

More Than 100 Ways to Recognize Volunteers

- Send cards for personal achievements (birthday, anniversary, new arrival, promotion, graduation, etc.)
- Have an "at-home tea party." (Send volunteers a tea bag in a card and ask them to enjoy a cup of tea in the quiet of their own home.)
- Write a news article for the local newspaper, highlighting their contribution or impact upon the program or clientele.
- Write a news article which is published in the organization's newsletter.
- Send a thank-you note; include hand-written notes.
- Smile.
- Send a holiday greeting card and get well cards.
- Spontaneously say "thank-you" during a chance or planned meeting or gathering.
- Ask a volunteer for their input about a program or evaluation.
- Utilize a volunteer suggestion box. Carefully consider their suggestions!
- Ask a volunteer to serve in a leadership role.
- Present service stripes, candy sticks or candy canes with the message "You've earned your stripes!"
- Ask a volunteer to conduct an orientation or educational program.
- Have a soft drink party.
- Ask a volunteer to coordinate a program, event, or initiative.
- Shake hands.
- Plan a theme party (toga, costume, western, etc.)
- Give a pat-on-the-back.
- Invite volunteers to staff meetings. Encourage them to contribute and participate.
- Ask a volunteer to develop a window or table-top display to promote a program.
- Send a volunteer to a conference.
- Ask the volunteer to present a report, lesson, workshop, or seminar on some aspect of the conference which they attended.
- Cultivate volunteer's special interests. Whenever possible, encourage pursuit in their volunteer role.
- Utilize volunteer's unique special talents.
- Share the success or impact of one volunteer with others at a meeting or gathering.
- Provide extrinsic rewards (certificates, plaques, pins, etc.)
- Provide "perks" (free admission to paid events, free parking, etc.)
- Take an interest in their personal lives.
- Have a "volunteer of the month" award.
- Host a banquet, luncheon, dessert, tea, or reception in the volunteers' honor.
- Invite a volunteer out to lunch.
- Reimburse travel expenses.
- Establish a Volunteer Honor Roll.
- Provide volunteers with clerical or office support.
- Provide educational resources for the volunteers to utilize (videos, pamphlets, books, curriculum, etc.)
- Ask effective volunteers to each recruit another volunteer who is "just like them."
- Debrief with volunteers following a conference, program, or activity which they participated in or assisted with.
- Always use their first name.
- Nominate a volunteer to teach a workshop at a conference or symposium and assist in preparation.
- Label the office coffee pot in honor of an effective volunteer ("Vicki pours herself out for this organization!" or "Joe keeps things perking!")
- Greet each volunteer with enthusiasm and appreciation.
- Ask an effective volunteer to mentor a new recruit.
- Provide useful and effective orientation for each volunteer position.
- Send peppermint candies to your organization's volunteers with the message "You're worth a mint!"
- Develop leadership skills and self-confidence.
- Recognize and share innovative suggestions or programs.
- Recognize volunteers and program participants for community service activities.
- Take time to explain.
- Recognize volunteers for financial and philanthropic contributions.
- Recognize tenure.
- Practice the "Platinum Rule." ("Do unto others as they prefer being done unto.")
- Recognize the number of hours contributed to the agency, organization, or program.
- Ask a volunteer to speak on behalf of the program to an outside agency.
- Ask a volunteer to speak to a funder.

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- Ask a volunteer to speak at a volunteer meeting.
- Ask a volunteer to write a news article or news release.
- Foster personal growth.
- Ask a volunteer to make a television appearance or radio announcement.
- Provide scholarships to educational conferences or workshops.
- Enable a volunteer to move on to expanded or higher level responsibilities.
- Recognize the achievements or accomplishments of those with whom the volunteer works.
- Share the volunteer's personal success story
- Provide volunteers their own work area.
- Have a youth share a success story about the volunteer.
- Be respectful.
- Schedule monthly birthday bashes.
- Have a program participant share a success story about the volunteer.
- Provide transportation to meetings, events, educational workshops, and volunteer activities.
- Write letters of reference to prospective employers.
- Surprise a volunteer with a birthday cake.
- Utilize a volunteer as a consultant.
- Send flowers, balloons, candy, cookies, Valentines.
- Nominate volunteers for awards.
- Attend personal celebrations (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)
- Take note of volunteers' children's accomplishments. Recognize them.
- Make home visits.
- Make sure that each volunteer is a "good fit" with their volunteer role.
- Let each volunteer know they were missed.
- Make telephone calls.
- Encourage program participants to send a thank-you note.
- Plan an organizational outing (picnic, theater, ball game, family day, pool party, etc.)
- Praise in public; especially in front of family and friends.
- Encourage program participants to send birthday and anniversary cards.
- Send get well cards.
- Have a birthday and anniversary column in your organizational newsletter.
- Send a note of congratulations for personal and professional achievements.
- Send a thank-you note to the volunteer's spouse to thank him/her for sharing his/her spouse's time and talents with the organization.
- Send a thank-you note to the volunteer's employer, noting the impact and contribution which the volunteer has made. (If the employer does not provide release time to volunteer.)
- Send a thank-you note to the volunteer's employer to thank him/her for sharing the employee's time and talents with the organization. (If the employer provides release time to volunteer.)
- Recognize an employer with the volunteer publicly (if the employer provides release time for the employee, or allows the employee to utilize resources or support staff to serve.)
- Encourage other volunteers to express appreciation.
- Send volunteers an "Encouragemint".
- Ask volunteers to chaperone trips.
- Ask volunteers to judge competitions.
- Provide child care.
- Secure complimentary gift certificates from businesses or the Chamber of Commerce.
- Print business cards for volunteers.
- Ask a volunteer to co-present with a salaried professional at a conference, workshop, or staff development.
- Promote effective volunteers to higher areas of volunteerism within your organization.
- Attend volunteers' meetings and activities.
- Bounce new ideas off of a volunteer.
- Involve volunteers in problem solving efforts.
- Organize a card shower.
- Plant a tree or flower bed in a volunteer's name.
- Contribute to a charity in a volunteer's name.
- Send spices, seasonings, or herbs with the note: "You are the spice of life!"
- Provide a golf cart for a volunteer to utilize during a fair, festival, golf outing, etc.
- Organize a holiday open house for your volunteers.
- Feature a volunteer in a slide show.
- Have reserved seating at any event.
- Provide favors at meetings or events.