

Informal Recognition Guide

“I can live for
two months
on one good
compliment!”

-MARK TWAIN

PEOPLE PLEASIN' PRAISE!

Go Public...

- At service unit meetings
- At conferences
- During event gatherings
- In your newsletter
- As correspondence to volunteers
- Via news releases
- On bulletin boards
- Through associations
- With framed certificates

...Or keep it under wraps

- Write it in a thank you card
- Share it during a performance review
- Say it in person
- Key it via email
- Send a message home via mail

50 Reasons to Recognize

1. For the smile that's always there
2. Hands that are always willing to help
3. A creative idea
4. Consistent quality work
5. Continuous improvement
6. An extra-mile effort
7. Meeting the goal
8. Surpassing the goal
9. A winning attitude
10. Support
11. Loyalty
12. Punctuality
13. Cost-Conscious behavior
14. Being part of the team
15. Solving a problem
16. Commitment to the customer
17. Service with a smile
18. A “whatever it takes” philosophy
19. Strong leadership
20. Having the vision to make it happen
21. Perseverance
22. Big dreams
23. For being fast and efficient
24. Making the commitment
25. For doing everything that's asked...and than some
26. Accepting a challenge
27. Seizing the opportunity
28. Overcoming insurmountable odds
29. Doing it right the first time
30. For believing and then succeeding
31. For “never quitting”
32. Being committed to the safety of others
33. Thinking ahead
34. Being a tactful manager
35. Managing time wisely
36. Motivating others
37. For having superior skills and ability
38. Having the courage to push ahead
39. Always expecting to win
40. Outstanding achievement
41. Making tough choices
42. Staying well-read and informed
43. Overcoming fears and failure
44. Always giving of time and effort
45. Ethical behavior
46. Being committed to team efforts
47. Accepting responsibility
48. For attendance
49. For blazing new trails
50. No reason at all

Price-less Motivation

Quick tips on how to recognize with a limited budget!

- **GET PHYSICAL!** Make a habit of using positive, non-verbal recognition gestures like “thumbs up” or “high five.” These simple actions not only recognize others, but also help spread contagious enthusiasm throughout the service unit.
- Give out **CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION.** Located in this book are examples or you can find blank forms in many office supply catalogs, motivational product stores or online.
- **USE THEIR HEAD!** Develop recognition swaps that people can wear on their hat or cap.
- **WRITE THEM UP!** Community editors of local newspapers are always looking for interesting stories.
- **INTRODUCE A NEW VOLUNTEER!** Seize every opportunity to introduce new volunteers to the service unit. The message to the new person is, “You’re important...I want people to meet you.”
- Leave **RECOGNITION VOICE MAILS!** Don’t let being away on business (or too busy) as an excuse for not recognizing a deserving person.
- Add **SHAMELESS BRAGGING** as a short agenda item to service unit meetings. Encourage participants to brag about someone who they have worked with who has had a positive impact on girls, service unit or council.
- If the person you’re recognizing appreciates public praise initiate **A STANDING OVATION** at your next gathering.
- Personally deliver a **BOUQUET OF BALLOONS** to the person’s work location or have it waiting for them when they arrive at a service unit meeting.
- Get a **LEG** up on recognition:
 - Look them in the eye
 - Explain specifically what they did well
 - Give them a great big “Thank You!”
- Arrange for a **SPECIAL THANK YOU** (note, letter, and card) to a deserving individual signed from your entire team and/or council staff.
- **GIVE ‘EM A NEW MUG!** (No we’re not talking facelifts here!) Give imprinted or hand painted coffee mugs as recognition pieces.
- Use **EXXXXXXXXXXXTRA special EXAGGGGGGERATED** words in informal communication to recognize **OUTSTANDING** results and **grrrrreat** performance!!!!!!
- Set up a recognition **NEWSLETTER.** Ask volunteers to submit positive performance stories. Include any fun, unique, or creative ways that people have been recognized.
- Take a volunteer out for a **rootBEER!**
- **SHARE THE SUCCESSES!** Recognize individuals who help contribute to the success of the service unit membership or President’s Award.
- Keep a camera on hand to **RECORD SPECIAL EVENTS** and special people. Post the pictures in a common area. And when it’s time to take them down, place them in a photo album for all to enjoy.
- Place a **RECOGNITION BOX** filled with cards, sticky notes, happy-face stickers, etc., in a common area. Encourage people to “go to the box” frequently to acknowledge volunteers’ good performance. If the supply is readily available, there’s a greater likelihood it will be used by everyone...especially if YOU set the example.
- Establish a **WALL OF FAME!** Post all kinds of stuff: pictures of team members, new leaders who took training, newspaper clippings, etc. Let your creativity flow....and be sure to solicit ideas from other volunteers.
- **CREATE A “PASS-ALONG AWARD”**...some sort of trophy, gizmo, stuffed animal, decorated boot, etc., that has meaning to the group. Include some pass-along rules, like: “The ‘Boot’ Award” (for the woman or man who is a trail blazer). The recipient will pass it on at the next service unit meeting to the next deserving person.
- **GIVE THEM RECOGNITION BUTTONS!** All you need is a button/badge maker, a computer with a color printer, and a little imagination to create buttons that people can wear proudly. Example: Volunteer on the move, Volunteer Star, WIT – Whatever It Takes, I’m a Volunteer who rocks! I Make A Difference.

