

School Board of Alachua County



School Volunteer Coordinator's ToolKit

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**The Alachua County
School Volunteer Program
Connecting Community and Classrooms**

Program Overview

Community Involvement: Making a Difference in Alachua County

VOLUNTEERS COUNT!

School Volunteer Program Statistics for 2018-2019

More than 24,420 volunteers gave over 609,200 documented hours of service to 40 schools and centers.

Over 386 businesses and organizations served as Partners in Education, providing resources to our schools valued at \$3.7 million.

All Alachua County schools received the State of Florida Golden School Award for outstanding community involvement.

Approximately 400 College Mentors were paired with at-risk students in 20 schools, serving as positive role models and encouraging friends.

The Community Resource Volunteer Program provided more than 3,848 enrichment programs in classrooms throughout the school district.

More than 1,200 volunteers served as mentors.

Over 5,000 college students were placed as volunteers in the public schools, working with children needing individual help.

Alachua County Public Schools is proud of the high level of volunteer involvement in schools throughout the district. Our community's parents, college students, retirees, interested citizens, community and service organizations as well as businesses donate their time and talents to public schools in many ways. Our volunteers help deliver valuable services to students and schools that would not be possible without their support.

Each school's volunteer program reflects its individual needs and strengths. The leadership of the Volunteer Coordinator is paramount to the success of the volunteer program.

A well-organized volunteer program requires planning based on the school calendar and that school's community involvement goals. This handbook is provided to assist School Level Volunteer Coordinators manage high quality programs at the school level.

Alachua County School Volunteer Program Partners in Education



Connecting Community and Classrooms

The School Volunteer Office welcomes your comments and suggestions. Department staff is available to assist and support school based volunteer programs throughout the year.



The Alachua County School Volunteer Program Connecting Community and Classrooms

Program Goals:

To involve parents, teachers, and the community in cooperative ventures to expand and enhance learning experiences and meet the needs of individual students.

Program Objectives:

- To help students improve academically
- To provide curriculum enrichment opportunities
- To provide assistance to teachers and staff
- To increase community involvement in education
- To assist in locating additional resources to meet identified needs
- To reduce the number of dropouts

Program Overview:

While the Alachua County School Volunteer Program is coordinated at the district level, it is essentially school-based. Principals appoint school-level volunteer coordinators each year. The district office provides the structure and materials needed for operating an organized program and provides assistance and training in areas of recruitment, record keeping, orientation and training of staff and volunteers, recognition, public relations, and program evaluation. The district office promotes and facilitates parent and community involvement in education and provides recognition for volunteers and partners.

Sharing the Responsibility,

Sharing the Results!

District Level Programs

Specific programs operated through the district office include:

College Volunteers

Each semester, the district office recruits and takes thousands of students from the University of Florida and Santa Fe College as volunteers in area schools. Teachers submit requests and sign-ups are held the second week of classes. We collaborate with professors of both institutions to provide their students with opportunities to experience working with children in public schools. **Contact: Liz Stark**

Teen Trendsetters Reading Mentors Program

This award-winning program recruits and trains high school students to mentor third graders in reading. Teens commit to one hour each week (minimum ten per semester) and are matched with elementary students at a partnered school. Recruited teens are trained to work with a specialized 40-minute curriculum developed by the Barbara Bush Foundation in cooperation with Scholastic. Please visit <http://barbarabush.org/home-feature/teen-trendsetterstm/> for more information. **Contact: Liz Stark**

Partners in Education

The Alachua County Partners in Education Program works to strengthen the educational process through promoting and facilitating collaborative efforts between schools and the private sector. Partnerships involve community businesses and organizations working with schools and/or programs individually as well as on a district-wide basis. The largest partnership initiative is the Adopt-A-School Program, which began in 1988 through a partnership with the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce. **Contact: Kelley Kostamo**

MentorGNV

Mentors are recruited through MentorGNV, a student organization at UF. It has been through many name changes over the years but is still placing mentors in select elementary, middle and high schools. Volunteers are matched both 1 on 1 and in small groups. Mentors visit the schools weekly during lunch, a class period or during afterschool. Volunteers commit for one semester at a time. Recruitment, orientation, and placement of volunteers is done at the beginning of fall and spring semesters. **Contact: Kelley Kostamo**

Community Resource Volunteer Program (Speakers Bureau)

The Community Resource Volunteer Program maintains a database of community volunteers who are willing to go into the classrooms at the request of teachers to share their expertise with students. Speakers enhance curriculum by sharing information about careers, hobbies, travels, experiences, etc. **Contact: Pam Fitzgerald**

Lunch Buddies Program

Lunch Buddies is a mentoring program that pairs 3rd grade students with caring adults who meet with them once a week during lunch. The program is offered at Alachua, Lake Forest, Metcalfe and Terwilliger Elementary. **Contact: Liz Stark**

**The Alachua County
School Volunteer Program
Connecting Community and Classrooms**

**School-Level
Volunteer Coordinator Role &
Planning**

Role of the School-Level Volunteer Coordinator

The School-Level Volunteer Coordinator (SLVC) is the key link to a successful community involvement program. The following is a brief description of the common duties of a SLVC. Duties may vary from school to school based on the needs of the students and teachers.

Typical Duties

- Conferring with school principal to determine school policies, procedures, and goals for the utilization of school volunteers.
- Conducting a faculty orientation on utilizing school volunteers.
- Determining teacher and staff volunteer/resource needs.
- Recruiting volunteers/partners to meet identified needs.
- Interviewing volunteers in order to determine placement.
- Utilize the Raptor Program to track volunteer applications and volunteer hours.
- Offering orientation sessions to new volunteers.
- Tracking volunteer hours, adding volunteer hours not captured in Raptor, and sending copies to the District Volunteer office monthly.
- Completing Outstanding School Volunteer nominations.
- Organizing and providing volunteer appreciation events.
- Maintaining community involvement through constant communication with volunteers, partners, and school staff.
- Evaluating the success of the volunteer/partnership programs and completing the end-of-year reports.

