

Outreach Suggestions & Recognition Ideas

National Volunteer Week

April 21 – 27, 2024

The U.S. hospice movement was founded by dedicated volunteers and volunteer commitment continues to be a core part of the Medicare Hospice Benefit today. This National Volunteer Week, April 21 – 27, 2024, we're shining a light on the dedicated, compassionate volunteers who brighten the lives of the patients and families we collectively serve.

The primary goal of volunteer outreach is to spread the word about the many benefits of volunteering for your hospice, palliative care organization, or end-of-life coalition. Below, you will find ideas that you can utilize to host both in-person and events to accomplish these goals.

In-Person Recognition Ideas

- Plan a public event or community activity. Coordinate a community fair, a walkathon, a volunteer awards ceremony, or a celebration like a community cookout for volunteers.
- Host an office celebration where your volunteers can come in to celebrate each other's work, say hello to your staff, enjoy refreshments, and potentially pick up recognition gifts of awards.
- Invite a local celebrity or government official to visit your organization. The celebrity or official could volunteer for a day, visit patients and family members, or tour a facility, creating positive press for both the dignitary and your organization.
- Hold a formal recognition event, such as a dinner, reception, or dessert buffet.
- Establish a volunteer bulletin board with volunteers' photos and names. Highlight special projects and place the board in a prominent place within your office to be viewed by everyone.
- Share outcome and evaluation results with volunteers showing their personal impact.
- Arrange discounts for your volunteers at local shops.
- Create a booklet containing comments and quotes from staff, patients, and families, demonstrating the difference volunteers make. Share it at a recognition event or have it available at your office.
- Provide certificates of accomplishment for completion of a project, length of service, or active participation in your volunteer program.

Virtual Recognition Ideas

- Develop a set of key messages about your organization mission and the role volunteers play within this important work. Weave your key messages into the theme of your outreach and your program's communications with the public – especially in the public statements of officials or program leaders.
- Put out some of your key messages via social media. NHPCO offers [social media graphics](#) for members to use. Additionally, consider sharing key messages with your volunteers and ask them to send out via their social media. You may also want to share posts from the [NHPCO Facebook](#) or [LinkedIn](#) pages and tag NHPCO so we can engage with your posts.

- Use the high-resolution PDF [ad slicks](#) that NHPCO has created for members. They come in different sizes and there are versions with full text and versions with minimal text. Feel free to customize or utilize these ads in any manner that is helpful for your outreach.
- Tell a story – Do you have an amazing volunteer? Share their story with your community. Why do they volunteer for your hospice? What do they get in return? Why should others join them? Social media is a great way to share a story.
- Involve a local celebrity or government official virtually. Invite someone with name recognition in your community to write a letter, record a video message, or post on social media with a message of appreciation to your volunteers.
- Submit a letter to the editor or op-ed to your local media outlet. Call them or search their site to see who covers healthcare, human interest, or community news. Keep them informed with regular emails or phone calls, as appropriate. NHPCO has created some [template documents](#) you can use to craft a message specific to your organization.
- Post a press release to your organization’s website and share it with local media contacts. NHPCO has a [template available](#) for members to customize. Then, follow up on that release. Be mindful of deadlines and ask, “When is the best time to call?” The press doesn’t have to “be there” to report on a story. Sometimes a well-written press release makes all the difference.
- Use pictures or videos to tell the story – consider what photos or videos you have collected from previous events that you can use, or ask your volunteers to share photos of the work they are doing. Be sure to caption your photos.
- Create a digital photo scrapbook or album of your volunteers in action. Post your scrapbook on your organization’s website and social media channels. Share it with local referral sources.
- Place articles in your organization’s newsletter or website showcasing the hard work of your volunteers. Share these articles with your local newspapers; they make excellent human-interest stories.
- Send individual thank you cards to your volunteers. Short, handwritten thank you notes from board members mean a great deal.
- Give volunteers a phone call to express gratitude for the work they do and recognize them during National Volunteer Week.

NHPCO’s Marketplace carries a range of merchandise that can be used as special gifts for your volunteers; available items include tote bags, mugs, bookmarks, and recognition pins. For more information, please visit www.nhpc.org/marketplace or call 1-800-646-6460.

We also encourage you to brainstorm and share ideas with your colleagues in the Volunteer/Volunteer Management Community of MyNHPCO. To access the community and post in the discussion board, visit my.nhpc.org and sign in with your NHPCO credentials.