

Good Advice...Rewarding and retaining volunteers

A board member of a nonprofit animal shelter in Florida recently asked a good question, "How can nonprofits with limited funds reward their volunteers?"

Volunteer engagement -- the recruitment, orientation, management, recognition, and retention of volunteers - is a core specialty of Project Partners. Our training program, [Volunteers. You can't live with them. You can't live without them.](#) has been wildly popular since so many professionals are put in their positions without any training on the art and science of volunteer engagement. Having a foundation of information makes all the difference. I could write a book on this subject and will add to this in future Good Advice articles, but start with why volunteers volunteer in the first place.

Volunteers are motivated by a number of things:

- Employer-encouragement
- Desire to develop skills and expertise
- Desire to build personal relationships
- Desire for status, power, prestige, or community profile
- Desire to make a difference
- Love your mission
- They were asked!

With this in mind, the staff and volunteer leadership teams tasked with engaging volunteers must tailor their incentives and rewards to their volunteers -- and no two volunteers are alike. This might be time consuming, but there is no better way to [increase capacity for a nonprofit](#) than to increase the quantity and quality of the volunteer "workforce".

- Recruit to job descriptions.
- Orient to those job descriptions.
- Provide direction, support and follow-up.
- Recognize them through board and committee meetings, major events, e-mails, hand-written notes and letters, communications channels, small gifts or honorariums, very personal approaches like introductions to someone they want to meet, and more.

Loyalty and retention will be your reward.

Your partner for good,



Lerii F. Smith, CFRE
President, Project Partners, Inc.
817.922.9460
Lerii.Smith@yourprojectpartners.com
www.yourprojectpartners.com



Please share in our [Good News](#).

[Good Advice](#) is a monthly article series of tips and tools to help you advance your cause. We invite you to pass it along to fellow staff and volunteer leadership.

Celebrating 16 years of service to distinguished nonprofit executives and community leaders of North Texas

© Project Partners, Inc. 2011

**What is your best volunteer reward?
[Email Lerii](#)**