Qualities of an Effective School-Level Volunteer Coordinator

- Commitment - The SLVC must be committed to the importance and value of community involvement.
- Good Public Relations Skills - The SLVC will be interacting with the school's entire community and must be able to motivate others.
- Strong Organizational Skills - The SLVC will need to assess the school's needs and subsequently to recruit, place and provide recognition to the volunteers and partners providing needed resources.

Volunteer Program - A Year at a Glance

This calendar is offered with the hope that you will find it useful as you and your principal plan a program to meet your school's goals of achieving success and for enhancing student learning through the utilization of volunteers. Specific dates will be provided.

July/August

- New SLVC Training
- Contact last year's volunteers to "re-up"
- Network with PTA/SAC and place recruitment posters around the school
- Have a volunteer table for parents as they enroll students
- Consult school calendar and plan opportunities for volunteer recruitment
- Establish a system to track and maintain hours
- Conduct your faculty orientation and assess volunteer needs during pre-planning
- 8** Attend *the meeting for district School-Level Volunteer Coordinators*
- Maintain volunteer hours and records-send in summer hours

September

- Have sign-up information at open house
- Send a letter home with students describing volunteer opportunities
- Begin process of selecting your school's Outstanding Volunteer(s)
- Maintain volunteer hours and records

October

- Send follow-up "volunteers wanted" notice to parents listing specific volunteer needs
- Maintain volunteer hours and records

November

- 6** Nominations for Outstanding Volunteer due in District Volunteer Office (forms mailed to principals)
- Maintain volunteer hours and records

December

- Maintain volunteer hours and records (Should have at least half of the hours needed to qualify for the Golden School Award)

January

- Placement of collegiate volunteers
- Maintain volunteer hours and records

February

- 13** Workshop for District SLVC on Recognition/Appreciation
- Maintain volunteer hours and records

March

- 31 Golden and Silver School Requirements need to be met this month
- ___ Maintain volunteer hours and records

April

- ___ Hold volunteer appreciation activities
- 16 Attend Outstanding Volunteer Luncheon-Wyndham Garden Hotel

May/June

- ___ Maintain volunteer hours and records

Last Day of School- Complete and turn in End of Year Report!



**The Alachua County
School Volunteer Program
Connecting Community and Classrooms**

Volunteer Policies and Procedures

Definition of Volunteers

Volunteers are individuals who donate their time, without financial compensation, to benefit Alachua County students. The volunteer participation may occur in a classroom setting during the school day or outside the school setting as part of an extracurricular activity. A person who comes to the school for a one-time special event, such as a guest speaker, presenter, or visitor is considered a guest and they do not complete a volunteer application. The policy of the School Board of Alachua County prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, marital status, sex, religion, age, or disability.

Who Should Register as a School Volunteer?

A completed Alachua County Public Schools Volunteer Application is required by the School Board for all regular school volunteers. A new application must be completed each school year. Applications must be processed and all applicants screened through the sexual predator website prior to receiving an assignment to volunteer. The volunteer application, in addition to serving as a screening tool, registers volunteers for coverage through the district's worker's compensation program. Volunteers must sign in and out in the front office and wear a nametag while on campus.

Worker's Compensation

Volunteers who suffer injuries while on active duty are covered under Worker's Compensation. Timely reporting of claims and following proper procedure is imperative. Volunteers should report injuries immediately and initial reports must be completed as soon as possible. For additional information and proper procedures please visit the Risk Management homepage (<http://www.sbac.edu/~riskmang/workerscomp.html>).

Counting Volunteer Hours

Although tracking volunteer hours is a tedious task, it is very important for several reasons:

- Serves as proof that your school values community involvement
- Provides accountability to the community for their involvement
- Necessary to qualify your school for the Golden School, Silver School, and Five Star School Awards
- Provides statistical information that could prove beneficial for grant applications
- Must be reported to the Florida Department of Education and the School Board
- Provides a record of who is on campus and why they are there

Volunteer Record Keeping

Volunteer Applications

Volunteers must complete the online application through the Raptor system. Paper applications will not be accepted. Volunteers must complete a new application each year. It will be helpful if your school has computer access for those volunteers who do not have access to a computer. The application can also be completed on a smart phone. Once the volunteer submits the application a check of national sexual predator websites is completed and they are approved or denied. If the applicant checks that they have a criminal history, the application is routed to the School Volunteer

Office for a further check. Then it is determined if they are eligible to volunteer or denied and that is noted in Raptor. The applicant must then go to the school they are volunteering in and have their Driver's License scanned to get their DL picture in the system. The list of approved volunteers is available to view in Raptor. The list can also be downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet and shared with the appropriate school personnel. **A separate document will be provided for Raptor instructions.**

Volunteer Hours

Keeping track of volunteer hours is necessary for the safety of students and staff as well as for reports to the Florida Department of Education. Please make sure volunteers know how to sign in and out in one of the following ways:

Raptor Sign-In System

Each school will have the Raptor System in the front office for checking visitors and volunteers in and out at each visit. The system scans the Driver's License and completes a check of the sexual predator website and prints out a name badge with a picture of the visitor or volunteer. Visitors and volunteers must wear a name badge at all times. Volunteers and visitors will only need to show their driver's license at their first visit. Raptor tracks volunteer hours and can run several reports. If Raptor is down for technical reasons, volunteers must sign in and out on a paper Volunteer Services Record or time sheet. Raptor only works if the volunteers sign out each time to track the accurate number of hours.

Volunteer Services Record

This paper form, more commonly referred to as the volunteer "time sheet", should be available for individual volunteers and groups that may not sign in and out at the front office. This might include volunteers in afterschool programs, booster groups, field trip chaperons, volunteers who take work home to complete, etc. School level volunteer coordinators must collect and turn in these forms monthly. Call the district School Volunteer Office (955-7250 X252) if you need more forms.

Volunteers should record the name of the staff person they are working with in the "Staff Supervisor" column and briefly describe their activity in the section labeled "Type of Volunteer work." This information is required in order to determine how many hours your school has earned toward the Golden School Award.

