



***Special Olympics***

VOLUNTEER TRAINING SERIES

# **RECOGNITION**

***Facilitator's Guide***



## **Special Olympics Volunteer Management Series**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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- Special Olympics staff
- The Global Volunteer Resource Development Team
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**Introduction:**

Often volunteer recognition is narrowly thought of as a formal banquet, a t-shirt, or a letter that acknowledges a volunteer's service with Special Olympics. But the scope of recognition is much broader and must be considered an integral part of every Special Olympics Programs – a management philosophy that continually seeks to notice and value individual contributions.

Powerful and meaningful recognition begins when we recognize the talents and desires of prospective volunteers and offer them the job which responds to their motivational needs. The remainder of meaningful recognition is the myriad ways we formally and informally say, "I noticed" and "thank you."

Recognition should be timely and genuine. It can be either formal or informal and should be based on the motivation and level of responsibility of the volunteer. Informal recognition should exist at all levels of the Program. Formal recognition should be the responsibility of the Program's paid and volunteer staff.



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The **Primary Goals** of this module are:

- ⇒ to help Special Olympics staff appreciate the significance of meaningful recognition to volunteers
- ⇒ to discuss formal and informal acknowledgments that can be offered at numerous times during a volunteer's involvement with Special Olympics

### **Learning Objectives:**

Upon completion of this module, the participant will be able to:

1. Understand the impact of recognition in his/her own life.
2. Identify any organizational barriers to providing volunteer recognition and propose solutions to address them.
3. Explore ways of providing formal and informal recognition to volunteers in your Special Olympics Program
  - Discuss creative, minimal cost recognition ideas to acknowledgments volunteer contributions
1. Review essential guidelines of effective recognition.



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### **General Notes to Facilitator:**

1. This workshop is in a suggested format. Feel free, however, to personalize it with your own stories and experiences working at Special Olympics. Also, phrase questions and activities in a manner most attuned to the Program(s) you are addressing.
2. This training should be upbeat and fun. Participants should leave the workshop with an increased sense of the value of recognition and additional ideas on ways to give it.
3. Be aware of general organizational barriers to giving recognition within your Special Olympics Program. Some participants may equate recognition with high costs and increased staff resources
4. You may wish to change the timing in the workshop or use some of the suggested expandable activities depending on what discussions would be most appropriate to your Program.
5. To assist in the delivery of the workshop, you may wish to involve those who are particularly effective at recognition or volunteers who can share the impact that recognition has had in their lives.
6. Presentations and facilitation must be crisp and timed. If participants want more information, use this as an opportunity to ask for future additional training time on the topic.
7. If you wish to supplement your presentation with additional information, see the resource page at the end of this guide.



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**WORKSHOP OUTLINE**

<b>Slide #</b>	<b>Corresponding Facilitator Guide Pages</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Total Estimated Time: 60 minutes</b>
<b>H- 2, 3, 4</b>	<b>8-9</b>	<b>Section I: Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning Objectives</li><li>• Opening Exercise</li><li>• 4 Key Concepts</li></ul>	10 minutes
<b>H- 5, 6</b>	<b>9-10</b>	<b>Concept 1</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognition as an Integral Part of Program Management</li></ul>	10 minutes
<b>H- 7, 8, 9, 10, 11</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>Concept 2</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formal / Informal Recognition</li></ul>	15 minutes
<b>H- 12, 13</b>	<b>12-14</b>	<b>Concept 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meaningful Recognition</li></ul>	10 minutes
<b>H- 14, 15</b>	<b>14-16</b>	<b>Concept 4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creative Recognition</li></ul>	10 minutes
<b>H- 16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Summary/Wrap-up/Evaluation</b>	5 minutes



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### SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

- **Show Slide #1**
- **Show Slide #2: Learning Objectives**

Summarize objectives of this module and offer some introductory comments on recognition. Employ personal experiences and anecdotes.

- **Show Slide #3: Personal Recognition Experience**

Have participants think about volunteer recognition in their own lives:

#### **Opening Exercise**

*Ask:*

- What kind of recognition have you received?
- Was it meaningful?
- Why?

Have a few participants briefly share their answers with the group. Try to get examples of meaningful and non-meaningful recognition. Keep in mind that meaningful and non-meaningful can differ depending on the recipient's point of view.

*Ask:*

- What makes recognition meaningful?

On flip chart or transparency, record the characteristics of meaningful recognition.

Note to Facilitator: If participants seem reluctant to speak out, try to elicit comments with the following questions:

- Does meaningful recognition need to be costly?
- Should recognition be planned or spontaneous?
- Who should recognition be given by?





