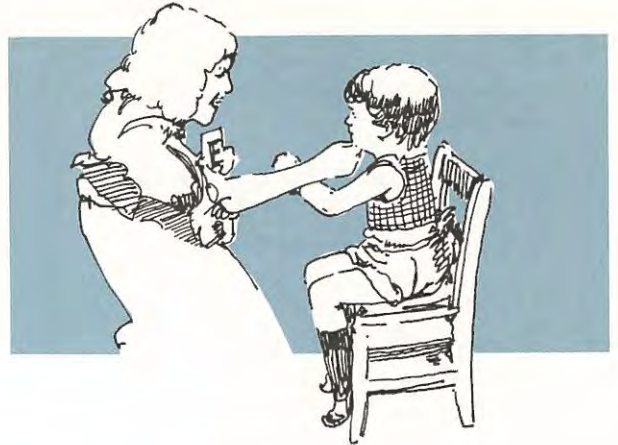


# Volunteer Recognition

## A Year-Round Responsibility



The following list provides lots of ideas at a glance for recognizing your volunteers 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 Voluntary Action Center of the United Way in Dayton, Ohio.

### 2. Daily or weekly:

- SMILE!
- Informal thank-yous 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.

- "Turn-about" lunch—staff serve 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 publications 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 volunteer 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.

**A** volunteer's pay is recognition and 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.
- Provide RSVP benefits, if eligible.
- Publish name of new volunteer in employee newsletter and/or volunteer newsletter.



#### 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.



- Send letter of recommendation to potential employer.

### 10. During National Volunteer Week:

- Be a part of the community recognition activities planned by local Volunteer Center.

### WHERE 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-yous 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 or 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 volunteers' 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 effort.

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.

From Here to There—Management Techniques for Volunteer Programs, the manual from which this article was excerpted, comes in a 3-ring notebook and is divided into sections on key aspects of volunteer management—each presented in the same easy-to-read, bulleted format. It can be obtained for \$8.50 + \$1.50 postage/handling (prepaid) from: Voluntary Action Center of the United Way of Dayton Area, 184 Salem Ave, Dayton, OH 45406. (Descriptive brochure available, too.)