After Hours/Volunteering at Home

Please give a few Volunteer Services Record sheets to volunteers who do most of their volunteer work at home or to the chairman of a group (such as a planning committee, fund raising group, or booster club) so that their hours can be tracked and counted. Remember to count tutors, students who tutor their fellow students, teachers/staff who contribute extra time for special activities beyond their expected duties and responsibilities, classroom speakers, community judges for special events, unpaid coaching assistants, and overnight outings such as Camp Crystal Lake and Washington, D.C. trips etc. in your monthly totals.

Raptor Volunteer Portal

There is a Volunteer Portal component in the Raptor system. This allows approved volunteers to sign up for events, add hours worked offsite, track hours and communicate with other volunteers. Once the volunteer is approved, they will be sent an email with instructions to access the portal.

Counting Volunteer Hours (Monthly)

1. In the Raptor System run a report each month that totals the volunteer hours by month.
2. Gather all paper time sheets for the month.
3. Total the hours and record at the bottom of each sheet. You may round off your total hours to the nearest half hour. For example, "1 hour, 10 minutes" rounds to 1 hour, "2 hours, 16 minutes" rounds to 2.5 hours. If a volunteer has forgotten to sign out, you may record 1 hour or the usual amount of time for that volunteer if he/she is a regular.
4. Make copies of sign in sheets that aren't NCR.
5. Total all time sheets for the month. Staple or bind them together with the total for all sheets written at the top right corner of the top sheet. Pages that contain days from multiple months and sheets from previous months can be included in the current month's totals.
6. Send the original copies of all sheets to the district Volunteer Office.
7. File your copies in the appropriate place making sure they are accessible to school staff.

Examples of Volunteer Hours to Be Counted

- Classroom assistance
- Tutoring
- Music and art assistance
- P.E. assistance
- Media assistance
- Special Education assistance
- Community resource volunteers
- Health screening
- Guidance assistance
- Clinic help
- Clerical help
- Teen Trendsetters
- Field trip chaperone
- Band booster
- Sports booster
- At-home projects
- Coaching
- PTA/SAC committees
- Fundraising

- Yearbook assistance
- College volunteers
- Mentoring
- Special events help (dances, carnivals, book fairs, etc)
- Safety patrols
- Volunteer coordinator
- Teachers working over and above assigned duties

End of Year Report

The End of Year Report is due by the last day of school. Included in the report is the total number of hours worked by all volunteers and groups not entered in Raptor. You may need to estimate hours for field trips that take place after school is over, such as the Safety Patrol trip.

Partners in Education

You may be asked to coordinate activities with businesses and organizations in the community. The following suggestions are activities that have provided meaningful partnerships for businesses or organizations working with schools:

- Provide release time for employees to tutor, mentor or read to students.
- Serve on a School Advisory Council.
- Provide incentives for students who have great attendance, grades, attitude or who have shown improvement.
- Provide career-shadowing opportunities for students.
- Donate used equipment or surplus materials.
- Serve as judges for various events, e.g. science fair, spelling bees, etc.
- Sponsor school beautification project days with materials or volunteers.
- Sponsor field trips.
- Assist with school publications/websites.
- Provide display space for student artwork.
- Serve as a guest speaker on career awareness, or special interest topics.
- Recognize students who receive special honors or awards.
- Sponsor special programs or school clubs.
- Provide educational or curriculum support materials.
- Provide part-time employment for academy students.
- Provide seminars for students, parents, and administrators.
- Collect school supplies, canned goods, or personal hygiene items.
- Provide tours of your facility.
- Assist with school fundraising activities.
- Participate in school events.
- Provide recognition to teachers.
- Sponsor contests in art, writing, math, reading, etc.
- Offer services to the school that might be unique to your business.
- Sponsor needy families at holiday times.
- Provide scholarships.

For assistance contact Kelley Kostamo at 955-7250





**The Alachua County
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Information for Teachers

Staff Training

As the SLVC it is your responsibility to train faculty and staff on proper utilization of volunteers. The material in this section is provided to assist you. It is recommended that you meet with the school staff during preplanning or at the beginning of the school year to go over the established policies and procedures for volunteers. Any of the material in this section can be copied and handed out to any staff utilizing volunteers.

Teachers Need Many Hands

There are many non-teaching jobs in the classroom, which can be done effectively by someone other than the teacher. Teachers need many hands and some of these belong to volunteers. Volunteers allow you, the professional, the time to do the specialized job you were trained to do.

The additional help and encouragement that volunteers offer pupils can sometimes make the difference between school success and failure. Their gift of time and talent supplements, but does not replace, the professional staff.

The willingness of volunteers to help is concrete evidence of the community's encouragement and support of the teacher. It is a demonstration that the community shares the teacher's interest in and concern for the education of our children.

We Would Like to Make a Point

Volunteers should feel that they are a part of a team – a team whose major aim is to provide a quality education for all. To realize the full potential of the services that volunteers can provide, it is vital that roles be clarified. Everyone must understand the line that separates the tasks of the staff person from those of the volunteer.

The following are tasks for school staff only:

- Supervising students. A volunteer may not supervise classes.
- Diagnosing student needs.
- Prescribing instructional programs and activities.
- Selecting appropriate learning materials.
- Evaluating student progress and achievement.
- Disciplining students.
- Supervising students in the event of a fire or weather-related drill.

What School Volunteers Can Do

School volunteers work with teachers who request them to:

Extend the teacher's teaching time

- read stories
- assist in Labs
- answer questions
- check student work
- create learning centers
- tutor in math and reading
- use audio-visual equipment
- find materials for classroom use
- help older children with research
- reinforce skills by providing extra drill
- work with non-English-speaking children
- play spelling, phonics, language, math games
- assist children with make up work and missed tests

Enrich the learning environment

- dramatize stories
- assist with art projects
- make educational games
- help children choose books
- assist with creative writing
- tape record children's stories
- help children use video cameras
- type and reproduce class newspapers
- record books for students who have reading difficulties

Expand the resources of the school

- display special collections
- explore career opportunities
- add expert resources in special classes
- give performances or demonstrations in the arts
- show slides and comment on experiences in other cultures

Teacher Do's and Don'ts

Do . . .

