Chapter Seven: Recognition

"Volunteers are not paid — not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless."

- Unknown

7. Recognition

When you ask volunteers why they volunteer, none say "to receive recognition", yet lack of recognition or appreciation is often one of the reasons volunteers give for leaving an organization. According to Webster's Dictionary, recognition is simply "special notice or attention." Volunteers and paid staff alike enjoy receiving special notice or attention for their efforts. Recognition does not have to only be provided by the assigned supervisor. Agency leadership, other paid staff, volunteers and even clients show appreciation. The challenge with recognition is that everyone is unique when it comes to what types of recognition are preferred. Some prefer a quiet "thank you" for a job well done, while others relish the limelight of an awards ceremony.

7.1 Recognition Principles

Some general principles regarding recognition taken from Court Appointed Special Advocate on line volunteer network, http://www.casanet.org/ are outlined below:

- Deliver recognition and reward in an open and publicized way. Do not, however, think that public recognition will substitute for private, everyday, personal thanks and respect. What happens 365 days a year has much more impact than what happens at an annual recognition ceremony.

- Timing is crucial. Recognize contribution throughout a project. Reward contribution close to the time an achievement is realized. Time delays weaken the impact of most awards. An immediate 'thank you' or 'great job' is much more important than a proclamation six months later.

- Tailor your recognition to the unique needs of the people involved. Have several recognition and reward options to enable managers to acknowledge accomplishment in ways appropriate to the particulars of a given situation.

- Deliver recognition in a personal and honest manner. Small, personal indications of appreciation tend to be perceived as more sincere than formal pronouncements.

- 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. People must think that awards are fair and deserved.

- Recognize recognition. That is, honor people who recognize others for doing what is best for the agency. It is the job of everyone on the team to recognize and support excellence.

7.2 Personalize Recognition

How do you know what types of recognition your volunteers will truly appreciate? One way is to know what motivates your volunteers. There's a popular body of knowledge that people volunteer for the following reasons:

- Achievement.

- Affiliation.

- Power.

- Recognition.

- Altruism.

7.2.1 Assessing Motivation

The art of motivating volunteers lies in knowing what their goals for volunteering are. To assess motivation ask volunteers to check each of the following in importance to them:

Volunteer Goals Assessment Key

To help us determine the best volunteer job for you, check each statement that applies to you:

I volunteer to:

- ❒ Gain knowledge of community problems. (Achieve)
- ❒ Maintain skills no longer used otherwise. (Achieve)
- ❒ Spend "quality time" with members of my family by volunteering together. (Affiliate)
- ❒ Get out of the house. (Affiliate)
- ❒ Make friends. (Affiliate)
- ❒ Be with friends who volunteer here. (Affiliate)
- ❒ Learn new skills. (Achieve)
- ❒ Pay back. (Altruism)
- ❒ Gain experience. (Achieve)
- ❒ Feel useful. (Altruism)
- ❒ Make business contacts. (Power)
- ❒ Be part of a prestigious group. (Power)
- ❒ Make a transition to a new life. (Achieve)
- ❒ Fulfill a moral or religious duty. (Altruism)
- ❒ To have fun. (Affiliate)
- ❒ Help those less fortunate. (Altruism)
- ❒ Try out a new career. (Achieve)
- ❒ Meet a challenge. (Achieve)
- ❒ Improve the community. (Altruism)
- ❒ Work with a certain client group. (Affiliate)
- ❒ Be in charge of something. (Power)
- ❒ Be part of a group or a team. (Affiliate)
- ❒ Gain work experience to help get a job. (Achieve)
- ❒ Meet important people in the community. (Recognition)
- ❒ Gain status with my employer. (Recognition)
- ❒ Get community recognition. (Recognition)
- ❒ Required. (Achieve)
- ❒ Other, please list:_____

Use this chart with volunteers. Use the above chart to determine a volunteers goals.

