



Telling Their Story: Writing a Powerful Citation for President's Award Nominations

Honouring exceptional dedication and long-service to RDA.

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Elevating Stories of Service: Creating an Impactful Citation for the President's Award

The President's Award is one of RDA's highest forms of recognition, celebrating individuals who have dedicated their lives to supporting the mission and values of RDA through voluntary service. Writing a great citation doesn't need to be complicated – it's about telling a genuine story of the nominee's dedication, achievements, and impact.

Your citation plays a crucial role in bringing your nominee's accomplishments and contributions to light. It is the only information the judging panel will have when reviewing candidates, so crafting a clear and compelling citation is essential.

To help you effectively tell the story of your nominee's lifetime of dedication to RDA, we've put together some tips and guidelines. These will help make your submission stand out, while ensuring it remains both informative and accessible.

We recognise that writing citations for awards can be a time-consuming process that requires careful consideration, significant thought and effort. We want to express our appreciation for taking the time to make a nomination and honour the exceptional volunteers within the RDA community. Your dedication and effort in bringing these remarkable individuals into the spotlight not only helps us celebrate their invaluable contribution but also inspire ongoing excellence and dedication within our organisation.

Key Elements of the Citation

Your citation will be the foundation of the nomination, so it's important to capture the heart of the nominee's contributions in a clear and engaging way.

Part 1 - Reasons for Nomination (300 words max)

In this section, provide a powerful overview of why the nominee deserves the award. Highlight their dedication, commitment, and unique contributions to RDA over their 30+ years of voluntary service. Here's how to make this part shine:

- **Focus on their impact:** How has the nominee's work transformed RDA or one of its Member Groups? Think about the difference they've made – be specific!
- **Tell their story:** Every nominee has a journey. What stands out about theirs? Highlight key moments where they went above and beyond to support RDA's mission.
- **Show their passion:** What drives their continued commitment? This is a chance to showcase their dedication and passion for RDA, which is essential for a lifetime award.

Part 2 – Outline of Exceptional Service (100 words max)

In this section, summarise the nominee's remarkable contributions over their years of service. Focus on capturing the most important details of their service and achievements over the years. Use the following prompts to focus on key aspects:

- **Volunteering Journey:** Describe the nominee's journey with RDA, highlighting their dedication over time.
- **Impactful Roles:** Highlight specific roles or responsibilities that showcase their leadership and impact.
- **Milestones and Achievements:** Mention notable achievements or recognitions that underpin their exceptional service:

- **Enduring Contributions:** Emphasise any long-lasting contributions or changes they've made.
- **Personal Dedication:** Capture the nominee's personal commitment and its effect on RDA.

Writing Tips for Success

When facing a blank page, writing a citation can seem daunting, so here are a few tips to make the process easier:

- **Keep it personal and specific:** Don't just list facts; share specific examples of how the nominee has made a lasting difference. Think about moments where they showed exceptional leadership, dedication, or made a significant impact.
- **Be clear and concise:** The word limits help keep the citation focused, so avoid repetition and unnecessary details. Aim for clarity and simplicity – make it easy for the judges to see why your nominee deserves this award.
- **Use active language:** Keep the tone engaging by writing in the active voice. For example, say “They led the team to success by introducing new training programs” rather than “The team was led by them.”
- **Focus on the lasting impact:** The President's Award is about a lifetime of service. Think about how the nominee's contributions have helped RDA grow, evolve, or overcome challenges over the years.

Example Citations

Below are some example citations. These fictional examples are inspired by successful past nominations and can serve as a helpful starting point if you're preparing a nomination.

Jordan Taylor - The Heart of Meadowbrook Group

Part 1 - Reasons for Nomination (235 words)

Jordan Taylor began their journey with Meadowbrook Group over forty years ago when it was based at an earlier location. In the early days, Jordan dedicated significant time and effort to developing activities that allowed participants to achieve their best while having fun. This success and growing demand led to the opening of a new custom-built centre in 1997.

Jordan's dedication and skills were quickly recognised and utilised. Known for their organisational prowess and attention to detail, Jordan meticulously organised all sessions on a regular basis, ensuring appropriate coach and volunteer support and coordinating with schools to confirm participant attendance.