- Make volunteers feel welcome.
- Meet often with volunteers.
- Plan the work volunteers are to do before they arrive.
- Be generous in offering praise, encouragement, and support, judicious in offering constructive criticism.
- Start simply and give additional activities as you feel volunteers are ready for them.
- Plan enjoyable experiences through which volunteers can create good relationships with students
- Make sure instructions are clear with adequate time allotted for preparation.
- Supply materials appropriate for lessons.
- Provide guides, keys, or corrected papers for explanation.
- Be honest and open in talking over small problems.
- Treat volunteers politely and as educational team members.

Don't . . .

- Leave volunteers in charge of the class.
- Give volunteers more than they can handle in the allotted time.
- Expect volunteers to do tasks they are not trained or prepared to do.
- Assign duties that belong to teachers.
- Expect volunteers to be just housekeepers.
- Criticize volunteers in front of children.
- Expect volunteers to change their schedules without proper notice.

Teachers – If You

- Remember that volunteers cannot be thanked too many times.
- Include the volunteers in planning and encourage their suggestions.
- Prepare for the volunteers before they arrive.
- Show a genuine interest in the volunteers, they will show a genuine interest in the school.
- Remember personal information about the volunteers.
- Are flexible.
- Assign the volunteers jobs that will keep them busy and interested.
- Assign tasks that will increase the skills and knowledge of the volunteers.
- Check each volunteer's job often so it does not become stale.
- Increase the volunteer's responsibility by expanding assignments.
- Notice signs of fading interest (such as absenteeism), try to change the assignment or add more responsibility.
- Find out why a volunteer quits, try to remedy the school-related reasons.
- Give awards and recognition to emphasize their importance and to show your gratitude.
- Show appreciation daily instead of relying totally on award ceremonies to thank the volunteers.

. . . You will have Dependable, Cooperative, and Contented Volunteers.

The First Meeting

Teacher-Volunteer Initial conference Checklist

The first session with your volunteer is very important. This is the time you will set the tone for your working relationship. You must remain the leader but still make your volunteer feel confident, useful, and valuable to you and your students.

Have You:

- Explained fire drill procedures?
- Discussed your methods of discipline and classroom rules?
- Given the school calendar to your volunteer?
- Shown your volunteer the location of the restrooms, Media Center, and sign-in book?
- Set up and explained the schedule the volunteer will follow?
- Toured your classroom pointing out centers, materials, and equipment?
- Determined if the volunteer will be eating lunch at the school and made arrangements as necessary?
- Explained your communication vehicle for daily volunteer assignments (folder, notes or other means)?
- Made your volunteer feel a comfortable part of your working situation?
- Allowed the volunteer to ask questions freely?
- Decided what procedure you will follow if either of you must be absent?
- Discussed the school dress code?
- Explained school policies and rules?
- Discussed the name students will use for the volunteer? (Recommendation- Mr.B----- or Ms. B----- not Jane or John)?
- Provided a place for your volunteer to put personal items such as coat and purse?
- Smiled?

If you have, you're ready!!

Sample Thank You for Work at Home Volunteers

Date:

Dear:

I really appreciate your taking the time to do this work for me at home. Please record the amount of time it took for you to finish this project. Return this form with the completed work. Our Volunteer Coordinator keeps track of volunteer services donated to the school, and this will help with that task.

Thank you again for giving your valuable time to help our school.

Sincerely,

Signature

Time it took to complete this project: _____ hours and _____ minutes

Special instructions for this project:

Thank You.

Ways for Teachers to Show Appreciation

Ways to Show Appreciation to Your Volunteer:

- Greet the volunteer by name; encourage students to use volunteer's name.
- Thank the volunteer personally each day, noting special contributions.
- Set a time to talk with the volunteer when students are not present; speak briefly with the volunteer each day before departure.
- Celebrate the volunteer's birthday, and encourage students to write occasional thank-you notes.
- Share articles and books of mutual interest, on child development; learning styles or content area in which the volunteer works.
- Include the volunteer when planning class activities.
- Send a letter of appreciation
- Call or write when the volunteer is absent or ill.
- Invite experienced volunteers to train new volunteers.
- In assigning tasks, use the volunteer's special talents, knowledge and interest.
- Enable the volunteer to grow on the job by giving him/her increasing responsibilities and more challenging tasks.
- Include the volunteer in staff meetings and in-service training, when appropriate.
- Write an article on the volunteer's contributions for your volunteer newsletter, school newspaper, or community paper.
- Nominate your volunteer for a volunteer award.
- Treat your volunteer to lunch.

- Celebrate outstanding contributions or achievements.
- Recommend the volunteer to supervisory staff.
- Ask volunteers to help evaluate the program and suggest ways to improve.
- Help plan a recognition event and invite the Superintendent, School Board members, administrators, parents, and community leaders.
- Write a letter of recommendation when the volunteer requests it.

Faculty Orientation

Use the following two pages for your faculty orientation. You may hand these out at a faculty meeting or place in every teacher's mailbox. There is also a Power Point presentation you can show or send out. A faculty orientation must be completed each year. This will satisfy the requirements for the Golden School Award.

Welcome Back Teachers!

Greetings from your Volunteer Coordinator(s) for the _____ school year:

Name _____ Phone # _____
Name _____ Phone # _____

A few reminders about utilizing volunteers in our schools...

