

Recognizing Volunteer Successes

We all need a pat on the back from time to time. Whether we call this recognition, appreciation, or awards, we are recognizing the efforts and contributions of others.

One of our deepest emotional needs is for recognition and approval by other people. Satisfying this need is especially important when working with people in a leadership capacity.

Giving volunteers visible appreciation needs to include recognition of:

- The importance of the job.
- The quality of the performance.
- The person or group that performed the job.

This doesn't mean pouring on praise when it's not deserved. It does mean giving credit where credit is due.

In order for recognition to be most effective, it should be:

1. **Earned:** Recognition should be for significant accomplishments.
2. **Formal and Informal:** Formal recognition consists of certificates, ribbons, pins, etc., and is usually given in a public situation. Informal recognition is more spontaneous and is not usually planned in advance. However, it is sometimes more important than formal recognition. From time to time, we all need to receive such strokes as "You really taught a good workshop," or "Wow! I'm glad you are here with these good ideas."
3. **A Part of the Total County or Group Program.** Plan to include recognition in the program on an annual basis. Advance planning builds in opportunities to recognize personal contributions of volunteers, parents, public supporters, and others.

EVALUATION AS RECOGNITION

Evaluation can also be one form of recognition. Volunteers want to know how they are doing. Discussions with volunteers not only help them to see their progress, but also give them a chance to ask questions and make suggestions for the program.

Individual and group discussions with volunteers will help to:

- Identify training needs.
- Judge volunteer's potential for new leadership roles.
- Determine the extent to which youth and adults are achieving their goals.
- Provide feedback on the success of the 4-H program in different situations.

Some key times for volunteer recognition, described in Missouri's Extension 4-H **ISOTURE...Volunteer Support System** are: Initial commitment to volunteer; successful completion of orientation training; successful completion of first cycle of service; successful completion of subsequent cycles of service; and outstanding performance as needed.

Tie recognition to the performance standards in the Job Agreement. Include means for providing consistent and timely recognition for all volunteers.



Volunteerism for the Next Generation



WAYS TO RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

Some ways you might recognize volunteers are:

1. Give personal thanks or praise either on the spot or by telephone. Write a note of appreciation or praise.
2. Encourage participation in team planning.
3. Celebrate outstanding individual and/or group accomplishments.
4. Have special recognition programs, parties, teas, or other activities for 4-H leaders, parents, community supporters, first year 4-H members, officers, or other contributors to the program.
5. Recognize individuals in front of people who are important to them.
6. Send invitations for special 4-H events such as the annual club public presentation program, Christmas party, or summer picnic.

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Selection and Recognition Worksheet

Volunteer Role Selection and Recognition Worksheet

How do you select volunteers for specific roles that need to be done in your group? How do you recognize volunteers? Try something innovative, sincere, specific, and relevant to the recipient's interests or success.

How do you do all that? Think of roles that are best suited for people who are motivated by achievement, power or affiliation. Collect ideas from fellow volunteers for celebrating success with achievement, power, or affiliation-motivated volunteers. Even if you don't know the motivating factors for your specific volunteer, thinking about the three types will give you some new angles on your recognition creativity. Use this worksheet as a guide for your creativity.

Type of Person	Best Kinds of Roles Suited For This Person	Examples of Recognition Suited For This Person	Creative Presentation of Celebration Ideas
Mostly Achievement Oriented			
Mostly Power Oriented			
Mostly Affiliation Oriented			

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