



25 Ways to Show Appreciation to Volunteers

It is extremely important to continually appreciate your volunteers. Showing appreciation will increase your volunteer retention rate. Volunteer appreciation does not always have to take the form of gifts or food.

1. Greet the volunteer by name; encourage student to use volunteer's name.
2. Thank the volunteer personally each day, noting special contributions.
3. Set a time to talk with the volunteer when children are not present, speak briefly with the volunteer each day before departure.
4. Celebrate the volunteer's birthday, and encourage students to write occasional thank-you notes.
5. Use the volunteer's special talents, knowledge and interest in assigning tasks.
6. Give the volunteer increasing responsibilities and more challenging tasks.
7. Share articles and books of mutual interest—on child development, learning styles, or content area in which the volunteer works.
8. Include the volunteer when planning class activities.
9. Include the volunteer in staff meetings and in-service training when appropriate.
10. Send a letter of appreciation.
11. Take the volunteer to lunch.
12. Call or write when the volunteer is absent or ill.
13. Invite experienced volunteers to train newer volunteers.
14. Seek training opportunities for the volunteer, perhaps by providing PTA scholarship to a volunteer conference or workshop.
15. Write an article on the volunteer's contributions for your volunteer newsletter, school newspaper, or community paper.
16. Ask the volunteer coordinator or school community relations staff person about a feature story on volunteers for the newspaper, radio or TV station.
17. Nominate your volunteer for a volunteer award.
18. Celebrate outstanding contributions or achievements.
19. Commend the volunteer to supervisory staff.
20. Ask volunteers to help evaluate program and suggest improvements.
21. Ask the children to evaluate the performance of volunteers; share their comments with the volunteers.
22. Help plan a recognition event—an assembly, reception, or luncheon, invite the superintendent, school board, administrators, parents, and community leaders.
23. Accommodate the volunteer's personal needs and problems.
24. Enable the volunteer to grow on the job.
25. Write a letter of recommendation when the volunteer requests it.

Volunteer Recognition Year-Round

When should you recognize your volunteers? All year, all the time! Here are some more ideas (Voluntary Action Leadership, Winter 1995 issue):

1. **At the time they sign up to volunteer:**
 - Send letter/email of welcome
 - Make sure they have a nametag and all of the necessary materials
 - Welcome them to the school and give them an orientation and tour



- Provide a parking space when possible
 - Provide a detailed job description, training, and supervision
 - Publish the name of a new volunteer in school newsletter
- 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
 - 4. Annually**
 - Special events where awards are given, such as a dinner, luncheon, reception, coffee or dinner dances
 - 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 letters 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 students wish them happy birthday
 - 8. When they are sick**
 - Send get-well card
 - Call them at home
 - 9. At the time they leave**
 - Send a letter of thanks
 - Give a certificate or resolution of appreciation
 - Send letter of recommendation to potential employer
 - 10. During National Volunteer Week (mid-April)**