

25 Tips to Maximize Volunteers

INCLUDE VOLUNTEERS

1. **Treat volunteers as you would your most valued employee.**
 2. **Give volunteers a voice** in your organization.
 3. **Survey or ask volunteers' opinions** when developing new policies, strategies and programs to obtain knowledgeable feedback.
 4. **Keep volunteers informed** of changes in staff structure and personnel.
 5. **Invite volunteers** to a staff outing or employees' family event.
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MANAGE VOLUNTEERS

6. **Provide meaningful and enjoyable work for volunteers.**
 7. **Ensure volunteers have adequate space and equipment** to do their work.
 8. **Allow volunteers to take ownership** in their work.
 9. **Capitalize on volunteers' interest and special talents** whenever possible.
 10. **Design volunteer positions in a way that directly contributes to your organization's mission.**
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RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS

11. **Nominate volunteers for awards** in your organization and in the community.
12. **Inform local press** about exceptional work of your volunteers.
13. **Use quotes from and the experiences of your volunteers** in promotional materials (annual reports, brochures etc.).
14. **Include a feature article** on key volunteers in your organization's newsletter.
15. **Hang a volunteer board** in a prominent place for staff and visitors to view.

REWARD VOLUNTEERS

16. **Secure complimentary gift certificates** for volunteers from local businesses or your Chamber of Commerce.
17. **Hold an annual award ceremony** to honor your volunteers.
18. **Name an ongoing program or project** after a dedicated volunteer.
19. **Give a volunteer of the month or quarter award.**
20. **Create a Volunteer Appreciation Day.**

THANK VOLUNTEERS

21. **Say “thank you” often, and mean it.**
22. **Send handwritten notes of thanks** that clearly state the volunteer’s impact.
23. **Send a thank-you note to a volunteer’s employer** for sharing the employee’s time and talents with your organization.
24. **Employ program participants** to share a success story about a volunteer.
25. **Engage your board members** to thank volunteers with personal phone calls, emails or notes.



“**Safety Net For Youth Top 25**” is a part of National Safe Place’s 25th anniversary celebration, “Building A Safety Net For Youth.” Each month during 2008, National Safe Place and a national partner will highlight tips, resources and concerns related to major youth service issues. For more information about the campaign, visit www.safetynetforyouth.org.

National Safe Place, headquartered in Louisville, Ky., provides training and technical assistance for youth service agencies and businesses interested in developing a Safe Place program. Safe Places provide access to immediate help and safety for all young people in crisis. A public-private network of more than 16,000 sites across the country extends the doors of local youth shelters by displaying the Safe Place sign. Business partners and community locations that appeal to youth – such as fast food restaurants, convenience stores, fire stations, public buses and libraries – connect kids looking for help with the youth service agency. More than 105,000 youth have received immediate help at Safe Place location since the program’s inception. The Safe Place program was created by the YMCA of Greater Louisville in 1983. For additional information, visit <http://www.nationalsafeplace.org>.

VolunteerMatch is a national nonprofit dedicated to helping everyone find a great place to volunteer. Its award-winning online service, available at www.volunteermatch.org, makes it easy to find local volunteer opportunities by ZIP code, interest area, and/or keyword. The VolunteerMatch network regularly welcomes more than 125,000 visitors each week and has become the preferred volunteer recruiting service for tens of thousands of participating nonprofits across the country. The organization is committed to building world-class Internet applications that bring our communities closer together, expand the capacity of civil society, and encourage a culture of individual empowerment and participation.