

# WAYS TO GO:

## Ideas For Volunteer Recognition



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# Successfully Recognizing Volunteers

“Thank you” or “Way to Go” is the “paycheck” for a volunteer. Expressions of appreciation and recognition are important in keeping volunteers motivated and enthusiastic. Recognition has multiple functions beyond simple human courtesy. To the volunteer, recognition signifies that someone notices and someone cares. To the rest of the organization, recognition creates role models and communicates standards. There are seven principles guiding recognition.

**Principle 1 – Emphasis success rather than failure.**

**Principle 2 – Deliver recognition in a personal and honest manner. Avoid providing recognition that is “too” slick or overproduced.**

**Principle 3– Tailor your recognition and reward to the unique needs of the people involved. Having many recognition and reward options will enable management to acknowledge accomplishments in ways appropriate to the particulars of a given situation, selecting from a larger menu of possibilities.**

**Principle 4– Timing is crucial. Recognize contribution through a project. Reward contribution close to the time an achievement is realized. Time delays weaken the impact of most rewards.**

**Principle 5 – Strive for a clear, unambiguous, and well-communicated connection between accomplishments and rewards. Be sure people understand why they receive awards and the criteria used to determine awards.**

**Principle 6 – Recognize recognition. That is, recognize people who recognize others for doing what’s best for the organization.**

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# Ode to Volunteers

Many will be shocked to find with the Day of Judgment nears --

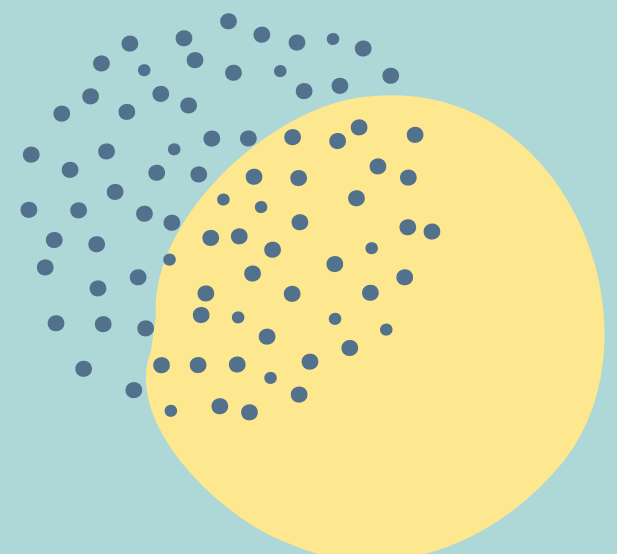
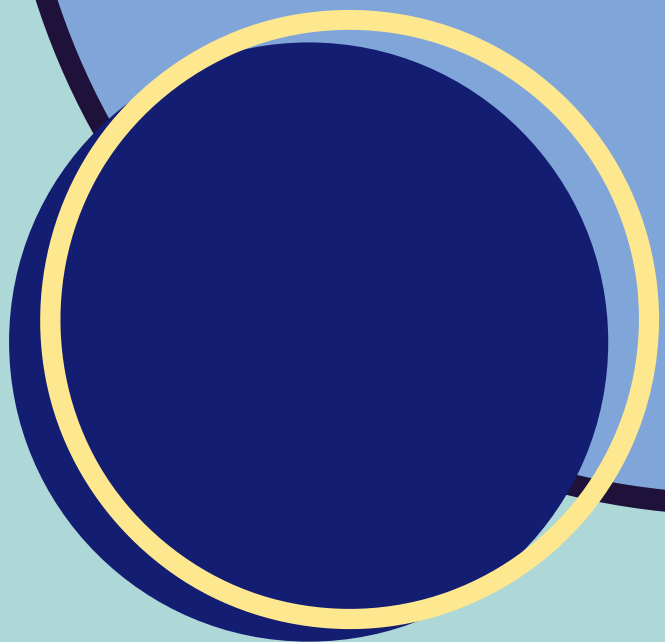
That there's a special place in haven set aside for volunteers

Furnished with big recliners, satin couches, and footstools -- where  
there's no committee chair, no group leaders for carpools.

