



4-H Quick Tips How To Say Thank You

SAYING THANK-YOU:

Whoever said "It's better to give than to receive" knew the real meaning of the words "thank you." A thank you is the ultimate gift, no matter how it is expressed. It becomes a memory stored in one's heart and mind forever. In 4-H we have many unique opportunities to express our thanks to 4-H'ers, donors, volunteers, parents, school administrators and others. How you choose to thank these people can make a real difference in your 4-H program.

DO:

- Match the thank you with the gesture.
- Remember a thank you is always appropriate.
- Appreciate the little things someone does for you.
- Be timely with your thank you. The sooner, the better! When there are only a few notes to write, try to send within a week. If there are numerous notes to be written send them within four to six weeks. Write a few a day.
- Be specific with your thanks. Include the importance of job accomplished, quality of performance, specific things they did, etc.
- Add your personal touch to the thank-you.
- Plan ahead for when thank you's are predictable.
- Set an example and involve 4-H'ers, volunteers, friends, etc. in thank you's.
- Be creative. Creativity comes in all shapes and sizes and suits all budgets.
- Be prepared. Put away a few thank-you cards or gifts so that they are ready and waiting when you need them.
- Save your favorite thank you's and record them to share with others.

DO NOT:

- Overdo or underplay a thank you.
- Spend a lot of money to be creative.
- Neglect the importance of 4-H'ers writing thank you's to donors, volunteers, speakers, etc.
- Write the same handwritten or typed note to common groups. Everyone should be

acknowledged personally and sincerely.

- Use the same thank you notes year after year.

IDEAS:

- Thank four people everyday for something!
- Create a thank you chain letter.
- Create a thank you project.
- Write a humorous thank you poem.
- Take thank you notes to DPA, camp, etc., and have 4-H'ers write notes while at the event. Collect the notes to insure they are mailed.
- Use hotel/motel stationery to write thank you notes for specific events such as State Congress, National Congress, etc.
- Have a class on writing thank you notes.
- Have a thank you party and let each person write a dozen notes.
- Give a thank you award such as "World's Greatest Friend of 4-H".
- Give edible thank you's with clever notes attached. (Examples: Give a basket of bubble gum with a note that says, "Thanks for your help...without you we would have blown it!"; Fortune Cookies with note that says "We're fortunate to have your help!" Soup mix with note that says "You're SOUPER!"; Keyring with a note that says "Thanks for 'Key-ping' us in the loop.")
- Use other items rather than food items with special notes attached. (Examples: Measuring cup with note that says "You've given our 4-H'ers joy beyond measure!" Seed Packet with note that says "You've planted the seed of success!" Batteries with note that says "Thanks for energizing our 4-H program!", etc.)
- Give a good deed basket filled with band-aids, chicken soup, bath soap or anything comforting.
- Personalize thank you by focusing on the day or month the person was born. Use gems and birth stones and sayings such as "You're a jewel of a 4-H sponsor".
- Think of clever ways to use a person's name such as rhyming the name, quoting a famous saying, or using acronyms to spell

out the name of the person you are thanking.
(Example: "You left your Mark" "Gail -
Great Agent I like".)

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION:

Volunteer appreciation and recognition is so important to a successful 4-H program. Here are some ideas of ways - both big and small - to thank them.

- Smile
- Treat them to a soda
- Reimburse expenses
- Send a birthday card, Valentine, Thanksgiving card, St. Patrick's Day Card or other holiday or fun cards etc. to volunteer and family
- Give service stripes or service pins
- Maintain a coffee bar
- Have 4-H'ers make homemade goodies and present them
- Plan annual recognition program
- Accommodate personal needs and problems
- Respect his / her wishes
- Provide good pre-service training/orientation
- Hold rap sessions and ask for input
- Enable to grow on the job
- Create pleasant surroundings
- Enlist to train other volunteers
- Take time to talk
- Make good plans
- Provide scholarships to volunteer conferences or workshops
- Utilize as consultants or on advisory committee
- Surprise with coffee and cake
- Celebrate National Volunteer Week in April with special ceremony
- Nominate them for volunteer awards/offices.
- Carefully match volunteer with job
- Praise them to their friends and peers
- Provide in-service training
- Plan staff and volunteer social events
- Rent billboard space for public laudation
- Accept their individuality
- Plan occasional extravaganzas
- Promote a "Volunteer-of-the-month" program
- Send letter of appreciation to their employer
- Plan a "Recognition Edition" of 4-H or volunteer newsletter
- Present them with a reusable name tag
- Send commendatory letters to prominent

public figures

- Say "We missed you"
- Award special citations for extraordinary achievements
- Plan a theater party
- Have a picnic
- Have 4-H'ers adopt a volunteer "Secret Pal"
- Have a volunteer planning retreat
- Create a volunteer bulletin board with announcements, pictures, and recognition
- Almost any idea you think of is certain to be appreciated!

REMEMBER: GRATITUDE IS THE BEST ATTITUDE!

Sources: The Thank You Book by Robyn Freedman Spizman, Longstreet Press, Inc., 1994.

"101 Ways To Give Recognition To Volunteers" by Vern Lake, Volunteer Services Consultant.

"Recognizing and Retaining 4-H Volunteers" class materials by Jenny Jordan, Extension 4-H Specialist, 1999.

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