



Volunteer Management Community Newsletter

Spring 2011

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The quarterly Newsletter provides news and information you can use to help your Senior Nutrition Program reach its fullest potential.

Happy National Volunteer Month! The original “National Volunteer Week” has grown exponentially since it was first established in 1974. In celebration of this popular event – falling on April 10–16 this year – many organizations view the full month of April as a time to inspire, recognize and encourage people to engage in their communities. National Volunteer Week is about taking action, finding imaginative ways to engage and being at the center of social change.

In the spirit of National Volunteer Week, this newsletter will provide tips and in-depth articles on ways you can recognize your volunteers right now, as well as on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

Bonus Resource

The Points of Light Institute provides a comprehensive *2011 National Volunteer Week Resource Guide*, which is available for download here:

http://www.handsonnetwork.org/files/NVW_ResourceGuide_2011.pdf

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Note: The following articles are reprinted verbatim and with the permission of the sources cited unless otherwise noted.

The Nine Basic Rules for Volunteer Recognition

By Hands On Network

Consider these 9 rules for volunteer recognition when planning a recognition effort.

1. Recognize . . . or else.

The need for recognition is very important to most people. If volunteers do not get recognition for participation, it is likely that they will feel unappreciated and may stop volunteering with your program.

2. Give it frequently.

Recognition has a short shelf life. Its effects start to wear off after a few days, and after several weeks of not hearing anything positive, volunteers start to wonder if they are appreciated. Giving recognition once a year at a recognition banquet is not enough.

3. Give it via a variety of methods.

One of the implications of the previous rule is that you need a variety of methods of showing appreciation to volunteers.

4. Give it honestly.

Don't give praise unless you mean it. If you praise substandard performance, the praise you give to others for good work will not be valued. If a volunteer is performing poorly, you might be able to give him honest recognition for his effort or for some personality trait.

5. Recognize the person, not just the work.

This is a subtle but important distinction. If volunteers organize a fund-raising event, for example, and you praise the event without mentioning who organized it, the volunteers may feel some resentment. Make sure you connect the volunteer's name to it.

6. Give it appropriately to the achievement.

Small accomplishments should be praised with low-effort methods, large accomplishments should get something more. For example, if a volunteer tutor teaches a child to spell "cat" today we could say, "Well done!" If she writes a grant that doubles our funding, a banner lauding her accomplishment might be more appropriate.

7. Give it consistently.

If two volunteers are responsible for similar achievements, they ought to get similar recognition. If one gets her picture in the lobby and another gets an approving nod, the latter may feel resentment. This does not mean that the recognition has to be exactly the same but that it should be the result of similar effort on your part.

8. Give it on a timely basis.

Praise for work should come as soon as possible after the achievement. Don't save up your recognition for the annual banquet. If a volunteer has to wait months before hearing any word of praise, she may develop resentment for lack of praise in the meantime.

9. Give it in an individualized fashion.

Different people like different things. One might respond favorably to football tickets, while another might find them useless. Some like public recognition; others find it embarrassing. In order to provide effective recognition, you need to get to know your volunteers and what they will respond to positively.

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<http://www.handsonnetwork.org/nationalprograms/signatureevents/nvw>

**Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but
because they are priceless.
~Susie Riner**

Volunteer Appreciation Day Ideas

By Cindy L. Smith

Any organization that relies on volunteers understands the important contributions these unpaid workers make. Hosting a Volunteer Appreciation Day gives the organization a chance to thank each person who gives their time.

Meaningful Speakers

Many people who volunteer do so because they are passionate about the mission of the organization. Consider booking a speaker who will be able to address issues that are important to your group. This will not only be a treat for the volunteers, but the speaker may also light a spark that causes the volunteers to want to give even more of their time.

Top Volunteer Awards

While it is important to thank all of your volunteers, you should also recognize those who gave the most hours of their time. You may consider starting a Volunteer of the Year program where the person who volunteered the most hours is named the winner. Another idea is to recognize all volunteers who gave more than a set number of hours.