Telephone lists will be outlawed, but a finger snap will bring cool  
drinks and gourmet dinners, and rare treats fit for a king.

You ask, who's served the privileged few and works for all they're  
worth? Why, those who reaped the benefits and not once volunteered  
on earth.

Author Unknown.



# A Leader is Best

A leader is best when people barely know he exists. Not so good, when people obey and acclaim him, worse when they despise him. But a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled. They will say: "We did it our-selves."

-Chinese Proverb





# Quotable Quotes

You give but a little when you give your possessions. It is when you give yourself that you truly give.

Volunteering warms the essence of the soul.  
Joe Sidoti

There is no higher religion than human service. To work for the common good is the greatest creed.

A real diamond – the person who will take time to be friend to those in need and not just the people with pleasing personalities.

When people are serving life is no longer meaningless.

You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.

In this world, it is not what we take up but what we give up that makes us rich.

What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?

Volunteers are not paid -- not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless  
Susie Riner

A human being is happiest and most successful when dedicated to a cause outside his own individual, selfish satisfaction.

Giving is the secret elixir that gives life meaning.

Perhaps the world little notes nor long remembers individual acts of kindness, but people do.

Our country was built on volunteerism and we need to do all we can to perpetuate this unique quality that has made our nation so great.

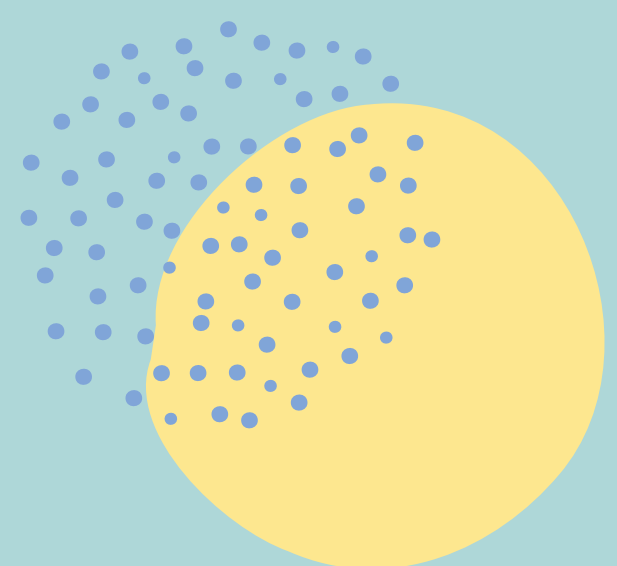
# Thoughts on Personalizing Volunteer Recognition

McClelland and Atkinson found three types of information that people exhibit which includes: affiliation, achievement and power/influence. By keeping in on a volunteer's motivation, you can personalize recognition to mean more to the volunteers receiving the recognition.

## Motivational Analysis

Each of the following groups of statements below has three choices. Choose the one in each set which most closely fits your own motivations. Remember, there are no wrong answers. Place an "X" before the letter of your choice.

1.
  - a. When doing a job, I seek feedback.
  - b. I prefer to work alone and am eager to be my own boss.
  - c. I seem to be uncomfortable when forced to work alone.
2.
  - a. I go out of my way to make friends with new people.
  - b. I enjoy a good argument.
  - c. After starting a task, I am not comfortable until it is completed.
3.
  - a. Status symbols are important to me.
  - b. I am always getting involved in group projects.
  - c. I work better when there is a deadline.
4.
  - a. I work best when there is some challenge involved.
  - b. I would rather give orders than take them.
  - c. I am sensitive to others - especially when they are mad.
5.
  - a. I am eager to be my own boss.
  - b. I accept responsibility eagerly.
  - c. I try to get personally involved with my superiors.
6.
  - a. I am uncomfortable when forced to work alone.
  - b. I prefer being my own boss, even when others feel a joint effort is required.
  - c. When given responsibility, I set measurable standards of high performance.
7.
  - a. I am very concerned about my reputation or position.
  - b. I have a desire to out-perform others.
  - c. I am concerned with being liked and accepted.
8.
  - a. I enjoy and seek warm, friendly relationships.
  - b. I attempt complete involvement in a project.
  - c. I want my ideas to predominate.
9.
  - a. I desire unique accomplishments
  - b. It concerns me when I am being separated from others.
  - c. I have a need and desire to influence others.
10.
  - a. I think about consoling and helping others.
  - b. I am verbally fluent.
  - c. I am restless and innovative.
11.
  - a. I set goals and think about how to attain them.
  - b. I think about ways to change people.
  - c. I think a lot about my feelings and the feelings of others.



