

## 10 Rules for Keeping Volunteers Happy and Engaged

- ① **Make it Count.** People offer to volunteer because they want to make a difference. If the volunteer opportunities you offer don't have a meaningful impact, you are wasting their time and yours. And if they do have meaningful impact, make sure your volunteers know it!
- ② **Cultivate Leaders.** Volunteers are great. Volunteers that recruit and organize other volunteers are even better! Identifying and cultivating potential volunteer leaders should be a cornerstone of your program and a goal of each and every organizer.
- ③ **Give up (Some) Control.** Most people work best when they feel a sense of ownership over their work. If you're giving your volunteer leaders a lot of responsibility, make sure you're giving them clear goals and boundaries, but also the freedom to make decisions and do a good job.
- ④ **Say Thank You.** Share credit and spotlight. You can't do this too much or too often.
- ⑤ **Offer Training.** Learning new skills can be a great incentive and reward for volunteering, and it can be a good investment when your volunteers come back.
- ⑥ **Provide the Right Tools.** Whether it's sturdy shovels, functioning databases, or an easy way to track their hours, don't skimp on the tools that your volunteers use. If people are frustrated trying to work for you, they won't come back.
- ⑦ **Good Feedback Loops.** Actively solicit and respond to questions, suggestions and critique. Don't just ask if everything is ok -- ask how you can make it better.
- ⑧ **Create Camaraderie.** Friendship is a supreme motivator. Working with your friends, whether they're staff or other volunteers, makes volunteering more enjoyable. Create opportunities for relationship-building with and between your volunteers.
- ⑨ **Be Supportive.** From carpool coordination to providing childcare, organizations who know how to smooth the way for their volunteers keep them coming back.
- ⑩ **Fun.** Some volunteer jobs are inherently fun. If you need volunteers for a job that isn't, make sure you can offer fun before or after.