



YMCA of the USA  
101 North Wacker Drive  
Chicago, Illinois 60606-7386  
312-977-0031

E. H. Clark, Jr.  
Chairman, National Board

David R. Mercer  
National Executive Director

December 1993

Dear YMCA Executive:

If Christmas is the giving season, then nobody embodies the spirit of giving better than the 430,000 volunteers who serve the YMCA nationwide. In honor of the time and talent that they so generously share, I am pleased to give you a Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition Package.

We planned to sell it through the YMCA Program Store, but then we decided that every branch should receive a free copy. It's part of our goal of increasing the number of program and fundraising volunteers in the YMCA movement.

The package contains everything from reproducible brochures to recruitment posters to recognition certificates. There's even a form for ordering some clever recognition gifts.

Also take a look at "Acting on Principle." This paper, endorsed last year by the National Board of YMCAs, is a good primer on working with volunteers.

For more information, *The Seven Rs of Working with Volunteers: A YMCA Resource Kit* will soon be available through the Program Store. Details about it are enclosed. And of course, our national staff is ready to help. For questions on the package or on anything related to working with volunteers, please contact Celeste Wroblewski, Associate Director for Volunteer Development, at 800-872-9622.

Best wishes to you and your volunteers for a blessed holiday season and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

David R. Mercer  
National Executive Director

cc: Executive Cabinet

YMCA Mission:  
To put Christian principles  
into practice through  
programs that build healthy  
body, mind, and spirit for all.

# How to Use the YMCA Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition Package

Your **YMCA Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition Package** includes the menu of items below. We think you'll find the items and suggestions for how to use them helpful in recruiting and recognizing volunteers.

- **Acting on Principle: Goals and Guidelines for Volunteer Development in the YMCA Movement**

Before beginning any recruitment campaign, you'll want to review this paper. Consider it a crash course on working with volunteers. It contains principles and practices for a sound, successful volunteer program. It's designed so you can photocopy it. The first page can also be photocopied by itself. Give it to all paid staff members as a reminder of the Y's philosophy.

- **Advance Publication Notice for *The Seven Rs of Volunteer Development: A Resource Kit***

This resource kit is an easy-to-use, comprehensive guide to working with volunteers, especially program volunteers. It contains a videotape, an audiotape, and dozens of tips, ideas, and ready-to-photocopy forms on everything from volunteer job descriptions to recordkeeping. It can be used by your staff members as a simple reference for answering specific questions (e.g., How do I evaluate a volunteer?) or by a team or task force as a step-by-step guide for starting and operating a volunteer program. An order form will be mailed to you.

- **How to Use the Volunteer Logos and Colors**

Instructions for the correct use of the volunteer recruitment and recognition logos, which contain two different themes:

**Do Something Good. Volunteer at the YMCA.** (recruitment)

**YMCA Volunteers Do Something Good** (recognition)

In a world with so many problems, people often throw their hands up and say, "What can I do?" Our recruitment and recognition themes convey the message that there are things—simple, good things—people can do to make the world a better place. By serving their communities through the YMCA, volunteers become part of a force for good. Volunteers do something good for the YMCA, for the community, and for themselves.

- **Recruitment Logos**

Camera-ready artwork in three different sizes. Use it on print pieces, as well as small giveaway items such as pencils. You can also blow the logo up into a large 17-by-22-inch poster.

### • **Recruitment Tips from Word-of-Mouth to Advertising**

Dozens of ideas on how to recruit volunteers for your programs. Remember, every good recruitment message has three parts: 1) the need or problem (not the YMCA's needs, but the kids' needs, the members' needs, etc); 2) what the volunteer can do about it (the various volunteer opportunities); and 3) what the volunteer will get out of it (how he or she will benefit from it or enjoy it) (McCurley and Lynch, 1989). Your best targets are people with a connection to the YMCA —members, program members (participants), and others who benefit from the program as well as their parents, relatives, friends, co-workers, fellow church members, fellow club members, etc.

### • **Recruitment Brochure Shell: "You can help out anywhere. But you belong at the YMCA."**

Take this brochure to your printer or use it as inspiration for your own writing and design. It can even be photocopied. Add information, either specific or general, about the kinds of volunteer opportunities at your YMCA and who to contact for more information. Give it to prospective volunteers. Keep copies at the front desk and around the Y. Borrow the headline and copy to use in other printed pieces; for example, your program schedule. Thanks to the Philadelphia MRC, who gave us permission to adapt this headline from an ad originally developed by Alice Sawyer, MRC Associate Director.

Print the brochure on 60-lb. cover weight stock. You can use any of the three suggested logo colors: PMS 2665 (purple), 320 (blue-green), or 195 (red).

### • **Mini Brochure Shell: "You can help out anywhere. But you belong at the YMCA."**

A gem of an idea. Add your YMCA's name, address, and phone to the back of this tiny little brochure, the size of a business card. Great to take to meetings, large gatherings, speeches, and presentations. Ask local businesses and other organizations to include it in their mailings.

Print this brochure on 80-lb.-weight cover stock. You can use any of the three suggested logo colors: PMS 2665 (purple), 320 (blue-green), or 195 (red).

### • **Recruitment Posters**

Five ready-to-photocopy, 8 1/2-by-11-inch posters to hang around the YMCA, and even around town. You can put a detailed job description on one poster, or the basic facts about several related jobs; for example, youth sports volunteer jobs. Or, you can list many different opportunities, using small blurbs; for example, "Give the gift of better health. Become a volunteer aerobics instructor. You'll stay in shape and help others do the same." Don't forget to list the name and phone number of who to contact for more information.

### **Make a Connection that Counts**

### **Do Something Good. Volunteer at the YMCA.**

### **Help a Child Grow Strong**

## **The YMCA's Most Wanted**

### **Talent Search**

Put them in your lobby, locker room, even the bathroom stalls. You can also use them as flyers. Photocopy them in different colors. You can also blow them up into 17-by-22-inch posters.

- **Working with the Media for Volunteer Recruitment**

See this how-to piece for detailed instructions on adapting and using the enclosed:

### **Public Service Announcements**

**Fact Sheet:** Volunteers and the YMCA

**Editorial Opinion**

**News Release** (for a recruitment campaign kickoff)

**Volunteer Profiles** (see the recognition items)

In addition to providing these to media outlets in your town, you can use the information in your own newsletters, brochures, and flyers.

- **Recruitment Print Ads**

The ads feature three different messages:

**You can help out anywhere. But you belong at the YMCA.**

(One large ad with a photo plus two smaller ads to fit the extra space that newspapers and magazines sometimes have for public service ads.)

**We couldn't pay these people to come to the YMCA.**

(One large ad with a photo.)

**Do Something Good. Volunteer at the YMCA.**

(Two small ads to fit the extra space that newspapers and magazines sometimes have for public service ads.)

See if your local newspaper will run them as public service ads. Or try to get a local business to pay for it. Volunteerism is a cause that many businesses like to support. (Maybe you can also solicit a donation to help you start a volunteer program at your YMCA.)

If you have the money, buy the space. Use them in your own newsletters, brochures, and flyers.

You can use the photos provided or select a different photo from your own files or from the Photo File of the YMCA of the USA. Call Association Development and Communications: 800-872-9622.

- **Volunteer Recognition: An Overview and 133 Ideas for Volunteer Recognition**

Dozens of ideas for how to say thank you to those who give their time and talent. Remember, recognition is an attitude; not an annual dinner.

- **Order Forms for Volunteer Recognition and Gift Items from Sports Awards and Beerntsen's**

Finally, ready-made gifts that are relatively inexpensive because they have been ordered in large quantities. Many of the gifts can be customized to include the name and logo of your YMCA. You can also order gifts that are higher or lower in quality and price. Listed below is a sample plan for using them to mark how many hours of service each volunteer has contributed. Of course, you can also adapt this to fit your own needs. Some YMCAs may wish to set different numbers of hours as milestones, or to give gifts after one year of service, two years of service, and so on.

The plan is up to you. Create a team of both paid and volunteer staff members to design your own recognition program. The big question to ask and answer: Based on who our volunteers are, what would make them feel appreciated? Remember, the most effective recognition is the most personal: birthday celebrations, congratulations for a particular accomplishment, etc. Some people prefer certificates to hang in their office; others want a handy gift to use at home. You can also use the enclosed recognition logos on other kinds of items: business card holders, fanny packs, even radios!

