

Informal Recognitions

Simple but Meaningful Ways to
Show Volunteers That They Are
Appreciated

Purpose of Recognition

We humans need to be recognized, and it's nice to be recognized for good things. When people recognize us, it feels like they care we are here and they value our contributions.

People volunteer for all sorts of reasons, but most volunteers want to do a good job and to make a positive difference. When volunteers know their time and energy are appreciated and that we all value them, they commit themselves to Girl Scouts. They want to know their service is helping the greater good, making the world a better place. That means our recognition is one of the most powerful ways we can retain the invaluable women and men who volunteer for Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania.

Three Keys to successfully recognizing volunteers:

- 🌱 Do it Well.
- 🌱 Do it Often.
- 🌱 Make it Meaningful.



Creating a Year-Round Culture of Appreciation

A culture of appreciation is one where anyone working toward the Girl Scout Mission feels respected and valued for her or his service and contribution. Remember the concept of Ubuntu: “I am me because we are we”

We create that type of culture by identifying means of recognition, tools and resources we can use for recognition, and collaboration between staff and volunteers to recognize all of our good work. Consider how your recognition efforts affect those around you.

An ideal volunteer recognition system includes a mixture of informal and formal methods to acknowledge all accomplishments, regardless of role or length of service. These methods also meet a wide variety of personal preferences. When thinking of ways to thank volunteers, ask “What can GSEP or our Service Unit do to show appreciation in a meaningful way to this person?”

Successful recognition includes: inclusiveness, accessibility, and consistency. Thanking a volunteer at the end of a project or the GS year also offers the opportunity to encourage participation in the same role or other opportunities coming up. However, please remember to show appreciation in appropriate ways throughout a person's participation and not only at the end.

Informal Recognition for Volunteers

Informal recognition is the day-to-day appreciation—the intangible benefits and heartfelt ways of saying “Thank you.” These sincere expressions of appreciation are based on specific contributions and are given in a timely manner. Informal recognition is powerful and effective because it makes people feel valued by a personal touch.

Examples:

- A Welcome or Thank you card
- Showing interest in the person’s life beyond Girl Scouts “What are you passionate about beyond Girl Scouts?”
- A Shout-out at the Service Unit Meeting or on the Service Unit Facebook group
- Complimenting the person’s work to the Service Team
- Sending a letter of appreciation to the person’s work supervisor/company
- Look her or him in the eye and say, “Thank you so much (name) for (be specific). Your service is invaluable.”

Creative Ways to Say “Thank You” or “We Appreciate You”

1. Use small heart patches and say: We care about your service



2. Make pins out of puzzle pieces and write: You fit us well or You’re an essential piece



3. Give rulers and say: You measured up to the job



4. Give a magnifying glass that says: Thanks for your vision



5. Give a certificate: Funny Bone for the volunteer who keeps you from taking things to seriously



6. Give a light bulb or a small light bulb pin with: What a great idea!



7. Give a mini-flashlight with: Your vision is our guiding light



8. Spray paint old keys with golden paint: Thank you for being a key member of our team



9. Give packets of vegetable or flower seeds with: Thanks for planting the seeds of our success



10. Give a coffee gift card with: Our cup runneth over with our thanks to you for your time and efforts.