- Volunteers participating in any activities (including field trips) must fill out a Volunteer Application, and a check of the sexual predator website must have been completed, prior to volunteering.
- All volunteers must sign in and out with the front office before proceeding to their volunteer sites.
- All volunteers must wear an appropriate identifying nametag.
- Volunteers **MUST NEVER BE LEFT ALONE WITH A STUDENT**. They should always be in view of a staff member.
- Any volunteer activity can be counted as hours towards the school's total volunteer hours. Work done at home should be counted and documented as well. Forms are available to send home with volunteers completing work at home.
- Please document any hours that you work over and above your work duties. This could include overnight field trips, evening events, or service on SAC or PTA. Forms are available for you to document and submit monthly.
- Provide a classroom specific orientation to all volunteers assisting in your classroom.
- Please be advised that staff members are responsible to supervise the actions of their volunteers. Report any problems or concerns as soon as they arise.

The Teacher and the Volunteer

Congratulations! Now that you have opted to work with a school volunteer, what happens next? As usual, careful planning and some preliminary steps will smooth the path to a successful teacher/volunteer experience.

Do's & Don'ts for Working with School Volunteers

Do

- Be sure that the volunteer has all required clearance. Refer them to the Volunteer Coordinator if they don't.
- Make volunteers feel welcome.
- Give a brief orientation to your classroom.
- Explain dress requirements to the college volunteers.
- Plan the work volunteers are to do before they arrive.
- Be generous in offering praise, encouragement and support: judicious in offering constructive criticism.
- Start simply, and then give additional activities as you feel volunteers are ready for them.
- Plan enjoyable experiences through which volunteers can establish good relationships with students.
- Supply materials appropriate for the activity.
- Be honest and open in talking over small problems.
- Treat volunteers as education team members.
- Give volunteers proper notice of schedule changes.
- Prepare students to work with volunteers.
- Work with college student volunteers to provide an appropriate experience for their class requirements.
- Provide feedback and ongoing guidance.

Don't

- Leave volunteers alone with students.
- Give volunteers more than they can handle in the allotted time.
- Expect volunteers to change their schedules without proper notice.
- Speak to volunteers in abbreviations. They are a foreign language to outsiders.
- Waste a volunteer's time.



**The Alachua County
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Recruitment

Benefits of a School Volunteer Program

Recruitment is an ongoing, 12-month effort. Everyone is a potential volunteer. When speaking in public or writing press releases, focus on what each stakeholder gains from volunteering. Most importantly, be enthusiastic! If you aren't, why should they be?

Benefits for Schools:

- Enriched curriculum
- Expanded use of tax dollars
- More involved and informed parents and community
- Improved school community relations
- Better staff morale through extra help

Benefits for Teachers:

- More individual instruction
- Help with non-instructional duties
- Lower adult-child ratio
- Closer working relationship with parents
- Lightened clerical load
- Broader support from community

Benefits for Students:

- Increased remedial help
- Greater enrichment
- Improved self-image
- Positive adult role models
- Individualized instruction
- Exposure to careers
- Diversity of Experiences
- Personal Attention

Benefits for Volunteers:

- Personal satisfaction
- Improved self-esteem, sense of accomplishment
- Opportunities to learn
- Knowledge/understanding of school systems
- Work experience

Benefits for the Community:

- Better-educated students
- Improved graduation rates
- Increased confidence in the education system

Steps to a Successful School Volunteer Program

Before you begin to recruit volunteers please make sure these basics are in place:

Step 1: Appoint A School Volunteer Coordinator and/or Organize a Committee

A parent and/or staff member should be selected to serve as the coordinator/s. This person should be accessible during the school day for contact with volunteers. The school volunteer coordinator:

- Serves as a contact person for the district coordinator.
- Receives volunteer program forms and materials.
- Attends two district wide meetings each year.
- Facilitates staff training, volunteer orientations, and recognition events.

Step 2: Target Your School's Needs

Survey your staff to assess their needs for volunteer assistance. Develop a checklist for parents and community members, which outlines ways they can help.

Step 3: Provide Training for Staff

The entire school staff should know the policies and guidelines for school volunteers. Staff training is required to earn the Golden School Award.

Step 4: Recruit Volunteers

There is obvious benefit from parental involvement in school, so parents and family members should be the first recruitment thrust.

- A "kick-off" letter from the principal or individual teachers at the beginning of the year should welcome parents and list specific ways they can help. Include a response form so they can indicate their willingness to help.
- A "recruiting station" can be set up in the hallway on meet the teacher day, open house night, or at other school events. Have forms ready for parents to complete.
- Regular "Help Wanted" ads in the school's newsletter or on the marquees can be helpful recruitment tools.
- Personal phone calls from teachers to parents can also be very effective.

Step 5: Conduct an Orientation or Interview for Volunteers

After you receive responses from your recruitment efforts, hold orientation/information sessions and/or individual meetings with as many volunteers as possible. Points to be covered include:

- guidelines for volunteers
- school and classroom rules
- job descriptions
- a school map or tour
- completion of required forms

A new volunteer must complete a volunteer application and be screened before participating in school activities.

Step 6: Monitor Your Progress

Place volunteers as soon as possible. Make certain front office staff knows to expect volunteers and where sign-in sheets and nametags are located. Particularly in secondary schools, check with staff who use chaperones to see if everything is going well. When there is a snag, concerns should be handled promptly, and professionally.

Step 7: Recognize Your Volunteers

Ideas for recognition:

- Display “thank you” signs on outside marquees, hallway banners or bulletin boards.
- Birthday cards may be sent by mail or clipped to the volunteer’s sign-in page.
- Place a reminder in the sign-in area that coffee is available in the lounges.
- Send news of your volunteer to their club or business newsletter.
- Provide special treats for School Volunteer Week/Valentines Day
- Arrange a lunch or dessert event prepared by the school staff.
- Request recognition items available from the district volunteer office and distribute to volunteers.

Step 8: Evaluate

Survey your volunteers for their opinions about your program. Evaluate the following:

- Did it meet your needs? Cite areas where your school and students have benefited from volunteer involvement.
- Do you need to recruit others?
- Does your staff need additional training in effectively utilizing and managing volunteers?
- How can you expand your program? Could you plan a Community Resource Day, Career Day, or Parent’s Day where students can hear about the realities of jobs and the world of work?

Step 9: If You Still Have Questions . . .