The number for Sport Awards is 800-621-5803. In Illinois, it's 312-282-8060. They sell all but the chocolate bar, which comes with its own ordering instructions, below. (Thanks to Sports Awards for underwriting a portion of the reproduction costs of this package.)

**Do Something Good chocolate bar**—A sweet idea. Keep them on hand (locked up, unless you have the discipline of a saint) to give to volunteers anytime you catch them doing something good. (This gift must be ordered separately, directly from the confectioner. See the Beerntsen's order form, enclosed. The phone number is 414-684-9616.)

**Balloons, Buttons, and Decals**—Use at volunteer recognition events or to attract attention as a recruitment device. Great for kids, too!

**Soft vinyl keychain:** Give to volunteers once they make a formal commitment to volunteer. Even better, put a fake but symbolic key to the YMCA on the chain.

**Name badge**—give it to volunteers their first day on the job.

**Certificate**—An all-purpose, two-color certificate that can be used alone or in conjunction with any of the gifts below.

**Refrigerator-magnet frame**—25 hours. Pop out the logo to create two magnets: the logo as well as a frame for a photo on the fridge! A plus: Give volunteers a picture of themselves on the job, or of the kids or people they serve. Even better: Ask the kids the volunteers serve to decorate the frame with paint, sequins, glitter, etc. Also a great idea for youth volunteers, who love to see their picture on the refrigerator at home.

**Enamel pin**—50 hours.

**Mug**—100 hours. Fill it with the volunteer's favorite things: jelly beans, chocolate kisses, high-quality coffee beans, herbal tea.

**Sticky notes and holder**—150 hours. Thank volunteers for their noteworthy accomplishments. Every time they send a note, they'll be advertising the fact that they volunteer.

**T-shirt**—200 hours. Tell them they fit the picture of an ideal volunteer to the tee! Kids will like these, too.

**Travel alarm with photo slot**—250 hours. Thank them for taking the time to volunteer. Give the volunteers a picture of themselves on the job, or of the kids or people they serve!

**Plaque**—300 hours. Request "Triple Line Roman U/L" as the typeface.

**Umbrella**—400 hours. Thank them for all the storms they've help you weather!

**Sweatshirt**—500 hours. Thank them for all the sweat they've put into their volunteer jobs.

- **Recognition Logos**

Use the camera-ready artwork on locally produced gifts that you choose, and on printed pieces such as the program for an annual appreciation breakfast.

- **Volunteer Profiles**

Samples of the kinds of profiles you should write about your volunteers to recognize them. Use them in your newsletters, and possibly as story ideas for local media outlets. See "**Working with the Media for Volunteer Recruitment**," above. Publish the profile on the recognition posters, listed below. Writing isn't your forte? Recruit a journalistic volunteer.

- **Recognition Posters**

Type or photocopy profiles of your current volunteers on these 8 1/2-by-11-inch posters. Add a photo. Hang them on a special recognition bulletin board or around your YMCA. There are two basic themes:

**Doer's Profile**

**People Who Do**

Each poster comes in two different versions. One version contains questions to ask of volunteers; another has a relevant Biblical quote, tying your volunteer recognition into the YMCA's mission of putting Christian principles into practice: "**Be doers of the word, and not hearers only**"—James 1:22. (A nice quote, by the way, to use on other volunteer recognition items.) Both the questions and the quote can be blocked out if you want to use the posters with the headlines alone. And the headlines, "Doer's Profile," and "People Who Do," can also work on bulletin boards or as the name of a regular section in your newsletter that highlights the work of volunteers.

- **Recognition Certificates**

These are ready to print or photocopy. Ideally, print them in one of the volunteer colors: PMS 2665 (purple), 320 (blue-green), or 195 (red). Use a high-quality paper.

**Volunteer of the Month**—Use it to recognize a different volunteer monthly. Ask paid and volunteer staff members to make nominations. Give a plaque to a "Volunteer of the Year." See the recognition gifts, above.

**Recognition for Hours of Volunteer Service**—Build this into your recognition program. Give it by itself or along with a gift.

**In appreciation of...** A good all-around certificate. A printed two-color version is available from Sports Awards (see the order form.)

Have fun using these items. For questions on any of them, or about anything having to do with volunteers, contact Celeste Wroblewski, associate director for Volunteer Development at the YMCA of the USA, 800-872-9622.

# Recruitment Tips

## From Word-of-Mouth to Advertising

Adapted by permission from *The Seven Rs of Volunteer Development*, copyright the YMCA of the USA.

The recruitment techniques you choose should depend on the people you're targeting as YMCA volunteers. Who are your potential recruits? What do they read, watch, or listen to? Where do they live, work, and spend their free time? Who has influence with them and would therefore be a good recruiter or bearer of the message? For example, teens might be influenced to volunteer by their class leaders; young professionals might be influenced by their bosses.

All recruitment efforts should include a three-part message: 1) the need or the problem (not the YMCA's needs, but the kids' needs, the members' needs, etc.); 2) what the volunteer can do about it (the various volunteer opportunities); and 3) what the volunteer will get out of it (how he or she will benefit from it or enjoy it).

A good resource on communications techniques and tools of all kinds is the *YMCA Communications Handbook*, available from the YMCA Program Store. Here are some other things to think about as you choose recruitment techniques:

- Before beginning any recruitment effort, make sure that all members of your staff—including program directors, front desk staffers, and telephone operators—are prepared to handle inquiries from potential volunteers.

If you're not sure how such inquiries would be handled, ask a friend to pose as a "mystery volunteer." Or call the front desk one day and disguise your voice. (If that sounds silly, get your cousin to call.) The mystery volunteer can make an inquiry like this: "I'd

like to be a volunteer in a program that helps kids. Can I do this at the Y?" See how the response is handled. Does the staff person know how to answer the question? Is there someone to refer you to? Do they promise to get back to you within the next day or two? As with membership development, the point-of-contact is crucial to getting and keeping new volunteers.

- In fact, you must make sure that you are equipped to handle volunteers. Do you have job descriptions? A plan for orienting and training them? For supervising them? See the white paper "**Acting on Principle: Goals and Guidelines for Volunteer Development**," included in this package, as well as an order form for *The Seven Rs of Volunteer Development: A YMCA Resource Kit*, available from the Program Store.
- Testimony from current volunteers can strengthen any message strategy used in a volunteer recruitment piece.
- Remember that many times, your volunteer recognition activities also serve as recruitment tools. Articles in the newspaper, profiles in the newsletter, and signs around the lobby not only make current volunteers feel appreciated, but they also help bring in new volunteers.
- Volunteer recruitment also helps the YMCA improve its image as a community service association. When you recruit volunteers, you send the message that the YMCA is a voluntary organization that depends upon the donations and contributions of people in the community. You remind people of the many kinds of programs offered at the YMCA.



## **Face-to-Face Talks**

- Ask YMCA paid and volunteer staff members to ask the people who benefit from the programs to volunteer. These may include YMCA members, program members, and community residents, as well as their friends and relatives. Two out of the three most popular ways people learn about volunteering is by participating in an organization and having a friend or family member who benefits from it. (The Independent Sector, 1992)
- Copy a YMCA membership promotion idea: Consider a "Friend Get a Friend" volunteer recruitment promotion. Recognize those volunteers who have successfully recruited others.
- Ask people who benefit from the program to ask their own friends and relatives to volunteer. For example, have teens ask a teacher at school to be a Leader's Club advisor. In one study of people who volunteered because someone asked them to, most were asked by someone they knew well, such as a friend, a relative, or someone in their church or synagogue. (The Independent Sector, 1992)
- Ask YMCA staff members and volunteers to ask their own friends and relatives to volunteer. (Make sure you have considered your YMCA's policy on whether staff members can supervise relatives and friends.)
- Ask YMCA staff members and volunteers to ask donors to volunteer. The Independent Sector reports a high correlation between giving and volunteering. Consider making an appeal for volunteer time, or at least a brief mention of the option, part of the face-to-face "ask" in every annual support campaign as well as other fundraising drives.
- Face-to-face recruiting can be informal. Some people seize the moment and ask everyone they meet.

