Recognition

University of Minnesota students who do service learning in your organization are like all other volunteers with your agency—they deserve recognition for the important work they do in the community. In fact, the better the students experience with you, the more likely it is that they will continue their work with you beyond the semester. One of the best ways to keep volunteers is to provide them with interesting and rewarding work, but recognition is also one of the essential keys to making that experience successful. Just as in staff appreciation, recognition of student service learners makes them feel valued and a part of the working team.

Recognition does not have to be extravagant, rather consistent, sincere and creative methods are the most effective. Below are many ideas, as well as resources for other ideas.

- Events (i.e. dinners, teas, dessert buffets, potluck dinners) held during National Volunteer Recognition Week
- Thank you cards, an e-card sent on-line or in regular mail
- Articles on individual volunteers in organization newsletter
- Volunteer of the Month award
- Free coffee for on-site volunteers
- Name badges
- Articles about your volunteer(s) in the local newspaper
- Pizza party
- Gift certificates or coupons to local restaurants, theaters, or cultural events
- Know their names, the names of their partners, kids or pets and ask about how they are
- Birthday, anniversary and holiday cards
- Plaques in public areas
- Organization logo t-shirts, mug, pens, or notepads
- A newsletter for your volunteers
- Print names of all volunteers in weekly/monthly corporate/agency newsletter
- Recognize volunteers at events honoring paid staff service awards.
- Invite volunteers to participate in workshops and involve them as speakers
- Letter to the volunteer’s family, employer, professor/instructor, academic advisor
- Letter to volunteer from the beneficiaries of their services or work with your organization
- Articles on individual volunteers on the organization’s Web site or even a Web page salute to volunteers
- A special parking spot for a month
- Arrange discounts for your volunteers at local shops
- Share outcome evaluation results with volunteers showing their impact on clients and programs
- Have staff and clients give comments and quotes about the difference volunteers make to be printed in a booklet and shared at a recognition event or mailed.
- Candy
- Photos of volunteers up in prominent spot in agency or in newsletter doing volunteer work
- Volunteer buttons and pins
- Video
- Kudos Korner—These forms are available at each event and are filled out by someone who notices another’s outstanding achievement.
- Highlight volunteer programs with pictures, stories and statistics on a bulletin board in your agency lobby
- Outstanding Service Award
- Ask Your Volunteers
- Develop a wall of fame
- Provide scholarships for workshops or conferences
- Nominate them for statewide awards
- Letters of recommendation
- Meals
- Future employment opportunities
Resources and Websites

101 Ideas for Volunteer Programs, by Steve McCurley & Sue Vineyard
Beyond Banquets, Plaques and Pins, by Sue Vineyard
Effective Ways to Recruit, Keep & Motivate Volunteers, by Linda Spaulding
Volunteer Recognition: How To Make It Work For You, by Jim Bottorf
Volunteer Recognition Skit Kit, by Arlene Grubbs & Evelyn Levine

The Foundation Center – http://www.fndcenter.org/
Impact Online – http://www.impactonline.org/info/index.html
Independent Sector – http://www.indepsec.org
Internet Nonprofit Center – http://www.nonprofits.org/
Internet Resources for Non-Profit Public Service Organizations – http://www.sils.umich.edu/~nesbeitt/nonprofits/nonprofits.html
Meta-Index for Non-Profit Organizations – http://www.duke.edu/~ptavern/Pete.meta-index.html
Nonprofit Resource Catalogue – http://www.dark.net/pub/pwalker;home.html
SERVEnet – http://www.servenet.org
United Way – http://www.unitedway.org
Minnesota Office for Citizenship and Volunteer Services – http://www.movcs.state.mn.us
Campus Outreach Opportunity League – http://www.COOL2SERVE.org