Who They Helped

In some organizations, the volunteers have a direct impact on the lives of the people helped by your group. If such is the case with your group, consider having some of those who benefited from the volunteer work come and speak at the Volunteer Appreciation Day. Encourage the speakers to explain just how their lives were touched by the work of the volunteers.

This will allow the volunteers to hear exactly how their hard work has benefited those in the community and will inspire them to continue giving.

Open House

Because many volunteers also have regular jobs, consider hosting your Volunteer Appreciation Day as an open house. You could have refreshments set out and staff members ready to greet and thank any volunteers who stop by. If you have certificates or other tokens of appreciation for your volunteers, they could be handed to volunteers throughout the day rather than at a ceremony that some volunteers may be unable to attend.

Be sure to keep a list of volunteers who stopped by so that you can send a letter of thanks to those who were unable to attend.

Cindy Smith is a Volunteer Trainer at Goodwill of North Georgia and a Training Consultant at LA Fast Start. She has over eight years experience in training and development. She currently creates training materials as a contract instructional designer.

Read more: http://www.ehow.com/list_7230301_volunteer-appreciation-day-ideas.html

If every American donated five hours a week, it would equal the labor of 20 million full-time volunteers.

~Whoopi Goldberg

Bonus Resource: A Tip a Day on Managing Volunteers

Interested in quick tips on recruiting, coaching, communication, record keeping for your volunteer program? Follow *Volunteer Today* publisher and editor, [Nancy Macduff on Twitter](#). She is posting quick ideas each workday on Twitter about the administration of volunteers. This new quick resource on Twitter is a VERY abbreviated form of *Volunteer Today*.

Nancy is seeking tips, hints, ideas, and comments on things related to the management and administration of volunteers. You can leave a Tweet on the Twitter site or email Nancy at mba@bmi.net. The tip cannot be longer than 140 spaces or characters.

If you have not used Twitter before and are looking for a way to learn how to use it for future communication with volunteers, this is a fantastic opportunity to practice.

REMEMBER: Followers on Twitter can set their profile on privacy to avoid getting unwanted Tweets. Also, you must pick up Tweets, they do not pop up like your email. Make it a bookmark on your computer. If you need help getting started on Twitter, look at [The Twitter Basics](#).

A volunteer is a person who can see what others cannot see; who can feel what most do not feel. Often, such gifted persons do not think of themselves as volunteers, but as citizens – citizens in the fullest sense: partners in civilization.

~ Former President George W. Bush

National Volunteer Week - A 3 Step Plan to Make it Special

By Merle Benny

Could your organization exist without volunteers? Consider the work of those who serve on your board, show up each day or raise money for you. Volunteers deserve our appreciation all year long but National Volunteer Week is an opportunity to acknowledge their essential work.

The week has been designated by the President of the United States each year since 1974. It's official and as good a week as any to show your volunteers how much you appreciate their work.

Deciding how to acknowledge volunteers is challenging. You are familiar with some of those challenges including: The desire to make the award special and appropriate. A limited budget. The difficulty of finding or creating something unique and the lack of time to do it.

If you're bored with the same old certificates, let's explore some new ideas.

Research has been done on the reasons people volunteer, and you will want to keep them in mind as you begin the 3 Step Plan to make this year the best yet.

Why Do People Volunteer?

- Some people volunteer simply because they want to help.
- Friends volunteer with/for friends.
- Volunteers may want to meet others who share their interests and values.
- Some people want to learn something new and different.
- Students and adults alike might volunteer because it looks good on the resume.
- Volunteers may be looking for the chance to do something they love.
- They may want to be part of something prestigious or important.

This information helps when you are recruiting, but also when you are seeking recognition ideas. Understanding a volunteer's motivation will help you help them achieve what they set out to do. But you do not have time to understand each person's motivation. This brings us to Step 1 of your plan to do something special for Volunteer Week this year.