Your Goals for Volunteering

To help us determine the best volunteer job for you, check each statement that applies to you:

I volunteer to:

- ❒ Gain knowledge of community problems.
- ❒ Maintain skills no longer used otherwise.
- ❒ Spend "quality time" with members of my family by volunteering together.
- ❒ Get out of the house.
- ❒ Make friends.
- ❒ Be with friends who volunteer here.
- ❒ Learn new skills.
- ❒ Pay back.
- ❒ Gain experience.
- ❒ Feel useful.
- ❒ Make business contacts.
- ❒ Be part of a prestigious group.
- ❒ Make a transition to a new life.
- ❒ Fulfill a moral or religious duty.
- ❒ To have fun.
- ❒ Help those less fortunate.
- ❒ Try out a new career.
- ❒ Meet a challenge.
- ❒ Improve the community.
- ❒ Work with a certain client group.
- ❒ Be in charge of something.
- ❒ Be part of a group or a team.
- ❒ Gain work experience to help get a job.
- ❒ Meet important people in the community.
- ❒ Gain status with my employer.
- ❒ Get community recognition.
- ❒ Required.
- ❒ Other, please list:_____

The mix of responses will give you a better feeling for why your volunteers want to volunteer and what you need to give them in return as their "motivational paycheck."

7.2.2 Achievement-oriented Volunteers

An achievement-motivated person looks for situations requiring top performance in which they can excel. This person likes to out-perform others attaining unique accomplishments and enjoys striving for lofty goals. They want to do the job better, figuring out ways to remove obstacles.

To work well with achievers:

- Ask for their help in setting goals, the work pace and in establishing methods.
- Give them challenging tasks that require efficiency.
- Allow them to learn new skills or material.
- Give them clear feedback on their performance.

Recognize achievers by:

- Offering additional training or more challenging tasks.
- Linking recognition to a very specific accomplishment.
- Using the words "best" and "most" when presenting awards.
- Timing recognition around "checkpoints" or "records."
- Having awards selected by coworkers.

7.2.3 Affiliation-oriented Volunteers

Being around other people is important to volunteers with an affiliation motive. The social aspect of volunteering appeals to them. They want to build friendships and to be respected. They want to help people and care about others' feelings.

For success with affiliation-oriented volunteers:

- Let them work with people.

- Find tasks that require cooperation.
- Give them off-task time to interact with coworkers.
- Allow plenty of relationship-building time and activities.

Recognize affiliate-motivated volunteers by:

- Providing recognition at group events.
- Giving recognition in the presence of peers, family, and other bonded groupings.
- Ensuring awards or gifts have a "personal touch."
- Making recognition given on behalf of the organization.
- Allowing peers to select those who should receive awards.
- If primary affiliation is with client, not others in the organization, then a personal note or a word of thanks from a client is more powerful.

7.2.4 Power-oriented Volunteers

People seeking power want to have impact, influencing others with their ideas. They want to win arguments and get others to do things their way. They seek ways to influence through communication.

To direct power-motivated volunteers:

- Give them opportunities to direct or mentor others.
- Allow them to implement changes.
- Have them interact with coworkers, volunteers and with supervisors.
- Let them control their work pace.
- Ask them how jobs should be done.
- Give them tasks that need managerial skills.

Recognize power-motivated volunteers by:

- Promoting them and conveying greater access to authority or information.
- Having installation leadership present awards.

- Announcing recognition to the community at large via the media.
- Having recognition decisions made by the organization's leadership.

7.2.5 Recognition-oriented Volunteers

For those motivated by recognition, prestige and status are important. They prefer clear-ending, short-term tasks. They enjoy public relations. They want to be connected with popular projects. They want to advance to new tasks, so desire timely completion of work.

When volunteers are motivated by recognition:

- Give work that can be completed quickly.
- Let them be in positions of high visibility, on radio, TV, or in the news.
- Let them work with people.
- Award them with plaques, certificates, and public announcements of their achievements.

7.2.6 Altruism-oriented Volunteers

Altruistic people pursue attainment for the general good. They have high ideals and values. They are concerned about interests that benefit the public. They care about accountability.

To work well with volunteers motivated by altruism:

- Include them with others of similar values and goals.
- Have them work with other highly committed people.
- Provide volunteer opportunities that revolve around accepted community concerns and the mission of your agency.

7.2.7 Identify Recognition Preferences

The challenge for supervisors is that each employee or volunteer likes to be recognized in different ways! How do you learn in what ways volunteers like to be recognized? Ask them at the end of a training session, through an e-mail survey, or during a supervision meeting. Create a list of ways you're willing and can afford to recognize volunteers and ask each of your volunteers to rank the top three ways they'd most prefer. A sample form follows:

Volunteer Recognition Survey

From time to time we like to appreciate the wonderful services our volunteers provide. We know that people like to be recognized in different ways. Would you please check three ways you'd most like to be thanked for the work you do?