- However, face-to-face talks can also be used as part of a plan. For example, one person or a team of two (some combination of a staff member, current volunteer, or someone who benefits from the program) might make a phone call to set up an appointment with a prospective volunteer. They would go to the meeting prepared with their three-part recruitment message, job descriptions, information on the YMCA, and more. After the meeting, they would follow up with a thank-you letter that notes the next steps to be taken.

This kind of approach can be systemized into a large-scale campaign, much like a fundraising campaign, as long as the YMCA is prepared to handle the inquiries.

## **Small Groups**

- Ask volunteers to hold small in-home meetings. A staff member, volunteer, or someone who benefits from the program (alone or in combination) can make a pitch for volunteers.
- Ask volunteers to hold small breakfast, lunch, or dinner meetings at a local restaurant or in the conference room of a business. A staff member, volunteer, or someone who benefits from the program (alone or in combination) can make a pitch for volunteers.

## **Speeches and Presentations**

- Research from the Independent Sector shows that a popular way for people to find out about volunteer activities is through groups or organizations they belong to. That's why it makes sense to try to plan speaking engagements to various groups. Be strategic. Choose those groups whose members match the requirements of your volunteer jobs and opportunities.

- Ask a staff member, volunteer, or someone who benefits from the program (alone or in combination) to make a pitch for volunteers at meetings of groups such as service clubs, church groups, etc.

- Provide compelling stories and testimony. Show a slide show or video. Pass out flyers or brochures. (See the artwork in this package.) Have a signup sheet there.

- Ask clergy people to make an appeal to their congregations. See the notes on YMCA Sunday under the section on special events, right.

- Consider asking all paid and volunteer staff members to make an appeal or at least a mention of the option of volunteering at all public appearances they make. For example, if the fitness instructor is talking to the women's group about exercise, at the end of the talk he can talk about how the YMCA needs the support of volunteers. He can then discuss opportunities in his program area as well as other program areas.

### **Audiovisuals**

- Consider creating a slide show or video for volunteer recruitment. Like any other communications piece, it should contain a three-part message strategy: 1) the need or the problem; 2) what the volunteer can do about it (the various volunteer opportunities); and 3) what the volunteer will get out of it. (McCurley and Lynch, 1989)

- Whether you're asking for money or for volunteer time, the case for supporting the YMCA is the same. Some fundraising audiovisuals can do double duty as volunteer recruitment pieces. Does your YMCA have a good one? Also consider the video produced by the YMCA of the USA, *The YMCA. Helping Kids and Families Grow Strong*. Call Association Development and Communications, 800-872-9622.

- In the future, consider putting an appeal or at least a mention of the option of volunteering in all your audiovisual materials.

### **Special Events**

- As one Y public relations pro said, "A special event is a key message disguised as a good time!" You can stage special events specifically to promote volunteerism, or you can publicize volunteer opportunities at your existing events.

- Consider a Volunteer Recruitment Day or week at your YMCA. You could hold it during National Volunteer Week, which is usually held in April. (Call Community Resources at the YMCA of the USA for future dates.)

- Or hold it during YMCA Week, the third week in January. Use YMCA Sunday, usually on the third or fourth Sunday in January (depending on when the Superbowl falls), as a chance to inform churchgoers on volunteer opportunities at the YMCA. Include a mention or listing of volunteer opportunities in the YMCA Sunday bulletin or the church bulletin. There's a strong correlation between religious beliefs and volunteering. (Independent Sector, 1992)

- Set up a volunteer booth at various special events and festivals offered by groups and organizations in your community.

- Participate in any community-wide volunteer recruitment fairs or events offered in your area.

- Think of every special event that your YMCA offers or participates in as a vehicle to publicize volunteer opportunities. Can you put up signs, hand out flyers, or set up a booth at your foot races, family nights, swimming competitions, and so on? Have speakers mention the chance to volunteer. At the least, publicize volunteer opportunities re-

lated to the program; e.g., discuss family volunteering at family nights. You could also publicize all the volunteer opportunities at the Y, regardless of whether they're related to the event.

### **The Telephone**

- If you conduct a phone campaign to recruit volunteers, make sure that you don't bother people at dinner time or late at night. Make sure that your callers are trained in the key message points and that they're friendly and concise.
- If you have an ambassadors program wherein volunteer ambassadors call and ask new members about their satisfaction with their membership, consider asking the ambassadors to mention volunteer opportunities as well.
- As stated in the introduction to this section, make sure the people who answer the phones know how to answer or refer questions on volunteer opportunities.
- If your YMCA has a taped message that is played while a person is on hold, make sure that it includes a mention of volunteer opportunities at your association.
- Consider using incoming calls as the chance to promote volunteer jobs. If people call asking about certain programs, train your staff people to add information about volunteer opportunities within the program.

### **Letters and Direct Mail**

- Use short and sweet notes—in a simple card or postcard—to send to selected people about specific volunteer opportunities.
- Ask kids in the program to write notes or draw pictures that you can include as part of the note or letter.

- Send notes home to parents of kids in YMCA programs, offering them the chance to volunteer.

- Consider using the YMCA's mission postcard series to send personal notes about volunteer opportunities. These cards interpret the goals of all Y programs through photographs and brief explanations. They're available from the YMCA Program Store, 800-747-0089.

- Use a direct-mail campaign to YMCA members, or to others in your community, listing volunteer opportunities. Provide a postage-paid reply card so they can indicate their interest.

- Put the YMCA recruitment slogan, "Do something good. Volunteer at the YMCA," on your postage meter.

- Consider putting a volunteer recruitment message in all direct mail that is sent out by the YMCA.

### **Printed Pieces Such as Brochures and Schedules**

- On your membership application, include a mention of volunteer opportunities and a place to check if interested. Example: "The YMCA offers many different ways to share your time and talents as a volunteer. Are you interested in learning more about how you can do something good for (name of community) as a YMCA volunteer?"
- Also consider attaching a volunteer interest survey to every application or enrollment form.
- Using the **brochure shells** in this kit, develop a business-card-sized brochure, a flyer, or a longer brochure about volunteer opportunities at your YMCA, and make sure it is spread widely around the facility and

around your community. Some YMCAs have brochures that talk about volunteer opportunities in general. Others list the volunteer job descriptions on their brochures or flyers.

- Distribute the brochure through special events. Ask different employers or organizations to include it with their mailings. The business-card-sized brochure is ideal for this. See the artwork in this package.

- Put all volunteer job descriptions in a notebook that is kept out at the front desk or in other places around the YMCA.

- Include at least a paragraph, if not a longer listing, about volunteer opportunities at your YMCA in every program brochure or schedule that you produce. The Tacoma (Wash.) YMCA prints a heart next to all programs that involve volunteers. To explain what the heart means, the Y prints this in the front of the brochure: "Look for this heart throughout the activities schedule. It designates programs involving volunteers. Consider these as opportunities for you to reach out and help by getting involved as a volunteer. Training and supervision are provided by the YMCA's program staff."

- Make sure that volunteers are somehow profiled or featured in your annual report. The value of volunteer hours should be calculated and publicized in the report. *Note:* The dollar value of the volunteer hours should be included as a footnote, not on the books.

- Consider an idea from the Somerset Hills (N.J.) YMCA: Run photos of volunteers along with a quote about why they volunteer. Print it in your program schedule, or even try to get it placed in your local newspaper. When the Somerset Hills did this with dozens of their volunteers, the effect was very strong.

Their coordinators of volunteers said it was one of their best recruitment efforts ever, and it was also a nice way to recognize their volunteers.

- Put a mention of volunteer opportunities in fundraising brochures and all the other printed pieces your Y produces.

### **Newsletters**

- Feature a profile of one or more volunteers in your newsletter. Talk about what the volunteer does. Use quotes from the volunteer about why he or she enjoys the job. Make sure you cover the wide range of volunteers, not just the board members. You can make it a regular section of your newsletter. Consider calling it "Doer's Profile" or "People Who Do."

- Make sure every newsletter contains information about volunteer opportunities at the YMCA. Consider profiling one or two jobs in detail, then simply listing other opportunities as space permits.

