

# 101 WAYS TO GIVE RECOGNITION TO VOLUNTEERS

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. Give service Stripes
9. Maintain a coffee bar
10. Plan annual ceremonial occasions
11. Invite to staff meetings
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 groups
28. Take time to explain
29. Be verbal
30. Motivate agency VIPs 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 others
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 with paid staff
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 individuality
73. Provide opportunities for 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 to employer
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 or 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 orient to job
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

# VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

## A YEAR-ROUND RESPONSIBILITY

The following list provides lots of ideas at a glance for recognizing your volunteer's year-round as well as during National volunteer Week. It is reprinted with permission from a recently revised handbook entitled From Here To There, published by the Volunteer Action Center of the United Way in Dayton, Ohio.

A volunteer's pay is recognition and the assurance that he/she is an equal partner of the agency or organization. Recognition, therefore, should be an integral part of the management process so that people feel valued and good about themselves and their organization.

### WHEN TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

1. At the time they sign up to volunteer:
  - Send letter of welcome
  - Issue I.D. card, name tags, uniform, etc.
  - Provide an orientation program
  - Provide a parking space, lunch, coffee and/or mileage reimbursement
  - Provide good job descriptions, training and supervision
  - Publish name of new volunteer in employee newsletter and/or volunteernewsletter
2. Daily or weekly:
  - Smile!
  - Informal thank-you by staff and volunteer coordinator
  - Document their time for evaluation
  - On the job praise
3. Monthly:
  - Volunteer of the Month
  - Appropriate evaluations
  - Articles in newsletters
4. Annually:
  - Special events where awards are given, such as a dinner, luncheon, reception, coffee or dinner dance.
  - Certificates, plaques and other awards for time spent volunteering
  - Gift of photo of volunteer at work or receiving award
  - Volunteer Appreciation Day- use facilities free of charge
  - "Turn-about" lunch - staff serves volunteers
  - Holiday parties
  - Teenage pizza party

5. At the completion of a special project:
  - Say “thank you”
  - Send letter of thanks to volunteers and/or their boss or school or staff supervisor
  - Write article for newspaper or in-house publication about project.
  - Take out to lunch or for a coffee break
  - Promote to another job; give more responsibility
6. At meetings with staff or groups:
  - Tell about volunteer projects and individual accomplishments
  - Praise volunteers to others
  - Have a slide show or film showing volunteers at work
  - Invite volunteers to staff meetings
  - Provide volunteers with outside training programs
7. On their birthdays or holidays:
  - Send cards
  - Have an informal party
8. When they are sick:
  - Send a get-well card
  - Call at home
9. At the time they leave:
  - Send a letter of thanks
  - Give a certificate or resolution of appreciation
  - Send letter of appreciation to potential employers
10. During national Volunteer Week.
  - Be a part of the community recognition activities planned by local Volunteercenter

### **HERE TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS**

1. Volunteer office or lounge:
  - Have coffee available
  - Have pictures posted
2. Hallway entrance to building or cafeteria
  - Have a bulletin board with pictures
  - Display posters
3. On the job:
  - Thank-you and smiles
  - Treat as an employee
  - Invite to staff meetings

4. At home:
  - Send a letter
  - Call
5. At school or business:
  - Send a letter
6. At church:
  - Announcements in bulletin
  - Encourage minister to talk about volunteering
7. At shopping centers:
  - Display banner or billboard
8. At main intersection:
  - Display banner or billboard
9. In all media:
  - Newspaper--feature articles about volunteer projects and/or individual volunteers
  - TV--commercial and cable
  - Radio--news and public service announcements
  - Slide shows and movies
  - In-house publications
  - Volunteer newsletters
  - Professional journals or magazines
  - TV documentary during National Volunteer Week
10. City Council or Commission meetings:
  - Proclamation
  - Mayor's Award for Volunteer Service

