

Volunteer Recognition Round Table Discussion
November 5, 2010

The discussion of volunteer recognition focused on tangible ideas and ways that we can demonstrate appreciation to our volunteers. As managers of volunteers, it is vital that we create a culture of gratitude within our organization and with our volunteers. This starts with providing a meaningful, genuine “thank you” at the end of every session a volunteer attends.

The following is a list of ideas on how to recognize volunteers (Loosely Grouped in Categories):

Relationship Building

- Ask volunteers how they want to be recognized
- Get to know your volunteer and pin point specific interests (ex: Casino Night for volunteers who like to gamble)
- Photo Collage/Board
- Have residents/recipients assist with volunteer thank yous
- Board members call to thank volunteers
- Share positive feedback (personal and meaningful)
- Send pictures to volunteers in action and include a note
- Give specific verbal recognition
- Residents/Participants make cards
- Spend time with volunteers (personal connection)
- Share ownership (team)
- Build relationship
- Staff/program participants use “thumb” prints to make sign/card- “You’re really Thumb-Thing!”
- Involve President/CEO of organization in recognition of volunteers
- Birthday cards with a personal note
- Birthday Emails
- Holiday card with a personal note
- Bulletin board with pictures of volunteers centrally located
- Monthly Social
- Verbal thank you
- Condolence cards
- Play a game to connect volunteers
- Trivia Party

- Send photos of volunteer during an event
- Card home to family highlighting needs of volunteers

Awards

- Program Volunteer of the Year (adult, family, youth, and teen)
- 2 times a year banquet
- Volunteer of the Year awards
- Present each volunteer with a check of much each volunteer saved the organization
- 1 big conference every 6 years
- Presidential Service Awards
- Years of service awards
- Letter of recommendation
- Award 1 of 6 categories – Email nominations
- Awards based on service hours
- Awards on rotating basis (holiday themes)

Food Thank You

- Recognition Dinner/Banquet
- Holiday Potluck/Get Together
- Summer Picnic
- Hot Chocolate & Mug
- Candy Bar Thank you (You’re worth a Grand, Take 5 Bar Thank you)
- Cookie ingredients in a jar with a thank you note
- Candy with catchy phrases
- Breakfast
- Potluck with donated door prizes
- Lunches at different sites
- Ice Cream social
- Make volunteers coffee

- “Super volunteer”- mug with soup recipe
- Volunteer potluck (saved money goes for gifts/door prizes)
- Volunteer breakfast
- Instead of dinner, cake or appetizers
- Christmas Party

Gifts

- Gift of a clock (Your time is precious; Thank you for sharing it.)
- Note pad/pen thank you gift
- Reusable grocery bag
- Birthday cards
- Flowers/Seeds
- Use donations to thank volunteers
- Volunteers Rock pins
- Birthday emails
- Give gift cards
- Provide t-shirts/cap
- gifts to take home from banquet
- Survival kit bag
- Recognition pins, name badges

Media/Community

- Newsletter Recognition
- Baudville.com (recognition gifts)
- Note Card Thank you
- Instead of sending invitations to each volunteer, post it on website
- volunteers have their own website and post recognition/communications
- Post photos of volunteers in local newspaper
- Provide entertainment opportunities
- Newspaper article
- Volunteer profile
- E-Cards (123 greetings)

Other Ideas

- Volunteers given access to perks of the job
- Continuing education programs
- Letter (This is how you have helped)
- Postcard coupons – Volunteer bring them in to office to receive a gift
- Picture of thanks
- City wide volunteer thank you