

Recognition Boosters

The following list of ideas was created by 47 super energetic extension professionals in 3 minutes and 33 seconds during a workshop session at AC 2001 in Manhattan, Kansas. Thanks TEAM! Use them as “fun-puns” and “idea boosters” for the next time that you recognize volunteers and staff for their contributions and support to your program.

Simple Gift

Suggested Tag Line(s)

Tinker Toys

You build us up.
Thanks for building the program.
You help us make the connection.

Magnet

We're drawn to you.
Thanks for attracting new volunteers
(or audiences, opportunities, resources, etc.)

Flag

We salute you.

Kite

Thanks for helping us soar to new heights.

Socks

Thanks for all your footwork.

Shoelace

You know how to tie us together.
Thanks for tying up the project.

Nut and Bolt

Thanks for providing the “nuts and bolts” for our project.

Rubber Scrapper

We couldn't have scraped by without your help.

Glove

Thanks for giving us a hand.

Flower Pot

Thanks for growing the program.
We're glad to be growing together.”

Wooden Blocks

Thanks for building the program
(or organization, event, notebook, training program, etc.)

Play Doh

Thanks for molding young minds.

Gum

Glad you're a “chewsey” *(I mean choosy!)* volunteer, and you chose us.

Fishing Lure

Glad we caught your good ideas.
You're a great catch!

Bandana

This wraps up another year. Thanks!

Simple Gift

Suggested Tag Line(s)

Shovel	Thanks for digging in on our project.
Rake	Thanks for helping rake in the donations <i>(or benefits, hours, items, etc.)</i>
Rock	You are the rock solid foundation of our program. Thanks!
Acorn	We are nuts about your work!
Horseshoe	We are lucky to have you in our program.
Mirror	You reflect good habits. You are looking at the world's best volunteer. I see a winner! Take a look at a great volunteer!
Marble	You keep us rolling!
Fortune Cookie	We're fortunate to have you. You are worth a fortune to us.
Sparkler	Thanks for creating a spark. You make our organization sparkle.
Matches	You light the fire for our organization. Thanks for lighting the way.
Yo-Yo	Thanks for helping with the ups and downs. Thanks for always coming back.
Scissors	You're a cut above the rest.
Glue/Tape	Thanks for sticking with us. You're the glue that holds us together.
Thumbtack	Without your "tack-ful-ness," we'd be all thumbs.
Seashell	Listen to our sea of thanks.
Chalk	Chalk it up to a great experience.
Play Money	Spread the wealth of our organization around.
Hot Chocolate Mix	Take time to relax. You've warmed our hearts.

Simple Gift

Suggested Tag Line(s)

Fertilizer	Thanks for helping us grow.
Cookie Cutter	You help shape lives.
Crayon	Thanks for playing with us. It's OK to color outside the lines.
Rope	Thanks for tying up the project. Thanks for pulling us through.
Gold Fish	Thanks for swimming upstream! F.I.S.H. = Fresh Ideas Start Here
Christmas Ornament	Cherish the moments. You've "trimmed" our programs in success.
Feather Duster	Thanks for taking care of the details. Thanks for helping us clean up. Thanks for helping us get the dust out of our organization. Thanks for freshening up our image.
Star	You are a star!
Toothpick	Thank for getting to the hard-to-reach spots.
Flower Bulb	Good things will grow from your efforts. You have blossomed.
Chopsticks	Thanks for helping us learn to use a new tool.
Firecracker	You're a popping good volunteer! You did a bang up job. You're a blast!
Film Canister	New things have developed with your involvement. Thanks for creating lasting memories.
Cereal:	
Life	You bring LIFE to our program.
Frosted Flakes	You're GRRRRRR-E-A-T!

Other Simple Gift Ideas

Attach a strip of two-sided tape to the back of a small box of raisins and attach a small note "Thanks for raisin' all those funds!"

Wrap votive candles in cellophane and tie them with ribbon, attaching a note stating "You light up the lives of so many!" and "You light-en our load."

Involve young children to create "Thank You Posters" using poster board and crayons/markers. Donors, businesses, and others partners who receive these hand-drawn posters can hang them in their lobbies or entrances to their office buildings.

Take a yellow work glove and stuff it full (to the fingertips!) with fiberfill, then tie it closed with ribbon around the wristband. On the palm side of the glove, paint a variety of shapes on each finger and thumb (heart, star, 4-leaf clover, along with small dabs of paint in a variety of colors). In the palm, paint in big letters "Thank you!" and surround it with more small dabs of paint. Then attach a note to the ribbon that says, "Give Yourself A Hand!"

To a small container of Play-Doh, attach a label that says "Thank you for making a commitment to shape the future of our youth/program/organization!" Put a sticker of your organization on the lid!

Attach a small plastic toy dinosaur to a round circle of colored construction paper, on which is printed "Dinomite job! Thank you for all you do!"

Tie a note to a pair of sunglasses with colorful ribbon. Print a special message with the person's name, saying: "Thank you for all your work as Committee Chair/Leader. Your leadership and energy have helped to make our program so bright we gotta wear shades!"

Volunteer Essentials

Each individual receives small colorful bag with "Volunteer Essentials" printed on one side and the following printed on the other (*with, of course, all of these items in the bag!*):

- A lollipop to help you lick your problems
- A rubber band to help you be flexible
- A Snickers bar to remind you to laugh
- A paperclip to help you hold things together
- Gum to give you a stick-to-it attitude
- A pin to help you pinpoint problems
- A piece of string to help you tie up loose ends
- A lifesaver to keep you from drowning in everyday problems
- A lemon drop to remind you: "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!"
- Pennies to give you extra "cents" when you need it
- Kisses to remind you that you are loved!

Stress Management Kit

Each individual receives a colorful bag with appropriate graphic (e.g., illustration of someone holding the whole world on his or her shoulders) with "Stress Management Kit" printed on one side and the following information printed on the other (*with, of course, all of these items in the bag!*):

- RUBBER BANDS to remind you to stretch your ideas and your mind to new limits so you will continue to grow
- TISSUE to remind you to see the tears and needs of yourself as well as others
- CANDY KISSES to remind you that everyone needs a hug, kiss, or a word of encouragement everyday
- LIFESAVERS to remind you to think of your friends as "lifesavers"; they care about you and want to help you through the stressful times
- PENNIES to remind you the value of your thoughts, big and little; share them with others
- ERASER to remind you that we all make mistakes, and they don't have to be permanent
- TOOTHPICK to remind you to "pick" out the good qualities of others and yourself and to be tolerant and accepting of differences
- STARS to acknowledge your many accomplishments!

Source: Pat Fultz, Extension Specialist, 4-H and Other Youth, Kansas State University