

# 93 Ways to Recognize

## 1. T-shirts

T-shirts are an excellent way to promote unity and community. They can also be used as awards and motivators. Create a unique design, or capture a phrase that is representative of the group that you are working with, and award the shirts to deserving members. Shirts are inexpensive motivators (usually only \$5.00 to \$7.00 for small quantity orders). Having the group use fabric paints and create their own designs can save more money.

## 2. Friendship Plants

There are a variety 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 cutting out to people who have helped you or who are deserving of recognition.

## 3. 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 deserves it 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.

## 4. 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.

## 5. 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 House Council President. You can also announce the selection in the newspaper, on the campus radio, etc. Post the winners picture too!

## 6. Notes

There are so many times that a simple note can have a 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.

## 7. Member of the Month

Your House Council can select a member of the month. This can be a simple program based on nominations and a small selection committee. Refreshments can be served in honor of this person, and the association may want to present the winners with a certificate. This motivates members and recognizes your student leaders.

## 8. Leadership Scholarships

Present outstanding student leaders on your campus with scholarships on each class level. Students can fill out applications, and the scholarships 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 campus awards programs and publicize your organization.

## 9. 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, and involvement, support of House Council/Area Governments, and growth or improvement that has occurred throughout the year. Involve administrators in presenting the award to make it even more special.

## 10. Dinner with the Execs

New students can often be very shy about approaching Executive Board members of your organization. This simple program gives them a fantastic opportunity to meet the board in a non-threatening and enjoyable way. Try to have dinner (or lunch, breakfast) with different residence hall representatives or staff members each week (or bi-weekly or monthly). The enhanced and improved communication that you can expect from taking time to communicate more closely will provide you with rich dividends that you can draw on throughout the year. To make this more special, you may decide to eat off campus.

## 11. Letter to Families

A powerful recognition tool is to take time to write a letter to students' families. Parents, guardians, 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 a 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 understanding.

## 12. 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.

### **13. 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.

### **14. Success Jars**

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

### **15. You're a STAR**

Buy plain stars and have members decorate them with names and personal wishes or messages. Display these stars in a visible location.

### **16. 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! You could also provide a bag of the goldfish crackers instead of a live fish.

### **17. Un-Banquet**

Many times we strive to do so much recognition through the use of banquets that they become less than special occasions. If you are involved in planning too many banquets, make a Un-Banquet --- plan a simple menu along with special activities 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!

### **18. 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.

### **19 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 for ideas that have burned bright!

### **20. 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!

### **21 Blue Ribbon Exercise**

Make an outline of a 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.

### **22. 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 memento of a burnout of a program or workshop.

### **23. 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!

### **24. 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!

### **25. 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.

### **26. 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.

### **27. 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!

### **28. 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 the jar! This is made even more powerful if you attach a note, or share with them why you are rewarding them.

### **29. 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.

### **30. Service Pin**

Consider giving service pins to those students who have been involved in your residence life program for 1,2, and 3 semesters. These pins need not to be given out on a competition basis - they should be distributed based on involvement. This is a wonderful way to recognize on-going service. Depending on the cost of your pins, this can be an expensive project.

### **31. Key Chain**

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

### **32. Medallions**

Get in touch with one of your art students or the art department faculty members to make small medallions out of clay. Let each be glazed and fired in a different way to promote uniqueness. Present these as awards of thanks and praise when someone was helpful.

### **33. 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'll even decide to give tadpoles to these outstanding members.

### **34. Membership Certificates**

Give membership certificates to all those who are involved in your organization. You will 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.

### **35. Door Decorations**

Give members a laminated door decoration that includes their name, position and organization logo.

### **36. 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.

### **37. 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.

### **38. Letter Bombs**

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

### **39. 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.

### **40. 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!

### **41. Bright Ideas**

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

### **42. Good Egg Award**

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

### **43. Campus TV/Radio**

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

### **44. 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!

### **45. Tapes or CDs**

Have members or you organization, committee or staff bring a record 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!

### **46. 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.

### **47. Hangers**

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

### **48. 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.

### **49. Opportunities**

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 projects ask what the members did with their seeds.

**50. Adjourn in Honor of...**

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

**51. Celebration**

Spread streamers about your meeting room to celebrate an accomplishment. Take time to revel in your successes!

**52. 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 of individuals that could use ideas on enhancing motivation.

**53. 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 meetings.

**54. 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.

**55. University Signs**

Many universities have announcement signs near the administration building or the heart of campus. See if you can encourage an administrator to recognize efforts of those you work with by placing a message on the signs.

**56. Honor of...**

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

**57. Leader Trees**

Plant small trees on your campus to honor student leaders. Work with administration to find an area in need of planting and create a living testimony to the outstanding efforts of your top student leaders.

**58. Proclamations**

Have your campus Chancellor, Dean of Students or Director of Residence Life issue proclamations that recognize the achievements and involvement of outstanding students and groups.

**59. Slide Shows**

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.

**60. New Cars**

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

**61. Chancellor's Lunch**

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 outstanding students.

**62. Carpeting Award**

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

**63. Brushing Up Award**

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.

**64. Plaques and Trophies**

Plaques and trophies make outstanding mementos of involvement and achievement. If you can't 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.

**65. Friend of the Halls**

Make an award to administrators, maintainers, 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 to recognize all of those who assist in the halls - not just the students.

**66. Murals**

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.

**67. Videos**

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.

**68. Balloon Prizes**

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.

**69. 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.

**70. Paper Clip Award**

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.

**71. Banners**

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.

**72. Balloon Surprise**

Share a Mylar balloon as a surprise or for an even greater 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.

**73. 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 for focus on their positive contributions! Encourage good behavior to repeat itself!

**74. Wanted Posters**

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

**75. Jail**

Arrest these "do-gooders" and place them in jail – Campus Center Concourse would be a good place! Treat them with a lot of TLC in preparation for #80. This may also be adopted as a fund-raiser - see if friends or colleagues will post bail money!

**76. Trial**

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 - and you may want to consider videotaping for later showing - at the close of the Trial is a perfect opportunity for a going free party!

**77. Meeting Themes**

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

**78. Report Cards**

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 these home to family members.

**79. Flowers**

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!

**80. Cinema Announcements**

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

**81. Chalk the Walls**

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

**82. Day Off**

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.)

**83. Phone Calls**

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

**84. Dedications**

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.

**85. 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.

**86. Letter to the President**

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.

**87. Show them their Efforts**

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!

**88. R.O.S.E.**

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

**89. Thank You!**

Need I say more?

**90. Twinkle, Twinkle**

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.

**91. E-mail Baby!**

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!!!

**92. PEZ Award For Providing Energy and Zest.**

Give PEZ and a dispenser to someone. You can also do this if they are "indispensable" by gluing the dispenser shut.

**93. Rock on**

Present rocks to members who keep spirit up, or to keep motivation. You can paint them.