**Recognition**

“Volunteers are not servants. Volunteers are partners working together for improving America’s future.”

- Mayor Richard Daly

Why do we need to understand the importance of recognition and retention to the success and stability of our volunteer programs?

Saying “thank you” is the ONLY way we have of insuring that our volunteers know how much we appreciate them. It also insures that they will remain supportive of our mission and continue to volunteer. Lean that saying “thank you” sincerely and often is not just a gift, but an ongoing process, which, if ignored, can threaten the stability of an organization.

Spend time focusing on both the art and science of reward and your agency will reap the benefits of committed long-term volunteers who feel respected, empowered, and appreciated. Discover the many creative ideas for events as well as a host of clever and inexpensive ways to say thank you each and every day.

**Websites**
- www.energizeinc.com
- www.ittakestwo.com/products/ThankYouCards.htm

**Books**
- Vineyard, *Beyond banquets, Plaques, and Pins: Creative Ways to recognize Volunteers*

**In this Section:**
- Volunteer Recognition Survey
- Sample Thank You Letter to a Volunteer
- Volunteer Recognition resources
- Volunteer Recognition Ideas
- Volunteer Recognition Awards
- About Delaware Volunteer Credit
- Certificate of Appreciation Template
Volunteer Recognition Survey

There is nothing more important to most individuals than knowing that their contributions are valued. We want to ensure that when the time comes for your performance to be recognized, you receive the type of recognition you like best.

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey to help us understand how you want to be recognized!

Name:________________________________________________
E-mail address:_________________________________________

1. What means of appreciation do you like best?
   ___Verbal words of thanks given privately
   ___Verbal words of thanks given publicly
   ___Thank you note

2. Favorite candy:_________________________________________

3. Favorite soft drink/beverage:_____________________________

4. Favorite color:_________________________________________

5. Favorite restaurant:____________________________________

6. Favorite snack:_________________________________________

7. Favorite author:________________________________________

8. Favorite flower:_______________________________________

9. Hobbies, Collections:__________________________________
Sample Thank You Letter to Volunteer

[DATE]

[NAME]
[ADDRESS]
[CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE]
[COUNTRY]

Dear [NAME]:

On behalf of the [CHAPTER NAME] board of directors, I would like to personally thank you for your recent contribution of time to the [CHAPTER EVENT]. This event could not have been a success without the help of you and the many other volunteers who donated their time.

[USE NEXT PARAGRAPH OR TWO TO HIGHLIGHT SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SUCH AS NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS, NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED, ETC. CONSIDER THANKING PARTICULAR PEOPLE BY NAME, SUCH AS THOSE WHO VOLUNTEERED THE MOST TIME.]

Once again, the [CHAPTER NAME] thanks you for your efforts and contribution of time!

Sincerely,

[NAME]
[TITLE]
Volunteer Recognition Resources

www.pointsoflight.org
Sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, National Volunteer Week materials are featured on this website. This website includes press releases, ideas for celebration, resources for purchasing recognition items, and lots of other helpful information about volunteerism.

www.energizeinc.com
The site features resources and links on volunteer recognition including quotes, humorous anecdotes, and celebration ideas.

www.volunteertoday.com
This site is a clearing house of volunteer information including links, recognition ideas and lots of helpful information for those working with volunteers.

http://www.louisiana4h.org/volunteers/national%20volunteer%20week%20recognition%20packet.asp
Designed to provide volunteer administrators with the tools, ideas and materials to recognize volunteers, this site is designed to promote volunteerism during National Volunteer Week and throughout the year.

www.4-h.uiuc.edu/events/volweek.html
Compiled by a group of 4-H volunteer specialists from the North Central Region, the site features informative links and resource materials.

Volunteer Award Opportunities

http://www.pointsoflight.org/awards/awards.cfm
Sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, this site features several awards available to youth and adult volunteers.

http://www.nationalservice.org/challenge/
Sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service, this site features student award opportunities.

Volunteer Recognition Retail Items

www.thankscompany.com
http://www.volunteerrec.com/
http://www.volunteergifts.com/
These sites are retail sites featuring recognition items that are reasonably priced.