- Ask other organizations, such as businesses, churches, and other community groups, to list your volunteer opportunities in their newsletters. When sending out news releases about volunteer opportunities, include the editors of those newsletters on your mailing list.

- Make sure that all your newsletters, including your employee newsletter, mention volunteer jobs at the YMCA.

### **Media Relations**

- Study your local media outlets—newspaper, radio, television, and cable—to look for opportunities to publicize volunteer opportunities. Who would be interested in a feature story? Who runs or broadcasts announcements of volunteer jobs?

- Try to send a news release out at least once a month about volunteer opportunities. See the “**Working with the Media for Volunteer Recruitment**” piece in this package.
- Consider putting a mention of volunteer opportunities on every news release put out by your YMCA. At the very least, it reminds people that the YMCA is a voluntary organization working in the public interest.
- See the **editorial opinion, fact sheet, and news release** in this package.
- Post one or more volunteer job opportunities on the **recruitment posters** included in this package and hang them up around the YMCA and around your community.
- Consider mentioning the opportunity to volunteer in ads that promote YMCA membership and programs.
- Don't forget to include the name and phone number of a person to contact for more information.

## **Advertising**

- The Independent Sector reports that people who see volunteer public service announcements are more likely to volunteer, with a 20 percent higher response rate, than people who don't see them. See the **public service announcements** in this package.
- See the sample **volunteer recruitment print ads** in this package.
- Run volunteer recruitment ads in your program schedules.
- Run volunteer recruitment ads in your newsletters.
- Ask media outlets to run such ads for you as free public service announcements.
- Ask local businesses to sponsor (pay for) these ads in the local media. Also ask them to run them in their newsletters.
- If you can afford it, consider paying to run the ads in local media outlets.
- Hang copies of the ads up around the Y and around town as posters.

# Working with the Media for Volunteer Recruitment

Though working with the media is not the only way you will gain new volunteers, it should be part of your recruitment plan. Stories, interviews, and public service announcements can help supplement and strengthen your total recruitment effort. It's another way to let the public know about the needs in your community, how the Y is meeting those needs, and the opportunities available at the Y for volunteers.

Of course before you contact the media about your volunteer recruitment drive, you must make sure that you have taken all the right steps to involve volunteers at your YMCA. Do you have job descriptions? Is there someone to interview and screen the volunteers? Do people at the front desk know who to refer interested volunteers to? See the white paper "Acting on Principle," included in this package. It lists many good practices that should be followed before you begin a recruitment campaign.

To begin your media campaign, you'll want to become familiar with the local media. You should carefully read the newspapers, watch television talk shows, and listen to radio public affairs shows to decide which writers and producers to place on your media list.

You'll want to target reporters and shows covering human interest and social service stories. Your list should include any columnists who write about local concerns and issues. You'll also want to include the editor of the editorial page, the person who handles the community bulletin board on your local cable television station, and the public service directors at radio and television stations. Some publications publish lists of volunteer opportunities. Put the editors of such listings on your media list.

You can contact the media to discuss your story idea before sending the **news release** and **fact sheet**. Or you can mail the material after talking with them. Either way, you'll want to follow up with a phone call about a week later to see if they are interested in writing a story or setting up an interview. Point out that a story about the importance of volunteerism can include other organizations serving the community, not just the YMCA.

You should try and place a spokesperson on talk and public affairs shows on television and radio. Perhaps your chief volunteer officer and a program volunteer could discuss the benefits of being volunteers and their experience of volunteering at the Y. They could talk about the different opportunities for volunteers at the Y, or what could be accomplished in the community if more people volunteered; how many children and families in need could be helped. The interview could also introduce some of the interesting points on the fact sheet.

In addition to approaching your daily and weekly newspapers about running a feature story, you can present the **editorial opinion** for them to edit and publish as their own editorial. Ideally, newspaper editors write and run their own editorials. This is the most effective way to present your case, as the newspaper is a third party, and therefore perceived as more believable. You provide the editorial opinion, news release, and fact sheet as background to help them write up their own version.

Try to set up a meeting with the editor of the page to discuss the editorial in person, or make an appointment to talk about it over the phone, then send the background material. You want to find out the paper's editorial policy, such as how long the editorial should be. You want to sell the editor on the importance of the message.

The editorial could also run as an op-ed, the page opposite the paper's editorials, under the signature of your chief volunteer officer. This opinion page has editorials written by someone other than the newspaper's editorial staff. It's like a long letter to the editor, but usually written by an expert on the subject. A newspaper prints such a piece because the author is a voice of authority on an important or newsworthy topic.

If you're unable to get an editorial opinion or op-ed published, you could use the editorial to create a letter to the editor. You might wait for a good opportunity to try to have it published; for example, after an article runs that talks about the need for more after-school programs because young people are returning to an empty house. Again, this could be signed by your chief volunteer officer.

You could also contact the public service directors at your local television stations to see if they would read the editorial as their own public service opinion. Or perhaps they'd let your chief volunteer officer read it as a guest editorial.

You'll want to review and edit the **public service announcements** to reflect your YMCA. Then phone public service directors at radio and television stations to discuss the requirements for using PSAs. They will need to be edited according to the directions provided by the stations. You should also consider arranging a meeting with the director to discuss your recruitment effort in person.

Some of your local stations may also air pre-produced (canned) spots and can help you produce them. The spot could feature your chief volunteer officer or a key program volunteer. You'll also want to try to get your local cable station to run a PSA as a community bulletin board announcement.

A recent Independent Sector study that analyzes why people volunteer revealed that PSAs can have an important impact. Those who reported seeing PSAs on television were more likely to volunteer, with a 20 percent higher response rate, than those who had not seen them.

Some newspapers, usually smaller ones, may be willing to publish a **volunteer profile** as a human-interest feature story. Also, if local media outlets run lists or want ads that describe different volunteer opportunities, be sure to send them updates of the opportunities available at your YMCA.

For more on working with the media to recruit volunteers, consult the *YMCA Communications Handbook*, available from the Program Store. And call Association Development and Communications at the YMCA of the USA, 800-872-9622. For general information on volunteer recruitment, see *The Seven Rs of Volunteer Development*, also available from the Program Store. Also contact the associate director for volunteer development at the YMCA of the USA.

# Public Service Announcements

These are 5-, 10-, 15-, 20-, and 30-second PSAs to use with local broadcast media. You can try placing them with local radio, television, and cable stations. You can edit them to reflect your YMCA or to fit the format of local stations. If your television or cable stations use accompanying artwork, provide them with a slide or photostat of the YMCA volunteer recruitment logo.

**-5-**

Share your time and talent as a YMCA volunteer. Call [Name of YMCA] at [Phone number].

**-10-**

YMCA volunteers help out with everything the Y does—child care, teen clubs, aerobics classes, and a lot more. If you'd like to volunteer at the Y, call [Phone].

**-10-**

The best gift is giving yourself to others. Volunteer at the [Name of YMCA] and share that gift. The YMCA needs you. Call [Phone] for more information.

**-10-**

More than 430,000 Americans volunteer at the YMCA each year. They help children and families grow strong. Do something good, volunteer at the YMCA. Call [Phone].

**-10-**

More than 430,000 Americans volunteer at the YMCA each year. They make their communities better places to live and work. For more information, call [Phone].

**-10-**

YMCA volunteers help out with child care, teen clubs, aerobics classes, and much more. Share your time and talent at the [Name of YMCA]. For more information, call [Phone].

**-15-**

The YMCA does a lot in this community. It offers child care, youth sports, teen leadership clubs, and programs that give families a chance to have fun together. There are dozens of ways for volunteers to get involved in this good work. If you'd like to support the YMCA by becoming a volunteer, call [Phone].

**-15-**

At the YMCA, your time and talent can go a long way. The Y offers child care, youth sports, teen leadership clubs, and programs that give families a chance to have fun together. There are dozens of ways you could get involved in this good work. Do something good, volunteer at the YMCA. Call [Phone].

**-15-**

More than 430,000 Americans volunteer at YMCAs each year. They help build a sense of community in their neighborhoods. To find out how you can take part, call [Phone]. Do something good, volunteer at the YMCA. That number again is [Phone].



