

High creativity trumps high cost everyday!

60 ways to recognize

1. Friendship Plants

There are a variety of plants that can be propagated very easily by simply rooting a cutting in water. Have a big plant like this in your office or room, and give a cutting out to people who have helped you or who are deserving of recognition!

2. Magnificent Marbles

Every member of your group should receive a marble. Then explain that this is a magnificent marble and that it should be given to someone who is deserving because they have done something magnificent! Each member is encouraged to visit with another member of the group who is deserving of receiving this marble and share why they are making this "award". This is a positive, non-threatening way to share positive strokes.

3. Wishing Well

Give every member of your group a penny, place a plastic wading pool in the middle of the room (or any wishing well facsimile) and request that members of the group throw their penny into the well while making a verbal wish. You may even adapt this by giving out more than one penny and having people make wishes in certain areas. This may be a good warm-up exercise of a goal setting program.

4. Notes

There are so many times that a simple note can have such great impact. Many people enjoy receiving praise in person, but there's something about having a note to refer back to that makes it very special. You can put a note on almost anything -- it's just the time you take to write it and send it that makes it special.

5. Leadership Scholarships

Present outstanding student leaders on your campus with scholarships. These can be awarded at a banquet or special luncheon. This serves as a great way to recognize student leaders. You may be able to participate in a campus awards program and publicize your organization.

6. Letters to Families

A powerful recognition tool is to take time to write a letter to students' families. Parents, guardian, relatives, and others all enjoy hearing about the special exploits of the students you work with. This is a powerful public relations tool as it enhances the status of your organization by promoting that you care, and it shows students that their involvement has had great impact. Many of us recognize that families have a difficult time understanding about the various leadership roles and student activities that take place in many residence halls.

This may help provide a bridge to greater understanding.

7. Limerick/poem

Write a goofy or fun limerick or poem to celebrate an individual or the accomplishments of a group! Pass it out at meetings or include it in your minutes. Use Dr. Seuss books for ideas :)

8. "To Do" Jar

Have people in your organization write the things that they like to do on a sheet of paper. After a particularly long day, meeting, or personal/organizational success, draw one of the cards and do what is written on the card! Your job as a leader is to assist in making sure that the activity takes place.

9. Success Jars

Have everyone in attendance at a meeting share a recent success on a card. Throughout the meeting, take time to draw out and read the cards.

10. Holiday Figures

Buy plain stars and have members decorate them with names and personal holiday wishes or messages. Display these figures (stars, candles, etc.) during the holidays--and give them to people before they leave campus for their holiday celebration.

11. GOALdfish !!

Few people enjoy creating goals--but everyone likes goldfish. When you set the goals at the beginning of a term or project, consider awarding a GOALdfish to all of those who achieve all of their goals. This is an inexpensive and creative way to encourage students to reach their goals and for you to recognize them for their accomplishments!

12. Poster-o-rama

Collect posters that are given to merchants (usually at the beginning of a term) and save them to attach to a note to give as mini-awards throughout the year.

13. Un-Banquet

Many times we strive to do so much recognition through the use of banquets that they become less and special occasions. If you are involved in planning too many banquets, make one an Unbanquet--and plan simple menus (make your own burgers or pizzas) along with special activities (team skits, a magician etc.) That are generally uncharacteristic of a banquet. Let people wear blue jeans, make them eat different courses by different people, do whatever it takes to shake things up!

14. Hats off to . . .

Cut top hats out of paper and award them to those who deserve a tip of the hat! This is a very inexpensive and creative way to share recognition!

15. Hot Ticket Award

Create an award that looks like a ticket, burn it around the edges, put it in a plastic sleeve--and you have that Hot Ticket Award--a perfect way to recognize those individuals or ideas that have burned bright!

16. Stirring Things Up Award

For those who have stirred things up in a positive way you may choose to recognize them by awarding them with a large wooden spoon. Attach a note or certificate to explain how they have mixed things up!

17. Blue Ribbon Exercise

Make out an outline of ribbon award for each member of your group or organization. Pass it around at the close of the meeting or workshop and encourage everyone to make positive comments on the ribbon.