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Publication Edited by Heather Caldwell & Debbie Plueger

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Volunteer Recognition Ideas

Ongoing

- Smile!
- Put up a volunteer suggestion box.
- Challenging volunteers by giving additional responsibilities.
- Greet volunteers by name.
- Create a volunteer space.
- Set aside some time every week or month to check in.
- Commend the volunteer to supervisory staff.
- Celebrate outstanding projects and achievements.
- Establish a “Volunteer of the Month” program.
- Provide development opportunities for trainings and evaluation.
- Display a welcome board in the front office with pictures of volunteers work.
- Keep your volunteer informed about any school schedule or staff changes.
- Send “get well” cards or call when your volunteer is sick.
- Keep track of length of time worked so as to recognize volunteers accurately.
- Share articles and books of mutual interest on child development, learning styles or content area in which your volunteer works.
- Accommodate volunteer’s personal needs and problems.
- Ask your volunteer questions about their day.

One-Time Thank You

- Plan a recognition event. Invite the school board, parents, administrators, and community leaders.
- Have students write letters of thanks on a volunteer’s birthday or during National Volunteer Week.
- Organize a special event or presentation for the volunteer.
- Give gift certificates or solicit donations from neighborhood businesses.
- Write an article about your volunteer’s contributions in a local or school newsletter.
- Write a letter of recommendation if your volunteer requests it.
- Take your volunteer out to lunch at the end of the semester.
- Create certificates commending your volunteer’s work.
- Send a letter of appreciation to a volunteer’s employer.

Light Touch

- Treat to a coffee, tea or soda.
- Invite to a staff meeting.
- Invite to staff coffee breaks.
- Enlist experienced volunteers to train new volunteers.
- Say “We missed you.”
- Say “Thank you.”
- Say “I appreciate you.”
If you know of some fantastic volunteers don’t forget to nominate them for the State of Delaware’s Volunteer Recognition Awards!!!

Governor’s Youth Volunteer Service Awards
- Held in the Spring, usually April
- Nomination forms due to the Office of Volunteerism by February.

Governor’s Outstanding Volunteer Awards
- Held in the Fall, usually October
- Nomination forms due to the Office of Volunteerism by August

Both awards recognize individual and group volunteers in a variety of capacities for their dedication, time and talent.

For more details, contact Carrie Hart,
302-857-5006
Carrie.hart@state.de.us

Or visit www.volunteerdelaware.org Examples of successful nominations are also available on our website.
For High School Volunteers.....

Earn an Elective Credit outside the Classroom!

The Delaware Volunteer Credit (DVC) is one elective credit used towards graduation. Students who complete 90 hours of community service during their entire high school career are eligible to receive this credit. If you have been volunteering, you may have already fulfilled the requirements to receive this credit and award!

Visit www.volunteer(delaware).org to find a volunteering opportunity near you, or call the State Office of Volunteerism at 1-800-815-5465. The Delaware Volunteer Credit is a prestigious award that will appear on your transcript for employers and college Admissions boards to see!

It's easy to get started!

1. Meet with your counselor to go over program and get the necessary forms.

2. Visit volunteer(delaware).org or call the Volunteer Resource Center at 1-800-815-5465

3. After completing 90 hours of service, submit required verification of service hours to your counselor.

4. Your counselor will send the forms to the Office of Volunteerism by April 15.

5. The Office of Volunteerism will send you a certificate of completion.

6. Upon receipt of the certificate, the school will assign the Delaware Volunteer Credit to your transcript.
THE DELAWARE VOLUNTEER CREDIT

DELAWARE CODE CHAPTER 89A, SECTION 8901 A. & 8902A.

Established by the Delaware General Assembly in 1998, allows students grades 9-12 to earn 1 elective credit towards graduation upon completing 90 hours of community service. Hours should be served in 2 semesters (45 hours each semester). The semesters do not have to be consecutive. Summer hours can be added to either Spring for Fall semesters. A student can only receive the credit one time in their high school career.

Hours must be performed outside the student’s regularly scheduled school day. Volunteer hours completed as part of a service group requirement may also be used towards the Delaware Volunteer Credit (DVC).

