

Writing a support letter for an award or scholarship...

Writing a support letter for an award or completing a reference letter for a scholarship may seem like a daunting task and your first reaction might be to say: "I don't think I can do that" or "I'm not really good with words" or "I don't know her well enough." Unless you cannot put a face to the name this is too soon to say no.

The application form for an award or scholarship usually asks for information about specific traits that the applicant or proposed recipient may or may not have. Before commenting on a specific attribute try to visualize a time when you have observed the applicant exhibiting that trait. Make short notes about the occasion or specific action that comes to mind. Don't try to write a polished paragraph just yet, notes are more useful because one event may apply to more than one of the application questions. Once you are comfortable with the connection between the trait requested and the occasion chosen ensure that the response does not exceed the stated word count. If a maximum word count is specified and you need to trim some words review your final response by reading it out loud as this may highlight awkward phrasing or inconsistencies.

The BC Book of Honour requires four letters of support from adult and/or girl members that show how the member:

- demonstrates a considerable commitment to fulfilling the organization's Vision, Mission and Values as outlined in *Guiding Essentials*
- exemplifies and promotes the spirit of Guiding through keeping the Promise and Law, as evidenced in her Guiding endeavours

A good place to start is by reviewing the Vision, Mission and Values of our organization which can be found on the national website. One way that may make it easier to respond is to rephrase these as questions. For example:

How has she (the nominated individual) made a positive difference in your life and how do you contribute responsibly to your community as a result of her actions? (GGC-Vision)

How does she (the nominated individual) enable girls to be confident, resourceful and courageous, and to make a difference in the world? (GGC- Mission)

Sparks and Brownies could be asked what their promise is and how their leader (the applicant) keeps that promise and how does she help them to keep that promise.

Guides could be asked how their Guider keeps the law.

Pathfinders and Rangers have usually shared a broader scope of activities with their Guider and are able to express themselves well on paper individually or as a group.

The personal anecdotes from fellow Guiders and girls make the presentation of an award extremely memorable and personal.