**-30-**

More than 430,000 Americans volunteer at YMCAs each year. They help the Y give children and teens the caring attention they need to develop self-esteem and good values. There are dozens of ways a volunteer can get involved at the Y—leading an aerobics class, coaching a basketball team, sponsoring a youth group, supporting a fundraising drive, and more. The [Name of YMCA] is looking for new volunteers. To find out how you can help, call [Phone]. Do something good, volunteer at the YMCA. That number again is [Phone].

**-30-**

A lot of people are searching for a sense of belonging. They want to be part of a community. YMCA volunteers help people make that connection. Whether it's teen leadership, youth sports, or child care, a YMCA program brings people together. As a YMCA volunteer, you can help support these programs. Become a Y volunteer. Make a connection that counts. For more information on volunteer opportunities at the YMCA, call [Phone]. That number again is [Phone].

### **Program-specific PSAs**

If you are looking for volunteers for a particular program area, you can use PSAs that are more specific. Below are some examples.

**-5-**

Help teach a child to swim. Call [Name of YMCA] at [Phone] for more information.

**-10-**

Do you have any spare time to help others who need you? The [Name of YMCA] is looking for volunteers for [Name of program]. Call [Phone]. That number again is [Phone].

**-10-**

Be a helping hand. Volunteers are needed at the [Name of YMCA] for the [Name of program]. Call [Phone] for more information. That number again is [Phone].

**-10-**

Every kid needs a good role model. By becoming a YMCA volunteer, you could be that role model. Call [Phone] for more information on the YMCA's mentoring programs.

**-10-**

Would you like to help a group of children build new skills and confidence? That's what you'll do as a volunteer coach for the YMCA's kids soccer league. Call [Phone] for more information.

**-20-**

Do you recall the joy you had as a kid in learning a new skill, in tasting success and feeling good about yourself? The YMCA [Name of program] aims to give kids this chance. And the Y needs volunteers to make it happen. Call [Phone] to share your time and help kids learn the joys of success.

**-30-**

Do you remember your first trip to camp? It might have seemed scary at first, but then there were new friends, new places, and new ideas to explore. You might have changed a lot, but camp hasn't. At YMCA Camp [Name], kids still learn about nature, sing songs around a campfire, and swim in the lake. And they also still need counselors—adult men and women who guide them through all their camp adventures. YMCA Camp [Name] needs responsible, outgoing volunteer counselors for the upcoming camping season. Interested? Call [Phone]. That's [Phone].

# Fact Sheet

## Volunteers and the YMCA

- More than 430,000 people volunteered at YMCAs in the U.S. during 1992. Almost 40 percent of those individuals were women.
- In 1992, U.S. volunteers provided an estimated 28 million hours of volunteer service to the YMCA, worth around \$366 million.
- Every YMCA is directed by a board of volunteers from the community. Nearly 70,000 volunteers served on YMCA boards in 1992.
- Volunteers are involved in every YMCA program area, including child care, sports, camping, community development, aquatics, health and fitness, teen and senior programs, family programs, and international partnerships. Nationwide, a total of 361,576 volunteers supported Y efforts in these areas in 1992.
- In 1992 The Independent Sector, a coalition of nonprofit community service organizations and philanthropies, asked 2,671 Americans about their volunteer activities. According to the survey, 51 percent of Americans volunteered in 1991.
- The Independent Sector study concluded that people are more than three times as likely to volunteer when asked than when they are not. Of the 44 percent who reported that they were asked to volunteer in 1991, 86 percent did so. Of the 55 percent who were not asked to volunteer, not even a quarter volunteered.
- A recent report from the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development concluded that "participation in community-based youth development programs can promote positive behavior and reduce high-risk behavior." The YMCA offers a wide variety of programs for teens and school-age youth, some of which offer opportunities for volunteer service.
- A study issued by the Chapin Hall Center at the University of Chicago concluded that the types of services provided by the YMCA and other nonprofit organizations are "an essential support system for children and families."
- The [Name of YMCA] is currently looking for new volunteers. Those interested in volunteering can call [Number] for more information.

# Editorial Opinion

A recent study pinpointed the most effective way to get people to volunteer for community service. It turned out to be quite simple. You have to ask them.

According to the study—which was conducted by The Independent Sector, a coalition of nonprofit organizations and philanthropies—people who are asked to volunteer are three to four times more likely to do so than people who aren't. Keeping that in mind, the YMCA is putting out the word that it needs volunteers to help out with all kinds of programs and activities. We think you should consider the request.

There are a lot of reasons to volunteer for the YMCA or some other community service group. To start with, they really could use the help. Throughout the 1980s, cutbacks in federal spending on social programs added to the burden of nonprofit organizations. Though the "thousand points of light" were supposed to pick up the slack, private donations didn't even cover half the loss in revenue, according to a report from the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development.

One of the most important ways nonprofits stretch their tight budgets is through volunteers. The Independent Sector says Americans volunteered 15.2 billion hours in 1991, serving as the equivalent of nine million full-time employees. That saved nonprofits around \$176 billion.

"There's a lot we're trying to accomplish. We provide family programs, teen programs, day care, swimming, and a lot more," said YMCA Executive Director [Name]. "We couldn't do all that without volunteers. Our paid staff just wouldn't be enough."

[Name] says volunteers have a lot of choices at the Y. They can coach a basketball team, support a fundraising drive, or lead a youth group. Another recent study—this one conducted by the Chapin Hall Center at the University of Chicago—confirmed that these kinds of activities can make a real difference for families, children, teens, and communities.

"The Little League game, the story hour at the library, the dance at the Y, the theatrical production at the community center, the youth group at the church or synagogue—in all of these, and in many other things like them, there is a richness of possibilities for children and young people...[these activities are] an essential support system for children and families," the Chapin Hall study said.

[Name] points out that the Y has volunteer opportunities for everyone; women, men, teens, adults, and seniors. But if you still don't feel the Y is your kind of place, there's always the church, local schools, or hundreds of other groups that could use your help. So no one has an excuse not to get involved in helping to make their community a better place to live.

And now you've been asked.

For more information on volunteer activities at the YMCA, call [phone number].

# News Release

## [NAME OF YMCA] KICKS OFF VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

For Immediate Release

Contact:       Name  
                  Name of YMCA  
                  Phone Number

[Name Of Town] [Month, Date, Year]—The [Name of YMCA] has launched a major effort to recruit more volunteers. According to Executive Director [Name], many of the Y's programs and activities have been reorganized to create new opportunities for volunteer involvement.

"We think it's very important to keep an organization like the Y rooted in the community. That's why we want to encourage volunteer involvement as much as possible," said [Name]. "And volunteers make our job a lot easier. We wouldn't be able to reach nearly as many children and families if we didn't have help from concerned, committed people from the community."

[Name] cited a recent study by the Chapin Hall Center at the University of Chicago that confirmed the importance of volunteers. "All communities, whether rich or poor, will need more [volunteers] to provide services," the study said.

A YMCA volunteer can lead a youth group, coach a basketball team, support a fundraising drive, lead an aerobics class, chaperon a teen dance, or pick another way to help out. Volunteers can even sit at the front desk and greet members. [Name] said anyone is welcome to volunteer at the Y—women, men, teens, adults, and seniors.

Nationally, the YMCA can claim around 430,000 volunteers, [Name] said. They give to the Y about \$366 million worth of time each year.

[Name] said [her/his] goal is to recruit [number] new volunteers by [date]. "We want to recruit Y members, certainly, but we want other people in the community to take a look at us, too," [Name] said. "A lot of people don't realize how diverse our programs are. There are a lot of opportunities here."

The YMCA is the largest nonprofit community service organization in America. It works to nurture children, support families, and make all communities healthy, safe places to live. There are more than 2,000 YMCAs in the U.S. All of them are directed by volunteer boards.

For more information on volunteer activities at the YMCA, call [phone number].

# Volunteer Recognition: An Overview

Adapted by permission from *The Seven Rs of Volunteer Development*, copyright YMCA of the USA.

