



VOLUNTEER



APPRECIATION



IDEAS

**52 VOLUNTEER
APPRECIATION IDEAS**

BAUDVILLE®
THE PLACE FOR DAILY RECOGNITION

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

If you have volunteers working for your organization, you understand the important role they play in your mission and your success. However, retention of volunteers is one of the most common challenges for nonprofit organizations. To keep your valued volunteers actively involved, recognition and appreciation are key!

Volunteers are more likely to quit an organization if they feel unappreciated. Prevent them from walking away by using the volunteer appreciation ideas in this eBook. With over 50 ideas, you will have more than enough inspiration to begin recognizing your volunteers on a regular basis.

We've divided this book into four sections:

- Volunteer Appreciation Event Ideas
- Volunteer Awards
- Volunteer Appreciation Gift Ideas
- Low and No Cost Volunteer Appreciation Ideas

We hope your volunteers will like the appreciation ideas in this eBook and remain with your organization for years to come! Use this eBook as a starting point to create your own ideas for appreciating your volunteers.

We hope you'll also share your stories, tips, and ideas with us on the [Baudville Facebook page!](#)

ABOUT BAUDVILLE

Baudville, the place for daily recognition, continues to be the leading innovator in day-to-day recognition solutions. Baudville's day-to-day recognition solutions appeal to today's increasingly diverse workforce with contemporary designs and relevant messaging, motivating and engaging workplaces world-wide. Baudville has been declared one of the best companies to work for in its area and strives to create the ultimate work experience for its employees. For more tips and ideas to create a positive culture, visit the [Baudville Recognition Resource Center](#) on [Baudville.com](#).

NEVER DOUBT
THAT A SMALL GROUP
OF THOUGHTFUL,
COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN
**CHANGE THE
WORLD.**
INDEED, IT IS THE ONLY
THING THAT EVER HAS.

— MARGARET MEAD.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT IDEAS

1. Celebrate National Volunteer Week.

National Volunteer Week takes place annually in April and is an ideal time to recognize your volunteers. Throw an appreciation party in their honor and share all their many accomplishments, from hours served to dollars raised!

2. Treat Volunteers to Lunch.

Take your volunteers out to lunch or have them to your home to enjoy a meal together. Volunteers will appreciate the camaraderie as much as the food!

3. Host a Garden Party.

Celebrate your volunteers and the growth of your organization with a spring themed party. Create cupcake flowers with sugar lady bugs and present volunteers with a [Lucky Us Character Pin](#) lady bug lapel pin. It's a great way to let volunteers know you're lucky to have them on your team.

4. Give Them Just Desserts.

For a memorable volunteer appreciation event, invite those who have given a helping hand during the year to a Just Desserts recognition ceremony in their honor. Send official invitations that allow honorees to bring a guest. Feature a variety of desserts, like a build-your-own sundae bar, gourmet cupcake buffet, or dessert potluck. There are lots of sweet rewards you can treat them to!

5. Put the Pieces Together.

Let volunteers know they're essential to your organization with an Essential Piece themed luncheon. Create puzzle piece placemats and decorate tables with puzzle piece sugar cookie bouquets. Give an [Essential Piece](#) gift to each attendee for a lasting reminder of your appreciation.

6. Arrange a Social Tea Appreciation Event.

Invite your volunteers to tea one afternoon to thank them for their dedication to your organization. Serve different kinds of tea, finger sandwiches, salad, and petit fours for dessert. Encourage volunteers to dress up for the occasion and take their pictures at the event!

7. Celebrate the Holidays as a Team.

The holidays are a common time for expressing appreciation to co-workers, teammates, and volunteers. Include your volunteers in a holiday celebration at the end of the year by putting their name into a Secret Santa drawing.

8. Show Them They Make a World of Difference.

Tell volunteers how much they impact your organization with a You Make a World of Difference themed event. Decorate with bold blue and green decorations, or reuse old maps. Feature food from around the world and give each volunteer a small memento of your appreciation, like a [lapel pin](#) or [globe stress toy](#).

9. Roll Out the Red Carpet.

Give your volunteers the red carpet treatment to show your appreciation. Create your own Walk of Fame by putting the names of all your volunteers on gold stars in a hallway of your building. Make popcorn for your award ceremony and treat it with all the finesse and flair of the Academy Awards!

10. Throw a Volunteer All-Star Party.

Perfect for a summer event, decorate with a baseball theme! Create all-star trading cards featuring your volunteers and their stats: what they do, how long they've been serving, and how many hours they've served, for example. Serve hot dogs, Cracker Jacks®, peanuts, and other favorite stadium food.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS

11. Submit a National Volunteer Award Nomination.

Nominate one of your volunteers for a national volunteer award. Sing your volunteer's praises in the application and make your local media aware your volunteer is competing for the honor. The public recognition will be priceless! Visit [Energize Inc.](#) for a list of volunteer awards. .