Volunteer activity cannot be political or advocacy in nature. Valid volunteer service must not include inherently religious activities such as religious worship, religious instruction, or religious proselytizing. Service performed at or with a faith-based organization must have a secular purpose and meet a recognized need in the greater community. Examples: Time spent teaching bible school at a church camp would not be valid for the DVC. Whereas, leading nature activities at a summer camp hosted by a church open to the broad community would be valid service for the DVC. Also, helping sort coats for a church-sponsored community clothing closet would be valid for the DVC. Sites must be approved by the Office of Volunteerism. Those not previously approved will be contacted to research their ability to meet the criteria for the credit. See the DVC Frequently Asked Questions for more examples of valid service.

A student may not earn ½ credit for 45 hours of services. Only full credits are awarded.
4 Key Components

This program can be structured in any way that works for the school but should include:

**Locate a non-profit volunteer site.**
If the student is already volunteering, contact the Office of Volunteerism at 1-800-815-5465 to make certain the site meets the criteria. Service hours beginning in the summer prior to the student’s freshman year are valid. If the student is looking for a site at which to serve, have them log onto [www.VolunteerDelaware.org](http://www.VolunteerDelaware.org) and search using key words, issue area, or zip code.

**Keep track of student service hours.**
This can be done on the enclosed log sheet or one from the site, a notification on the agency’s letterhead, or using a Completion Verification Form which can be downloaded at [www.state.de.us/dhss/dsse/volresctr.html](http://www.state.de.us/dhss/dsse/volresctr.html). The signature of an agency representative is required to verify the hours. The student is responsible for the tracking of hours, and submitting completed hours to the school representative.

**Accept documentation of completion of the 90 hours of service.**
Once the student has submitted verified 90 hours of service to the school representative, the representative should:

*Notify the Office of Volunteerism to issue Certificate of Recognition:* Please use the enclosed Completion Verification Form or submit a letter that includes all of the following: Student’s Name, Address, School and Grade, Total Number of Hours Served, Agency(ies) where community service was performed, Dates of Service, and Signature of School Counselor/Official.

*Note:* Deadline for submission of Verification Form (or letter) is April 15 (postmark or fax date). If April 15 falls on a weekend, the deadline is extended to the following Monday.

*Volunteer Resource Center mails Certificate to school principal in mid-May.*

*Process Delaware Volunteer Credit:* Upon receipt of the certificate, the school should use its normal process to affix the Credit to the student’s academic transcript.

*Note:* Service requirements, such as internships performed in conjunction with classwork that results in the receipt of an academic credit, may NOT be counted as service hours toward completion of the DVC. Service hours accumulated as a result of membership in service clubs (Key Club, 4-H) or Societies (National Honor) MAY be counted toward the Credit.

**Presentation of Certificate of Recognition to student, preferably at a school awards event**

Office of Volunteerism

1901 North Dupont Highway, Charles Debnam Bldg.

New Castle, DE 19720 1-800-815-5465 (FAX) 302-255-4462
Delaware Volunteer Credit
Frequently Asked Questions

How soon can a student begin volunteer service that counts toward the Delaware Volunteer Credit?
Students may begin counting volunteer hours served toward the DVC as early as the summer between their 8th and 9th grade year.

Can a student volunteer at more than one agency?
Yes. However it is preferred that the student volunteer at just 1 or 2 agencies unless the service is done through a school club, honor society or community service group.

Where is the best place for students to find opportunities?
The www.volunteerdelaware.org web site is the fastest and easiest way for a student to search for an opportunity to volunteer that matches his/her interest, skills and availability. All of the organizations listed there are pre-approved by the Office of Volunteerism.

What if a student wants to volunteer at a for-profit organization or business?
The legislation indicates that the volunteer service is to be done only at non-profit organizations. However, hospitals, nursing homes, schools and non-profit day cares are also appropriate.

How many times can a student earn the Delaware Volunteer Credit?
A student is eligible to receive the Delaware Volunteer Credit only once during the entire high school career.

When is the best time to submit the student's verification information to the Office of Volunteerism?
We accept verification by fax or by mail throughout the year. It is best to send the information in as soon as it is completed. The SOV staff can review documentation and catch any problems that may exist in time for them to be resolved so that the student can still have time to qualify for the credit.

What about community service done in a faith-based setting?
Service related to a religious institution must not be done as part of a religious service (ex. Choir singing, altar serving, bible teaching)
Service provided in support of programs provided by a religious institution and available to the greater community (i.e. not just to members) is eligible for the Credit (ex. choir singing at a nursing home, activity aide at a vacation bible school, church food pantry assistant).