Jordan embraced additional responsibilities, including serving as Group Treasurer and Trustee for many years. They played a crucial role in building and fundraising for the new centre, which enabled the group to expand its support to a wider range of participants year-round. Jordan was also one of four key volunteers who organised participant holidays—often the only opportunity for many participants to travel. This role required a great deal of compassion, calmness, and logistical coordination.

Jordan is highly respected and cherished by everyone at Meadowbrook Group. Their presence is both a pleasure and an asset, characterised by their fun-loving nature and practical wisdom. Although Jordan has stepped back from daily operations, they remain actively engaged, offering valuable advice and support. Jordan is wholeheartedly recommended for a President's Award.

Part 2 - Outline of Exceptional Service (79 words)

Jordan Taylor has been a cornerstone of Meadowbrook Group for over 40 years. Starting as a side-walker, their skills and commitment were quickly recognised. Notable roles include serving as Monday Day Organiser for over 30 years, as well as Group Secretary and Trustee. Jordan was instrumental in fundraising for the new centre and organising group holidays. They have consistently demonstrated a willingness to tackle any task and remain a dedicated supporter, providing valuable guidance and advice to Meadowbrook Group.

Emma Lawson – An Unsung Hero of Meadowbrook Riding Centre

Part 1 - Reasons for Nomination (291 words)

Emma Lawson's journey with the RDA spans over five decades, during which she has made significant contributions at the local, county and regional levels. Her deep passion for horses and her enthusiasm for improving the lives of people with disabilities have been evident throughout her tenure.

Emma's involvement with the RDA began when she was invited by a community leader to bring her pony to help establish a new group for disabled riders. This initiative grew into a thriving RDA group, and Emma quickly became a vital part of the team, dedicating her time and skills to support and develop other groups, particularly at Meadowbrook, where she was a fixture for many years. In 1985, Emma joined the Westfield group, where she took on multiple roles including organiser, coach, and safeguarding officer. She also served as Chair of the group's board from 1996 to 2002, guiding it through numerous challenges. Even after stepping down as chair, Emma continued to contribute her ponies and expertise to the group, remaining an active volunteer and trustee.

Emma's talents extended beyond her local group; she served as County Chair from 1998 to 2003 and as County Coach from 2005 to 2009, while also being a dedicated member of the Regional Committee from 1998 to 2015. Her most notable achievement has been the practical support she has provided to individuals with disabilities throughout the region. Having faced her own challenges with a learning difficulty, Emma has demonstrated remarkable perseverance and a refusal to let obstacles hinder her efforts. Her dedication has helped countless individuals, particularly children, to gain confidence and joy from riding. Emma often remarks that nothing is more fulfilling than seeing a child's face light up as they grow more confident on a pony.

Part 2 - Outline of Exceptional Service (79 words)

Emma Lawson has made an extraordinary impact on the RDA through her unwavering commitment at the group, county, and regional levels, with over 35 years of service to the Westfield group. Her dedication extends to raising awareness of the RDA's mission within the local community and generously hosting fundraising events. Emma's efforts have resulted in raising more than £8,000 and significantly boosting volunteer numbers, reflecting her exceptional contribution to the organisation.

Alex Jordan - The Cornerstone of Greenfield Riding Centre

Part 1 - Reasons for Nomination (256 words)

Alex Jordan has been an unwavering volunteer for more than 40 years, fuelled by a lifelong passion for horses and a deep commitment to equine welfare and riding activities. Alex began their journey in the South of England before moving North in the 1980s, where they joined Meadowbrook Group, then Forest Glade Centre, and ultimately Greenfield Riding Centre (GRC) in 2013.

Though modest in stature, Alex's influence is substantial. Their extensive experience, enthusiasm for dressage, and dedication to horse care shine through in every aspect of their work. Starting as a volunteer side-walker, Alex soon embraced additional roles, becoming a Group Coach and serving as Group Secretary for Forest Glade Centre for seven years.

At GRC, Alex is known for their early arrivals and resilience in facing the unpredictable weather to care for the horses and prepare them for sessions. They often stay late, embodying their belief of 'it's what you can do that counts'. Their coaching has inspired numerous participants, many of whom have achieved success at regional and national competitions. The Annual Championships are a key event for their group, with all their participants taking part.

Alex willingly shares their wealth of knowledge with newer coaches and volunteers and is actively involved in research on equine health issues. As an avid creative, they create artwork that generates significant funds each year. Their support for regional events and fundraising further highlights their commitment.

