Volunteer Recognition and Awards Ideas/Concepts for Implementation by ACA

Volunteer recognition should consider the two basic types of recognition: intrinsic and extrinsic. Many ACA volunteers are (we speculate) intrinsically motivated: they take pride in helping the association, sharing their skills/talents, and increasing their own competence and value in the association--they feel great about their affiliation with and their actual contribution to ACA.

ACA has a robust extrinsic recognition program for Standards Visitors; some LCOL also have quality recognition programs, but there is no "template" for volunteer recognition that is being used in all regions, in all counsels.

Our task is to develop a template that can be used across the association, but is also locally customizable. This includes both concepts for formal and informal volunteer recognition, and is based on the foundational premise that our association has and builds relationships with all members and volunteers.

Much research has been done on the motivation of volunteers, and that motivation must inform the variety and types of recognition ACA provides its volunteers. Volunteers who are motivated by connections/affiliation are going to be excited about recognition that involves people and parties. Volunteers who are motivated by achievement are going to appreciate recognition of their actual accomplishments/work. Volunteers who are motivated by impact/reach will value recognition of their leadership and vision. Volunteers, like a quality volunteer recognition program, are multi-faceted and unique.

This working document is our work-group's initial collection of thoughts regarding types of recognition/awards that might work well for the individual Local Council of Leaders to implement.

Please add, edit, update, delete, improve or reinvent by editing/suggesting.

Timelines/timeframes as well as recruitment concepts/ideas are already suggestions only.

Key:
ACA Develop=National Staff (or this work group?) creates/designs/builds/outlines/implements
LCOL Develop=Local Council(s) creates/designs/builds/outlines/implements

Phase One
- ACA Develop/LCOL Develop: LCOL appoints/creates a Volunteer Recruitment/Recognition Committee and/or Chair (every three years)
- ACA Develop: LCOL Membership Chair uses "ACA Member Profile" (to be developed in concert with PDC?) that provides key information regarding employment, position, and extracurricular interests. (Updates and membership chair review=ongoing)
- ACA Develop/LCOL Develop: LCOL Membership Chair and/or Volunteer Recognition Chair sends a Digital Thank You to year's previous volunteers w/ personal introduction (use the survey below as the "intro" template: Why I Volunteer for ACA)
- ACA Develop: LCOL Volunteer Committee/Chair sends out a BRIEF "Why I Volunteer" survey to all local members to determine "why" and "how" they have volunteered in the past and how/why would like to volunteer for ACA in the future.

(Note: This survey is probably part of the volunteer recruitment workgroup ideas; it is important for the survey to include questions that provide insight into a volunteer's motivation and recognition "comfort-zone". It is also important that it be short, funny and possibly incentivized to create a high return rate.)

Phase Two

- ACA Develop/LCOL Develop: Begin monthly digital profile of one-two local volunteers (much of the content comes from "Why I Volunteer" profile) for each of the ACA, Local monthly email blasts. (monthly)
- ACA Develop: **Informal Recognition Packet for LCOL's**--which includes: thank you notes/letterhead, list of ideas for informal recognition strategies (picking up the phone and calling someone's boss to say thank you, sending a handwritten note, birthday cards, sharing specific feedback from others regarding volunteer's accomplishments, etc.) (ongoing)
- LCOL Develop: LCOL members should all informally recognize volunteers they have personally worked with in the last month. Create a strategy/spreadsheet to track who in the membership is being acknowledged, how and for what. (ongoing)
- ACA Develop: **Formal Recognition Packet for LCOL's**--which includes: certificates, plaques, years of service awards, t-shirts/caps/coffee mugs (ACA schwag)
- LCOL Develop: Brainstorm/Plan formal volunteer recognition at local conference(s), retreats, events. Coordinate with Standards Chair to make Volunteer Recognition part of the meeting agenda and/or makes a meal/event at the conference/event designed around Volunteer Recognition. (annually/bi-annually)

Phase Three

- ACA Develop: Measurement tool/survey used to assess volunteer engagement/recognition efficacy. (annually)
- ACA Develop: "Culture of Gratitude" (making informal/formal recognition part of everything ACA does; building and maintaining relationships within every level of the organization is essential) (ongoing)
- ACA Develop: National Awards Program--possibly add Regional Volunteer Awards (similar to the Eleanor P. Eels Award for Program Excellence where multiple camps/people are recognized at the same time). LCOL should submit local volunteers for awards consideration. (annually)
- LCOL Develop: Fine tune system for tracking managing volunteer hours, accomplishments, recognition, etc. Provide feedback to ACA National. (annually)

Specific Ideas for our "Recognition Toolbox" (need a better name)

Informal

- Thank you notes (digital/traditional)
- Volunteer profiles in newsletters/email/Twitter/FB/etc.
- Verbal recognition/Validation Statements:
    - I admire your work ethic.
    - Your help with _____ has improved the _____ for ACA
    - You are a tremendous problem solver.
    - Your enthusiasm made my day!
    - I like…. I value….. I appreciate…. I'm impressed by…I'm inspired by…..

- Relationship building between new and seasoned volunteers at/outside of ACA events; formalizing those relationships between mentees/mentors is recognition for mentors
- Engaging volunteers in topics/projects you know will interest them personally
- Calling their boss/board and expressing appreciation for the work they did
- Sending birthday cards
- Remembering names/interests
- Providing aspirational volunteer opportunities to motivated (or just young!) members
- Encouraging volunteers to share areas of strength (lead conference sessions, write blog posts, etc.)
- Have Regional ACA staff or LCOL members reach out and invite specific volunteers to lunch/events/coffee/etc.
- LCOL/ACA Staff should call local volunteers with interests/expertise and solicit their opinions/ideas/advice

Formal
- 5, 10, 20 year Local Service Awards (plaques/framed certificates)
- Addition of Local Volunteer Awards at National Conference
- ACA Schwag for Volunteer Recognition Awards (t-shirts, coffee cups, cool camping gear, hammocks, etc.--let them choose from a menu of cool items)
- National Conference Awards