## RECOGNITION OF STAFF WHO WORK WITH VOLUNTEERS

1. Thank staff members who are working cooperatively with volunteers
  - For special projects they worked on together
  - For using volunteer's skills creatively
  - For using lots of volunteers
  - For taking time to supervise and train volunteers
  - For showing their appreciation to volunteers
2. Send memo to department and supervisor recognizing their efforts
3. Award certificate to department who most effectively uses skills and talents of volunteers
4. Invite staff to volunteer recognition events
5. Remember, with today's budget cuts, some staff may feel "forced" to use volunteer assistance and feel negative toward them. Others may feel threatened for their jobs. Help staff to see the benefits of volunteer assistance. Staff may not have even thought of using volunteers and something new is always frightening. Use this "crisis" as an opportunity to explore new ways of doing things. Many of the most loyal supporters of volunteer programs were very skeptical of the idea at first. RECOGNIZING VOLUNTEERS

Recognizing volunteers is essential to keeping your ALA a happy place to work(not to mention keeping your volunteers!)

Here is a list of "small creative thank you:"

THANKS FOR RAISIN' THE TOUGH	
QUESTIONSNO ONE HOLDS A	
CANDLE TO YOU	- mini box of raisins
YOU ARE A LIFESAVER	- scented votive candle, birthday candles
YOUR VISION IS OUR GUIDING LIGHT	- package of candy with a note
YOU TAKE THE	- mini flashlight
CAKE! THANKS FOR WORKING YOUR	
BUNS OFFA NOTEWORTHY	- cupcakes
ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE BERRY	
SPECIAL	- hot cinnamon buns
HUGS AND	
KISSES I'LL STICK	- package of post-it notes
WITH YOU YOU'RE	- fresh berries or jam
WORTH A MINT	- Hershey's candies
	- stick of gum
	- package of peppermints

## 10 TIMES FOR RECOGNITION

1. When they sign up to volunteer
2. Informal thank you- always
3. Monthly recognition (articles, award)
4. Annual appreciation certificates, dinners, etc.
5. At the completion of a project (letter, promotion, certificate)
6. At meetings- say thank you.
7. Cards at birthdays
8. Cards when they are sick.
9. Recognition when they leave.
10. during National Volunteer Week



### Volunteer "Goodie Bags" Ideas

**Cinnamon Toothpicks:** help you "pick out" your special qualities and skills.

**Pumpkin Seeds:** help you grow personally and professionally.

**Peppermint:** to thank you for your commit"mint" to your profession.

**Bit-O-Honey:** the sweetness you bring into the lives of those you touch. Tootsie Roll Pop: reminds you of the important role you play in your ALA. Laffey Taffy: to remind you that laughter is always the best stress reliever.

**Banana Candy:** to let you know that without you we would all go bananas. Candy Watch: to help you complete your many tasks with speed and accuracy. Satellite Wafer: acknowledges your talents are truly out of this world.

**Candy Lipstick:** Pride, commitment, teamwork - words we use to get you to work for free!

**Smarties:** to give you the wisdom to lead and the humility to follow.

**Bubble Gum:** helps you stick with it and complete any task or mission.

### "Post-It" Recognition

Play the song "The Way You Do the Things You Do". Have pre-written post it notes with the jobs that volunteers have done through the year, the quarter, etc. Go around posting the notes on the volunteers who did the tasks. After a few minutes no one will be without a post-it notes, and some will be completely plastered with them.

This is fun to do, and the response will be favorable.

### "Priceless" Volunteers

Have an ALA meeting specifically to honor your volunteer with the theme - "You're Worth Your Weight in Gold." Everything should center around money. Cut a 1" dowel rod into thin pieces, spray paint them gold and scatter them on tables to represent coins. Have paper cut in the size of dollar bills with the top piece of paper printed as a dollar bill with different volunteers' pictures in place of George Washington. (The pieces of paper underneath are left blank.) Then cut strips of paper to go around the stack and band them together. Spray paint bricks gold to represent gold bars. Set them on the table and place stacks of them on the backdrop, the podium, etc. Have bags made out of cream color burlap type material, filled with shredded paper, tied with gold cord with a painted gold dollar sign on the side. Have those on the tables as money bags.

### **Hawaiian Lei Rotating Award**

ALAs rarely have much money, if any, for volunteer recognition, but they have many deserving volunteers. At each meeting, pass around an award such as an inexpensive Hawaiian lei and let the individuals recognize each other. For example, one month it is the "Jane Doe Award," where Jane Doe decides whom she would like to recognize. The following month it becomes the award granted by the last recipient. It is a fun way to build a team and let others help recognize each other. The group will really enjoy it!