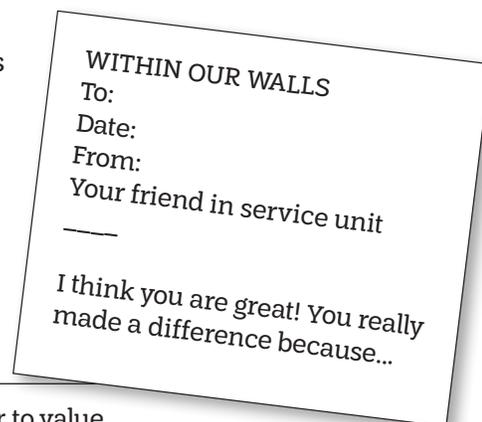
Remember that gimmicks, gadgets, and giveaways can make your recognition efforts fun and memorable. But nothing (and we mean NOTHING!) can replace a good old-fashioned, sincere, look-‘em-in’-the-eye-and-say “thank you.”

Creative Recognition

Here are some spontaneous rewards and informal recognitions that can be implemented with minimal planning and effort by almost any one. Start a trend by being the first to recognize a volunteer in your service unit. Use the following suggestions in telling a volunteer what a great job she/he did and why.

- Present thank you notes in person or by mail. Here are some creative ways to make sure your notes are always read and appreciated by the recipient.
- Include a piece of candy or gum with a note that reads “That was really sweet of you to do.” Enclose a Hershey’s Hug and Kiss for the great job they did!
- Make or purchase a large metallic gold star. Write individual names and the jobs they did, insert in large envelope and present them at a meeting. Example: A troop leader’s first camping experience, New Service Unit Recruiter first experience in organizing a Girl Scout troop, Product Sales Manager’s first troop cookie managers training.
- Include a Nestlé’s Crunch bar with an attached note that reads, “Thanks for helping out in the Crunch!”
- Put in a package of LIFESAVERS with a note saying “Thanks for helping with my troop’s emergency” or “You were a LIFESAVER in helping with day camp at the last minute”.

- Enclose a package of flower seeds (Daisies) if you find them, with a note saying, “I see your troop is really growing in size” or “Thanks for starting a new Daisy troop”.
- Make small thank you notes --business cards size. Simply carry a supply of your cards with you and as you catch volunteers doing something wonderful immediately write “Thanks,” “Good job,” “Keep it up” and include what they specifically did in two or three words. Put the person’s name on the card, sign it and give it to them right after the meeting or project. Works great at day camp or an event with parents and leaders.
- W.O.W. (Within Our Walls) - Recognize the positive things volunteers do at any level and at anytime. Materials needed: Blank postcard and colorful markers. Decorate with flowers, stars or hearts. Example: Use this idea for someone who always attends service unit meetings, assists with projects, and offer new suggestions.



