



ENHANCING THE CLUB EXPERIENCE.....

100+ WAYS TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer recognition is not a straightforward checklist of things to do, awards to buy, and accolades to present. Volunteer recognition is a state of mind. Recognition is realizing that everyone makes a contribution to the cause, and that everyone is a member of the same team. It's accepting people for who they are, understanding what they can offer, and doing our best, as volunteer coordinators, to effectively match the volunteer's unique talents, strengths and interests, with the role or responsibility for which they are best suited and can be most successful. Volunteer recognition doesn't have to cost anything, but if you value volunteers and you believe that the 4-H program would not succeed without volunteers, perhaps you can figure out creative ways to find funding to reward volunteers! The ideas are endless... but here's a few to get you started!

1. Send cards for personal achievements (birthday, anniversary, new arrival, promotion, graduation, etc.)
2. 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.
3. Write a news article for the local newspaper, highlighting their contribution or impact upon the program or clientele.
4. Write a news article which is published in the 4-H newsletter, website or blog.
5. Send a thank-you note.
6. Smile.
7. Send a holiday greeting card.
8. Spontaneously say "thank-you" during a chance or planned meeting or gathering.
9. Ask a volunteer for their input about a program or evaluation.
10. Utilize a volunteer suggestion box. Carefully consider their suggestions!
11. Ask a volunteer to serve in a leadership role.
12. Present service stripes, candy sticks or candy canes with the message "You've earned your stripes!"
13. Ask a volunteer to conduct an orientation or educational program.
14. Have a soft drink party.
15. Ask a volunteer to coordinate a program, event, or initiative.
16. Shake hands.
17. Plan a theme party (toga, costume, western, etc.)
18. Give a pat-on-the-back.
19. Invite volunteers to staff meetings. Encourage them to contribute and participate.
20. Ask a volunteer to develop a window or table-top display to promote a program.
21. Send a volunteer to a conference.
22. Ask the volunteer to present a report, lesson, workshop, or seminar on some aspect of the conference



which they attended.

23. Cultivate volunteer's special interests. Whenever possible, encourage pursuit in their volunteer role.
24. Recognize volunteers at Commissioners Court during National Volunteer Week in April.
25. Share the success or impact of one volunteer with others at a meeting or gathering.
26. Provide "perks" (free admission to paid events, free parking, etc.)
27. Take an interest in their personal lives.
28. Have a "volunteer of the month" award.
29. Host a banquet, luncheon, dessert, tea, or reception in the volunteers' honor.
30. Invite a volunteer out to lunch.
31. Reimburse travel expenses.
32. Establish a Volunteer Honor Roll.
33. Provide volunteers with clerical or office support.
34. Provide educational resources for the volunteers to utilize (videos, pamphlets, books, curriculum, etc.)
35. Ask effective volunteers to each recruit another volunteer who is "just like them."
36. Always use their first name.
37. Provide special interest materials to targeted volunteers.
38. Nominate a volunteer to teach a workshop at a conference or symposium.
39. When the workshop is accepted, assist the volunteer 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!")
40. Greet each volunteer with enthusiasm and appreciation.
41. Ask an effective volunteer to mentor a new recruit.
42. Send Hershey's Kisses to volunteers.
43. Provide useful and effective orientation for each volunteer position.
44. Send peppermint candies to your volunteers with the message "You're worth a mint!"
45. Develop leadership training for new volunteers and advanced training for experienced volunteers.
46. Ask a volunteer for their input or opinion.
47. Recognize and share innovative suggestions or programs.
48. Be patient.
49. Recognize volunteers and program participants for community service activities.
50. Take time to explain.
51. Recognize volunteers for financial and philanthropic contributions.
52. Build consensus.
53. Recognize tenure.
54. Practice the "Platinum Rule." ("Do unto others as they prefer being done unto.")
55. Recognize the number of hours contributed to the program.
56. Ask a volunteer to speak on behalf of the program to an outside agency.
57. Ask a volunteer to speak to a funder.
58. Hold a rap session.
59. Ask a volunteer to speak at a volunteer meeting.
60. Ask a volunteer to write a news article or news release.



61. Foster personal growth.
62. Ask a volunteer to make a television appearance or radio announcement.
63. Enable a volunteer to move on to expanded or higher-level responsibilities.
64. Recognize the achievements or accomplishments of those with whom the volunteer works.
65. Ask the volunteer to direct a membership recruitment campaign.
66. Share the volunteer's personal success story.
67. Provide volunteers their own work area.
68. Have a program participant share a success story about the volunteer.
69. Provide transportation to meetings, events, educational workshops, and volunteer activities.
70. Write letters of reference to prospective employers.
71. Utilize a volunteer as a consultant.
72. Send flowers.
73. Nominate volunteers for awards.
74. Take note of volunteers' children's accomplishments.
75. Make home visits.
76. Let each volunteer know they were missed.
77. Make telephone calls.
78. Encourage program participants to send a thank-you note to volunteers.
79. Plan an organizational outing (picnic, theater, ball game, family day, pool party, etc.)
80. Praise in public; especially in front of family and friends.
81. Encourage program participants to send birthday and anniversary cards.
82. Send get well cards.
83. Send a note of congratulations for professional achievements and promotions.
84. 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.
85. Send a thank-you note to the volunteer's employer, noting the impact and contribution which the volunteer has made.
86. Encourage other volunteers to express appreciation.
87. Send volunteers a note of "Encouragemint" when they need it and include a mint with the card.
88. Ask volunteers to chaperone trips.
89. Ask volunteers to judge competitions.
90. Provide child care for volunteers when they are providing their leadership.
91. Secure complimentary gift certificates from businesses or the Chamber of Commerce.
92. Print business cards for volunteers.
93. Ask a volunteer to co-present with a salaried professional at a conference, workshop, or staff development.
94. Stage a potluck dinner in a volunteer's honor.
95. Attend volunteers' meetings and activities.
96. Involve volunteers in problem solving efforts.
97. Plant a tree or flower bed in a volunteer's name.
98. Contribute to a charity in a volunteer's name.



99. Send spices, seasonings, or herbs with the note: "You are the spice of life!"
100. Print and distribute bumper stickers recognizing volunteers.
101. Provide caps or shirts to promote unity among the organization.
102. Provide a golf cart for a volunteer to utilize during a fair, festival, golf outing, etc.
103. Organize a holiday open house for your volunteers.
104. Feature a volunteer in a slide show.
105. Have reserved seating at any event.
106. Provide favors at meetings or events.
107. Direct newspaper reporters to worthy volunteers when writing a news story.
108. Send balloons.
109. Send candy or fruit baskets.
110. Surprise everyone by bringing donuts or fresh coffee cake.
111. Send cookies.
112. Encourage volunteers to assume community leadership roles.
113. Give a volunteer a light bulb or candle with the message "You light up my life."
114. Send Valentines.
115. Give calendars, notepads, pens, or pencils.