### **Snowflakes**

This works well for recognizing lots of volunteers in a single location. Using 4-inch white paper doilies, put the name of every ALA volunteer on their own "Snowflake" and hang them from the ceiling of the meeting place, the battalion classroom, wherever would be appropriate and approved by command. Add a poster that says "Just as every snowflake can add up to a blizzard, so every ALA volunteer's contribution adds up to a storm of activity. Thank you for your dedication!" It creates a lot of fun as each volunteer looks for their snowflake and also impresses staff and visitors with the extent of volunteer involvement. This idea could also easily be adapted for other seasons.

### **We Mint to say Thanks!**

Buy a package of Lifesaver Mints and put them in a bowl on an entrance table where at your next ALA meeting. In front of the bowl, put a sign saying: "We Mint to Say Thanks!" It will be well received and is an easy way to show appreciation for everyone attending the meetings.

### **Volunteer Tree**

Great Christmas idea! Create an ALA Volunteer Tree. To recognize your volunteers, take a picture of each one with a digital camera. Then print out the pics on a color printer and cut them into different shapes for the Christmas tree. Put a little glitter around the edges and then hang the pictures on an appropriately sized Christmas tree for all to see. It's a big hit with the volunteers and you might catch them looking for their pictures and sometimes even moving them to a more prominent spot on the tree!

### **Kudos Korner**

Great for ALA Newsletters! A Kudos Korner is one of the easiest and inexpensive ways for to recognize your volunteers. List the person's name and what tasks they performed during the last month or quarter. Some examples: "Baked delicious cookies for the ALA Meeting!", "Helped with content for the ALA Newsletter", "Recruited a POC / Key Caller". You can also put these on a poster board and displayed at ALA meetings.

## **10 TIMES FOR RECOGNITION**

1. When they agree to volunteer
2. Informal thank you – always and at anytime
3. Monthly recognition (ALA newsletter articles, awards at ALA meetings, etc.)
4. Annual appreciation certificates at recognition ceremonies
5. At the completion of a project or a tough time
6. At meetings – Say "Thanks!" so others hear the volunteer being thanked
7. Cards at birthdays
8. Cards when they are sick
9. Recognition when they leave the ALA
10. During National Volunteer Week in April

### Personalizing Volunteer Recognition

People exhibit three types of motivation to volunteer which includes: affiliation, achievement, and power/influence. By knowing why, a person is motivated to volunteer, you can personalize gratitude and acknowledgment to mean more to the volunteers receiving the recognition.

#### Affiliation-Motivated Volunteer

Characteristics	Recognition Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gets involved with group projects</li> <li>• Likes to have a solid relationship with the ALA Leader / Advisor</li> <li>• Wants to be perceived as a good helper</li> <li>• Wants to be liked</li> <li>• Seeks socialization opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cards, small gifts, etc. on their birthdays, or special holidays</li> <li>• Letters to thanking them for their work to benefit the ALA</li> <li>• Unexpected thank you notes</li> <li>• Opportunities to give input about specific ALA or individual's needs</li> <li>• Include the volunteer in slide shows or photos showing their work with the ALA</li> </ul>

#### Achievement-Motivated Volunteer

Characteristics	Recognition Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs specific goals with boundaries and feedback on how they're doing</li> <li>• Has a desire to achieve unique accomplishments</li> <li>• Needs to measure success by seeking goals</li> <li>• Seeks responsibility</li> <li>• Wants tangible rewards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible awards, plaques, or pins that can be displayed</li> <li>• Opportunity to use their own ideas to attain goals</li> <li>• Include their committee reports in ALA meetings when appropriate</li> <li>• Nomination for volunteer awards</li> <li>• Be careful not to waste their time</li> </ul>

#### Influence-Motivated Volunteer

Characteristics	Recognition Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs to impact and influence others</li> <li>• Enjoys teaching others</li> <li>• Can respond to needs of people</li> <li>• Seeks position of authority and responsibility</li> <li>• Responds to titles that depict authority; has strong feelings about status and prestige</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A volunteer title</li> <li>• Ongoing program to head up</li> <li>• Recognition that is broad-based that will be seen by others</li> <li>• Send them to ALA trainings and then ask them to teach others</li> <li>• Give them plenty of opportunity for input into the ALA's direction and decisions</li> </ul>



## Quotes on Volunteering

These are good to send to volunteers in a card, write it on a balloon you give to them, etc. Have a beach theme and write them on a piece of paper rolled up and placed in a bottle – message in a bottle!

- Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.
- In this world, it is not what we take up but what we give up that makes us rich.
- You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.
- A human being is happiest and most successful when dedicated to a cause outside his own individual, selfish satisfaction.
- You give but a little when you give your possessions. It is when you give yourself that you truly give.

## 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.

## Ways to Recognize Volunteers Everyday

- Put up a volunteer suggestion box or otherwise encourage your volunteers to contribute their ideas.
- Send volunteers to training and ask them to help train others.
- Accommodate personal needs & problems. This takes the pressure off.
- Be pleasant and smile.
- Post an honor roll at your ALA meeting and include volunteer contributions.
- Keep volunteers challenged with interesting assignments utilizing their talents. If they aren't doing something they like, they'll leave!
- Provide childcare during meetings when possible.
- Take time to fully explain responsibilities and give them a job description.
- Hold feedback sessions and value your volunteers' opinions.
- Create pleasant surroundings. Have an ALA volunteer meeting in your home or at the LETRA Lodge.
- Provide resources. Give all your volunteers their specific SmartBooks such as the ALA Secretary SmartBook, the Treasurer's SmartBook, the POC SmartBook, etc.
- Utilize volunteers as consultants. Ask their opinions. It gives them ownership in the ALA.
- Praise ALA volunteers to others, especially those individuals who the volunteer values.
- Create opportunities for volunteers to work together and build relationships with others. It

creates a team and bonds the members which gives a sense of personal responsibility to the team.

- Create a bulletin board that features pictures and accomplishments of all your volunteers.
- Give volunteers unit pins.
- Plan a volunteer's party where your ALA volunteers can just socialize with each other – no business allowed! Great during deployments!

### **Fun and Inexpensive Gift Ideas**

- A Round Tuit – (A cut out of a coin with the words Round Tuit written on it.) People say they can never get “A Round Tuit”, but you always do!
- Ball – You're a ball to work with OR Thanks for bouncing in with new ideas!
- Balloon – Thanks for helping the ALA soar to new heights! OR Thanks for breathing new life into the ALA! OR Thanks for helping the ALA grow! OR
- Bandage – Thanks for coming to our aid! OR Thanks for covering in a difficult situation.
- Book – You're number one in our book!
- Cake or Cupcakes – You take the cake as an outstanding ALA volunteer
- Candle, Match, Star or Light Bulb – No one can hold a candle to you! OR Thanks for creating a spark in our ALA! OR Thanks for burning the candle at both ends to help our ALA! OR You help our ALA shine bright! OR You light a
- fire in our ALA!
- Coin – Thanks for your “Good Cents!” OR A Penny for your thoughts!
- Battery – Thanks for energizing our ALA!
- Fortune Cookie – We are so fortunate to have you as a volunteer OR Your contributions are worth a “fortune.”
- 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! OR Give yourself a warm round of applause for the great job you do!
- Gum – Thanks for sticking with us and making such a difference.
- Heart – Thanks for caring and giving more than you ever receive.
- 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 ALA.
- Book of Matches – No one matches your contributions!!!!
- Mint – You're worth a mint! OR Thanks for your CommitMINT!
- 100 Grand Bar – You're worth a 100 Grand to our ALA.
- Paperclip – Thanks for helping to hold our ALA together.
- Post It Notes – Thanks for sticking with us!
- Raisins – Thanks for raisin' the ALA to a new level.
- Rubber band – Thanks for stretching your limits, your patience, your flexibility and your endurance.
- Seeds OR Plants – Thanks for all the great ideas that you have planted OR Thanks for helping us grow! OR You have grown and blossomed as a volunteer!
- Smiley Face – We appreciate your smiling face!
- Sunglasses – Thanks for helping us see this project through to a successful end.
- Tape Measure or Ruler – You measure up as a fantastic volunteer.

- Warm Fuzzy – Represents all the people you have touched