

What is 100 Ways to Recognize?

“100 Ways to Recognize” contains a creative list of ideas you can use to recognize people at your schools. These ideas can be used in your RHA, NRHH, or hall council meetings for goal setting and encouragement, to recognize the efforts of groups and individuals throughout the residence hall system, and to increase group morale. Below there is a list of seven categories in which difference purposes of recognition can fall. They are Goal Setting, Group Morale, Encouragement, Simple Individual Recognition, More Involved Individual Recognition, External Recognition, and Miscellaneous.

We hope that the recognition plans outlined in this booklet will be used to recognize, celebrate, and encourage students for all of the work they do. We hope that it will celebrate student leaders for the special gifts that they all bring to our residence hall communities, and encourage them to continue to find ways to be involved in residence hall life. Have fun recognizing!

How do I use the 100 Ways to Recognize?

The beginning of list has recognition ideas that were chosen each year from 1964-2006 as the best new idea for that year. Following those are many other ways to recognize. Read the descriptions of each idea on the list. Choose a few for your group to work on and try. Since there are so many ideas, you can try different ideas on the list at different times. Remember to have fun!

Some of the ideas are one-time recognition ideas, and others involve continuous involvement. Maybe try a few of each to keep the recognition going and keep group morale up.

Category Descriptions

Goal Setting: These ideas will help you set goals for your group that are fun and motivational.

Group Morale: These ideas will help you to lift morale and group productivity through recognition.

Encouragement: These ideas will help your group when things are tough. They can help motivate your members to continue to work hard.

Simple Individual Recognition: These ideas will help you to recognize outstanding individuals. These ideas are simple in nature, as they require small amounts of preparation.

More Involved Individual Recognition: These ideas will help you to recognize outstanding individuals.

These recognition ideas are not difficult to complete, however they can take more preparation work than the ideas listed in the “Simple Individual Recognition” category.

External Recognition: These ideas will help you to recognize individuals outside of your organization.

These ideas tend to be more externally oriented than those in the “Individual Recognition” categories.

Miscellaneous: These ideas do not fit in any of the above categories.

1. Chancellor's Lunch (1964)

Arrange for the Chancellor to take an outstanding student leader to lunch once a month. This may also be implemented with the Dean or Director. This will be a good motivator for students and will provide top administrators with the exposure to your best students.

2. Carpeting Award (1965)

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

3. Brushing Up Award (1966)

Give an award of a paintbrush 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.

4. Plaques and Trophies (1967)

Plaques and trophies make outstanding mementos of involvement and achievement. If you cannot afford new trophies scavenge old ones that could be revamped by adding new inscription plates, by adding a more appropriate decoration at the top, etc. Work with a local dealer who is willing to assist you.

5. Friend of the Halls (1968)

Make an award to 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. Don't forget that one of the efforts of NRHH should be to recognize all of those who assist the halls - not just the students.

6. Link Award (1969)

Provide those individuals, offices, and organizations that have assisted you in your efforts with a piece of chain. This is an inexpensive and catchy way to carry your message.

7. Murals (1970)

Recognize the creative talents of your group or organization by allowing them to create a mural that pictorially or graphically represents the goals of the organization. Allow all members involved to sign the mural.

8. Videos (1971)

Create a video that talks about group goals, group projects, or allows senior members to give advice to those who will be future members. This is an excellent way for people to feel involved and by giving copies of the video to each member; you share a lasting souvenir of the year.

9. Balloon Prizes (1972)

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

10. Jar of Candy (1973)

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.

11. Paper Clip Award (1974)

Give awards of a giant paper clip to those who are working to keep your organization organized or working together - sometimes we forget how much of an impact those simple tasks can be.

12. Banners (1975)

Create banners that share items of praise to be displayed at your meetings or in the hallways near your office. You may also choose to display a banner at the office or room of the person you are recognizing.

13. Balloon Surprise (1976)

Share a Mylar balloon as a surprise; or for a better surprise, arrange to fill an office or room with balloons. This will take some coordination for entry and a lot of hot air, but it is sure to surprise the recipient.

14. Incident Reports (1977)

Most campuses use 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 for focus on their positive contributions! Encourage good behavior to repeat itself!

15. Wanted Posters (1978)

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

16. Jail (1979)

Arrest these "do-gooders" and place them in jail - a main lobby area of the student union would be a good place! Treat them with a lot of TLC in preparation for #84. This may also be adopted as a fundraisers, see if friends or colleagues will post bail money!

17. Trial (1980)

Have a trial to see if they are guilty of the good deeds they have been charged with. This can be played to the hilt as a melodrama. (You may want to consider videotaping for later showing.) The close of the Trial is a perfect opportunity for a going free party!

