**Volunteer Recognition**

You have found the perfect volunteer. Now what do you do? You need to match the skills, qualifications, interests, and reason for volunteering to the job. Give them a job that is meaningful to them, but also important to the library. If a volunteer is happy in their role, feel welcome and supported by the staff, they will stay in this position for a long time.

It is essential that each volunteer feels like he/she is a part of the library family. Assign each volunteer to a staff person so they know who to turn to with questions or additional training. Sometime it takes a bit of coaching to get the volunteer comfortable in his/her new position. You want them to be successful. If one position doesn’t seem to match their skills, move them to another where they will feel successful.

Always recognize their efforts! There are two ways to recognize volunteers--formal and informal. Formal activities would include a Volunteer Appreciation Night, a special party honoring the volunteers, or a special dinner. A handwritten thank you card would be an informal method.

*Energize! Inc*. has given permission to share some Dollar Store ideas. There are Dollar Stores located everywhere and finding recognition items here won’t break the bank.

* Pop Rocks candy and attach a note telling them "you rock for..."
* Candle - Present a candle with a card saying "you light the way" or " no one can hold a candle to you"
* Light bulbs – “You light the way, thanks for your glowing enthusiasm”
* Permanent marker with this note – “You've made a lasting and permanent contribution to your library”
* Lucky Charm cereal with the note – “We're so LUCKY to have you!”
* 100 Grand candy bars – “Volunteers are priceless”
* Payday candy bar - "Volunteers don't receive a salary because they're not worth it... it's because they are priceless!”
* Gold chocolate coins – ”Volunteers are worth their weight in gold”
* Andes mints/ peppermint patties – “Your service is worth a mint to us!”
* Ruler/Tape measure – “It's easy to measure the difference you've made in our library—you’re amazing!”
* Inexpensive globes of the world with the message “Volunteers make a world of difference”

**More expensive gifts with a note:**

If you don’t have the budget for more expensive gifts, ask your Friends group to supply the funds. Donations from local businesses can also be a great source of potential gifts.

* Clock – “Thanks for the time you've given to our library!”
* Library logo Hat – “Our hats are off to you! Thanks for all you do!’
* Library Shirt – “We know you'd give the shirt off you back... so here's an extra one for the next time you give your all”
* Toaster – “A Toast to a super volunteer! Whenever you use this toaster, remember to toast yourself too!”
* Plant – “We grow luckier every day you're with us”
* Calculators with the library’s logo and the saying "We count on you" printed on it
* Totally Chocolate (<http://www.totallychocolate.com/>) The company has superb
100% Premium Belgian chocolate items....the "You're A Star" (dark chocolate star
individually wrapped in bright blue Mylar with a big star on the front is a great example)
* Purchase a book for the library “in honor of” a volunteer and make the announcement at the recognition ceremony. Take a photo of the volunteer holding the book.
* A tree sapling/shrub with a note – “Thank You for Helping Us Grow!” Take photos of the volunteer with the newly planted sapling/shrub on the library grounds for the local paper or you could let the volunteer take the sapling home to plant.
* A bags of mixed nuts with a note attached - “We would go 'nuts' without your support!"
* "Yankee" votive candles wrapped in cellophane and tied with a note - "You light up the lives of so many!" or "You lighten our load by volunteering."

There are all sorts of sites on the Internet geared to volunteer recognition. Check them out, or use your imagination and come up with a creative idea of your own.