- ❒ Handwritten thank you notes.
- ❒ E-mailed thank you notes.
- ❒ Small gifts.
- ❒ Formal certificates of appreciation.
- ❒ Feature you in an article in our agency newsletter or the installation newspaper.
- ❒ Recognize you at a Volunteer Appreciation luncheon or breakfast.
- ❒ Give you additional responsibilities.
- ❒ Provide additional training opportunities.
- ❒ Hire them for a paid position in your organization.
- ❒ Provide employment references.
- ❒ Write letter/note of recognition of volunteer's contributions to command.
- ❒ Remember your birthday, anniversary and volunteer start date.
- ❒ Acknowledge service milestones such as 100, 250, 500 hours served, or number of clients assisted.
- ❒ Pass along positive feedback we get about your work.
- ❒ Provide you with specific positive feedback about a case or client you worked with.
- ❒ Receive a letter of appreciation presented by the Commanding Officer of the installation.
- ❒ Take you out to lunch.
- ❒ Bring you coffee.
- ❒ Nominate you for a military or civilian volunteer award.
- ❒ Provide you with your own parking space.
- ❒ Other, list here:

_____

7.3 Reasons to Recognize Volunteers

There are a wide variety of reasons to recognize volunteers. We'll look at three of the most common. To:

- Motivate.
- Retain.
- Appreciate.

7.3.1 Motivate through Recognition

Use recognition to motivate volunteers to peak performance. Once you've determined what motivates a volunteer develop recognition strategies that are in concert. For example, if a volunteer indicates their motivation is achievement driven, celebrate successes. If a volunteer indicates they volunteer to gain power, put them in charge of a project or a group and recognize their leadership skills via verbal recognition, through articles in the installation paper, or by a presentation by the installation commanding officer.

7.3.2 Retain Volunteers through Recognition

The key to retaining volunteers is to make sure they are getting their motivational needs met through their volunteer experience. When this is occurring across the volunteer program, a positive, enthusiastic climate is created which, in turn, encourages people to continue to volunteer.

Studies of volunteer retention have determined the first six months' experience of a volunteer is critical towards their retention. The greatest loss of volunteers occurs during this period, as volunteers resign or simply drift away and disappear.

The loss probably occurs because new volunteers have approached the organization with a set of expectations for what they will encounter and what they will be able to accomplish. During their initial contact with the organization and its work, they will come face-to-face with the reality of the situation. If there is a significant gap between the high expectations and the actual situation encountered, the volunteer is more likely to reach a decision to depart.

Volunteer Program Managers must pay close attention to volunteers during this early period and smooth the transition through the normal ups and downs of this acclimatization period. They should also ensure that the volunteer does not have problems created by an inappropriate job match.

An environment most likely to make a volunteer feel good is one which bolsters the volunteer's self-esteem. When the work experience boosts a person's self esteem, the volunteer feels good about his or her job, be it paid or volunteer work. They look forward to going to the workplace.

For many reasons, short-term volunteering is not as rewarding as long-term. It doesn't provide the emotional satisfaction of being an integral part of something. Many short-termers may be engaging in sporadic volunteering as a sampling technique until they find the volunteer position that is right for them.

Take advantage of this by developing a series of entry level, short-term jobs that provide volunteers with the opportunity to see how they like working with the organization, its staff, and its clientele. Once volunteers are working in these "starter" jobs, the Volunteer Program Manager can work on retention, slowly grooming them for more work and ensuring that they truly enjoy the work they are doing.

From this perspective, emphasis on volunteer retention is much more important than emphasis on recruitment. Rather than focusing on constantly bringing new volunteers into the system and the energy required for recruitment, screening, orientation and training, concentrate on maintaining the existing volunteer force through retention of incumbents. Over time, the organization will benefit from the increased experience levels of its volunteers.

7.3.3 Appreciation

And finally, a simple reason to recognize volunteer efforts is because it's the right thing to do. Volunteers make significant contributions to military family support programs. They receive no monetary compensation. Without volunteers, many programs and services such as the Marine Corps LINKS program, the Navy's Ombudsman program, the Air Force Attic, etc. simply would not exist. An occasional verbal or written "thank you", luncheon or token gift is the least that can be done in honor of volunteers.