18. Meeting Themes (1981)

Boost the morale of your organization or staff by sponsoring meeting themes (i.e.: Beachwear, movie stars, etc.)

19. Report Cards (1982)

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

20. Flowers (1983)

Everyone enjoys flowers for special occasions. Why not share a bloom with those who are deserving of your thanks? It's a small deed that is sure to brighten their day!

21. Cinema Announcements (1984)

Usually it is common for a member of your campus cinema organization to make some announcements before the screening of the movie. Why not encourage the organization to recognize those that you work with?

22. Chalk the Walls (1985)

If it does not violate campus policy, why not share positive exclamations of praise by chalking them on the sidewalk? This is sure to draw attention to your "honoree" and to your organization for its recognition efforts!

23. Day off (1986)

Share recognition by trying to give an outstanding student leader a "day off." Try to find some volunteers that will assist them in making their day as effortless and enjoyable as can be (ideas might include doing laundry, cleaning dishes, typing memos, etc.)

24. Phone Calls (1987)

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

25. Dedications (1988)

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

26. Bookmarks (1989)

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

27. Letter to the President (1990)

Why not send a letter praising the contributions of your group or an individual to your state's Senator, Representative, or Governor, or perhaps the President of the United States? Politicians usually get letters of complaint or dissatisfaction. Many politicians will return positive letters, but even if they don't you can send a copy of the letter to who you are praising and they'll always have a letter that was sent to the President about their efforts.

28. Show them their Efforts (1991)

If your school nominates inductees into NRHH, rather than an application process, you send the nominee a copy of what great thing someone else has to say about them. This goes for all of the "Of the Month" award nominations as well. It always feels good to be nominated to win an award, or be inducted into an honorary organization, but it feels even better when you know why others value your dedication!

29. R.O.S.E. Award (1992)

"Recognition of Superior Effort" is given with a certificate and a rose. Choose a rose color that best matches the personality of your honoree.

30. Thank You! (1993)

Need I say more?

31. Twinkle, Twinkle (1994)

Constellations are wonderful, aren't they? So, to put things on a smaller, more individualized level, name a star after the best among your group.

32. E-Mail Baby! (1995)

Send a groovy message to those of a deserving nature. The Internet is a popular way of sending out some great vibes. Let the people who are worthy receive some great recognition. Everybody loves to get email!!!

33. Induction to the Association of Alumni and Friends of NACURH (AAFN) (1996)

The AAFN was formed to recognize outstanding individuals who have significantly contributed to improving the quality of life in the residence halls. The AAFN has been referred to as the "Hall of Fame" for NRHH Chapters and RHA's across the continent. Inductees are recognized at the NACURH Conference each May. A paragraph briefly detailing the individual's contribution is included in an annual booklet published and distributed among NACURH member schools. Inductees also receive an engraved paperweight. The deadline for inductees for each academic year is March 31st. Induction requires a \$100 contribution to the AAFN Fund and the submission of a brief (approximately 50-60 words) informational paragraph describing their contributions and accomplishments. The funds are used to support student leadership development and scholarships within NACURH. To induct an individual on your campus contact the National Advisor.

34. NRHH Pin and Apparel in honor of... (1997)

At your NRHH meeting, recognize someone who has exceeded the expectations of the group and wear your NRHH Apparel and Pins in honor of that person the next day.

35. "Liter" of the Week (1998)

At the beginning of the year the chapter decides who deserves the Leader/Liter of the Week Award. The winner is awarded with a bottle of soda and is allowed to keep it. The next week the previous winner chooses someone they believe is deserving of the honor and it continues that way for the rest of the year. Not only do the leaders get recognized for their leadership but they also get a frosty beverage!

36. Go Back In Time (1999)

Ever wished you were a kid again? By simply giving the gift of a children's book with a significant message, you can assist somebody to regress into his/her childhood and relive the "good ole' days." Might I suggest calling the Doctor (Seuss, that is!)? Did I Ever Tell You How Lucky You Are? or Oh, The Places You'll Go! And what about, "The Little Engine That Could"? There is no better way to tell someone, "I think you can, I think you can, I think you can..."

37. RC (2000)

Recognition Cola! Give a can of RC, along with a note to anyone that you would like to recognition. Whether they reached their goals, completed a task, passed a test, or were a great friend everyone deserved to be recognized

38. Build a Website (2001)

Build a website telling about the person/people and what a great job they have done or continue to do. This can be done at some place like geocities.com or on your own organization's web space.

39. Traveling Trophies (2002)

A chapter mascot, trophy, or any other item that has meaning to your group can be passed around each week to someone that has had the most successes, needs the biggest pick-me-up, or did the silliest thing can be the recipient of this award.