1. a. Achievement  
b. Influence  
c. Affiliation

2. a. Affiliation  
b. Influence  
c. Achievement

3. a. Influence  
b. Affiliation  
c. Achievement

4. a. Achievement  
b. Influence  
c. Affiliation

5. a. Influence  
b. Achievement  
c. Affiliation

6. a. Affiliation  
b. Influence  
c. Achievement

7. a. Influence  
b. Achievement  
c. Affiliation

8. a. Affiliation  
b. Achievement  
c. Influence

9. a. Achievement  
b. Affiliation  
c. Influence

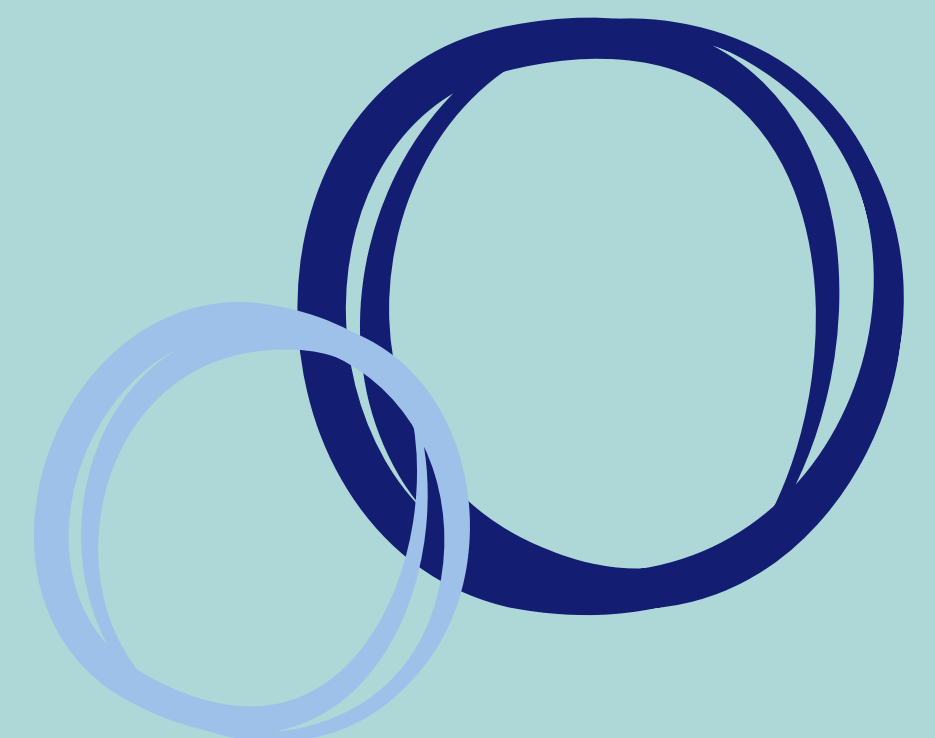
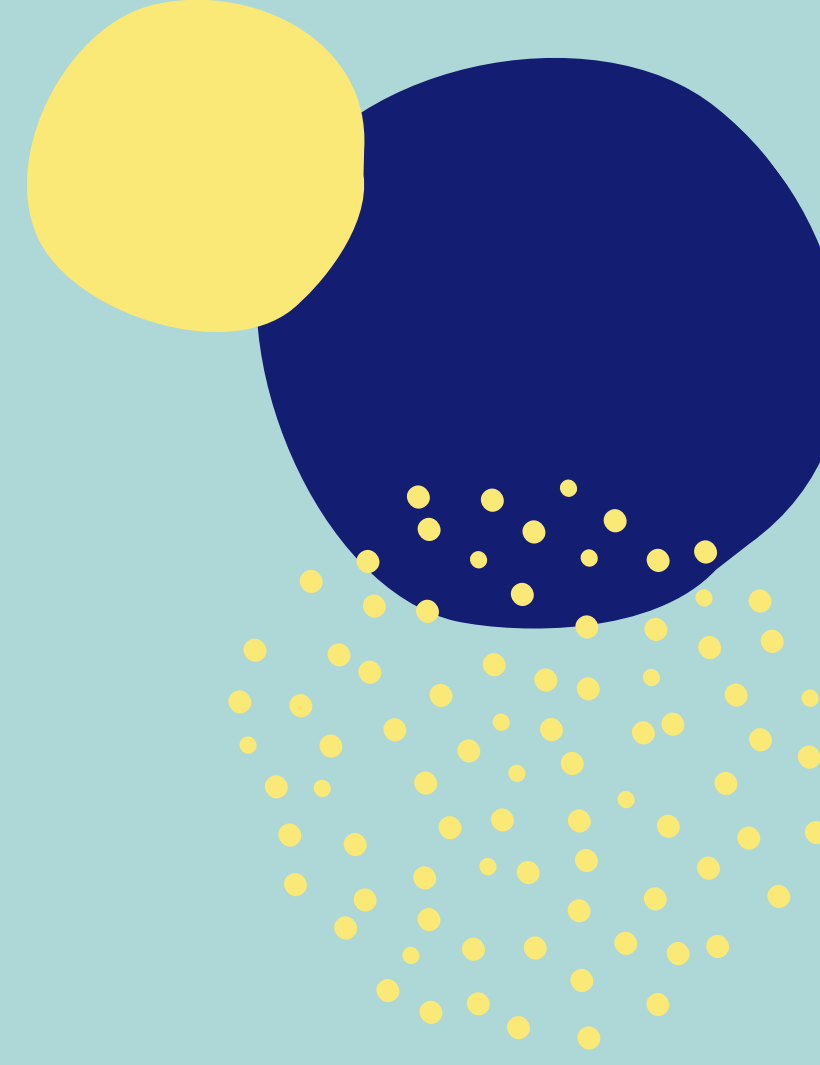
10. a. Affiliation  
b. Influence  
c. Achievement

