

CHALLENGE



IDEAS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF APPRECIATION

There's a quotation by the Roman poet Ovid that's especially appropriate when considering faculty appreciation efforts: *"The spirited horse, which will try to win the race of its own accord, will run even faster if encouraged."* Teachers, counselors, administrators, support staff members, and others at school take pride in the work they do and they are compensated for it in their paychecks. They do their work of their own accord and for various reasons. But have you ever noticed how much more effort people put into their jobs if they know their work is valued and appreciated?

We've probably all been in situations that have made us feel unappreciated and undervalued. And while the efforts we make are not usually done for recognition or appreciation, still, to find out that the efforts are not valued by some people can be very demoralizing. It can make us feel, for a while, like we don't want to do anything. And we all probably have been in situations where the reverse was also true—feeling appreciated made us work all the harder for those who valued our efforts.

As a student leader, it's important

for you to show appreciation for the work others do that affects you and your peers. Sure, it might be their job to teach, sweep floors, drive a bus, sort the mail, or cook lunch. But the rewards of any job go far beyond a paycheck. And there is a huge difference between happily devoting yourself to significant work you want to do and grudgingly doing what is required so you can get paid.

Showing appreciation to those in the school community for what they do will go a long way toward creating a positive school climate where everyone "runs faster." If your organization is looking for new ways to show appreciation to faculty and staff members, read on.

ORGANIZE A PERSONAL-SERVICE DAY for faculty and staff members. Offer timesaving services like on-site car washes or detailing, dry cleaning pickup and delivery, holiday gift wrapping, or even dinners to go.

CREATE A TREE OF THANKS on a wall at school. Write the names of faculty and staff members who have helped with your

organization's activities on colored leaves. Include a brief note about each of their contributions and place the leaves around the tree. Add to it as the year proceeds.

DESIGN A THEMED DINNER. On a day when teachers have to stay late for parent conferences, provide each teacher with a meal designed around a theme, e.g., a tackle box with a tuna sandwich, fish-shaped crackers, and gummy worms.

SPRUCE UP THE FACULTY RESTROOMS with a basket of scented hand sanitizer, hand lotion, and air freshener.

PLACE A BASKET of hot cocoa mixes, instant flavored coffees, and spiced cider packets in the teacher's lounge with a sign that says "You warm our hearts!"

OFFER TO SCRAPE WINDSHIELDS of faculty and staff members after snow or freezing rain falls during the school day. Your organization's members with afternoon study halls or released time can volunteer for this activity.

DECORATE THE DOORS of each

classroom with a piece of poster board on which the teacher's name is written and the words "We appreciate that..." Hang a marker on a string next to the door and make announcements encouraging students to write notes on the posters throughout the day.

HAVE EACH STUDENT BRING IN ONE FLOWER for their first period teacher. Provide the teachers with inexpensive flower vases in which to assemble their varied bouquets.

LEAVE A RIBBON in each mailbox with a note that says "We can clearly see we have the best staff around. If you would like your car windows washed tomorrow so you can see clearly, please tie this ribbon to your car antenna."

PUT A LOTTERY TICKET in each teacher's mailbox with a note saying, "We are lucky to have such great teachers!"

AWARD "FACULTY SPIRIT" CERTIFICATES to teachers for their participation in your activities.

DESIGNATE A SPECIAL DAY for the cooks, custodians, bus drivers, secretaries, and others. On their day, hang signs in the halls reminding students to "thank the cooks" for the work they do. Provide a treat (see sidebar) for each member of the staff group you are recognizing.

HOST A STAFF APPRECIATION BREAKFAST each semester. Plan the breakfast around a theme, such as "We are thankful for our teachers" near Thanksgiving, or "We love our teachers" near Valentine's Day. Have students

decorate the faculty lounge, contribute homemade breakfast dishes, provide coffee, tea, and juice, and clean up afterwards. Solicit door prizes from area businesses.

LITTLE GOODIES

Show your appreciation for staff members with some of these items:

- Key chains with a light on the end with the words "teachers light the way."
- Bag of unpopped popcorn with a note "we're just popping by to say thanks for all you do!"
- Colorful duct tape with note that "this place would fall apart without you"
- Magnetic memo board imprinted with your school mascot
- Small bottle of hand lotion with the words "thanks for a smooth year"
- Painted rock paperweights with "[School name] teachers rock!"
- Small bag of coffee with "thanks a latte for all you do!"
- Pack of Extra gum with "[School name] teachers are extra special!"
- Clothes hangers with attached note stating "thanks for hanging in there!"
- Light bulb with a note that "you make our world shine" or "thanks for being a shining example"
- Hot soup lunch with a sign that "our teachers are souper!"
- Mini carrots and veggie dip in the teachers lounge with a sign that "We know you are 24-carrot teachers!"
- Root beer or Coke floats during lunch periods with a note that "you float our boats"
- Sub sandwiches for lunch with a sign that "there's no SUBstitute for you"
- Mini fan noting that "we have the coolest teachers"
- Highlighters in fun colors with a note that "highlighting all you do is impossible!"
- Bag of nuts noting "we're nuts about you!"
- Flower seed packet indicating "you help us bloom to our full potential."
- M&M candies noting "you're marvelous & magnificent!"
- Starburst candies noting "we're bursting with appreciation for you"