Volunteers may require more attention at anniversaries such as annual evaluation dates, the end of large projects, or the completion of an agreed term of participation. At these critical points, volunteers are likely to engage in a re-evaluation of their service to the organization, reconsidering their commitment to and interest in the work that they are doing.

You can assist volunteers in re-affirming that commitment by pro-actively assisting them in this analysis and helping identify new interests and goals. You can then suggest possible jobs within the organization that will help them obtain these new motivational objectives.

Volunteers can experience burnout. Do not assume that a volunteer who has been doing a job will always want to do that same job. Volunteers change over time, due both to changes in their own lives and to exposure to types of volunteer work. Periodically review what they are doing and what they would like to do next.

7.4 Recognition Methods

There are entire books written on how to recognize paid staff and volunteers. Essentially, recognition methods fall into two broad categories:

- Formal.
- Informal.

We'll look at each.

7.4.1 Formal Recognition

Formal recognition strategies are typically included in a written plan and might be part of your Volunteer Services Program Standard Operating Procedure or even your marketing plan. Formal strategies include:

- Awards.
- Length of service.
- Certificates.
- Letters of appreciation.
- Recognition events.
- Media.

7.4.1.1 Awards

You can nominate volunteers for local, regional, national, and service specific awards to recognize significant achievement. There are also Department of Defense awards for public service and national recognition awards here are local, regional and military service specific awards available as ways to recognize your volunteers.

7.4.1.1.1 DOD Public Service Awards

The following information is from the Army Community Service Volunteer Leader Handbook, August 2003, *www.goacs.org*.

- Secretary of Defense Award for Outstanding Public Service is the second highest award presented by DOD to private citizens. It is presented to private citizens whose contributions, assistance, or support to DOD functions are extensive enough to warrant recognition beyond the DA level, but are of a more limited scope or impact that that required for award of the DOD Medal for Distinguished Public Service.

- DOD Medal for Distinguished Public Service. This is the hightest honorary award presented by DOD to private citizens whose contributions, assistance or support to DOD functions are extensive enough to warrant recognition beyond the level of the Secretary of Defense Award for Outstanding Public Service.

7.4.1.1.2 Military Volunteer Awards

- Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal. AR 600-8-22, Sect VII, DA Form 628. Awarded to members of the Armed Forces of the United States who, subsequent to 31 December 1992, performed outstanding volunteer community service of a sustained, direct and consequential nature. Service member must be performing services on a voluntary basis, not detailed or tasked.

7.4.1.1.3 Other Military-related Volunteer Awards

The United States Armed Forces present these awards:

- Dr. Mary E. Walker Award. This award honors spouses for their voluntary service. The award is described in some MACOM regulations.

- Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Award. (AR 672-16) - Multi-Department award designated to recognize and reward an individual(s) or organization(s) demonstrating exceptional patriotism and humanitarian concern for members of the United States Armed Forces or their families.

- Air Force Volunteer Excellence Award (AF VEA) (AFI 36-3009). The AF VEA was established to recognize federal civilians, family members and military and federal retirees who perform outstanding volunteer community service of a sustained, direct, and consequential nature.

7.4.1.1.4 Military-affiliated Volunteer Awards

Selection of the recipients of these awards does not go through the military chain. The first is for any military volunteer; the second is for a private organization having a program that benefits the military community.

- Very Important Patriot (VIP). The National Military Family Association sponsors this award for exceptional military volunteers whose outstanding service contributes to improving the quality of life in their military and neighboring civilian communities. Only a limited number of active duty service members and family members may be nominated for this award.

- Newman's Own Award for Excellent Military Community Service. By providing the details of a planned or existing innovative program that improves the quality of life for military families and their communities, private organizations may be selected to receive grants.

7.4.1.1.5 Civilian Awards

- The Daily Points of Light Awards are presented by the Points of Light Foundation to honor those who have made a commitment to help meet critical needs in their communities through voluntary service.

- The President's Volunteer Award honors outstanding individuals, families, groups, organizations, businesses and labor unions engaged in voluntary community service addressing unmet human service, educational, environmental and public safety needs.

- Jefferson Awards were established in 1972 by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Senator Robert Taft, Jr. and Sam Beard; the American Institute for Public Service presents the Jefferson Awards on two levels: local and national.

- The President's Student Service Challenge is a White House initiative that recognizes young Americans with awards and scholarships for outstanding community service, while encouraging more young people to serve.