18. Burning the Candle

Burn a candle at both ends and award it to someone who is pushing themselves to the limit! This might also work as a nice moment of a burnout program or workshop.

19. 12th Week Banquet

Most banquets celebrate beginnings or endings. A very difficult time can be the middle of the semester. Plan a mid-semester banquet to chase away the blahs--and remind students that they are appreciated!

20. Hugs and Back-Pats

Never underestimate the power that is carried by touching another! Talk is cheap, but by reaching out to another--you can indicate your approval, your understanding, your appreciation, and your support! Don't let anyone suffer from skin hunger!

21. Posi-Squad

Implemented at one of NACURH's own Annual Meetings, these awards (a button and certificate) are given to those people who make positive statements or exhibit positive behaviors. Sometimes groups can become too negative, and this award tends to refocus the group on the positive!

22. Starfish Award

There's a story about a gentleman who questions why a person is going to extraordinary measures to throw starfish back into the sea. When asked the question, the rescuer responds "because it makes a difference to this one . . ." A personal favorite of Daniel Siler, this short story emphasizes the importance of being involved. Giving a starfish made out of crushed tinfoil to those who are outstanding in reaching out to others makes for an appropriate and touching award.

23. Energizer Award

Give an award of a battery to the individual who is doing the most during a week to energize the group or organization. You may use one battery mounted on a plaque to you may present each honoree with an individual battery.

24. Work of Art

Have each member of your group create a drawing of a very special time or event . . . save these drawings, and later in the year, display each for a certain period of time in a very special place. Create a museum or art gallery-like atmosphere to highlight the individual's accomplishment or remembrance!

25. Appreciation Marbles

Give each member of your group a small jar. Each time they do something that you appreciate, give them a marble to place in that jar! This is made even more powerful if you attach a note, or share with them why you are making this award.

26. Key Chains

Give key chains to all of the students involved in leadership positions on your campus. Virtually all students have a need to carry a key , and an inscription such as "I'm a student leader" on the key ring helps to emphasize an important (but sometimes overlooked) point!

27. F.R.O.G.s

Frogs (an acronym "For Recognition of Growth") may be awarded to those who are maturing and developing in their leadership positions. You may choose to give plastic frogs or perhaps you'll even decide to give tadpoles to these outstanding members.

28. Membership Certificates

Give membership certificates to all of those who are involved in your organization. You'll be surprised at how pleased your members will be. Everyone has a need to feel included in a group or organization. These certificates are perfect for display on a bulletin board.

29. Words of Wisdom

Have each member give you a quotation that is a personal favorite. Compile these into a small quotation book and use the quotes to decorate bulletin boards, etc. You may also want to keep track of the quotes that come from the group.

30. C.A.R.P. Award

This award also utilizes goldfish in recognition of the fact that they are nothing but fancy little carp! C.A.R.P. is an acronym for Caring And Responsible Person, and a C.A.R.P. award should be made anytime on of your members has done something that is sensitive and supportive of others.

31. Letter Bombs

If someone is having a tough time, encourage all the members of the group to send him or her an encouraging note! Bombard them!

32. Staff Attack

Encourage members of your organization or staff to attack another organization during their meeting—bring treats or prizes and be a positive and energizing force! It's best to check with the organization or advisor to make sure that your attack will not come at an inappropriate time.

33. Buttons

Buttons can advertise a number of things. They can indicate membership, or they can indicate special recognition within your group. Use buttons as an inexpensive way of recognizing the efforts of others!

34. Bright Ideas

Give out a light bulb to those members of your organization who have had a bright idea!

35. Good Egg Award

Blow out an egg, decorate it, and award it to a member or you organization who has been a "Good Egg."

36. Superballs

Give everyone in your organization a superball as a reminder that they are super! You might even want to take a break in meeting to play some games with the superballs--free the child that's hidden inside you and the members of your organization!

37. Tapes

Have every member of your organization, committee or staff bring a CD or tape of their favorite song. Record this into a master copy and then share a duplicate with all the members of the group. This can make a good closure gift.