**Review Key Messages:** We often overlook recognition of others until we explore the impact it has had on our own lives.

- **Show Slide # 4: Key Concepts of Recognition**

This workshop is built on 4 Key Concepts. Indicate that during the workshop each concept will be examined more closely.

- **Show Slide #5: Key Concept 1**

**KEY CONCEPT 1:  
RECOGNITION IS AN ONGOING INTEGRAL PART OF THE MANAGEMENT PROCESS.**

Recognition is a philosophy and an attitude that should permeate an entire Program. **Remember: Special Olympics was built on the foundation of volunteerism and recognizing volunteers.** Volunteer recognition on an ongoing basis will be hampered if the Program does not embrace this idea.

- **Show Slide #6: Barriers to Recognition**

**Activity**

Ask:

- Can you identify organizational barriers to giving positive feedback and recognition to volunteers?

Utilizing flip chart or transparencies, record barriers (left side) and methods to overcome barriers (right side).

Answers you might receive and suggested method of recording:



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### Barriers

1. Time
2. Paid staff not feeling recognized
3. Funds

### Overcoming barriers

- Many forms of recognition require little time (for example: a handwritten note, an e-card, a smile and a thank you)
- Give joint recognition to paid and non-paid staff, recognized as a team
- Many forms of recognition require little money (for example: thank you notes, items made by athletes)

**Review Key Messages:** Recognition need not be expensive or time consuming – but it needs to be present everyday

- **Show Slide #7: Key Concept 2**

**CONCEPT 2:  
RECOGNITION CAN BE FORMAL OR INFORMAL AND CAN BE GIVEN ON MANY OCCASIONS  
DURING THE VOLUNTEER'S INVOLVEMENT WITH SPECIAL OLYMPICS.**

### Activity

Ask participants to list various types of formal and informal recognition. Use a flip chart or transparency to record answers.

Note: Informal Recognition is the day-to-day ways we say, "We couldn't do it without you!"

Ask:

What type of recognition is more valued by the volunteer? Discuss.

- **Show Slide #8: Formal Recognition**



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Review the major values of formal recognition:

1. Builds community spirit among volunteers
2. Publicly recognizes volunteers - attracts others to join.
3. Boosts volunteer's motivation.
4. Volunteer sees how much their service is valued.

- **Show Slide #9: Cautions in Formal Recognition**

Review some of the barriers that staff may encounter when implementing formal recognition programs:

1. Presuming a formal ceremony replaces daily "thank yous."
2. More costly - some people believe the money should be spent solely on the Program.
3. Poor attendance at formal recognition ceremonies
4. Time constraints – no time to plan events
5. Lack of personal presentations – a generic token for all volunteers

- **Show Slide #10: My Program Recognizes Volunteers...**

### Activity

Ask:

- How and when does your Program currently recognize volunteers?
- How could you improve on that?

Record participant answers on a flipchart or transparency and facilitate a brief discussion.

- **Show Slide #11: Times for Recognition**



Recognition should not be reserved for an annual banquet or ceremony. Review the following suggestions and ask participants for other ideas.

Times for recognition:

- Daily or weekly basis
- Monthly/ yearly basis
- Special occasions (birthday, anniversary date with Special Olympics, holidays, etc.)
- End of a project
- When they leave Special Olympics
- Before or after a Special Olympics competition

Other suggestions: During Games, National Volunteer Week, Annual Leadership Conferences, awards banquet, Family Conference, VIP reception

**Review Key Messages:** there are many ways to say, "thank you!" Open participants minds to think outside of the traditional certificate or honorary dinner.

- **Show Slide #12: Key Concept #3**

**KEY CONCEPT 3:  
RECOGNITION SHOULD BE MEANINGFUL TO THE RECIPIENT AND SHOULD BE GIVEN IN A TIMELY MANNER.**

Not everyone is motivated by the same incentives. Laura may yearn for an opportunity to join a committee or delegate a project, while Pablo would surely shrink from such a spotlight. Different types of people respond to different motivation. The following exercise will help participants understand that recognition must be personalized to the individual being acknowledged.

