



RECOGNITION ACTIVITIES

Ways to Recognize Your Volunteers

There are countless ways to recognize your volunteers and it is not the cost of the recognition that matters but the genuineness of those gestures that count the most.

So how can you express genuine appreciation to your volunteers? The choice is up to you but below are a few ideas to get you started on creating a recognition process that works for your team.

Remember, recognition should be frequent and appropriate for the amount of donated time, longevity with The Salvation Army and your volunteer's unique personality.

One-off Activities

Ask For The Mayor's Involvement

Get your city's mayor to bestow some special proclamation for your volunteers. Call your local paper to see if they would like to cover the event.

Send A Letter Of Thanks And Recognition To The Volunteer's Employer

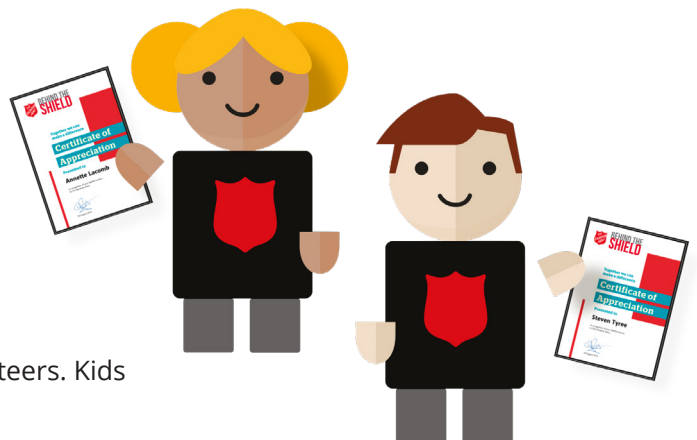
This is an excellent way to say thanks to a working volunteer. Acknowledging our appreciation that some of your volunteer's donated time has been during regular business hours, courtesy of the employer reassures companies of the value of offering volunteer hour benefits. This is a great way to recognize your volunteer but always be sure to tell the volunteer that you are going to do this and to whom best to send it.

Do Something For The Volunteer's Family

Send a special note home to your volunteer's family to let them know how much you appreciate your volunteer. After all, when one member of the family volunteers for you, s/he can't be with the family. So, the family is contributing as well.

Give Your Clients An Opportunity to Say Thank You

Ask your clients to make a thank you gesture for your volunteers. Kids can draw a picture and adults can write thank you notes.



Ongoing Recognition Ideas

Say Thank You

Sometimes the easiest way to recognise our volunteers is simply saying Thank You!

Welcome your new volunteers with a Thank-You-for-Joining card or coffee/tea with the team on their first day. Whatever you choose to do for them, make sure they feel appreciated from the very start of their volunteer journey.

Say thanks to your volunteers often and be sincere and specific when you do it. Be vocal about why volunteers are so critical to the delivery of our mission.

Age specific suggestion:

- ▶ **Gen Z/Millennial:** Make a welcome sign and take a digital picture so they can post on their social media.
- ▶ **Gen X/Boomer:** Have a client write them a note welcoming them to the volunteer services team.

When someone's time volunteering for TSA has come to an end, regardless of reason, always thank them for their service and for being a part of the Behind the Shield community.

Show Them They Are Part Of The Team

Volunteers are an integral part of The Salvation Army. It is incredibly important to make them feel part of your team because they are.

Make sure you:

- ▶ Remember to give them a volunteer name badge
- ▶ Let them know about your evaluation process
- ▶ Invite them to team meetings
- ▶ Ask them for their input
- ▶ Understand why they have chosen to give of their time to TSA.

Taking these steps that are similar to how you would treat staff show respect for your volunteer and recognizes the value of the work they will be doing.

Age specific suggestion:

- ▶ **Gen Z/ Millennial:** at the first team meeting ask them to share what inspired them to volunteer
- ▶ **Gen X/ Boomer:** at the first team meeting ask them to share a little about their history with volunteering or with The Salvation Army

Use Social Media

Social media is a great public way to thank and celebrate your volunteers. This could be a welcome to the Behind the Shield volunteer team, to acknowledging going above and beyond, to a farewell thank you for their service.

Social media is also a great way to share inspiring volunteer stories. These stories show appreciation for our volunteers and illustrate to your other followers the emotional rewards that come with volunteering and highlight the difference they can make in someone's life.

Special Events

Creating a fun event for your volunteers is a great way to show your appreciation for all they do. It is also an excellent way for the team to bond and learn more about each other. Creating an event is highly dependent on who your volunteers are and how much time and resources you can spend on planning the event.

Keep in mind that the point is to have fun together. So although it is a great idea to include activities in an event, they should not be educational or training focused as those should be done separately.

Events For Gen Z/Millennial Volunteers

If your volunteer team is mainly comprised of youth volunteers you may want to consider some group activities such as going bowling or an outdoor scavenger hunt. If you are throwing an on-site event, think about including group challenges like charades or if you have the space a relay race.

The Salvation Army conducted a survey of volunteers and found that in this age group volunteers are most interested in receiving a small gift. Think about what might be possible for your team. Swag items such as mugs or home-made items such as small scrapbooks can be put together with comments from clients and quotes about the difference that volunteers make.

Events For Gen X/Boomer Volunteers

Have volunteers share stories of hope and help. They can be asked what gives them hope and what they have most enjoyed about helping their communities.

The Salvation Army conducted a survey of volunteers and found that volunteers in this age range are most interested in receiving a certificate of appreciation. Think about having a formal presentation of certificates at your event.