



CHALLENGE



April 2006

A Herff Jones IMPACT Resource for Students

Expressing Appreciation

“Thank you!”

“You really did a nice job with that.”

“I appreciate your efforts!”

It doesn't take much to let people know their efforts have been noticed and appreciated. Yet how many people go through each day never receiving positive feedback for the things they do? As a student leader, it's easy to get swept up in the hectic pace of juggling responsibilities and personal obligations while jumping from one activity to another. You appreciate the contributions of other members of your group, volunteers, faculty members, and parents, but how often do you take the time to let them know how much you value their efforts? As the school year begins to wind down, challenge yourself to express your appreciation to those who have helped you achieve your goals this year.



Group Members

There are probably many group members who have done more than their fair share on projects and activities this year. One of the most meaningful things you can do is write a note thanking each member for his or her contribu-

tions. Be explicit in mentioning things the person was responsible for or give specific examples of times they were especially helpful.

Another idea for expressing appreciation and giving your peers a little extra recognition is to work with your adviser to craft a letter outlining all of your organization's accomplishments for the year and identifying what students were in

charge of each activity. The letter could say something like: “Please join me in congratulating the following students on a successful year of

projects.” Put a copy of the letter in each staff member's mailbox. A display case with the same information along with photos of each activity could convey this recognition to the student body at large.

Volunteers

Every group has people who pitch in to help when it is needed, even if they aren't members of the organization. A nice way to express appreciation to these folks is to have a thank-you event and invite all the volunteers to attend. Perhaps a bagels and donuts breakfast before school could be arranged or an ice-cream sundae party after school.

Staff Members

Work with the other members of your organization to arrange for gestures of appreciation to staff members. There are two types of staff members who should be thanked: those who specifically helped with projects and the staff in general for their support and patience throughout the year.

One idea for faculty and staff members who worked with your group to supervise activities or advise committees is to purchase coffee mugs with your school's mascot or logo on them. Distribute them with a note that says “For all you do, this mug's for you.” As an added treat, provide specialty coffees and teas in the teacher's lounge on the day you give out the mugs.

Another idea is to put the names of all teachers or staff members who have chaperoned a dance or other activity into a drawing for special prizes such as dinner for two, movie passes, free video rentals, free groceries, etc.

As a general thank-you to the faculty and staff, organize a cook-out lunch of hamburgers and hot dogs with various side salads prepared by your group members. Or, surprise the faculty with edible treats at their next faculty meeting along with a big sign thanking them for their patience and support.

If your group's budget will allow it, buy each staff member a lottery ticket and give it to them with a note that says, "We never gamble when we count on you!"

The faculty adviser who works most closely with your group—who probably puts in many hours of unpaid work—deserves his or her own special recognition. Group members can chip in to purchase something like a stress reliever spa package or massage or other gift, but a personal gesture or memento will probably be most appreciated. Create a framed collage of photos of group members, a mini scrapbook, a list of "10 Things We Learned from Mrs. _____," a poem of highlights of the year—anything that is personalized to your group's members and this particular school year. Don't forget a nice thank-you card signed by all members of the organization.

Parents

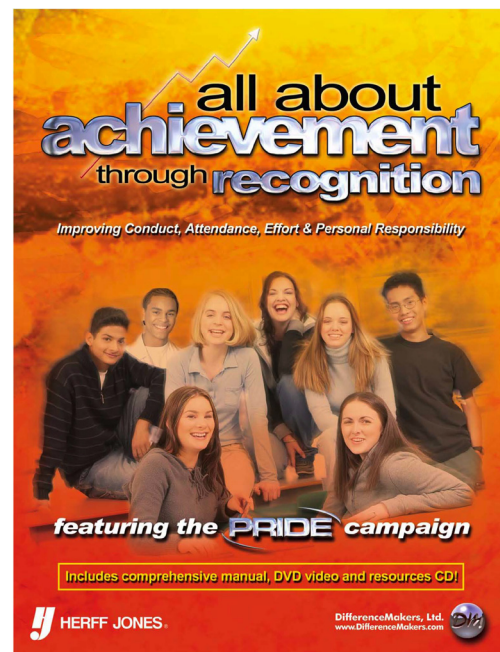
As you are considering the people and groups to thank for their support this year, don't forget to thank your parents. A personal letter to them expressing gratitude for all they have done to encourage and support you will be much appreciated. In addition, arrange for some public acknowledgement of all the parents of group members, such as presenting them with a flower at a recognition banquet or other event.

Taking time to appreciate the contributions of those who helped you achieve your goals is the mark of a first-class student leader. And don't be surprised if you find it garners even more support!

Appreciation One Liners

For a quick expression of appreciation, give teachers, volunteers, and members a small treat with a related one-line expression such as the following:

- Mounds candy bar: I just have Mounds of praise for your hard work.
- Twix candy bar: "Twix" you and me, you're doing a great job! Keep up the good work!
- Life Saver candy: You were a Life Saver this week!
- Peppermint: You're worth a mint to us!
- Bag of chips: Chip, Chip, Hooray—Our teachers are the best!
- SweetTarts candy: Thank you for putting your heart into ____.
- Red Hots candy: Thank you for being a red hot member!
- Package of popcorn: You add pop to our program!
- Cracker Jacks: You are a prize in our school!
- Extra gum: Thanks for going the extra mile.
- Apple Jolly Rancher candy: You're the apple of my eye. Thanks for teaching!
- M&M candy: You are Marvelous & Magnificent!
- Starburst candy: You're a star in the classroom.
- Bar None candy bar: You're the best—bar none!
- Pay Day or \$100,000 candy bar: You deserve an extra pay day!
- Animal crackers: This place would be a zoo without you!
- Orange: "Orange you glad you work here? We sure are!"
- Post It notes: "We're stuck on you."
- Plastic glove with candy inside: "Thanks for the helping hand."
- Hand Mirror: "You're looking at an exceptional teacher."



Today, recognition is a "must do." Doing it right, doing it often, and doing it for everyone in the learning community leads to improved academic achievement for the entire school. See your local Herff Jones Professional for more information.