40. New Cars (2003)

Give everyone in the group a new car! Make award contingent upon some accomplishment or a record of participation. Attach the slogan "Way to Speed through the project". Unless you are quite wealthy we suggest you purchase Matchbox cars vs. the real thing!

41. Slide Shows (2004)

Take a number of pictures throughout the year to create a slide show for presentation at the end of the year. Paired with music, a slide show can be a powerful way to focus attention on the accomplishments of the year.

42. Prize Patrol (2005)

Have you ever seen Ed McMahon and the Publisher's Clearing House sweepstakes van? Take that idea and create life size congratulatory checks to deliver to rooms of students who have won an OTM. Take balloons, some food, and the large check right to their door and surprise them! Don't forget to bring a camera. When you get done, post all the photos on a Prize Patrol bulletin board so everyone can see!

43. Adjourn in Honor of... (2006)

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

44. Appreciation Marbles (2007)

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

45. Appreciation Weeks

Celebrate your custodial staff, hall directors or central staff by dedicating an entire week to them. Small gifts and notes can go a long way in thanking these individuals for all their hard work.

46. Bright Ideas

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

47. Bubbles

Let members of your organization know that they "Blow you away" with all their hard work and dedication. Bubbles can be a great way to take a break and relieve stress as well!

48. Burning the Candle

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

49. 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 to recognize the efforts of others!

50. Campus TV/Radio

Use your campus TV or radio station to promote outstanding achievements of organizations or individuals! This is an excellent way for students to be aware of the excellent pursuits of their peers.

51. C.A.R.P. Award

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

52. CDs

Have every member or you organization, committee or staff bring a CD or tape of his or her favorite song that reflects on the memories of this group or that reminds them on each other. Burn these songs into a master copy and then share a duplicate with all the members of the group. This can make a good closure gift!

53. Coloring Book

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

54. Corn

Cans of corn are inexpensive and although really “corny” can make someone laugh. Give a can of corn to the “Cream of the Crop” in your organization!

55. 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 a meeting and award a copy to the deserving party.

56. Door Decorations

Give each member a laminated door decoration that includes his or her name, position and organization logo.

57. E-cards

If you need a quick way to send any variety of messages or possibly lack the creativity to make or write a catchy slogan and card there are a number companies that provide free cards. Send to a few or many people as deserve recognition each day!

58. Energizer Award

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

59. Fan

You are doing a “fan”tastic job in your position. Give a fan to anyone that deserves to be recognized. Write a note on the back so they don’t forget why they were given this fan!

60. Flower Seeds

Give packets of seeds to individuals at the beginning of a term 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 the members did with their seeds.

61. Friendship Plants

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

62. F.R.O.G.s

F.R.O.G.s (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 will even decide to give tadpoles to these outstanding members.

63. GOALdfish

Few people enjoy creating goals - but everyone likes goldfish. When you set 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 for their goals and for you to recognize them for their accomplishments!

64. Good Egg Award

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

65. Hall of the Year

Form a committee to nominate, deliberate, and select a residence hall on your campus that is deserving of the award for being the "Hall of the Year". Selection criteria should be established early and should be communicated with all the halls wishing to participate in the program. Halls can submit bids or the selection committee can solicit bids from deserving halls. Suggested categories for consideration could include creativity, programming, involvement, support of RHA, and growth or improvement that has occurred throughout the year. Involve administrators in presenting the award to make it even more special.

66. Hangers

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

67. 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.

68. High-Five!

Trace your hand on a sheet of paper and write High-Five at the top! Below the hand write the word HAND vertically with the acronym Have A Nice Day! Include a personal note to make the persons day extra special!

69. Honor Chords

Honor your graduating members with Honor Chords to where during commencement. Chords can be given for being a member of the organization or for specific requirements that were met throughout their membership. They can be purchased through the NACUH Services & Recognition Office.

70. 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 the Hot Ticket Award. A perfect way to recognize those individuals or ideas that have burned bright!

71. Hugs and Back-Pats

Never underestimate the importance of being touched by someone. 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!

72. Need a Hug?

Trace two of your hands then connect them with string. You can then put on the hands on the string and write a note on the hands telling them why they are appreciated!

73. Lapel Pins

Many people like to collect lapel pins. Have your organization make an award in which each recipient receives a lapel pin for their accomplishments. Pins can be designed specifically for your group or organization through a number of companies. Search out the best deal for you!

74. Letter to Families

A powerful recognition tool is to take time to write a letter to students' parents, guardians and relatives. All enjoy hearing about the special talents 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 a great impact! Many of us recognize that families have difficult time understanding the various leadership roles and student activities that take place in many residence halls. This may help provide a bridge to greater understanding.