## Two Rules

There are two basic rules for recognizing volunteers:

### 1) **Make sure that recognition is meaningful to the volunteers.**

Recognition is like buying Christmas and birthday presents. **The big question to ask and answer: "Based on who our volunteers are, what would make them feel appreciated?"** Some volunteers may like receiving a jar of jam with a note that says, "You're berry special"; others will think it's corny. What's appropriate for the soccer coaches may not be appropriate for the board members. Some people may want to make a short speech at an annual luncheon; others will be genuinely embarrassed by it.

**How do you know what's meaningful? Just ask.** Ask volunteers individually or hold small, informal focus groups. Ask, "What would make you feel appreciated?" **Better yet, involve volunteers in planning the recognition program.** Invite a diverse group of volunteers who will represent different viewpoints: people of different ages, teens to seniors; people holding different kinds of volunteer assignments; and so on.

**How can you accommodate so many needs? By doing different things.** Informal recognition activities such as notes, small gifts, and simply saying "thank you" can and should be tailored to the individual volunteer. When planning formal events or awards programs for large numbers of volunteers, try to please the most people you can. For example, choose practical gifts that almost everyone can use, such as umbrellas or clocks, rather than cookbooks or business card holders. Ask a volunteer who likes the limelight to make a short speech at a recognition dinner; let those who are shy simply enjoy the companionship at their tables.

### 2) **Make a plan for recognizing volunteers.**

Recognition should be "business as usual" at your YMCA. It should be built into the way your YMCA operates. Do you have nametags for your program volunteers? Are they invited to attend staff meetings? Do you have a plan for communicating with and thanking all volunteers regularly? Do you send them newsletters? Thanksgiving cards? Do you keep track of the hours and years of service that each volunteer contributes?

## Two Ways

If there are two rules for recognizing volunteers, then there are two ways to recognize volunteers: 1) Treat volunteers as you would the paid staff; and 2) Express your appreciation often. Here are some ideas and examples that illustrate these two methods.

### 1) Treat volunteers as you would the paid staff.

- **Manage volunteers as you would paid staff members.** Recognition begins when you recruit the volunteer, and it continues all the way through the volunteer's orientation, training, and supervision. These management practices, when carried out correctly, are the most basic way to show volunteers you value them. As it says in the YMCA of the USA white paper "Acting on Principle," volunteers, like paid staff, deserve such things as:

**placement in a job that matches their skills and interest;**

**supervision and clear communication;**

**a good orientation and a continual flow of information** on what's happening in their departments and in the YMCA as a whole;

**opportunities for regular training** inside and outside the YMCA;

**avoiding language that implies that volunteers are amateurs**, such as "the professionals and the volunteers";

**the chance to grow and to take on new responsibilities** and assignments;

**good records kept** of their hours, accomplishments, donations, certifications, training, and so on.

- **Integrate them into the YMCA's culture and make them feel a part of the family.**

**Include them in meetings and fun, informal rituals.** In her excellent book *At the Heart, the New Volunteer Challenge to Community Agencies*, Nora Silver discusses the importance of including volunteers in meetings, social events, and even fun, informal rituals. For example, on birthdays, the Garden Ranch branch of the Pikes Peak (Colo.) YMCA celebrates by asking people on the aquatics staff—both paid and volunteer—to swim to the middle of the pool to retrieve a cupcake, candle and all, that's floating on a kickboard.

**Recognize that recognition is an attitude, not an annual dinner.** How are volunteers treated at your YMCA? Does the staff know their names? Are they greeted warmly? Given adequate supplies? Is there a place for them to hang their coats? Do they have a pleasant work space? Do signs read, "For staff and volunteers" rather than "Staff only"?

**Communicate with volunteers regularly and honestly.** Make sure they understand the YMCA's structure—its lines of authority and communication. Let them in on “inside information” about the YMCA. For example, give them advance notice of when the YMCA will be in the news, whether it's good publicity or bad publicity. (When it's bad, explain the YMCA's position.)

**Listen to them, seek their opinions, and respond to them.** Involve them in planning that is related to their jobs and to the YMCA as a whole. Are program volunteers involved in program planning? Do you also involve them in larger, association-wide tasks such as rewriting the YMCA's mission statement? Do you allow them to evaluate their own jobs and the volunteer program as a whole?

**2) Express your appreciation often.** Timing is important. Try to say thanks quickly after the behavior takes place; don't wait for the annual dinner eight months later. Also, be consistent and fair. If you send the same thank-you letter to all volunteers, regardless of whether or not they fulfilled their commitments, you will lose credibility among the hard-working volunteers.

- **You can express appreciation informally,** immediately after they've finished a project or after you catch them in the act of doing something good. But be sincere. People can spot a fake a million miles a way. People who constantly say “super” or “wonderful” appear to be phony. Here are some examples of informal recognition:

Say “Thanks, or “I appreciate that.”

Write a personal note.

Give them candy kisses, a card, a token gift.

Buy them coffee.

Say “good job” or “I'm glad you tried that.”

- **You can express appreciation formally.**

**Send letters of thanks to the volunteer's family or employer.** (In the second case, check with the volunteer first.)

**Send notes and cards:** Thanksgiving cards, birthday cards, Valentine's Day cards.

**Set up an awards program** recognizing volunteers for the number of hours they served. They might receive a mug at 100 hours, a T-shirt at 200 hours. See “How to Use the Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition Package,” as well as the order forms for gifts from Beerntsen's Confectionery and Sports Awards in this package.

Create a team of both paid and volunteer staff members to design your own awards program.

**Choose gifts that will be meaningful to the volunteers.** Not everyone can use a business card holder; give them umbrellas or fanny packs instead.

**Write profiles** of your volunteers. **Publish them in your newsletters.** Publish them on the **recognition posters**, enclosed, and hang them around the YMCA.

**Set up a “Volunteer of the Month” and “Volunteer of the Year” awards program** at your YMCA.

**Nominate your volunteers for other awards, sponsored by your Cluster, your Field, the YMCA of the USA, and other organizations,** too.

**Send story ideas to the media outlets in your town, encouraging them to run feature stories or profiles on your dedicated volunteers.**

Send story ideas about the volunteer to his or her **alumni newsletter or employer’s newsletter.** (Check with the volunteer first.)

Some YMCAs are successful in holding **recognition events**; others aren’t. It seems to depend on the interests and motivations of the volunteers as well as the quality of the event.

Recognition events **should be fun, convenient, and meaningful.** For example, busy working parents may not like an annual dinner that keeps them away from the kids one more night. Instead, they may prefer the kind of event put on by the Chris-Town branch of the Phoenix YMCA. It holds an open house, with activities for the whole family, on a Saturday afternoon.

The Marin Branch of the San Francisco YMCA holds a very successful event each year that is based on a different theme. One year it was the Academy Awards. Paid staff members dressed up as celebrities and gave “Oscars” to the volunteers, who were invited to come in costume.

Use **National Volunteer Week, usually sometime in April, or YMCA Week, usually the third week in January,** as an opportunity to recognize volunteers through letters, media publicity, a special event and so on. Call Community Resources at the YMCA of the USA for dates.



## **133 Ideas for Volunteer Recognition**

Adapted from a list originally compiled by Vern Lake from the Minnesota Department of Public Welfare.

Here's a list of all kinds of ideas in no particular order. It includes both formal and informal ways to recognize volunteers. Some ideas are universal; e.g., "Be genuinely nice." Others may be appropriate only under certain circumstances: "Have the staff put on a good-natured, funny skit about the volunteers or the challenges they face on the job." Remember, the best recognition is tailored to the volunteer.

Be genuinely nice.

Put up a volunteer suggestion box (but only if you'll take action on the suggestions.)

Treat to a soda.

Reimburse them for assignment-related expenses.

Send a birthday card.

Better yet, celebrate their birthdays at the YMCA, the same as you would for the paid staff.

Greet them by name.

Place them in jobs that match their skills and interests.

Pay for their assignment-related certifications and training and participation in local workshops, Cluster events, and so on.

Give them dry-mounted or laminated newspaper articles about themselves.

Give them adequate supervision.

Replace "Staff only" signs with ones that read "Paid and volunteer staff only."

Recognize the volunteers along with their paid staff partners.

Maintain a coffee bar with high-quality coffee.

Be honest with them.

Give them photos of themselves on the job, or of the people they serve (the kids, the members, the program members, and so on).