Alex's dedication, thoroughness, and passion make them an indispensable member of the GRC team. They are wholeheartedly endorsed for a President's Award.

Part 2 - Outline of Exceptional Service (67 words)

For over 40 years, Alex Jordan has been a cornerstone of riding activities, demonstrating exceptional dedication to equine welfare and participant growth. Their expertise and passion have greatly impacted the lives of many participants, and their fundraising efforts through the arts have been substantial. Always ready to lend a hand, Alex is a valued member of the Greenfield Riding Centre, showing dedication and enthusiasm that surpass expectations.

Miranda Smith – a Group Volunteer with Vision

Part 1 - Reasons for Nomination (279 words)

When Miranda Smith joined the Peppermint Group in 1984, she had little personal experience of horses, and although she had been aware of RDA through contact with a former RDA rider, she knew little of the therapeutic value that RDA offers.

After five years as a side-walker, and attendance at numerous training sessions, Miranda realised that she wanted to be more involved. After a Group AGM she realised that the Group was struggling financially and there was a real possibility that it may even have to close. To Miranda, closure was not an option and it was to avert this that she joined the Fundraising Committee, and from there she was co-opted to the Management Committee, becoming Honorary Treasurer and then Chair within two years. Having restored the Group's financial stability Miranda became the driving force behind a new project to create a purpose built centre. Along with other Trustees, "Miranda" was successful in raising the initial £500,000 required to begin the project. The team was faced with many challenges, but when the new centre opened in March 2005 it was all worthwhile.

Miranda's vision extended to introducing new opportunities and in 2007 the Group delivered its first carriage driving session. Miranda was once again the leading figure; arranging training for 10 volunteers, finding suitable ponies and overseeing the purchase of two specially adapted carriages. Miranda always leads from the front and even when suffering a period of ill health, she never allowed it to impede her enthusiasm. It was this dedication that endeared her to her RDA colleagues, and participants and their families, and brought the best out of them.

Part 2 - Outline of Exceptional Service (96 words)

Under Miranda Smith's expert Chairmanship, the Peppermint Group has developed from a small, financially distressed riding Group with 20 riders to become a respected multi-disciplined RDA Centre with over 130 riders. She

did this by putting the Group on a sound financial basis, introducing carriage driving, and ensuring that the management was on a sound footing. Miranda was the driving force in raising funds for the new premises, and for ensuring that Instructors, resources and administrative backup, were all in place to broaden the range of therapies available to meet an increased demand for RDA therapy.

Pricilla Willowspot – an Inspirational Coach

Part 1: Reasons for Nomination - 290 words

When Pricilla decided to become an RDA Coach, it was a red-letter day for RDA. Under Pricilla's careful and compassionate tutelage, riders at the Stonecroft Farm Group blossomed, and some have gone on to compete at a high level at the RDA National Championships, with one rider entering the talent pathway for Para-equestrian Dressage.

Despite being a highly esteemed coach, Pricilla's heart remains in coaching grassroots riders, and her lessons are serious but infused with fun. She has a gift for enticing the most timid rider to try just that little bit harder. She also works hard to include parents so that RDA becomes a part of their lives too.

The Region quickly recognised Pricilla's knowledge and talent, and she took on the role of County Coach, a position she held for 6 years. She was then appointed Regional Coach and held this post with considerable distinction. She was instrumental in reinventing the Regional Training Programme, and through her efforts, the standards of Group instruction, volunteering training, and volunteer management have advanced beyond recognition.

Pricilla then became a member of the RDA UK Coaching Committee and has played a large part in the production of many of RDA's standard policies and protocols. As Chair of that Committee, she had the vision and enthusiasm to revise training procedures to include the many new Health & Safety requirements while ensuring that teaching programmes were kept fresh and invigorating for volunteers and participants alike.

While Pricilla's first love is teaching, she has never forgotten the need to pass on her knowledge and experience to the next generation of RDA coaches. It is for this dedication to ensuring a continued supply of well-trained volunteers for future participants.

Part 2: Outline of Exceptional Service – 75 words

Pricilla Willowspot has used her natural gift for teaching RDA participants to help a huge number of coaches improve their teaching techniques and enhance their RDA sessions, and in the process has gained much admiration and respect. In addition, she has been unstinting in her input at Regional and National levels to pass on her enthusiasm, skill, and knowledge to establish the high standards expected from RDA coaches, without whom Groups could not operate.