

ALASKA



FOOD COALITION

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“So shines a good deed in a weary world.”

- *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*

Volunteer Appreciation

Supporting, recognizing and challenging volunteers are all separate tasks. Together they provide a strong volunteer program with satisfied volunteers. Maintaining volunteers is one of the most the most difficult and integral parts of any volunteer program and vital to your agency.

In 2011, National Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 10 – 16, but volunteers are available to be appreciated all year long. You should show them how much you value their contributions to feeding hungry people throughout the year. Here are a few simple recognition and appreciation ideas that can be used at any time.

Small Acts of Kindness

We all like to be thanked. For many, it brings a smile and a feeling of accomplishment. A simple note with small gift goes a long way. Here are few low-cost ideas:

- ◆ Votive Candle: “No one can hold a candle to you!”
- ◆ Permanent Marker: “Thanks for your lasting and permanent contribution!”
- ◆ Gold Chocolate Coins: “Volunteers are worth their weight in gold!”
- ◆ Chocolate Mints: “Your service is worth a mint to us!”
- ◆ Ruler: “It’s easy to measure the difference you make, you’re amazing!”
- ◆ Logo Hat: “Our hats are off to you! Thanks for all you do!”

Create a Gathering

A get-together is a terrific way of showing appreciation. Barbecues, luncheons, receptions and potlucks are some examples. Take pictures of your volunteers ‘at work’ prior to the celebration, get an inexpensive frame, or have student volunteers make and decorate a simple piece of brightly colored card board for a mat, glue the photo to the decorated paper and give them to your volunteers.

Make Them a Star

Create a space for a plaque to display at your agency to recognize volunteers who have been involved for a number of years.

Submit a media release to your local media thanking an outstanding volunteer. If you live in a small community your local radio station may have a specific time to acknowledge community members or activities.

Create personalized ‘thank you’ magnets with the person’s name and the name of the agency. You can simply laminate the message and attach a magnetic strip to the back.

Post pictures on your agency bulletin board, on your website or in your newsletter - highlight a different volunteer each month.

Use pictures of volunteers 'at work'. Put a copy of the picture in a note card that includes a handwritten personal note thanking them for their services.

Holiday Tree – take photos of each volunteer. Glue to a 3 x 5 card, punch a hole at the tip, and hang them around the office holiday tree.

Tally up the volunteer hours at your agency and calculate what their salaries would be if they were paid. Calculate how much food you can purchase with the money. Let your volunteers know how valuable they are to your agency

Display a “We Love Our Volunteers” poster or banner in a public place.

RESOURCES

Suite 101.com Volunteer Recognition Ideas Part 1

<http://www.suite101.com/content/volunteer-recognition-ideas-part-1-a297990?template=>

Food Bank of New York City Blog

<http://foodbanknyc.org/blog/index.cfm/2010/4/20/Meet-Warehouse-RePack-volunteer>

Charity Village.com

www.charityvillage.com/cv/research/rvol38.html

The Alaska Food Coalition is here to help. Copies of Alaska Food Coalition White Papers are available online: <http://www.alaskafood.org/whitepapers.shtml> For additional information, contact Vanessa Salinas, Alaska Food Coalition Manager: afc@foodbankofalaska.org

NEXT MONTH: Volunteer Recruitment