

Use this guide to write appreciation notes for event volunteers that are authentic, meaningful, and never boring!

A Power Thank You in Four Parts

While the nickname "snail mail" might have some negative connotations, for your volunteers it can be a real WOW! factor.

Why Volunteers Will Appreciate a Handwritten Thank You Note

- Getting an actual card in the mail from an actual person is rare.
- Most volunteers understand how busy you are; knowing that you take time to personally thank them will make them feel valuable.
- Volunteers will appreciate your efficient use of resources. Many volunteers don't want nonprofits to spend limited resources on plaques, pins, or slick mail campaigns.
- Day made! For some folks, this card will put a smile on their face for their entire day.

Keep it Simple and Create a Habit

During the event, use your smartphone to keep notes when you witness special talents, teamwork, or contributions. You never know when that moment of inspiration will strike.

You Will Benefit, Too

Don't be surprised when the warm fuzzies strike you as you sit down to write. You will deepen your relationships, and you shouldn't be surprised if volunteers come back to help again and again.

- 1) **Focus on Excellence** – Thank them for something they have done that was particularly valuable for the event's success or beyond the call of duty. Be specific.
- 2) **Connect the Dots** – Describe how it has helped the program or the organization achieve its goals or further its mission. Tell a story.
- 3) **Acknowledge the Effort** – Recognize that volunteering takes the sacrifice of personal time.
- 4) **Make It Personal** – Share what the volunteer's contributions have meant personally to you as the event leader.

Sample Thank You Note

A note like this should go out 1-2 days after the event to thank each volunteer for their contributions to the event's success. If you have a hard copy photo of them at the event, even if it's just on printed on plain paper, include it.

Dear [insert first name]:

It was a pleasure to work alongside you at [insert even name]. The way you [insert something unique or special you or the team leader noticed about the volunteer's contributions]. I believe it is a big part of what made this event successful.

Also, your hard work helped us reach our goal. Because of your contribution to this event's success, [insert goal that was achieved]. This will make a difference in the lives of [insert name of primary beneficiary].

I appreciate all of the energy and passion you gave to our organization, and I thank you so much for volunteering.

I hope you'll consider working with us again at next year's event.

Thank you!

[insert handwritten first name]

Your email signature (name, position, phone, website)

Your Recognition Toolbox

Make sure you have the basic tools to write your notes before you sit down to do them. Consider creating a small "gratitude box" that sits in your workspace and includes the following:

- **Cards and Envelopes:** Print some with your organization's logo and info on them. Or, just pick up some inexpensive packs when they're on sale. You can also have service beneficiaries create hand-crafted cards before your event. The best place to find ideas is Pinterest!
- **Stamps:** Ask pack of 20 (Or more) from your bookkeeper or administration, so you have them ready to go whenever you need them.

- **Return Address Labels:** Use an office stamp or print out sheets of adhesive labels using an easy label template. Make sure they are small enough to easily fit on your envelope.
- **An Updated Volunteer Contact List:** Whether you have an electronic database, and Excel spreadsheet, or a notebook where you store volunteer information, make sure it is kept up to date. There's nothing like getting a handwritten thank you note you put effort into returned in the email as undeliverable.