- The Congressional Award is the U.S. Congress' award for young Americans. It is non-partisan, voluntary, and non-competitive. The program is open to all 14- to 23-year-olds. Participants earn Bronze, Silver and Gold Congressional Award Certificates and Bronze, Silver and Gold Congressional Award Medals. Each level involves setting goals in four program areas; Volunteer Public Service, Personal Development, Physical Fitness, and Expedition/Exploration.

7.4.1.2 Length of Service

Many organizations recognize individuals for their length of service. They establish opportunities to celebrate an individual's time contribution to their agency. Length of service awards vary. Some agencies may recognize hourly accomplishments. Many organizations award an upgraded nametag after 25 or 50 hours of service. Other token gifts or certificates are presented at other pre-established milestones. It's important to recognize all individual length of service milestones in the same manner. For example, all individuals who volunteer 100 hours of service receive an agency coffee mug rather than some receive a mug and others receive a key ring or T-shirt. The perception of fairness is critical in providing awards for length of service.

7.4.1.3 Certificates

Certificates of appreciation are another standard, inexpensive way to acknowledge volunteer accomplishments. Certificates can be presented during a luncheon, during a staff meeting or when there is an opportunity to acknowledge an individual in front of an audience. Certificates of appreciation can motivate when they are presented as an acknowledgement of a specific accomplishment rather than a generic statement of appreciation.

For example a certificate of appreciation presented to a volunteer for "Outstanding Customer Service" might be presented at a staff meeting if a receptionist did an outstanding job of handling a distraught client and getting the client to the assistance they needed. When presenting the certificate the presenter should explain the incident or ask the volunteer who received the certificate to briefly tell others what happened and how he or she handled the situation.

7.4.1.4 Letters of Appreciation (LOAs)

Letters of appreciation, just as certificates of appreciation, are another inexpensive way to acknowledge staff and volunteers. LOAs are very common ways to summarize contributions when a staff member or a volunteer leaves an organization. However, you don't have to wait until someone is leaving to write an LOA. Highlight a specific accomplishment. Include the individual's role in the project and the impact the project had on individuals or the community.

Letters of appreciation can be sent to active duty service members' commands, an individual's employer or a student's school principal for enclosure in their personnel files.

In some cases it might be a good idea to forward your letter of appreciation up the chain of command to be signed by installation leadership for possible greater impact.

7.4.1.5 Recognition Events

Formal recognition events are often held in April which is Volunteer Appreciation Month. Events range from potlucks at your agency to functions that acknowledge volunteers throughout the installation.

Volunteer recognition events are a great way to recognize volunteers as:

- Command leadership participates.
- It's an opportunity to get the entire installation involved.
- It's a great media opportunity.
- Many volunteers enjoy the public recognition.

Planning these events is crucial. A very thorough sample event planning guide which you can adapt from Fort Sam Houston in Texas follows:

Volunteer of the Year Ceremony and Reception Project Checklist

Club Reservation

- ❒ Reserve one year in advance
- ❒ NCO Club
- ❒ Ceremony: Bexar Ballroom
- ❒ Reception: Travis, Alamo, Crockett, Bexar, Bowie, Austin Ballrooms
- ❒ Volunteers: Sports Bar (line-up, briefing on awards presentation, etc.)
- ❒ POC:
- ❒ Telephone number:

Command Group Calendar Requests

- ❒ Request 60 days in advance (minimum)
- ❒ Installation Commander (Presenter)
- ❒ Garrison Commander (Presenter)
- ❒ Director, Community Activities Business Center (Presenter)
- ❒ Request via e-mail
- ❒ Ask for each individual or his representative
- ❒ Normally only Installation Commander or Garrison Commander present at an event, this is an exception (only opportunity for volunteers to see both commanders)

FSH 198 for Event

- ❒ Send 60 days in advance of event (minimum)
- ❒ Thru Chief, Army Community Service
- ❒ Thru Director, Community Activities Business Center
- ❒ Thru Garrison Commander
- ❒ To Installation Commander
- ❒ Details of event
- ❒ Where/when/how/why
- ❒ Schedule of events
- ❒ Number of awardees
- ❒ Types of awards
- ❒ Total value of volunteer contribution

Chaplain – Invocation

- ❒ Request 60 days in advance (minimum—year out best)
- ❒ Installation Chaplain
- ❒ POC:
- ❒ Telephone number:
- ❒ E-mail with specifics and a schedule of events