38. Create-A-Song

Rewrite the words to a favorite song or TV theme song to recognize a special event or the accomplishments of an individual. Make a tape of this song to play at meetings and award a copy to the deserving party.

39. Hangers

Give a plastic hanger to members of a group or organization that need encouragement to "hang in there" after a difficult meeting or week.

40. Outlet Awards

Give the award of a small outlet cover or plate to someone who has been an outlet for creative ideas or energy within your group or organization.

41. Opportunity . . .

Give packets of seeds to individuals at the beginning of a term or project. Tell them that the seeds are like opportunities--if treated with care, and given the right amount of nurture, they will flourish into something beautiful. Organizational tasks and individuals

are the same . . . at the end of the term or project ask what members did with their seeds.

42. Adjourn in Honor of . . .

As simple recognition, adjourn your meeting in honor of an individual or organization that has excelled. This should appear in the minutes.

43. Motivation Box

Have every member of your group write down something that motivates them on a card. Place this card in a box and share the motivation box ideas with any groups or individuals that could use ideas on enhancing motivation.

44. Coloring Book

Create a coloring book based upon the individuals and projects that are representative of your group. Try selling it as a fundraiser or hand it out at a meeting for those who like a doodle.

45. Personal Ads

Take out a personal ad in your campus newspaper to praise the accomplishments of individuals or groups that you work with. This is an inexpensive way to praise efforts and to share recognition in front of peers.

46. Day in Honor of . . .

Name an individual to honor on a certain day. You may also want to honor a type of individual (RA, Hall Director, etc.) on a certain day. Honor them with banners, balloons, small prizes, notes, etc.

47. Carpeting Award

Give small carpet samples to those students who are wearing out the carpet by visiting other students in an effort to encourage them.

48. Brushing-Up Award

Give an award of a paint brush to those members who are making efforts to improve their leadership skills and abilities by attending workshops, programs, and conferences. It's important to encourage this kind of activity.

49. Friends of the Halls

Make an award for administrators, faculty and staff members who make an outstanding contribution to the residence halls. This may be in the form of a small award, a certificate, a newspaper ad, or simply recognition at a banquet.

50. Link Award

Provide those individuals, offices, and organizations that have assisted you in your efforts with a piece of chain (may be plastic, mounted, two links, etc.). This symbolizes

their important role in providing an important link to you or your group accomplishing your goals. This is an inexpensive and catchy way to carry your message.

51. Balloons Prizes

Solicit prizes from local merchants and at the end of the year gives members an opportunity to break a balloon that corresponds to a prize.

52. Jar of Candy

Keep a jar of candy on your desk and only let individuals take a piece of candy from the jar if they can share an outstanding personal success or accomplishment with you!

53. Paper Clip Award

Give awards of giant paper clips to those who are working to keep your organization organized or working together--sometimes we forget how impactful those simple tasks can be.

54. Incident Reports

Most campuses utilize some type of incident form or documentation for the student conduct system. Why not take these forms and document positive behaviors? Have students meet with hearing panels or administrators to focus on their positive contributions! Encourage good behavior to repeat itself!

55. Wanted Posters

Utilize photos to create "Wanted for Good Behavior" posters to be placed throughout the office or hall!

56. Meeting Themes

Boost the morale of your organization of staff by sponsoring meeting themes (i.e., Beachwear, future occupation, movie star, favorite stuffed animal, etc.)

57. Report Cards

Give everyone reports cards at the end of the project or a term. This can be a very positive way to evaluate and recognize accomplishments! You may even choose to send these home to family members!

58. Phone Call

Have an administrator make a phone call to family members of an outstanding student to share their appreciation for the efforts of the student!

59. Dedications

Dedicate programs, activities, and events to the outstanding individuals on your campus. This really will cost nothing- just make mention of it on the advertisement or mention it in the introduction.

60. Bookmarks

Create bookmarks that highlight the outstanding accomplishments of individuals and have these bookmarks placed at the main desk of your campus learning/resource center.