Network with volunteer coordinators at other schools to share ideas and concerns. Contact the District Volunteer program office to discuss your individual needs.

Recruitment and Community Outreach Ideas

Tips to remember when recruiting school volunteers:

- **Have patience.** Be aware of volunteers and what motivates them.
- **Use warmth, friendliness, and the “human touch.”** Show a sincere interest in the prospective volunteer—everyone needs to feel important and needed!
- **Reach out!** Personal testimonies are often more powerful than a printed promotional piece. Most successful school-recruitment programs do not wait for volunteers to come to them but develop plans to actively reach the community and bring them in. Be proactive and persistent. View the neighborhood community as a source of potential volunteers.
- **Maintain momentum throughout the year.** Active recruitment is an ongoing, continuous process. Use real life examples of students who need tutors/mentors, and those success stories of students, who benefited from the help of volunteers.

- **Make it easy to serve.** Keep the required forms, rules, and regulations to a minimum. Legal aspects of participation must be covered, but the important thing is to get people working with students. Believe in volunteers and the contributions they make to education. Communicate this through all your efforts.
- **Make your needs known.** Be specific about your need for volunteers. A vague invitation to volunteers for an open-ended project will produce few responses. People want to know what kind of a commitment they are being asked to make.
- **Always, always remind volunteers that they are needed and appreciated.** Thank them for every-thing they do!
- **Put out the welcome mat for volunteers!** Create a “volunteer area” somewhere in the school to make volunteers feel welcome, comfortable, and special.

Parent Recruitment

Please refer to the following guideline for successful parent recruitment:

Needs Assessment:

- Begin in the summer by forming a committee
- People/groups to contact:
 - Principal
 - PTA president
 - Teachers, team leaders
 - School office staff
 - Booster club sponsors/coaches

Staff Orientation

- Volunteer Coordinator should try to speak at the first faculty meeting of the year—during pre-planning, if possible.
 - Urge teachers to recruit parents of their students through:
 - Memos home
 - Open House
 - Try to find ways to involve all parents in some way.
 - Golden School in-service requirement

Clubs and Organizations (PTA, SAC, Booster Clubs, etc.)

- Urge group leaders to plan ahead and provide parents with specific needs for volunteer assistance (dates, times, description of activities).
- Group leaders will draw upon interested, involved parents of kids who are participating in their organization.
- Group leaders should be encouraged to keep accurate records of all volunteers since their activities often take place after school or in other locations.

Preparation of recruitment forms/fliers specific to your school

- Your recruitment flier shouldn't be a slick publication that looks expensive, but should have a clever, attention-getting approach.
 - Example: "Volunteer "4" Education!" Ask every parent to commit to four hours of volunteer involvement each semester, which equals one hour per month.
- Provide a list of volunteer options for parents.
 - Special events of activities, give date, time commitment, description
 - Opportunities for working parents like Saturday events, sports concession stand, and career day.
 - Opportunities to volunteer at home: typing student stories, trimming and counting Campbell soup labels, and providing refreshments.
 - Classroom volunteers.
- Items to consider when preparing fliers:
- Give a brief description of event/activity
- Provide a way for parents to respond

Ways to Recruit Your Volunteers

- Keep your "old" ones—don't let the good ones get away.
- Use your school's website to publish volunteer opportunities.
- Create an email list serve to get the word out about school needs.
- The school marquee is a great place to let parents know about upcoming events.
- Visit a PTA or other parent meeting at the feeder school.
- Sell them on the idea of volunteering.
- Speak at your incoming class spring orientation program.
- Let the students know parents ARE at the school.
- Ask to be included in a school highlight video.
- Show the volunteers in action.
- Meet directly with the students.
- Get them excited about school activities.
- Write articles for the school newsletter.
- Be sure not to miss the fall back-to-school issue.
- Distribute a volunteer survey form in newsletters and at meetings.
- Give them several options of ways to get involved.
- Publish dates of one-time projects that will depend on volunteers.
- Announce your needs or publicize events within the community.
- Use your local paper or church bulletins.
- Repeat all of the above whenever you can!

Ways to Retain Your Volunteers

- Place volunteers in a job that gives them a sense of belonging.
- Make certain they are comfortable in their work.
- Introduce them to as many school employees as possible.

- Make certain they are appreciated.
- Pass along compliments—in front of others if possible.
- Encourage “graduate” volunteers.
- Allow commitments to be made for spots in the spring.
- Listen to what volunteers are saying.
- Reward them in any way you can.
- Recognize them as individuals.

Sample Recruitment Letter
(On School Letterhead)

Dear Parent,

Most of us think education is important. We know that our children’s future success and happiness depend on the education they receive today. That’s why we’re asking for your help. You can be part of this learning process—as a volunteer.

Why should you volunteer? There are many reasons:

Your kids will benefit. Even if you are not in their classrooms, your children will know you are in school. They’ll see that you believe learning is important.

You’ll get to know your child’s teachers. Knowing the teacher makes it easier to ask for help when your child needs it.

The school will benefit. The time you spend in school will allow our staff to do more things for more students. That means better learning for all.

The community will benefit. You’ll learn more about our school, and you’ll be able to share what you know with friends, neighbors, and co-workers.

Volunteering is easy. We’ll be glad to train you for your job. Many of them can be done at home or in school, during the day or on the weekend.

Volunteering is satisfying. You’ll meet other parents. You may learn new skills. And you’ll get a good feeling from knowing that you’re part of something important.