- **Show Slide #13: Appropriate Recognition for the Individual**

**Activity**

*Ask participants:*



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### **What kind of recognition do people who are motivated by accomplishment like?**

*Examples may include:*

- Include in staff meeting/ committee meetings
- Job assignments that offer increased responsibility
- Letter to family or boss
- Letter of commendation
- Delegate a project
- Provide opportunities to give input, be part of the planning process

### **What kind of recognition do people motivated by social interaction enjoy?**

*Examples may include:*

- Name in the newsletter
- Remembering birthday
- Personal note
- Going to lunch with supervisor
- Having a potluck meal or picnic with the committee

### **What kind of recognition do people motivated by power like?**

*Examples may include:*

- Chance to give input into the Program's future
- Job assignments that allow them to interact with the highest level of volunteer or paid staff
- Letters of commendation to boss, university magazine noting accomplishments
- Feature story in newsletter stating accomplishments
- Job assignments that offer increased responsibility
- Notes from supervisor, Executive Director, or Board of Directors stating the impact the volunteer has had on the program

### **Review Key Messages:**



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### ⇒ **Personalize the Recognition**

- The trap we frequently fall into is recognizing people the way we like to be recognized. For example, "I like to receive certificates, so I always give my volunteers certificates." The recognition must suit the individual being recognized!
- When you are recognizing many types of volunteers in one event, make certain that you plan different types of recognition. For example, include an apple with the school award, or a camera or photo for the public relations person, Remember, each award does not have to look alike.

### ⇒ **Recognize volunteers in a timely manner**

- Recognition should be given as close to the close of the activity as possible. (Offer an example from your Program or use this example: If someone chaired Summer Games, don't wait until the Winter Games to recognize him/her)

### • **Show Slide # 14: Key Concept #4**

**KEY CONCEPT 4:  
RECOGNITION CAN BE CREATIVE AND FUN TO GIVE AND RECEIVE. IT IS BEST  
WHEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROGRAM'S CULTURE AND THE VOLUNTEER'S TYPE OF SERVICE.**

### **Review Key Messages:**

### ⇒ **Be creative! Be innovative!**



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### **Activity**

Ask participants to think of some creative and thematic ways to recognize Special Olympics volunteers. Consider sport-centric ideas or Olympics themed awards. Discuss.

### **Show Slide # 15: Innovative Ways to Recognize Volunteers**

### **Activity**

Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to devise innovative ways to recognize the following people. Have small groups share their two most creative suggestions with the entire group.

\* Sample ideas are listed in the participant Guide. Encourage groups to develop unique suggestions.

- Day-of-event volunteers
- Office Volunteers
- Committee members
- Games and Area Management Teams
- Year-round volunteers

Remind participants to consider the following:

- What incentive/motivation drives the volunteer?
- When is an appropriate time to recognize the volunteer?
- How can you personalize the recognition?
- Be creative and innovative!!!!

Note: Do any of the suggestions involve athletes in the recognition ceremonies? This may be a good time to address the inclusion of athletes in recognizing volunteers.



- **Show Slide #16: Essential Guidelines of Successful Recognition**

### **Summary/Wrap-up/Evaluation**

In closing, offer the group some reminders of principles for successful volunteer recognition. Close with a review of the 4 Key Concepts. Ask participants to fill out the Evaluation Form located in the back of the *Participant Handbook*.

**END VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION MODULE**





### **Suggestions For Expanded Activities**

1. Take longer to hear peoples' experiences with volunteer recognition and discuss what you learn from these experiences.
2. Design a handout that has participants fill in information describing current recognition practices and new ideas generated at the workshop.
3. Give workshop participants a list of barriers to giving recognition and ask them to check off any that specifically apply to your organization. Spend more time working through a plan to overcome these barriers. (Barriers such as: Volunteers don't work at the office, Most volunteers are short term, etc.)
4. Give significantly longer time for the groups to generate new ideas for recognition.
5. Ask group to come up with ways to incorporate many types of recognition styles in a formal ceremony so that all who are honored truly feel personally acknowledged.
6. Suggest a follow-up discussion to determine if new and rejuvenated methods of recognition are being tried as a result of this seminar.
7. Invite your Special Olympics volunteers to the workshop and ask them to describe how the Program has recognized them and how it has been meaningful or not meaningful.



### **Additional Resources on Recognition**

#### On-Line Resources:

<http://energizeinc.com> Energize, Inc. is an international training, consulting and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism. Their goal is "to connect leaders of volunteers with resources, information and ideas generated from around the world."

<http://www.iave.org>. IAVE is "the only international organization with the mission to promote, celebrate, and strengthen volunteerism worldwide." The International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) worked in close cooperation with the United Nations Volunteers and was a major contributor in establishing the International Year of the Volunteer.

<http://e-volunteerism.com/> The "Electronic Journal of the Volunteer Community," e-Volunteerism is a quarterly online publication that caters to volunteer leaders and managers.