

# DOVIA Mississippi Presents

## 101 Ways to Thank Volunteers for Under \$10

Recognizing and rewarding volunteers is a simple but vastly complicated subject! Below are some great ideas borrowed from volunteers and managers of volunteer programs of all types. These are just a few of the thousands of ideas for letting youth, adult, or senior volunteers know how valuable they are to your program! (Taken from a DOVIA program, "101 Ways to Salute Your Volunteers Under \$10")

- Birthday cards (e-cards?) and telephone calls on volunteers' birthdays
- Make a Get Well card on the computer, have everyone sign it, and send it to someone who is out sick.
- Your attitude is so important. Remember volunteers don't have to be there!
- Free lunch
- Flyers in the elevators or around the office anywhere thanking and calling attention to value of volunteers
- A picture board in the office showing volunteers doing their jobs
- Candy in the office each day
- Goodies in the volunteer office every day during Volunteer Appreciation Week (usually the teen week of April) and other special occasions
- Eat lunch with your volunteers each day.
- Put someone "in charge" when you are away from the office
- Hang any awards on the walls
- Post pictures of volunteers on bulletin boards and around the office
- Make and display an album of awards and newspaper articles
- Make and display a photograph album in the volunteer office showing activities of volunteers
- Post quotations about how great volunteers are
- Compliment them constantly and thank them constantly – be sincere!
- Bring back favors collected from seminars and meetings and make available to anyone who wants them.
- Have complimentary pens available at all times
- Have longevity pins for them to wear on their name tags
- Be sure that staff recognizes the worth of volunteers and shows appreciation every day verbally and through their actions
- Let them know they are missed when they are away
- During volunteer appreciation week have staff members write thank you notes to volunteers
- Have door prizes from the gift shop at your appreciation luncheon
- Calculate the money saved your organization by volunteers (hours x minimum wage) and tell this at appreciation luncheon
- Nominate someone for every award that comes along

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- Take time to listen to them – constantly
- Be interested enough in them to ask pertinent questions about family and activities
- Celebrate arrival of new grandchildren, etc., with cards
- Greet each one personally, know each one by name
- Post a list of birthdays for the month in the office
- Thank individuals specifically for specific job well done.
- In front of the volunteer, tell others how much you appreciate what the volunteer does – be specific!
- Subscribe to this motto: "If it is great, you did it. If it is OK, we did it. If it is bad, I did it."
- Nominate her for a Governor's Initiative for Volunteer Excellence (GIVE) Award
- Submit the 9th - 12th grade volunteer to be in the YES! Program (Youth Engaged in Service) through MCVS ([Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service](#))
- Send a "Thanks for Serving" e-card
- Movie tickets (>\$7)
- Gift certificates for Baskin Robbins, McDonald's, etc. (\$5)
- Print a certificate on your color printer (7" x 8.75"), cut it out, and tape it around a giant Hershey bar (\$1.29)
- Nominate for a Daily Points of Light Award – [www.pointsoflight.org/recognition/dpol](http://www.pointsoflight.org/recognition/dpol)
- Or an Ageless Heroes Award – [www.agelessheroes.com](http://www.agelessheroes.com)
- Write a letter of commendation to the volunteer's supervisor. Be sure to send a carbon copy to the volunteer!
- Thank the volunteer by name in a public speech.
- At a volunteer thank-you event, distribute "Thanks, Volunteers!" T-shirts and Sharpies; allow time for volunteers to sign each others' shirts. (>\$10)
- Send birthday cards and anniversary-of-service cards.
- Send Valentine's Day cards.
- Using certificate paper and gold foil seals from the office supply store (about \$15 for 50 certs & seals), custom make Thank Yous, Certificates of Commendation, Awards of Merit, and more.
- Make them official with company badges, name tags, or ID cards.
- Thank you coffee mug filled with candy (\$9)
- "Our Volunteers Are Stars" tote bag (>\$8) – [www.volunteergifts.com](http://www.volunteergifts.com)
- "Our Volunteers Are Treasures" key chain (>\$3) – [www.volunteergifts.com](http://www.volunteergifts.com)
- Praise the volunteer to his or her spouse and children.
- Smile and say "Good Morning!"
- Have a job description for each volunteer job; place a copy in the volunteer's official file.
- Nominate the young volunteer for a President's Student Service Award.  
[www.presidentialserviceawards.gov](http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov)
- Nominate the young volunteer for a Presidential Freedom Scholarship.  
[www.nationalservice.org/scholarships](http://www.nationalservice.org/scholarships)
- "Peace" and "Happiness" magnetic buttons (>\$4) – [www.anopenheart.org](http://www.anopenheart.org)
- On a 3x5 card: "Without you, we'd be in a real CRUNCH!" (attach a mini Crunch bar)

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- Smile and say "Good afternoon!"
- Have a time card for the volunteer to sign in/sign out.
- Keep good volunteer records.
- Have a "We Have Great Volunteers" pizza party.
- Invest in tiny charms that attach to a volunteer's badge that say "1 year", "2 years", etc. or "250 hours", "500 hours". Or designate a star to mean 250 hours, a shoe to mean 500 hours, etc.
- Have a bulletin board up in a public place and post photos of your smiling volunteers at work. Attach a folder containing a volunteer application form.
- Give incentives to volunteers who recruit other volunteers, such as \$10 gift certificates to area restaurants and attractions.
- Give volunteers more respect and attention than they expect!
- Give a copy of Chicken Soup for the Volunteer's Soul (\$15; I know this is over \$10 but it's such a GREAT book!)
- Special design certificates
- Personal notepads or paper
- Pins and buttons
- Creative pens
- Potted Flower with name of volunteer
- Volunteer Appreciation Kit
- Photos of special events with the volunteer
- Newspaper/Newsletter articles
- Recognition for students to parents/grandparents/school officials
- Chocolate Salute
- Angel Award
- Special parking privileges ("volunteer of the month" space?)
- Name badges
- T-shirts
- Caps
- Volunteer Handbook
- Complimentary Meals
- Donated artwork, pottery, etc.
- Coupons for food/services
- Address book
- Calendar
- Books
- Put on Committees/Boards of other organizations
- Nominations for special local, state, national awards
- Sun visors
- Bean bags with logo
- Stuffed animals
- Candles ("You Light Up My Life")
- Clocks

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- Calculators
- Picture Frames
- Bookmarks
- E-mail messages
- "Bottle of Bubbles"
- Candy Kisses at the desk of volunteers
- Name the coffee pot after a volunteer each month for "serving" well
- Your list begins here...!

DOVIA MISSISSIPPI

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