Give them gifts, from chocolate bars to travel alarms, with a theme such as "YMCA Volunteers Do Something Good." (See the artwork and order forms in this package.)

Keep challenging them.

Mark the anniversary of their start dates.

Respect their wishes.

Establish a recognition program that honors volunteers for milestones in terms of the number of hours or years they serve.

Give them the chance to volunteer along with their family members.

Plan annual events such as a dinner, party, or picnic that are fun and meaningful.

Give them tickets to a play or sports event.

Celebrate National Volunteer Week, usually sometime in April, or YMCA Week, usually the third week in January. Call Community Resources at the YMCA of the USA for dates.

Create a slide-show or videotape of your volunteers. Present it at your annual meeting or recognition event.

Seek out their opinions.

Make sure they have a place to hang their coats.

Plant a tree in their honor.

Ask the people they serve (the kids, the members) to create cards, drawings, and gifts for them.

For young volunteers, send letters to their parents, teachers, pastors, the school newspaper, and so on.

For young volunteers, provide a letter of recommendation to a future employer or college.

Include them in staff meetings and other staff gatherings.

Give financial assistance for a YMCA membership or program to a needy person in the name of a dedicated volunteer or group of volunteers.

Dedicate new rooms, facilities, or equipment in the name of a volunteer or a group of volunteers.

Have the staff put on a good-natured, funny skit about the volunteers or the challenges they face on the job.

For extraordinary service on a special project or program, do something extraordinary: a special event, plaque, or ceremony.

Provide parking, snacks, child care, and meals while the volunteer is on the job.

Recognize personal needs and problems.

Accommodate personal needs and problems.

Put a volunteer recognition bulletin board or display case in a prominent place in your YMCA.

If volunteers work as a group, team, or family, reward them as a group.

Hold a volunteer/staff potluck.

Have a public figure such as the mayor recognize YMCA volunteers, perhaps during YMCA Week, usually the third week in January.

Give informal teas.

Make a collage or scrapbook of mementos or photos for an individual volunteer or for a group of volunteers.

Keep the mission paramount. Remind volunteers why they're doing what they're doing.

Send a Thanksgiving Day card to the volunteer's family.

Give volunteers caricatures of themselves.

Say, "Good morning."

If they like, arrange for them to do volunteer work at home.

Provide good training before they begin their assignments.

Help them develop skills and confidence.

If they're being sponsored by an employer, church, or club, give the sponsoring group recognition: a plaque, an article in your newsletter, and so on.

If they're being sponsored by an employer, church, or club, recognize the volunteer in that group setting: at a meeting of the club, at a church service, and so on.

Give clear directions. Take time to explain things fully.

Motivate the YMCA's leaders and administrators to get to know the volunteers.

Give them more responsibility as they are ready for it.

Involve them in all planning related to their jobs.

Involve them in planning related to the YMCA; for example, ask them to be part of the team making the five-year plan or reviewing the mission statement.

Respect their sensitivities.

Enable them to grow on the job.

Plan recognition events with fun themes: "The Academy Awards," "Sixty Minutes," "A Barn Dance."

Send newsworthy information about the volunteers to the media.

Have wine and cheese tasting parties.

Involve the people they serve (members, program members) in thanking them.

Honor their preferences.

Give them an orderly, pleasant work space.

Enlist them to train other volunteers.

Take time to talk.

Explain the YMCA's structure to them: Give them a flow chart that outlines the lines of authority and communication.

Defend them against staff members who are unfairly hostile or negative.

Ask the policy volunteers (the board members) to honor the program, managerial, fundraising, and support volunteers.

Make good plans.

Tell other people in the Y about their accomplishments.

In some way or another, feature a program volunteer or a group of volunteers at every board meeting. (Invite the volunteer or group to attend. Make a presentation about the volunteer(s) to the board, or have the volunteer(s) do it.)

Send a valentine.

Ask the YMCA administrators (the executive, vice-presidents) to participate in formal celebrations and to give volunteers informal recognition, too.

Make sure they receive regular communication from you regarding their jobs or the YMCA in general: memos, newsletters, and so on.

Create and post an "honor roll" listing all your volunteers in a given year.

Write a letter of recommendation.

Give them gift baskets filled with their favorite things.

Help them write a description of their volunteer assignments for their resumes.

Regularly negotiate their job descriptions or commitments.

Ask each program or department to come up with a unique way to recognize its volunteers.

Treat them as partners with the paid staff.

Share with them complimentary letters received from parents, members, or program members about their services or the program overall.

Ask them to take a high profile in advocating for your YMCA; for example, speaking at a public hearing.

Send thank-you notes.

Surprise them with coffee and cake.

Give them opportunities to be promoted or to take on new or different responsibilities.

Nominate them for volunteer awards sponsored by the Cluster, Field, the YMCA of the USA, and other organizations, such as the President's Volunteer Action Awards.

Throw a holiday party.

Praise them to their friends.

Give them opportunities for frequent training.

Give gifts that are fun, valentine-like puns; for example, a candle with a note that reads, "No one holds a candle to you," or a box of raisins with a note that reads, "Thanks for raisin' the tough questions."

Give them adequate supplies and tools.

Say, "Good night."

Ask volunteers to take on special volunteer consulting assignments.

Hold social events with the paid staff.

Plan events to which they can bring their friends and family members; for example, a "Flick and Float" party in the pool—movies and swimming.

Put a sign on their lawn: "A YMCA Volunteer Lives Here," or "Roberta Simon Did Something Good at the YMCA."

Accept their individuality.

Arrange for an annual "mutual" review to talk about how the volunteer's assignment is going for everyone concerned: the staff, the volunteer, and the people the volunteer is serving.

Record their hours, their accomplishments, and the training and education they have completed as volunteers.

Assign a dollar value to the different kinds of volunteer jobs at your YMCA, then publicize the combined worth of volunteer activities in your annual report (as a footnote, not on the books), in news releases, and so on.

Instigate surprises that are planned by the people the volunteers serve (members and program members).

Ask volunteers to fill out an interest and skills inventory.

Start a "Volunteer of the Month" and "Volunteer of the Year" program.

Send a thank-you letter to their employers. (Check with the volunteers first.)

Send a thank-you letter to their families.

Give gifts or awards that signify particular accomplishments; for example, pins and plaques with stones that represent, one, five, or 10 years of service.

Enlist experienced volunteers as recruiters.

Send commendatory letters to public figures—the mayor, the governor, their Congresspeople, the President, even Willard Scott.

Say, "We missed you."

Write a profile of a volunteer and publish it in your newsletter.

Post profiles of the volunteers on the volunteer bulletin board or around the YMCA.

Give volunteers nametags.

Understand the difference between the needs of a group and those of the individuals in the group.

Don't give them boring assignments.

Maintain safe working conditions.

Give them an adequate orientation.

Fully indoctrinate them on the mission of the YMCA.

Let them in on "inside information" about the YMCA; i.e., give them advance notice of when the YMCA will be in the news, whether it's good publicity or bad publicity. (When it's bad, explain the YMCA's position.)

Send Christmas cards.

Conduct community-wide, cooperative volunteer recognition events with other not-for-profit agencies.

Plan trips to the theater, a sports event, a theme park.

Ask a volunteer to mentor another volunteer.

Consider volunteers for paid staff positions.

Say, "Thank you."

Smile, genuinely.

Note: If the YMCA gives free or discounted memberships to volunteers, it may create tax consequences for the volunteer as well as the YMCA. Therefore, this practice is discouraged. For more information on this topic or on volunteer recognition in general, see *The Seven Rs of Volunteer Development*, or call the associate director for volunteer development at the YMCA of the USA: 800-872-9622.

# Volunteer Profiles

If your YMCA publishes a newsletter, you can use it to profile your most active volunteers. This will give your volunteers positive reinforcement while encouraging members and program participants to try volunteering themselves. A volunteer profile should be brief and entertaining. It should run with a photograph, if possible. Below are three examples.

Some newspapers, usually smaller ones, may be willing to publish volunteer profiles as a human-interest feature story. You can also publish the profile on the "Doer's Profile" or "People Who Do" recognition posters enclosed with this package. (You can block out the quote and questions that are printed on those posters if you'd like more space.) Post one or more copies around the YMCA.