12. Apply for the President's Volunteer Service Award.

The President's Volunteer Service Award program was created to thank and honor Americans who engage in volunteer service. The award is bestowed on individuals based on the number of volunteer hours completed in a 12-month period. For more information on this award, visit www.presidentialserviceawards.gov.

13. Recognize Length of Service.

Volunteers put a lot of time and effort into their service, so recognize them for it! At your award event, present trophies or [anniversary lapel pins](#) to individuals who put in the most hours during the year. On the milestone years, such as 5, 10, 15, and 20, recognize individuals for their years of service.

14. Create a Volunteer of the Year Award.

Although all of your volunteers are terrific, is there one person who consistently goes above and beyond? Start a Volunteer of the Year Award, and each year present this honor to one worthy volunteer.

15. Present Certificate Awards.

Give each person a personalized certificate and spend a minute sharing a personal story of that individual's contribution. For help with your award presentations, download our free [Award Presentation Guide](#). With careful planning and personal certificates, this could be the most memorable volunteer appreciation your volunteers have ever received!

16. Create a Peer Nominated Award.

The individuals who serve alongside your volunteers know the true impact of their efforts! Ask your group of volunteers or staff to nominate a volunteer for a peer award. Present the award at an appreciation event or team meeting.

17. Give a Helping Hand Award.

The Helping Hand Award is given to an individual who goes above and beyond what is normally expected. Present the recipient with a [Helping Hand lapel pin](#) and ask them to wear it every time they volunteer or visit the organization. It's a great way to show off their achievement long after the award ceremony!

18. Nominate a Volunteer for an Award at their Alma Mater.

Many colleges, universities, and even high schools honor their alumni for community service. Contact your volunteer's alma mater and submit a nomination for their service award. Your volunteer will be both surprised and honored!

19. Present a Client-Nominated Award.

Ask the recipients of your volunteers' service, such as children, senior citizens, or teachers, to nominate the volunteer who made a difference during the year. The personal recognition from the people your volunteers serve will make the recognition extra special!

20. Give a Personal Character Pin Award.

It can be difficult choosing just one volunteer to recognize, so give a unique award to each one! [Character Pins](#) recognize the character traits and outstanding behaviors that make individuals shine. Select a different pin for each volunteer, and read the story aloud when you present it. Explain why you selected that story for an award ceremony your volunteers won't soon forget!

21. Design a Behind the Scenes Award.

Create an award specifically for those whose actions are not usually in the limelight. These individuals are vital to the life and success of your organization, yet they usually receive the least amount of praise!

22. Establish an Outstanding Volunteer Recruiter Award.

Recognize the volunteer on your team who has recruited new volunteers! If it weren't for word of mouth and personal recruiting of seasoned volunteers, where would your organization be?

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION GIFT IDEAS

23. Create Your Own Bookmarks.

Remind your volunteers how much they are appreciated every time they open a book. Create your own appreciation bookmarks with a simple design and a meaningful quote about volunteers. Laminate them and punch a hole in the top for a ribbon.

24. Give a Packet of Seeds or a Plant.

Express your appreciation to volunteers for helping your organization grow with the gift of a plant or packet of seeds. As their own plants grow, they'll be reminded of your gratitude.

25. Serve Baked Goods from Staff Members.

Treat volunteers to a sweet surprise. Have all your staff members bring in baked goods for your volunteers to thank them for their dedication. You can serve the treats in potluck style or create individual packages.

26. Design Your Own Note Cards.

Create your own note cards using old greeting cards, scrapbook materials, and embellishments. Tie a set of your homemade note cards together with a ribbon and present to your volunteers as a gift.

27. Buy a Gift Book of Volunteer Quotes.

Can't seem to find the right words to let volunteers know how much you appreciate them? Give them a [gift book](#) filled with inspirational quotes about volunteers. Write a personal note on the inside cover to dedicate the book to your recipient.

28. Make a Donation to the Charity of Their Choice.

Volunteers often put your organization before themselves. To thank them, make a donation to the charity of their choice or purchase a piece of equipment in their name.

29. Plant a Tree in Their Honor.

For a lasting sign of appreciation, plant a tree on the grounds of your organization or in the volunteer's neighborhood. Create a plaque to dedicate the tree in their honor.

30. Personalize Tote Bags.

[Tote bags](#) are a popular gift for volunteers because they are so practical! To make your gift even more memorable, have staff and volunteers express their thanks and well wishes by signing the bag using fabric markers.