Please help us help your kids. Be someone who makes a difference. Be a volunteer. It’s easy to get started. Please contact me (*e-mail, phone number*) and tell me that you’re interested. I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Volunteer Coordinator

Special Recruiting Events

Meet the Teacher and Open House Night

“Meet the Teacher” and “Open House” is an ideal time to remind parents they are needed as volunteers. As part of an effective recruitment pitch, you could have a teacher present a personal request for volunteers, and/or a brief talk by a student and his/her volunteer on what working together means to them. Other suggestions include:

- Decorate bulletin boards with volunteer program goals for the year.
- Have a “Volunteer” table set up for parents to pick up the application, handbook and list of volunteer opportunities for the year.
- Have an audio-visual or power point presentation running constantly
- Have volunteers and students available to answer questions
- Have each teacher reinforce the recruitment drive and the importance of volunteers in the classroom. **Be sure each teacher has a flyer or sign-in sheet available.**

“Bring A Friend” Event

Another way to recruit parents as volunteers is to host a “Bring a Friend” volunteer organizational meeting. Include refreshments, nametags, and an incentive to the volunteer who brings the most friends along. Prepare a formal presentation about volunteering in your school.

Special Day/Events

Career Days, Hobby Days, Grandparents Day, Homecoming, etc. offer you the opportunity to highlight the value you place on volunteer support and the benefits volunteers receive from working in the school. For these special days, you can arrange to have a volunteer display or presentation, or prepare a recruitment flyer to reach those people not already involved in the volunteer program.



**The Alachua County
School Volunteer Program
Connecting Community and Classrooms**

Orientation

Volunteer Orientation

Ideally, before a volunteer begins to work directly with a teacher or other staff member, they will be provided an orientation to the school and district volunteer program policies. However, this is not always feasible. The ACPS Volunteer Handbook is designed to be a general orientation for all volunteers. The teacher or staff member the volunteer has been assigned to should provide a more specific orientation. Training for teachers on how to utilize volunteers should have been completed.

The School Volunteer Office distributes the Volunteer Handbook to the schools. It is also available online. Every volunteer should be given the handbook or referred to the website and instructed to read the handbook before they volunteer.

A welcome letter or email is one way to provide volunteers with a more school specific orientation, in addition to the district Volunteer Handbook. A sample “Welcome” letter follows. Also included in this section is an orientation outline. Many schools host an orientation at the beginning of the school year and have the volunteers come to the school. Not all volunteers will be able to attend, but this is a great way to welcome and orient those volunteers.

Welcome Letter (On School Letterhead)

Dear Volunteer:

Welcome to _____ School. You are about to join a very important part of this school’s educational team—our school volunteers. It takes an exceptional person to give his or her time and energy to help make our school stronger. Your caring enables us to work better and more productively, and your involvement brings to our students the extra time and personal contact that are vital to academic success. You are sending students the powerful message that people care about them.

Before you begin your volunteer assignment, please make sure you fill out a volunteer application and read the “Volunteer Handbook”. There are a few things you need to know about volunteering in our school, as well.

- Bring your driver’s license each time you come into the school. We have a computerized check-in system and your license will be swiped.
- Remember to check out when you have completed your volunteer assignment.
- You may park in the lot reserved for volunteers north of the school.
- You must wear your nametag at all times.
- Please report to the school nurse if you are injured on school grounds.

Giving our kids the best education possible is an investment in the future of our community and nation. Thank you for recognizing this need and reaching out to help. We’re glad you’re here.

Sincerely,

Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteer Orientation Outline

The purpose of an orientation is to inform and listen. At this event your school will give volunteers:

- An overview of the program
- The guidelines established by Alachua County public schools
- The procedures for your school
- A summary of volunteer needs
- An opportunity to register as a volunteer

This is also an excellent time for school personnel to listen to the concerns and suggestions of parents and other volunteers. Please refer to the following volunteer outline:

Registration and Refreshments

- Refreshments set a nice tone for the meeting
- Sign-In (include the following):
 - Name, phone number
 - Are you a parent of a child in this school?
 - Returning or new volunteer?
- Name tags

Welcome and Introductions

- Volunteer Coordinator
- Principal
- Office Staff
- Volunteers introduce themselves

Why Volunteers are Important

- Individualize instruction
- Improve students' self-concept
- Build bridges between school and community
- Improve student achievement
- Help for teachers

School Tour

On the school tour, point out the location of:

- Attendance forms and school volunteer name tags
- Telephones for volunteer use
- Media center
- School clinic room
- Restroom facilities
- Cafeteria (Prices and procedures)
- Parking restrictions



**The Alachua County
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Recognition

Recognition

Recognition should be an ongoing process, a smile or word of thanks from the volunteer coordinator, the teacher, students, etc. Official recognition can take place in the following ways:

- Community Involvement in Education Week—April
- National Volunteer Week—April (usually third week)
- End of the year school recognition event
- District volunteer recognition event
- Certificates/awards/plaques
- Publicity in newsletters, newspaper
- Bulletin boards saluting volunteers
- Nominate volunteers for other local, state or national awards

District Outstanding School Volunteer of the Year

Each school has the opportunity to select an Outstanding Volunteer in the youth, adult and senior category. Those nominations are due in October. All of these volunteers are recognized at a luncheon in April where principals, volunteer coordinators and district staff are invited. A committee then selects the three district-level winners. Winners of the youth, adult and senior categories are then entered as nominees for the Department of Education's regional competition. Each school decides how to select its' outstanding volunteers. Some schools solicit nominations from all faculty and staff; some appoint a committee; and some principals consult with their volunteer coordinators to make a selection.

Tips for Writing an Award-Winning Outstanding School Volunteer Nomination

- Select a deserving individual who was heavily involved last school year and who continues to be involved this school year.
- Long-term involvement over many years is a significant factor. Mention previous and/or current involvement at other schools in the district as well.
- Total number of hours of service is important. Interview the nominee to get an estimate of number of hours per week that he/she volunteers for the school. Be sure to include time spent on projects outside of school and during the summers covered in this time period. Also include hours spent volunteering in other district schools.
- The narrative section is especially important in explaining why this volunteer is outstanding and deserving of this recognition.
 - Interview teachers, staff, administrators, and students who have worked with or benefited from this volunteer. You may pick up some heartwarming quotes, or at least get a good picture of what the volunteer does.
 - Interview the volunteer personally. Find out:
 - All the various school volunteer activities he/she has been involved with.
 - The amount of time contributed to school activities—both at school and at home.
 - What does he/she find to be the most rewarding part of being a school volunteer?
 - Why does he/she volunteer at the school?

