

Ideas for Recognizing Your Volunteers

National Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 15 - 21, 2007.

Working to create safe, attractive and healthy neighborhoods throughout Central Oklahoma.

1. When your volunteer does something that has really helped the organization, remember to write down the impact, so that when you write a card or give a speech to recognize that volunteer, you will have different messages for each volunteer, instead of using the same language for each one.
2. Be aware of volunteers' interests through conversations and observation. That way, when it comes time to give them recognition gifts you can get them something that they will really appreciate, and they will also know that you are interested in them.
3. Ask other volunteers, clients or staff about the volunteers efforts and personality. This will help you to get an idea of how others see this person, and will make the volunteer feel more included in the group, knowing how others perceive them.
4. Find out what types of foods your volunteers like - then randomly present them with treats, just to let them know that they are appreciated. Sometimes group volunteer recognition events loses the individual element of each volunteers contribution, so small, periodic random gifts can help to eliminate this problem.
5. Celebrate volunteers birthdays and let all staff know when that birthday is. For many people, just knowing that everyone in an organization is aware of you and shows interest can help you to realize that the organization appreciates your contribution.
6. Give your volunteers a bag of mixed nuts with a note attached stating, "We would go 'nuts' without your support!". This is a great, but simple, recognition for volunteers.
7. Fill an heirloom box with artifacts from the organization's past, and include a note that says "Thank you for being part of our history in the making".
8. Namesake Awards- Use a special method of recognition by naming awards after long-standing, stellar volunteer role models. Additionally, they have a 'batch' of volunteers that enter their organization together, during specific times of the year. These groups are usually 'named' after an extraordinary volunteer, a namesake, if you will. Part of this group's orientation includes information about this individual, and if possible, the honoree also addresses the group.
9. A Personal Note- It's not earth-shattering, but volunteers really appreciate and respond to the personal notes sent out periodically. On the organization's note-cards, or specially chosen cards for the individual volunteer, the volunteers are reminded of how important his/her efforts are to the organization. A recently accomplished task or project is emphasized and shown how it affected the organizations operation.



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