11. a. Achievement  
b. Influence  
c. Affiliation

# of Achievement

# of Influence

# of Affiliation





# *Affiliated Volunteers*

## **Affiliation Motivated Volunteer Characteristics**

**Gets involved with group projects.**

**Likes to have a personal relationship with supervisor.**

**Needs to be perceived as a good person.**

**Needs to be liked.**

**Seeks socialization opportunities.**



## **Affiliation Motivated Volunteer Recognition Ideas**

**Cards, gifts, etc. on their birthdays, or special holidays.**

**Letters to supervisors telling of their work to benefit people.**

**Unexpected thank you notes.**

**Awards that are personalized with a thank you from client served.**

**Opportunities to give input about specific clientele needs.**

**Banquets, luncheons, picnics, social outings or attending community events as a group.**

**Include volunteers in slide shows or photos showing their work.**



# *Achievement Volunteers*

## **Achievement Motivated Volunteer Characteristics**

Needs specific goals with boundaries and feedback.

Has a desire to achieve unique accomplishments.

Needs to measure success by seeking goals.

Seeks responsibility.

Needs tangible rewards.

## **Achievement Motivated Volunteer Recognition Ideas**

Tangible awards, plaques, or pins that can be displayed.

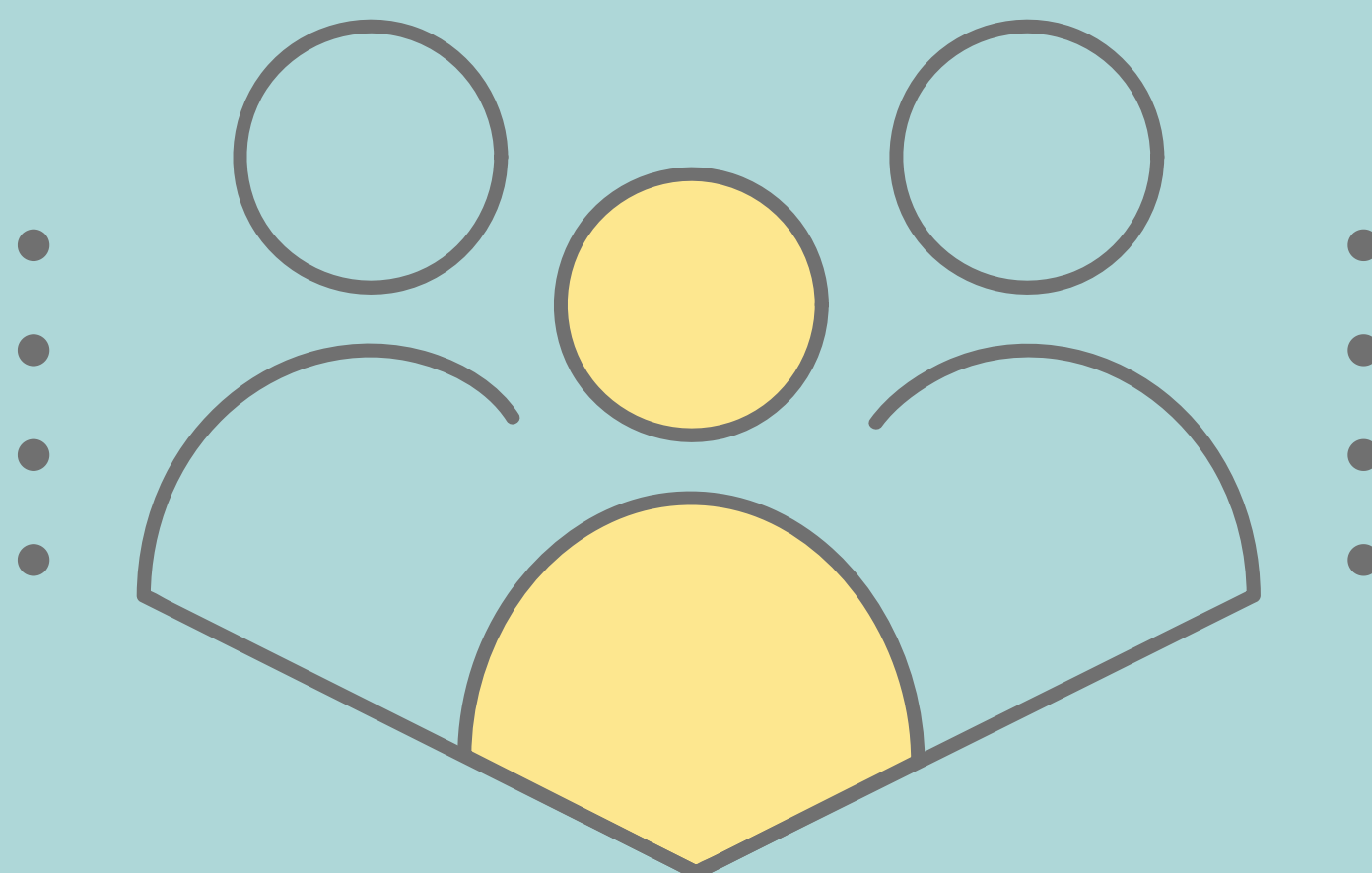
Letters of commendation for specific accomplishments from board members and to area newspapers. Opportunity to use their own ideas to attain goals.

Include in staff meetings when appropriate.

Nomination for area, state or national awards.

Careful not to waste their time.

Color name tags, badges to honor time spent with the agency.