323rd U.S. Army Band Request
- ❒ Woodwind Quintet
- ❒ Request one year in advance
- ❒ Arrange thru Public Affairs Office
- ❒ Plays marching tune as volunteers enter the ballroom
- ❒ Plays easy listening music during reception

Photographer Request
- ❒ Request 60 days in advance (minimum)
- ❒ Electronic request thru Public Affairs Office

Cole Junior/Senior High School Sabre Guard
- ❒ Reserve one year in advance
- ❒ POC:
- ❒ Telephone number:

Flag Detail
- ❒ Request 60 days in advance (minimum)
- ❒ National Colors
- ❒ U.S. Army Flag
- ❒ U.S. Army Medical Command flag
- ❒ U.S. Army Garrison flag
- ❒ Installation Commander's Star flag (one or two stars)
- ❒ Senior Flag Officer flag (e.g., 3 stars if 5th U.S. Army Commander is attending)
- ❒ POC:
- ❒ Telephone number:

Bogus Check
- ❒ Requires CSFS 1135 approval before purchase
- ❒ One Day Signs
- ❒ 8800 Broadway, San Antonio, TX 78217
- ❒ 210-826-1200 (office) / 210-826-6117 (fax)
- ❒ Compute calendar year volunteer hours and multiply by current hourly wage for volunteers

Fort Sam Houston Volunteers of the Year
- ❒ Selected by VAC Reading Panel
- ❒ FSH Youth Volunteer of the Year
- ❒ FSH Youth Volunteer Group of the Year
- ❒ FSH Adult Volunteer Group of the Year
- ❒ FSH Volunteer Family of the Year

Reading Panel
- ❒ Tasked 60 days in advance (when possible)
- ❒ Selects FSH volunteers of the year
- ❒ Recruited from the Installation Volunteer Advisory Council (VAC)

- ❒ Panel members are anonymous (per their request)
- ❒ Panel members do not meet; hand carry and pick up nominee packets to each member
- ❒ Panel members should not be from an organization that nominated a FSH volunteer of the year (when possible)
- ❒ Reading panel scores each nomination using the criteria established on the annual United Way Volunteer of the Year form

Specialty Paper

- ❒ Requires CSFS 1135 approval before purchase
- ❒ Paper Direct
- ❒ P.O. Box 2970, Colorado Springs, Co 80901-2970
- ❒ 1-800-272-7377 (office)
- ❒ 1-800-443-2973 (fax)
- ❒ Flyers: congratulatory note to volunteers of the year
- ❒ Jumbo Post cards: invitations to VIPs (Commanders, Directors, Senior Leader spouses, etc.)
- ❒ Programs: event schedule, announcement of volunteers, special thanks

Trophies

- ❒ Requires CSFS 1135 approval before purchase
- ❒ POC: Vicki Fleming, Ad Ideas
- ❒ 10500 Heritage, Ste 260, San Antonio, TX 78216
- ❒ 210-885-3366 (office)
- ❒ Individual Awards: gold star paperweight with engraving
- ❒ FSH Awards: Triple shooting stars with engraving

Event Volunteers

- ❒ Awards
- ❒ Trophies
- ❒ Paper weights
- ❒ Army Band
- ❒ Bogus Check
- ❒ Command presenters
- ❒ Installation Commander
- ❒ Garrison Commander
- ❒ Director, CABC
- ❒ Eagle Scout coordination
- ❒ Entertainment
- ❒ Flag detail
- ❒ Guest check-in
- ❒ Master of Ceremony
- ❒ Greeters/Ushers (hand out programs)
- ❒ Name tags
- ❒ NCO Club coordination
- ❒ Photographer

- ❒ Programs
- ❒ Reading panel
- ❒ RSVPs
- ❒ Command groups
- ❒ Organizations
- ❒ Volunteers of the Year
- ❒ VIPs (directors, etc.)
- ❒ Senior Leader Spouses
- ❒ VIP escort
- ❒ Volunteer line up
- ❒ NCO Club coordination
- ❒ Photographer
- ❒ Programs
- ❒ Reading panel
- ❒ Volunteer line up

Podium Book

- ❒ Completed 30 days in advance (when possible)
- ❒ Scripted event
- ❒ Schedule of Events
- ❒ Welcome Remarks
- ❒ Introduction of VIPs
- ❒ Parade of Volunteers
- ❒ Anthem
- ❒ Invocation
- ❒ Bogus Check
- ❒ Remarks by Installation Commander
- ❒ Volunteers of the Year
- ❒ Script provided by each nominator
- ❒ Closing Remarks by Master of Ceremony
- ❒ Reception
- ❒ Entertainment
- ❒ Reservations list
- ❒ Reserved seating list (CG, GC, VIPs, flag officers, 0-6 & above, etc.)
- ❒ Club layout
- ❒ After Action Report
- ❒ Administration
- ❒ Expenses

7.4.1.6 Media

Using installation and community media is another great way to highlight your volunteers' achievements.