75. Light Bulbs

Spotlighting a member of your organization each week can be a great way to recognize individuals and also get to know more about them. Read off facts about each member and have the rest of the group guess who you are talking about. The secret individual gets a light bulb or flashlight for being the "Spotlight" of the week!

76. Limerick/Poem

Write a limerick or poem to celebrate an individual or the accomplishments of a group! Pass it out at meeting or include it in your minutes.

77. Magnificent Marbles

Every member of your group should receive a marble. You 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.

78. Notes

There are so many times that a simple note can have a great impact. Many people enjoy receiving praise in person, but there is 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.

79. Origami Metaphor

This recognition idea is made specifically for leaders in housing and or residence life. You take a couple square pieces of paper, and instructions on how to make an origami piece. You also attach the following verse: The actual residence hall with its staff is plain, like this piece of paper. But when a staff and a little bit of work is added, both can be turned into something beautiful. Thanks for all the hard work you do!

80. OTM Blurbs

Each month, compile a short summary of each OTM that was submitted to your campus level. Take all those summaries and create a document with all OTMs submitted to your campus level. Finally, distribute it to all your halls, staff members, and housing personnel to post and read about. This way, EVERY OTM nominee can be recognized for the great work that they did in the past month. It's simple and the database can do it for you!

81. Outlet Award

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.

82. Paper Plate Awards

Recognition for the most random acts can be very enjoyable! Give each member of your organization a paper plate and some markers. Have them design an award for anyone in the room. The awards can be serious or silly. Have everyone present their awards to the others members!

83. Personal Ads

Take out a personal ad in you 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 their peers.

84. Publicity Releases

Utilize your University relation's experts on your campus to complete publicity releases about efforts of the individuals that you work with. Students like to see their names in local newspapers and usually it does not cost anything.

85. Raisins

Give everyone in your organization or on a committee a box of raisins for "Raisin' the Standard". Be sure to personalize the box of raisins with a note letting them know that their effort recently has set a new standard that others will have to strive for in the future.

86. Resident of the _____

Appoint a committee in your residence hall organization to select a resident of the (day, week, month, etc). Resident of the _____ can receive a letter of congratulation from the Director of Housing, the Chancellor, and the Hall Association President. You can also announce the selection in the newspaper, on the campus radio, etc. Post the winner's picture too!

87. Snap cup

Take a huge cup and decorate it so that is represents your group. When you feel like your group has some tension just needs a boost have everyone write down something nice about the group or a person in that group. After everyone has put it in the snap cup, you then pick them out and read them. After each one everyone snaps!

88. S'mores

Everything is "s'more" fun with you!! Everyone loves s'mores and they love being told they are good company. If you can not make s'mores, grab a s'mores candy bar.

89. 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." Giving a dried starfish to those who are outstanding in reaching out to others makes for an appropriate and touching award.

90. 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 mixing spoon. Attach a note or certificate to explain how they have mixed things up!

91. Success Jars

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

92. Sunglasses

Sunglasses come in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Let someone know that "You shined so brightly, I had to put on my shades!" Everyone can look ridiculous together wearing hot pink children's sunglasses!

93. Superballs

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

94. Thumbs Up!

Have your executive board decide on someone that did something great since your last meeting. Make them a big "Thumbs Up" and write a note explaining why you chose them. Have each member of the executive board sign it and present it at your next General Assembly Meeting.

95. 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.

96. Truck

Everyone has a bad week. Pass around a truck in your group each week to the person that could use the encouragement to "Keep on Truckin'" until things get better. Let them know that you are behind them and that if they need any help you are always there for them!

97. Twizzlers (Pull 'n Peel)

Did an individual or group within your organization just complete a large event or program? Give them a bag of Twizzlers Pull 'n Peel for "Pulling the Program Together". Also, a wagon is appropriate for "Pulling the Program Together" as well..

98. 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 for a goal setting program. Another variation of this activity is to attach a penny to a piece of paper. Give each person enough pennies and paper to write one wish for everyone else in the room. Present these wishes to each at the end of the meeting.

99. Words of Wisdom

Have each member give you a quotation that is a personal favorite. Compile these into a small quotation booklet and use the quotes to decorate bulletin boards, etc.

100. 100 Grand

100 Grand candy bars are a great way to let someone know that they are “Grand” at what they do or that they make the organization “grand”. Plus who couldn’t use a chocolate fix in the middle of the meeting or when they check their mailbox?

**If you would wish to submit new ideas to add to the list please feel free to email them to the NACURH Services & Recognition Office Director to submit to the NRHH National Board.