# *Influencer Volunteers*

## **Influence Motivated Volunteer Characteristics**

**Needs to impact and influence others.**

**Enjoys teaching others.**

**Can respond to needs of people or programs.**

**Seeks position of authority and responsibility.**

**Responds to titles that depict authority; has strong feelings about status and prestige.**



## **Influence Motivated Volunteer Recognition Ideas**

**Impressive job title.**

**Ongoing program or site name for them.**

**Recognition that is broad-based that will be seen by people in authority and power.**

**Letter of commendation noting their impact and importance sent to newspapers, colleges, and magazines.**

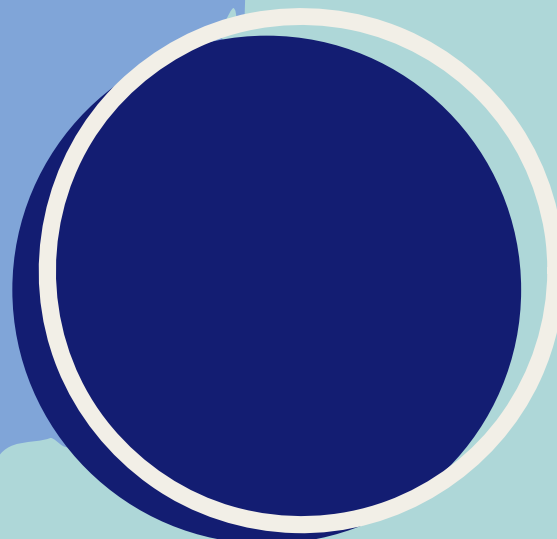
**Send them to seminars for volunteers and ask them to teach others.**

**Introduce them to people of influence and media contacts.**

**Give them the opportunity for input into the agency direction and decisions.**

**"A volunteer is a person who can see what others cannot see; who can feel what most do not feel. Often, such gifted persons, do not think of themselves as volunteers, but as citizens – citizens in the fullest sense: partners in civilization."**

**Former President George Bush**



# *Recognition Program Ideas for National Volunteer Week*


*April 18 - 24*




- Create a Facebook profile picture, profile frame, or cover photo thanking volunteers.
- Have the mayor or governor proclaim National Volunteer Week.
- Develop a special page or section on your webpage thanking volunteers for their efforts
- Create displays in local store windows or heavily traveled areas honoring the work that their club leaders support.
- Run contests or giveaways for volunteers on your social media pages
- Distribute bumper stickers or other promotional items recognizing volunteer contributions.
- Honor the first volunteer recruited during National Volunteer Week. Give this volunteer and their recruiter special prizes.
- Create virtual certificates or digital badges to honor volunteers for their efforts.
- Create an infographic promoting the good work that volunteers are doing within your program.
- Have the program director or CEO draft a personal letter thanking volunteers for their service.
- Honor volunteers with the President's Volunteer Service Award.



# *More Recognition Program Ideas Just for National Volunteer Week*



- \* Select a leader of the day for press coverage or recognition.
  - \* Have alumni and recipients write thank you notes to volunteers that have touched their lives.
  - \* Plant trees in the community commemorating volunteer contributions.
  - \* Distribute cookies or cupcakes for local merchants, supporters and volunteers.
  - \* Develop a slide show or presentation featuring volunteer contributions and premier it on Facebook.
- Hold a special event at a nice community setting, like a museum, to recognize volunteers with special recognition.
- \* Create a yearbook to be displayed in the lobby that contains all volunteer's photographs along with his or her achievements of the year.
  - \* Conduct an out-to-dinner program for volunteers. Award dinners to volunteers for doing something special.
  - \* Develop a Behind the Scenes Award especially for those whose actions are not usually in the limelight.
- 

# *Volunteer Recognition Cards of All Occasions*

## For Valentine's Day

- \* Thanks for sharing your work with our agency.
- \* Thanks for all the "heart work" you do throughout the year on behalf of our agency



## For the Fourth of July

- \* We salute you! Volunteerism is a hallmark of a free and democratic society.
- \* Our agency appreciates all that you do for our community - and our country. You are a star in our eyes! Happy 4th of July!



## For Thanksgiving

- \* Thanks for giving through the year.
- \* It's time to say thanks for all you've given and done through the year. Happy Holidays!



