

(cSc) Community Sector Council, Newfoundland and Labrador

<http://communitysector.nl.ca/>

Volunteer Recognition Tips

All volunteers want to know that their contribution is valued and not taken for granted. Here are a few tips to help your organization recognize the work of your volunteers as meaningful and appreciated.

- **Make it a priority.** Recognizing the work of volunteers is crucial for any organization who wants to retain them and attract others. Designate someone in your organization to be responsible for ensuring that ongoing recognition of volunteers takes place.
- **Do it often.** Recognition of volunteers should happen on a year-round, frequent and informal basis – begin with saying “Thank you” often!
- **Do it in different ways.** Vary your recognition efforts from the informal thank you and spontaneous treats, to more formal events, such as dinners and awards.
- **Be sincere.** Make each occasion you use to recognize your volunteers meaningful and an opportunity to truly reflect on his/her value to your organization.
- **Recognize the person, not the work.** Phrase recognition to emphasize the contribution of the

individual, not the end result. “You did a great job!” as opposed to “This is a great job!”

- **Make it appropriate to the achievement.** For example, a paper certificate accompanied by a private thank you may be appropriate for a few months of service but a public dinner and engraved plaque may better suit 10 years of volunteerism¹.
- **Be consistent.** Make sure whatever standards of recognition you establish can be consistently maintained by your organization in years to come. Holding a volunteer recognition dinner one year sets up expectation for future volunteers.
- **Be timely.** Try to arrange recognition soon after achievement has been reached – delaying until weeks or months later diminishes the value of your gratitude.
- **Make it unique.** Getting to know each of your volunteers and their interests will help you learn how best to recognize each individual and make them feel special.

Sources:

Making the Most of Volunteer Resources workshop materials, Community Services Council

Celebrate Volunteers, Volunteer Canada