Marquees. Post "Thank you John Doe for being a great FFSC Volunteer" on a highly visible marquee on your installation.

Support center bulletin board. Once a month or once a quarter post a picture and the name of one of your volunteers on a big "thank you note." The person doesn't have to be a volunteer of the month or quarter. You can simply recognize volunteers.

Installation or community newspaper. Interview a volunteer, take a photo of them doing their job at your agency and submit an article to the paper. This is a great way to recognize existing volunteers and recruit new ones at the same time!

Family support program newsletter or web site. You can also write an article about a volunteer and include it in your agency newsletter and web site. This is often easier as you have more control. Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words, so always try to include a picture with an article. Write in short, easy to read sentences and paragraphs.

Installation or community television or radio. Volunteers who enjoy PR work might enjoy being interviewed by local TV or radio on the benefits of volunteering for your agency. Contact your local TV and radio station, especially during April, and offer to talk about your Volunteer Services Program and bring a couple volunteers with you to discuss their experience.

7.5 Informal Recognition

The most effective volunteer recognition occurs in the day-to-day interchange between the volunteer and the organization through staff expressing sincere appreciation and thanks for the work being done by the volunteer. This type of recognition is more powerful in part because it is much more frequent – a once-a year dinner does not carry the same impact as 365 days of good working relationships.

7.5.1 100 Ways to Recognize Volunteers

You can create many, many ways to recognize volunteers. Here's a starter list:

1. Say *thank you*.

2. Involve your volunteer in decisions that affect them.
3. Ask about your volunteer's family and show an interest in their "outside" life.
4. Make sure volunteers receive equal treatment to that given staff.
5. Send a note of appreciation to the volunteer's family.
6. Allow your volunteer to increase their skills by attending training.
7. Recommend volunteers for promotion to a more responsible job.
8. Celebrate your volunteer's anniversary with the organization.
9. Send a card of welcome to a new volunteer.
10. Have a small welcome party for a new volunteer.
11. Have a small welcome back party for a volunteer who has been away for a while.
12. Bring a helium balloon to celebrate a volunteer's birthday.
13. Provide a parking space.
14. Bring donuts.
15. Write a personal thank you note.
16. Tell your volunteer they did a good job.
17. Invite a volunteer to join you for coffee.
18. Invite a volunteer to join you for lunch.
19. Host a volunteer potluck.
20. Ask a volunteer for their opinions.
21. Greet them when they come in the morning.
22. Show interest in their personal interests.
23. Smile when you see them.
24. Brag about them to your boss (in their presence).

25. Have a refreshment with them after work.
26. Say something positive about their personal qualities.
27. Provide food at volunteer meetings.
28. Let them put their names on the products they produce.
29. Write them a letter of commendation (with copies to personnel file and other appropriate people.)
30. Get a local radio station to interview them.
31. Put them on important task forces or committees.
32. Post graphic displays, showing progress toward targets.
33. Mention major contributors by name in your status reports to upper management.
34. Have them present their results to higher-ups.
35. Give permission to go to a seminar, convention, or professional meeting, if possible at the organization's expense.
36. Write articles about their performance for newsletters or newspapers.
37. Have them present a training session to co-workers.
38. Decorate their work area on their birthday.
39. Have your boss write them a letter of thanks.
40. Celebrate major accomplishments.
41. Have them represent you at important meetings.
42. Put their picture on the bulletin board with news of their accomplishments.
43. Cut out and share articles and cartoons they might be interested in.
44. Organize informal chats with organization leadership.
45. Have an afternoon tea.
46. Have a lunch time barbecue or picnic.

47. Display a plaque or photos recognizing volunteers who have been involved for a number of years.

48. Create a personalized thank you magnet with the person's name and the name of the agency. These need not be done professionally; simply laminate the message and attach a magnetic strip to the back.