## For the Holidays

- \* May the joy you receive this holiday season be equal to the pleasure you bring to others throughout the year. Happy Thanksgiving!
- \* For sharing your volunteer warmth and joy with others, we extend holiday greetings and best wishes for a year filled with peace and harmony.



## For Birthdays

- \* A special person was born today! We send wishes full of good cheer along with our thanks to a special volunteer.



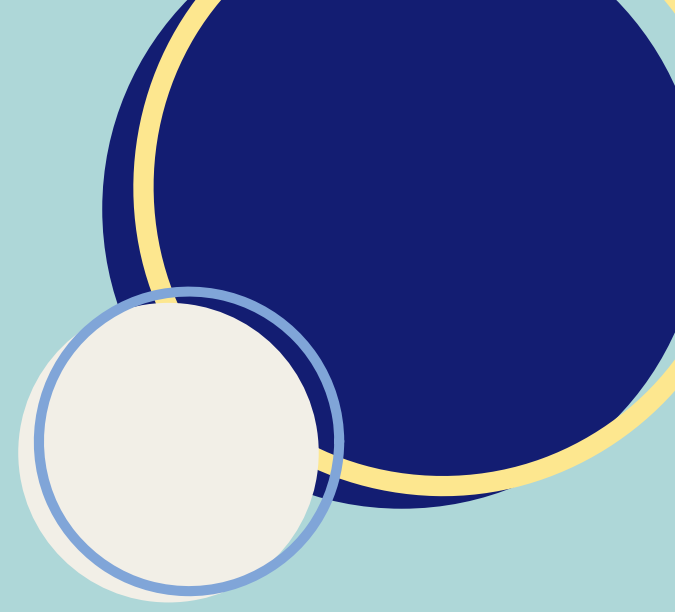


# Ways to Recognize **EVERYDAY**

- \* Put up a volunteer suggestion box.
- \* Reimburse assignment-related expenses.
- \* Work with businesses to provide discounts or coupons to volunteers.
- \* Maintain a coffee/refreshment area.
- \* Invite volunteers to staff meetings.
- \* Accommodate personal needs & problems.
- \* Be pleasant and smile.
- \* Post an honor roll in the reception area.
- \* Keep volunteers challenged with interesting assignments utilizing their talents.
- \* Provide child care during meetings.
- \* Take time to fully explain responsibilities.
- \* Hold feedback sessions and value a volunteer's opinion.
- \* Create pleasant surroundings, like a toy box in your office or reading material for people waiting to see you.
- \* Enlist volunteers to help with training.
- \* Provide resources for conferences and workshops.
- \* Utilize volunteers as consultants.
- \* Praise volunteers to others, especially those individuals who value the volunteer's value.
- \* Create opportunities for volunteers to work together and build relationships with others.
- \* Send a letter of appreciation to employer or spouse.
- \* Provide snacks during meetings and at work sites.
- \* Create a bulletin board that features pictures and accomplishments of specific volunteers.
- \* Give volunteers buttons or staff badges.
- \* Provide volunteers with a directory of volunteers in your program so they can network.
- \* Ask volunteers to represent your organization at other agency programs.
- \* Plan for a monthly volunteer's night out event where volunteers can just socialize with each other.
- \* Establish a wall of fame to honor volunteers who make a contribution to the program.
- \* Make yard signs that say volunteer lives here.



# Volunteer Slogans



- In volunteer work, the dividends are always greater than the investment.
- For returns far in excess of the initial investment, volunteer.
- Among volunteers, there are no ordinary people. Count yourself in.
- You are never too young or too old to volunteer.
- Do something wholesome for the family: Volunteer!
- Tired of the same old thing? Volunteer.
- Go on... Spoil yourself. Volunteer.
- If you think this is easy, try volunteering.
- Volunteering isn't only about giving. He who gives gets!
- Voluntary service -- the one human endeavor in which men and women of all races, nationalities, backgrounds and languages unite as a single force in pursuit of a single goal: Helping others help themselves.
- Feel left out? Include yourself in. Volunteer.
- Catalysts promote change. Volunteers work for change.
- Volunteers have their work cut out for them.
- Volunteers are the "We" generation.
- Among the in-crowd, volunteering has always been the thing to do.
- Lend a hand. Volunteer.
- Caution. Volunteers at work.
- Volunteers get involved.