Survival Kits

Use these items to “personalize” an appreciation survival kit. Choose 5–6 items that seem appropriate, package in a pretty container, and add a card with the name of the recipient and the meaning of the contents.

- Tea bag – Reminder that you are tea-riffic!
- Band-Aid – For all the aid you provide.
- Paper Clip – For keeping things organized.
- Stick of gum – As a thanks for “sticking” to it.
- Tootsie Roll – For rolling with the punches.
- Lifesavers – For all the times you have come to the rescue.
- Ruler – To measure the successes you have had.
- Sticky tape – Thanks for “sticking” to it.
- Google eyes – Because you see the good in others.
- Packet of seeds – A reminder that you are always growing,
- Puzzle piece – You are an important piece of our team.
- Candle – For sharing your light with others.
- Clothespin – Thanks for “hanging” in there.
- Happy face – Your smile is contagious.
- Rubber band – A reminder to stay flexible.
- Toothpick – For “picking” out the good qualities in people.
- Small smooth stone – For smoothing out the tough times.
- Mint – We are thankful for your commit-mint.
- Key chain – You were a key to our success.

- Penny – A reminder to value our thoughts and share them with others.
- Crayon – To color your days cheerful and bright.
- Peanut – Things can get a little “nutty”.
- Cinnamon sticks – Just to add some spice.
- A Tissue – To wipe away a tear...your own or someone else’s.
- Confetti – A reminder to celebrate your joys in life.
- A Quarter – If you need a friend – just call.
- Piece of Rope – When you reach the end of yours – tie a knot and hang on.
- Star – A reminder to shine and always try your best.
- Jewel – You are as valuable as a precious stone to us.
- Pipe cleaner – Don’t forget to be flexible.
- Chalk – Chalk it up to a job well done.
- Eraser – Everyone makes mistakes and they can be erased.
- Whistle – To get attention.
- Cotton balls – Just to soften the tough times.
- Safety pin – For those little emergencies.
- Playing card – Stepping out of our comfort zone is a “gamble”.
- Sweet & Sour tarts – A reminder to appreciate the differences in others.
- Sand Paper – To help smooth out the rough things in life.
- A Shape – Thanks for helping to “shape” our service unit.

MORE CREATIVE WAYS TO SAY “THANK YOU”

Develop a “Pat On The Back Award.” Give to volunteers who do an outstanding job. Put notice of awardee on your webpage. Materials Needed: To make this award, just trace your hand and wrist on heavy vellum paper. Cut it out, paint the nails, paint on rings and decorate with ribbons around the wrist. Write the individual's name on the award and the job they did. Make the presentation at the next meeting.

Create BRAVO or JUST WONDERFUL cards.

Materials needed: Small business cards made out of heavy construction paper and colorful markers. Print BRAVO or JUST WONDERFUL on one side of the card and your note on the other side. Write a little note on the reason why they're getting the card. Give immediately. Template located in the Appendix.

Create a Hall Of Fame photo album of outstanding volunteers. Materials Needed: Photo Album and camera. Include the year they received an award and a brief description of why they received the award. Display at a service unit meeting or the annual service unit recognition dinner.

Create a yearbook of all the volunteers in the service unit. Have each troop take a picture to be included in the yearbook. Display at the annual service unit recognition dinner.

Take a photo of the volunteers in your service unit being honored at the Annual Meeting/ Adult Recognition Event. Frame the photo. Display the photographs of volunteers with a brief description on why they received recognition.

Give each new leader a fresh flower at her first service unit meeting to welcome her. Have a welcome letter signed by the Service Unit Members. Include the names of new volunteers in an email

End your meeting with “The Car Wash”. Have volunteers line up in two parallel lines quite close together. Then one person is sent through the wash (between the lines) and everyone touches the person and says words of praise and encouragement. Try sending two people through at a time. The pats on the back, hand-shaking and verbal support produce a sparkling, shiny and a small at the end of the wash!

Pass out helium or air filled balloons to each volunteer with a special message or favorite Girl Scout poem, thanking them for joining Girl Scouts.