STEP 1

Profile your volunteers, by groups, to have a better sense of what would be appropriate. If you look at your Board of Directors as one group, you may find that their primary motivation is to help the community or it may be to interact with others they find socially or politically powerful. Your Saturday teen volunteers may be there because they have to meet a service requirement or because they want to hang out with other teens.

STEP 2

Once you have identified major groups of volunteers and have profiled their motivation, you are ready to explore the best recognition options for each group. Social-climbers on the board would like a gathering in their honor where they can connect with the other Board members or special guests. Your mom-volunteers would appreciate a special lunch (over before school gets out) or a little bag of chocolates. Surprise the teens with some music and snacks, and give them a certificate that is cool enough to hang in their room.

STEP 3

Now that you have a list of possibilities begin to work out a plan for each group. Work out the details. If you want your volunteers to be somewhere, plan on an appropriate invitation. Make it special! Once you know what is right, you can concentrate shortcuts and cost-saving to end up with something great.

Here's an example that may inspire some ideas.

Step 1: Profile your group

You provide temporary shelter for homeless families. Your volunteers are mostly women between the ages of 45 and 70 and have volunteered for several years. They volunteer because they feel the need to help and enjoy being with the families, especially the children.

Step 2: Brainstorm for ideas

You know your volunteers enjoy receiving a small gift or recognition but you have given them all the usual awards and certificates. You explore using the children's art for the recognition

Step 3: Finalize plans

Now you can concentrate on figuring out the easiest, least expensive way to use the children's art to make a memorable recognition. You consider lamination, dollar store picture frames, and printing the art on a canvas bag or t-shirt. Choose one and you're ready to go.

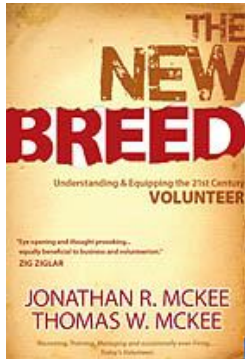
National Volunteer Week will be here soon. Get started on your volunteer recognition ideas now and make this an extra special occasion for those who do so much for your organization.

Merle Benny is a consultant and trainer and the author of "The Winner's Circle," a practical, easy-to-use program for nonprofit success and growth covering 11 key Actions including planning, branding and raising more money. It can be found at <http://www.Nonprofit-Champion.com/winnerscircle.html>. With over 25 years marketing and management experience, as well as being a lifelong volunteer, Merle's creative solutions for nonprofit organizations have included project management, strategic planning, events, websites, videos, branding, annual reports, brochures and development. She provides free ideas, tips and tools for nonprofit leaders at: <http://www.Nonprofit-Champion.com>

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Wherever there is a human being,
there is an opportunity for a kindness.

~Seneca



Book Review: The New Breed
Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer
by Thomas W. McKee and Jonathan McKee

Adapt to the changing world of volunteer management.

More than ever, today's volunteers work online, need flexible hours, and want to play a role in defining their jobs. They also want to feel a sense of responsibility for your organization's overall mission. Harness this passion and potential with results that uplift your goals and enable your volunteers.

The New Breed details the new cultural shift in volunteer management and also includes valuable, applicable resources for leaders, including job descriptions, icebreakers, team-builders and community-building activities, equipping leaders to move forward with confidence and empower valuable volunteers.

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Visit www.mowaa.org/calendar for the most up-to-date listing of events.

Webinars

Details: Visit www.mowaa.org/webinars for more information.

Preparing Successful Grant Proposals

When: April 14, 2011 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. EDT.

Where At a computer near you.

Fundraising for Small Nonprofits

When: May 12, 2011 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. EDT.

Where At a computer near you.

Other Opportunities

Bank of America, supporter of MOWAA's Basic Financial Management Institute, is hosting a series of Nonprofit Impact webinars. MOWAA Members have the opportunity to participate in these webinars for free. For more information, visit: <http://www.cybergrants.com/boa/webinars>

2011 MOWAA Annual Conference and CommonGoods Vendor Expo

When: August 30 - September 1

Where: Westin Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL

Registration: [Is now open. Early bird rates expire July 1!](#) Visit: <http://www.mowaa.org/conference>