## **Making a Splash**

If you've been down to the pool on a Wednesday afternoon, you've seen Harriet Lime. She's the one in the middle of all the commotion.

Harriet is the volunteer who helps Aquatics Instructor Joe Welles with the kids from Project Splash. Children with behavioral and developmental disabilities, they come to the Y for fun in the water that helps them develop their coordination, strength, and confidence.

Harriet and her family, husband Jack and sons Billy and Zack, have been Y members since 1987, when they moved here from Wilmington, Delaware. Harriet had been coming to the Y for a step aerobics class and to use the pool, but she decided to devote her afternoons to volunteer work when Billy went off to kindergarten this year. She got involved with Project Splash after she read about the program in a newspaper article.

"It seemed like a great idea for the kids, but I also thought it would be fun for me," she says. "I love being around children."

That shows in the water. Though Joe Welles and Wendi Hellman, a therapist from Children's Hospital, are on hand to run the program, Harriet is often the center of attention. The kids respond to her combination of patience and playfulness—often with a good-natured splash in the face!

"They can get a little rowdy," Harriet admits, laughing. "But that's why I'm there. Joe and Wendi just need another person there to keep things under control. If I can get Billy and Zack to bed at 8 o'clock every night, I can handle it all."

## **Setting the Stage for Achievement**

John D. Hibbert, Jr., is an influential man. His company, Quality Canning, employs almost 100 people. He's active with a number of political and community service organizations. He's been a Y board member since last May. But the person who probably feels John's influence more than anyone else is Terry Howell. John is Terry's Black Achievers mentor.



"There's a difference between helping people in an abstract way, from a distance, and helping somebody face-to-face," John says. "My experience with Terry has been great because I've been able to see the good it's done with my own eyes."

Terry, who lives with his mother and two sisters in the troubled Stoneridge community, is a sophomore at Robert M. LaFollette High School. He credits John with boosting his confidence and ambition. Since teaming up with John, his grades have gone up, and he's joined the school's debate club.

John and Terry have been to baseball games, plays, Fun Mountain amusement park, and Black Achievers banquets together. But because of John's busy schedule, it's sometimes hard to schedule a big outing. That's O.K. with Terry.

"John and I do a lot together, but my favorite thing to do is just hang out around his office," says Terry. "It's really exciting. I want to have an office like that one day."

### **Volunteer of the Month**

You've seen her answering phones. You've seen her sweeping floors. You've seen her in the day care center. She's Carmelita Perez, the Y's volunteer office assistant, child care helper, and all-around workaholic.

Although she's a junior at Debs West, Carmelita manages to spend 20 hours a week volunteering at the Y. Some day, she says, she'd like to be at a Y full time.

"I think I was born to work at the Y," Carmelita says. "When I think about the future, I just can't imagine any other career."

Carmelita and her family have been Y members for years. That's why she considers herself a "Y kid."

"I've been coming here as long as I can remember. I grew up here," she says. "I feel like the people at the Y are part of my family."

A full-fledged people person, Carmelita enjoys greeting members at the front desk the most. She also enjoys the time she spends helping the child care staff. She doesn't get such a kick out of cleaning up around the Y. Cleaning isn't even part of her volunteer job description, and yet nearly every day you can find her, broom in hand, battling dust and dirt. Why does she keep doing it?

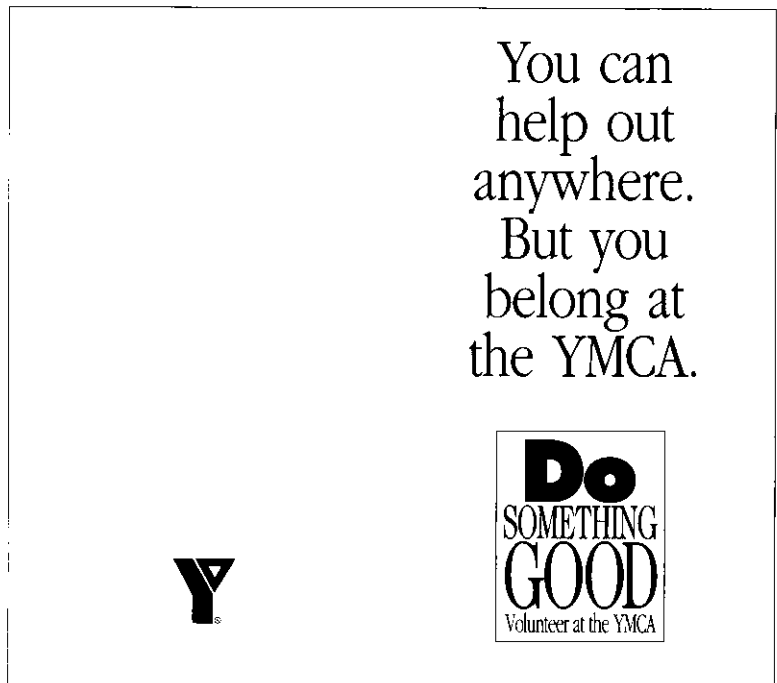
"I can't help myself," she admits. "I guess I'm just a neat freak. I see a dirty footprint or a spilled Coke and I find myself running for the broomcloset."

## Mini Brochure Shell

Add the name and phone number of your YMCA on the back of this business-card-sized-brochure. You can also include the name of a contact person. The preferred typeface is Garamond.

Give the brochure out at meetings, large gatherings, and at speeches and presentations.

Print this brochure on 80 lb. weight cover stock. You can use any of the three suggested logo colors: PMS 2665 (purple), 320 (blue-green), or 195 (red).



Back Cover

Front Cover

**A**t the YMCA, your time and talent go a long way. Every hour you spend as a YMCA volunteer translates into the caring attention a child needs to develop values like sportsmanship, compassion, and respect for self and others. Positive behavior in teens. Support for families so they can be successful and strong. Healthier lives for people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities, and incomes. A safer, more viable community that's a good place to live and work.

As a YMCA volunteer, you can lead a program, serve as a role model for young people, help out in the office or at a special event, raise money, or be part of a group or committee working on a neighborhood problem. No matter how you help, you'll make a big difference as you work with others to create a feeling of connectedness in your community.

To solve the problems closest to home—or better yet, to prevent them before they crop up—the YMCA needs more people like you. Do something good. Volunteer at the YMCA. Please stop by or call for details.

Inside

# You can help out anywhere. But you belong at the YMCA.



As a YMCA volunteer, your time and talent go a long way. You can lead a program, serve as a role model for young people, help out in the office or at a special event, raise money, or be part of a group or committee working on a neighborhood problem. No matter how you help, you'll make a big difference as you work with others to create a feeling of connectedness in your community.

To solve the problems closest to home—or better yet, to prevent them before they begin—the YMCA needs more people like you. Do something good. Volunteer at the YMCA. Please stop by or call for details.

**Do**  
SOMETHING  
GOOD  
Volunteer at the YMCA



# We couldn't pay these people to come to the YMCA.



That's because they're YMCA volunteers. And they choose to give their time and talent because they believe a price can't be put on the feeling that comes from helping someone else.

They work in various YMCA programs. In child care. As coaches in youth sports. As instructors in swimming or health and fitness. As leaders in teen programs.

And even though they're not paid in dollars and cents, they do get compensated with the satisfaction of knowing they contributed to someone else's life. And that feeling is priceless.

Please stop by or call for more information on volunteer opportunities at the YMCA.





**You know what  
the problems are  
in our town.**

Kids need attention. Parents need support. Teens need something to do. Neighborhoods need to be safe. And people want their community to be a healthy place to live and work.

If you want to solve these problems close to home—or better yet, prevent them—then do something good. Volunteer at the YMCA. For more information on volunteer opportunities, please stop by or call.



2 1/4" x 10"

**You know what  
the problems are in our town.**

Kids need attention. Parents need support. Teens need something to do. Neighborhoods need to be safe. And people want their community to be a healthy place to live and work.

If you want to solve these problems close to home—or better yet, prevent them—then do something good. Volunteer at the YMCA. For more information on volunteer opportunities, please stop by or call.



3 1/2" x 5"

**Recruitment Print Ads**

Add the name and phone number of your YMCA. See if local publications will run them as a public service. Drop them in your own publications.