# More Volunteer Slogans

- **Volunteering: there's more to it than meets the eye.**
- **Volunteering - the shape of things to come.**
- **Volunteers go where angels tread.**
- **Volunteers set off a chain reaction.**
- **Minding other people's business.**
- **Volunteers can turn any neighborhood watch into a block party.**
- **Charity inspires the volunteer. Solidarity is the reward.**
- **It's really all about time & talent - volunteer!**
- **Many hands make light work.**

## What's a Volunteer?

There is a job to be done, could be lots of fun.  
Just give us a call, and we'll have a ball. You  
must have a big heart. It's always a help to be  
sorta smart. The money is rare, but the rewards  
are big in compare.

- Pat Boyes

# Fun, Pun Gift Ideas

A Round To It- To inspire you so you can get the little things done in your job.  
Ball-You're a ball to work with OR Thanks for bouncing with the new changes!

Balloon - Thanks for helping us soar to new heights! OR Thanks for breathing new life into the situation! OR Thanks for helping us expand and grow! OR Thanks for helping our youth reach new heights!

Bandage - To guard you against negative people OR Thanks for coming to our aid OR Thanks for covering us in a difficult situation.

Book - You're number one in our book.

Cake or Cupcakes - You take the cake as an outstanding volunteer.

Candle, Match, Star, or Light Bulb - No one can hold a candle to you! OR Thanks for creating a spark in our organization! OR You shed a bright light on the situation! OR Thanks for lighting the way to success! OR Thanks for burning the candle at both ends to help our project succeed! OR You help our organization Shine bright! OR You light a fire within our organization.

Coin - Thanks for your "Good Cents!" OR A Penny for your thoughts! Or Thanks for changing our Paradigm (two dimes) OR You Make Things Shine!

Electrical Wire or a Battery - Thanks for energizing our organization.

Fortune Cookie - We are so fortunate to have you as a volunteer. OR Your contributions are worth a "fortune." OR Thanks to you, we are "predicting a prosperous future!"

Glove - Thanks for lending a hand. OR I've got to hand it to you - you are terrific! OR Give me A High 5 - you're great! Give yourself a warm round of applause for the great job you do! OR Thanks for getting a "HANDle" on the project.

Gum - Thanks for sticking with us and making such a difference.



# More Fun, Pun

## Gift Ideas



Heart – Thanks for caring and giving more than you ever receive.

Boxes of Juice – Your creative juices have really made a difference.

Kite String – You can soar to whatever heights you choose.

Lollipop – Thanks for your help in licking challenges.

M & M's – Thanks! You are made a Marvelously, Moving difference in our program.

Book of Matches – No one matches your volunteer contributions!!!!

Mint – You're worth a mint! OR Thanks for your CommitMINT!

100 Grand Bar – You're worth a 100 Grand to our organization.

Paperclip – Thanks for holding our program together.

Post It Notes – Thanks for sticking with us and making such a difference in the lives of young people.

Raisins – Thanks for raisin' us to a new level through your volunteer efforts.

Rubberband – Thanks for stretching your limits, your patience, your flexibility, and your endurance.

Safety Pin – Thanks for holding things together when they would have otherwise fallen apart.

Seeds OR Plants – Thanks for all the great ideas that you have planted to grow and bloom. OR Thanks for helping us grow! OR We're glad to be "growing together." OR Good things grow when volunteers are involved. OR You have grown and blossomed as a volunteer!

Shoelaces – Thanks for your ties to our program.

Smiley Face – Smile at people when they would have otherwise fallen apart.

Sunglasses – Thanks for helping us see this project through to a successful end.

Tape Measure or Ruler – You measure up as a fantastic leader.

Toothpick – To prop open your eyes on the 7th night meeting this week.

Warm Fuzzy – Represents all the people you have touched and all the people who have touched you.

Some of the ideas were adapted from Recognition Boosters, Pat Fultz, Kansas State University