

"Giving From The Heart"



**Creative Ways to Recognize and
Reward Valuable Volunteers!**

Tips for Giving Recognition

1. ***The most important way we recognize a volunteer is to place him/her in the most suitable volunteer job.*** The job itself is the greatest motivator, and it gives the volunteer the most satisfaction. Without a good job, most volunteers won't be around for the end of the year recognition.
2. ***The major trap we fall into in recognition is that frequently we want to give volunteers the kind of recognition that we like. The cardinal role of recognition is that it be meaningful to the recipient.*** (i.e., if a plaque would be meaningful to him/her and you don't happen to care about plaques, you go with what would please the volunteer).
3. Some of the best, most ***creative recognition does not need to cost much money*** (i.e., giving a banana to the "top banana", staff putting on a humorous skit for its volunteers, etc).
4. ***Formal awards should be given as personally as possible***, preferably by a person the volunteer knows or at least by a person who can pronounce the volunteer's name correctly.
5. The "***different strokes for different folks***" really holds true in volunteer recognition. For people motivated by social interaction, a social party and good food may be the best way to say, "Thank You." For people who are primarily motivated by being able to achieve and accomplish new projects, a new challenge, being sent to a seminar or being given a plaque may be the best form of recognition. For people motivated by the opportunity to use their power and influence to help accomplish some agency goals, very visible, public recognition such as a picture and article about them in the paper or an award named after them may fit the bill.
6. When you must ***recognize all volunteers in one event***, make certain that you have elements that will please different types of people.
7. ***Recognition should be given as soon after the activity as possible.*** If someone chaired your event in the fall and your recognition event is in the spring, make certain that you do something in the way of appreciation before the event in the spring.
8. ***Using humor and creativity in recognition*** demonstrates that you have put time and thought into personal recognition. And time is the greatest gift we give one another.
9. ***Make certain that recognition is fair.*** If you reward volunteers who are not performing well, you will de-motivate the volunteers who are performing well.
10. ***The informal everyday acknowledgement of our volunteers is the most powerful and effective way of saying, "Thank You!"***

REASONS PEOPLE VOLUNTEER

1. Fill Time
2. Repay a perceived indebtedness
3. Because someone they love benefits
4. Because someone they love is also involved
5. To set an example for children
6. To work as a family
7. To meet people
8. To please someone else
9. To have fun
10. To gain skills
11. To gain experience
12. To be visible
13. To gain credit
14. To express their religion or belief
15. To find happiness
16. To use otherwise unused gifts or skills
17. Because of tradition
18. As part of a group
19. To maintain health
20. To explore new learning, ideas, etc.
21. To heal (grief, personal paid, abuses, etc.)
22. To avert loneliness
23. Because of interest
24. As a hobby
25. Out of concern (ecology, child abuse, etc.)



26. To get a tax benefit
27. To counter-point paid work
28. As an extension of a job
29. Because they were assigned
30. To survive tragedy
31. To test skills
32. To gain recognition
33. To acquire self-confidence
34. To be a change agent
35. To right a wrong
36. To work in a safe place
37. To save money (free meals, cut down on utilities)
38. To have a purpose
39. To be a “good neighbor”
40. To get out of the house



GIFT PRESENTATIONS

Where, How, When

Where: Often means deciding whether the gift should be given in front of others.

How: Includes the wrapping, the card, and what you say when you offer the gift, as well as your attitude toward both the recipient and the gift.

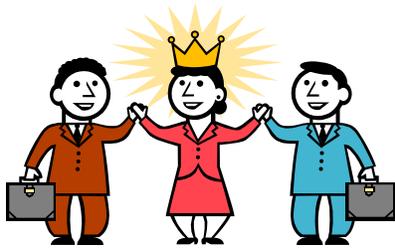
When: Is usually dictated by outside factors – Hail & Farewells, Parties, etc.



Volunteer Recognition Tips

1. Put an article about a volunteer in the local newspaper, their college alumni publication, their business, house, or organizational newsletter.
2. Leave candy kisses at the volunteer work sites.
3. Give a pacifier to a volunteer who is worried.
4. Send handwritten holiday notes to people.
5. Ask a volunteer's minister to recognize them in church.
6. Offer "Volunteer of the Month" awards.
7. Send 5 cent Valentines all year long.
8. Keep track of birthdays and send personalized cards.
9. Offer volunteers a chance to attend all agency training.
10. Hold a volunteer 'love-in', where volunteers bring in a loved one who helped them with a volunteer project.
11. Offer free meals to volunteers where cafeterias are part of the setting.
12. Name the coffee pot after a volunteer.
13. Present each new volunteer with their own coffee cup, monogrammed with their initials.
14. Provide clearly written and updated job descriptions for all volunteer jobs.
15. Create a bulletin board that features pictures and accomplishments of specific volunteers.
16. Send personalized "Thank you for sharing your love one" notes to parents, spouse, children, grandparents, etc.
17. Invite skilled volunteers to train other volunteers.
18. Acquire special discount coupons from local movie houses, restaurants, etc.
19. Involve volunteers in the long-range planning for your agency.
20. Be Nice.





101 Ways to Give Recognition to Volunteers

Continuously, but always inconclusively, the subject of recognition is discussed by directors and coordinators of volunteer programs. There is great agreement as to its importance but great diversity in its implementation.

Listed below are 101 possibilities gathered from hither and yon. The duplication at 1 and 101 is for emphasis. The blank at 102 is for the beginning of your own list.

I think it is important to remember that recognition is not so much something you do as it is something you are. It is a sensitivity to others as persons, not a strategy for discharging obligations.