If a student performs community service as part of a requirement for a class for which he is already receiving credit, can he also use this service toward the 90 hour service requirement for the Delaware Volunteer Credit?
No. Whenever school credit has already been given for service performed, no additional credit can be given for the same hours.
However, if the student chooses to continue to volunteer at the same agency for an additional 90 hours over and above that required for the academic credit, as long as the hours are documented and verified, he may also be apply for the Delaware Volunteer Credit.

Can a student who receives the Delaware Volunteer Credit use the same service hours toward the President's Volunteer Service Award?
Yes.
However it should be noted that the PVSA requires 10 additional hours (i.e. 100 hours total) and they must all be served within a 12 month period.
We encourage students to try to qualify for both the DVC and the PVSA.

Does the student receive any recognition along with the credit?
Yes. The student receives a Certificate of Appreciation signed by both the Governor of Delaware and the Secretary of Education. We encourage school officials to award the certificate at appropriate school recognition ceremonies.

When does the Office of Volunteerism process the Delaware Volunteer Credit verification forms?
Just once a year - in the Spring. The deadline for submission is April 15.
If April 15 falls on a weekend, the deadline is extended to the following Monday.

After submitting the verification forms, how will the counselor know if the student qualifies for the Credit?
Receipt of the signed Certificate is considered indication of approval for the Credit. This should occur in mid-May. Please make a copy of the certificate for the student's portfolio and award the certificate to the student at your school's most appropriate recognition event.

Can all 90 volunteer hours be completed during the summer months?
Yes. A student can accrue all hours over a combination of 2 summers.
THE DELAWARE VOLUNTEER CREDIT

Sample Procedure for Student

Meet with counselor to go over program and get the necessary forms. Sample forms might include: Service Contract, Volunteer Hours Log, Completion Verification Form. These can be downloaded at www.volunteerDelaware.org and click on resources. You may also click this link: http://www.volunteerdelaware.org/HOC__cmscontent?CMSId=a0UA0000005kWgxMAE

Log onto www.VolunteerDelaware.org for referrals to a volunteer site or contact the Office of Volunteerism to verify that current site of community service meets the Delaware Volunteer Credit requirements.

Office of Volunteerism
1-800-815-5465

After completing 90 hours of service, student should submit required verification of service hours to his/her counselor.

Counselor will send appropriate forms verifying completion of the hours to the Office of Volunteerism. (Completion Verification Form, letter, etc.) by April 15. If April 15 falls on a weekend, the deadline is extended to the following Monday.

The Office of Volunteerism will send the student’s Certificate of Achievement to the school for presentation to the student, perhaps at the spring awards assembly.

Upon receipt of the certificate, the school will assign the Delaware Volunteer Credit to the student’s transcripts through its internal process. A copy of the Delaware Volunteer Credit certificate will be kept with the student’s transcript.

While the State Office of Volunteerism accepts verification forms for review throughout the year, please note that:

The Credit is only processed one time per year (April 15).
Only documentation of 90 hours or more should be submitted.
DELWARE VOLUNTEER CREDIT PROGRAM

STUDENT CONTRACT
(*Optional – For Counselor Records)

I, _______________, Grade ______ at ____________________________,
(Student’s Name) (School Name)

agree to participate in the following community service activities:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

I will report to _______________ to perform the above listed services
(name of agency/site)
beginning _________________ on the following:
(date)

Day(s): ________________________             Time(s): ________________________

Day(s): ________________________             Time(s): ________________________

Day(s): ________________________             Time(s): ________________________

Student’s Signature: ____________________________________________ Phone: _____________________

Site Supervisor Signature: _____________________________________ Phone: _____________________

School: ______________________________________________________

School Official Signature: _____________________________________ Phone: _____________________

Date
# Delaware Volunteer Credit
## Volunteer Hours Form
(Optional– for use by Student at Service Site)

**Name:**

Date(s) __________________ to __________________

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**Hours total:** [ ]
Certificate of Appreciation

Presented to

__________________________________________________

In recognition of your deep commitment and outstanding devotion to our organization and the people we serve

This certificate is awarded by:

_____________________________________

this day of ____________________________

_____________________________________

Signature

This certificate is awarded by:

Outstanding devotion to our organization and the people we serve

In recognition of your deep commitment and

Presented to

Certificate of Appreciation

Template on disk