49. Give a certificate of accomplishment or appreciation.

50. Use votive candles and wrap them up nicely with a note stating "You light up the lives of many."

51. Create thank you bookmarks with the volunteer's name and a personalized message. Laminate the bookmark, and attach fancy yarn at the top.

52. Take a photo of your volunteer in action. Put in a matte frame imprinted with a thank you message.

53. Iron a thank you message on a T-shirt.

54. Give a coffee mug with the organization's logo.

55. Recognize volunteers involved with fundraising by taking a small box of raisins, attaching a strip of magnetic tape to the back and attaching a small note saying "Thanks for raisin' all those funds."

56. Create personalized computer cards.

57. Send a thank you e-mail.

58. Give a ball cap with your agency logo.

59. Give a lapel pin with your logo.

60. Publish their picture in the base paper as an outstanding volunteer.

61. Let volunteers use new equipment.

62. Give additional responsibilities and a new title.

63. Put up a banner celebrating a major accomplishment.

64. Give them a bigger office or work space.

65. Enlist them in training staff and other volunteers.

66. Involve them in the annual planning process.

67. Give volunteers feedback.

68. Ask volunteers to recruit other capable volunteers.

69. "Debrief" a tough situation a volunteer handled.

70. Let volunteers know about the outcomes of their efforts.

71. Make up a volunteer appreciation song.

72. If late in thanking a volunteer, put a mint on a note and say "I mint to say thanks."

73. Bring flowers from your yard.

74. Bring vegetables from your garden.

75. Give them a roll of Life savers candy and thank them for being a "life saver."

76. Create a "Way to go" box for staff and volunteers to thank each other. Read at meetings.

77. Make a slide or power point show of volunteers at work.

78. Bring a cupcake with a candle to celebrate a volunteer's birthday.

79. Wrap a few cinnamon buns with a note saying, "Thanks for working your buns off."

80. Bring a cupcake with a note that says, "You take the cake."

81. Give a potpourri packet with a note saying, "You've given our project the sweet smell of success."

82. Give your volunteers a bag of mixed nuts with a note attached stating, "We would go 'nuts' without you."

83. 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."

84. Fill a wine glass with candy and attach a note saying, "A toast to a job well done!"

85. Schedule times to meet with volunteers.
86. Take time to talk.
87. Defend against hostile or negative staff.
88. Give discount coupons.
89. Say "good night" or "good bye" at the end of the day.
90. Nominate them for awards.
91. Treat them to a soda.
92. Send a get well card.
93. Give valentines.
94. Give a packet of flower or vegetable seeds to volunteers "who've helped us grow."
95. Give Hershey's hugs and kisses.
96. Bring a token gift when you come back from vacation.
97. Recommend to prospective employers.
98. Provide pizza to teen volunteers.
99. Print names of all volunteers in your agency newsletter.
100. Create temporary tattoos for young volunteers with agency logo or volunteer message.

7.6 Recognize Volunteer Supervisors

It's almost as important for you to recognize staff members who supervise volunteers as it is to recognize volunteers. It would be difficult, and perhaps impossible, to supervise a large number of volunteers or volunteers who are specializing in a specific area such as sexual assault or domestic violence without the assistance of other staff members.

Most of the techniques discussed above are also appropriate ways to appreciate and recognize staff members who train and manage agency volunteers.

7.7 Document Recognition Efforts

There is no requirement for you as a volunteer coordinator to document volunteer recognition efforts. Many choose to document efforts to ensure they are regularly thanking their volunteers. It's amazing how quickly three or six months can go by without having said "thank you." Documenting appreciation efforts is also helpful for working with volunteers who have been with your organization for years to ensure volunteer recognition efforts are somewhat varied. Should you decide to document volunteer appreciation efforts create any system you're comfortable with using. A sample Recognition Record form to include in each volunteer's file follows:

Volunteer Recognition Record

Instructions: Use to document recognition for hours served volunteering as well as any informal recognition you provide such as birthday greetings, notes, phone calls, articles in the base paper, luncheons, etc.

Volunteer's name: _____

Hours of service	Date achieved	Date Recognized
50 Hours		
100 Hours		
250 Hours		
500 Hours		
1000 Hours		
2000 Hours		
3000 Hours		

Recognition	Date	Type of Recognition

Chapter Seven: Recognition

"Service is the rent we pay for living."
-Marion Wright Eddelman