1. Smile
2. Put up a volunteer suggestion box
3. Treat to a soda
4. Reimburse assignment related expenses
5. Ask for a report
6. Send a birthday card
7. Arrange for discounts
8. Maintain a coffee bar
9. Plan annual ceremonial occasions
10. Give service stripes
11. Invite to staff meeting
12. Recognize personal needs
and problems
13. Accommodate personal needs and problems
14. Be pleasant
15. Use in an emergency
situation
16. Provide a babysitter
17. Post Honor Roll in reception area

18. Respect their wishes
19. Give informal teas
20. Keep challenging them
21. Send a Thanksgiving Day card to the volunteer's family
22. Provide a nursery
23. Say "Good Morning"
24. Greet by name
25. Provide good pre-service training
26. Help develop self-confidence
27. Award plaques to sponsoring group
28. Take time to explain fully
29. Be verbal
30. Motivate agency VIP's to converse with them
31. Hold rap sessions
32. Give additional responsibility
33. Afford participation in team planning
34. Respect sensitivities
35. Enable to grow on the job
36. Enable to grow out of the job
37. Send newsworthy information to the media
38. Have wine and cheese tasting parties
39. Ask client-patient to evaluate their work-service
40. Say "Good Afternoon"
41. Honor their preferences
42. Create pleasant surroundings
43. Welcome to staff coffee breaks
44. Enlist to train other volunteers
45. Have a public reception
46. Take time to talk
47. Defend against hostile or negative staff
48. Make good plans
49. Commend to supervisory staff
50. Send a valentine
51. Make thorough pre-arrangements
52. Persuade "personnel" to equate volunteer experience with work experience
53. Admit to partnership
54. Recommend to prospective employer
55. Provide scholarships to volunteer conferences or workshops
56. Offer advocacy roles
57. Utilize as consultants
58. Write them Thank You notes
59. Invite participation in policy formulation
60. Surprise with coffee and cake
61. Celebrate outstanding projects and achievements
62. Nominate for volunteer awards
63. Have a "Presidents Day" for new presidents of sponsoring groups
64. Carefully match volunteer with job
65. Praise them to their friends



66. Provide substantive in-service training
67. Provide useful tools in good working condition
68. Say “Good Night”
69. Plan staff and volunteer social events
70. Be a *real* person



71. Rent billboard space for public laudation
72. Accept their individually
73. Provide opportunities for press conferences and evaluation
74. Identify age groups
75. Maintain meaningful file
76. Send impromptu fun cards
77. Plan occasional extravaganzas
78. Instigate client planned surprises
79. Utilize purchased newspaper space
80. Promote a “Volunteer-of-the-Month” program
81. Send letter of appreciation
82. Plan a “Recognition Edition” of the agency newsletter
83. Color code name tags to indicate particular achievements (hours, years, unit, etc)

84. Send commendatory letters to prominent public figures
85. Say “we missed you”
86. Praise the sponsoring group/club
87. Promote staff smiles
88. Facilitate personal maturation
89. Distinguish between groups and individuals in the group
90. Maintain safe working conditions
91. Adequately orientate
92. Award special citations for extraordinary achievements
93. Fully indoctrinate regarding the agency
94. Send Christmas cards
95. Be familiar with the details of assignments
96. Conduct community-wide, cooperative, inter-agency recognition events
97. Plan a theater party
98. Attend a sports event
99. Have a picnic
100. Say “Thank You”
101. Smile
- 102.



Volunteer Recognition Ideas

- Send volunteers to workshops and conferences representing agency
- Make a video of a person volunteering, showing at annual luncheon
- Humorous skit by paid staff on the role of volunteers in the agency
- Personalized gift baskets
- Tickets to something they like (sports, theatre) – get them donated!
- Card sent on the anniversary date of their becoming a volunteer
- Laminated copy of an article about them in the paper
- Recognize the paid and volunteer staff as a team in the recognition event
- Have a box entitled “A penny for your thoughts” for suggestions from volunteers
- Unique plaques with his/her picture as a volunteer on it
- A promotion to a higher-level volunteer position, more responsible job
- Discounts on tickets, gift items, medical services
- Articles about volunteers in local newspaper, their college alumni publication, newsletter at their work or through an organization
- Handwritten holiday notes to volunteers (Thanksgiving, etc.)
- Send 5 cent valentines all year long
- Invite volunteers to agency staff, planning and other significant meetings
- Have bulletin board dedicated to activities and news of your volunteers
- Have a personalized coffee mug for each volunteer
- Leave candy kisses on volunteers’ desks
- Develop creative, humorous awards to give at annual meeting
- Develop an in-house award named after your founding volunteer

- Send notes thanking family members for their support of the volunteer's efforts for your organization
- Involve volunteers in the long-range planning of your agency
- Have a birthday lunch once a month to celebrate all volunteer and paid staff birthdays that occurred during that month
- Nominate a volunteer for community recognition
- Give recognition items such as tote bags (You deserve a break!), rolls (You are on a roll), cupcakes (You Take the Cake), seeds (Thanks for helping us grow)
- Thank-you letter when they leave the organization
- A flower or helium balloon at volunteer's desk -"Just because"
- Volunteer portfolio for career development
- Coupons good for: one day off without an excuse, lunch with the Manager of Volunteers or Executive Director, 15 minute shoulder massage, etc
- Skills training (i.e., computer, FAX)
- Letter of Commendation to volunteer's boss
- Use of facilities for volunteer's service group
- Recognition gifts (see last page of this section for places to send for catalogues of special recognition gifts)

Volunteer of the Month