31. Give a Gift Certificate for a Night Out on the Town.

Give your volunteers gift certificates to enjoy some time to themselves or with their families. A dinner out, movie tickets, or even a shopping certificate will give your volunteers a much deserved break.

32. Give Personalized Leather Journals.

A personalized gift will mean the most to your volunteers. It shows you put extra thought and care into selecting a gift especially for them. Engrave [leather journals](#) with their names and the name of your organization, gift wrap them, and present them individually to volunteers.

33. Arrange for Relaxing Neck and Shoulder Massages.

Reduce the stress in your volunteers' lives by arranging for a masseuse to treat them to neck and shoulder massages at your next team meeting.

34. Create a Photo Album.

Present volunteers with a small photo album or scrapbook that includes pictures of them serving throughout the year. Include flyers or tickets from events and letters from those who have benefited from your volunteers' time and care.

35. Purchase Lapel Pins for Everyone.

For memorable group recognition, purchase a [lapel pin](#) for all of your volunteers. Present them at a team meeting, and communicate with the entire organization that the lapel pins are a special symbol of your volunteers' dedication and caring. Encourage volunteers to wear them to all organizational functions for extra recognition!

36. Give a Piece of the Organization.

Remind volunteers how important they are by giving them a small keepsake from your organization. This could include a brick from an old sidewalk, a piece of furniture they loved, or a painting they always admired. You can easily replace the item, but the volunteers' appreciation will be priceless!

37. Dedicate a Brick or Decorative Landscaping.

In honor of a special volunteer, purchase a garden decoration or a brick in their honor. Dedicate it to them and place it in a special place in your landscaping for everyone to admire.

LOW AND NO COST VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION IDEAS

38. Send a Card to Volunteers' Homes.

Your appreciation for your volunteers' service shouldn't be limited to your building. Send a card with your personal message of appreciation to the homes of your volunteers. The surprise note will make the appreciation memorable.

39. Present a Certificate of Appreciation.

Formalize your appreciation for volunteers by presenting a [certificate of appreciation](#) during National Volunteer Week.

40. Highlight Volunteers in Your Organization's Newsletter, Blog, or Facebook Page.

Tell the whole world about your amazing volunteers! Add a special column to your newsletter or blog with a volunteer spotlight. Feature it on your Facebook page, too.

41. Add a Note to a Candy Bar or Snack.

Treat a volunteer to her favorite snack or piece of candy. Make it personal by adding a small note of "thanks" to it.

42. Send an ePraise eCard to Say "Thank You."

Send notes of appreciation to your volunteers year round with Baudville's free ecard service, [ePraise](#). They even have exclusive volunteer appreciation ecards.

43. Publically Recognize Your Volunteers at a Meeting.

Tell your entire team about an awesome volunteer by sharing his story verbally at your next meeting.

44. Sing the Praises of Your Volunteers in a Letter to the Editor.

Let the community know about your organization's great volunteers! Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper sharing details about the impact your volunteers have on the organization. When the letter is published, cut it out and copy it for volunteers.

45. Laminate and Frame the Volunteer's First ID Picture.

Recognize a long-term volunteer by commemorating their first ID picture at the organization. If you have the original photograph, laminate it for protection.

46. Dedicate a Parking Spot or Name a Meeting Room in Their Honor.

Make an outstanding volunteer a permanent part of your organization by dedicating a parking spot in their honor or naming a meeting room after them. Place a plaque or nameplate near the area.

47. Deliver a Handwritten Note of Appreciation.

One of the most effective forms of appreciation is a [handwritten note](#). Your note should be personal to the recipient, specifically mention why you're recognizing them, and let them know they're valued members of the organization.

48. Give a Hug, High Five, Fist Bump, or Handshake.

Sometimes the best appreciation doesn't require any words at all! Show volunteers how much you appreciate their efforts with a high five or other similar gesture.

49. Collect Donations from Local Merchants and Businesses.

Give your volunteers a meaningful appreciation gift by seeking donations from local merchants and businesses. You can ask for merchandise, gift cards, or even a special coupon. Volunteers will love the exclusivity of this reward!

50. Spell Out Your Appreciation in Chalk.

Get a bucket of chalk and get to work outside your building! Write "thank you," "we appreciate you," and quotes about volunteerism on the sidewalk and parking lot of your building. Your volunteers will be surprised to see the colorful notes!

51. Wash Volunteers' Cars.

Volunteers give their time to others, so they often have less time for themselves. Turn the tables on your volunteers and serve them by organizing a staff car wash. Wash all the volunteers' cars to thank them for doing so much for others!

52. Ask a Volunteer for Input.

Let volunteers know you value their insight by asking them to participate on a project or sit in on an important meeting. Be sure to ask them to share their opinions!