- If the volunteer is a parent or grandparent, how does his/her involvement with the school impact his/her own child or grandchild?
- Using the information gathered from these interviews, make your volunteer “come alive” in your narrative section. Begin by telling a little about him/her as a person (i.e. parent of five, single parent, working mom, retired corporate executive who has traded the board room for the classroom, recent widow who needed to fill a void in her life, etc.) Be sure to mention any handicap or obstacle this volunteer has overcome as well.
- Describe the various ways this volunteer has contributed to the school, especially focusing on contributions to the students. If fundraising was a major activity of this volunteer, be sure to say how the money was used to provide needed items, and the significance of these contributions to the students. If the volunteer has done many, many things, group them together into an impressive array of involvement. If the service has been in one major area (such as helping third grade students with creative writing), then go into greater detail about that activity.
- In your closing, you need to convince the reader that this volunteer is truly outstanding. Perhaps use a quote from a teacher or student. You might use a quote from the volunteer that captures what makes him/her such a special person. Stress dedication, commitment to children, home-school link, outstanding role model, compassion for those with special needs, etc. Pour it on!
- Close with a statement expressing the school’s pride in and appreciation for this individual. Even if he/she doesn’t win the county award, the recognition from your school will mean a lot.

Department of Education Awards

The Department of Education sponsors various awards for showcasing outstanding achievement of schools throughout the state. Award nominations are submitted to the School Volunteer Office and are then submitted to the Office of Family and Community Involvement in Tallahassee for state recognition. The Outstanding Volunteer Award was mentioned above the other awards are listed below.

Golden School Award

This award recognizes exemplary programs, which promote parent and community involvement in education. The form is located in the forms section. A school must meet the following criteria in order to qualify for this award:

- The school must have a designated school volunteer coordinator who is responsible for recruitment, placement, training, and supervision of volunteers.
- A minimum of 80% of the school staff must have participated in training related to school volunteerism. This can be accomplished by completing the following three things:
 - Meet with the faculty or communicate via memo in the fall to go over volunteer procedures
 - Get faculty input in the selection of individuals for the Outstanding School Volunteer Award
 - Involve the faculty in volunteer appreciation
- The total number of hours of volunteer service equals twice the number of students enrolled in the school. Any volunteer activity that contributes to student improvement may be counted; this can include fund raising.

Silver School Award

This award recognizes secondary schools, which have exemplary school volunteer programs providing services to elementary schools or lower level secondary schools. These must be organized programs with coordination at both the sending and receiving schools. The student volunteers and the participating faculty must receive orientation and training. The total number of student volunteer hours must equal at least half the total number of students enrolled in the *sending* school. The sending school tracks the hours, but the receiving school counts the hours because they benefited.

Five Star School Award

This award recognizes schools, which have documented exemplary community involvement. A portfolio must be presented indicating that all criteria have been met in the five areas:

- Business Partnership
- Volunteers*
- Family Involvement
- Community Service
- SAC

* Requires that the school meet the Golden School Criteria, have a designated school-level coordinator, and provides recognition of volunteers.

Parent Involvement Award

Each year the DOE and the Florida PTA sponsor the Parent Involvement Award to promote and recognize innovative practices that increase family involvement in schools. Each school is encouraged to submit a nomination for a specific parent/family involvement strategy or practice implemented for recruitment, training, and/or recognition of parents or family members.

Recognition Ideas

Schoolwide Recognition

- Invite volunteers and partners to breakfast or lunch at school on a certain day during Community Involvement in Education week. Cards can be ordered from the district office to be used as invitations. Ask for PTA funds or have teachers provide dishes (don't ask your volunteers to bake!) An especially nice touch is to have students prepare and serve the meal. Decorate tables with hand-made placements, centerpieces, favors, etc. Have volunteers RSVP so you know numbers to plan for. Hang a "Thank You, Volunteers" banner the day before the luncheon and encourage students to sign it or write messages to volunteers.
- Plan a Volunteer Appreciation Party (a before-school coffee or after-school reception). Faculty members must be willing to attend in order for this to be an effective expression of appreciation. Ask a florist to donate a centerpiece (this can be given to a volunteer as a door prize). Encourage everyone (staff and volunteers) to wear nametags since many participants will not know each other. Put heart stickers or other identifying symbol on volunteers' nametags.
- Plan an after-school dessert party and send out invitations that read: Our volunteers deserve their "Just Desserts"! Please join us for dessert at our volunteer recognition reception..." (list where and when). Note: If you have an event like this, set up one room for child care and ask for a couple of staff members to volunteer to supervise this area during the event. Responsible older students such as safety patrols could assist with the childcare.

- Hold your appreciation event in conjunction with some other gathering of parents at school, such as a PTA meeting, or serve refreshments at your February SAC meeting as a special thank you to those volunteers.
- If you are having “an event,” have students perform (songs, poems, skits), or ask some teacher/staff representatives to share ways that volunteers have assisted them and their students. It’s most effective to hear directly from the recipients of the services.
- If you have youth volunteers serving at your school, such as peer facilitators or turn-about tutors, do something special for them (perhaps a sundae party with lots of yummy fixings or prepare goodie bags with things like pencils, stickers, gum, fast-food coupons, a skate center pass, etc.). Don’t forget to recognize your own students who volunteer as safety patrols, read-aloud buddies, tutors, teacher and office helpers, etc. You could thank them with a surprise Popsicle party at the end of the day.
- Set out goodies for volunteers each day during Community Involvement in Education Week. Teachers could donate goodies by grade level or department. Something like sweets and coffee, or a pretty bowl of candy hearts near the sign-in location would be nice.
- Candy such as Lifesavers and Hershey’s Hugs & Kisses are naturals for volunteer recognition treats. Put a bowl of candy by the volunteer sign-in with signs such as: (School name) Volunteers are real Lifesavers. Thanks!” or “Hugs and Kisses to our wonderful school volunteers!” Be creative with your treats and corresponding messages. There are lots of choices: “You’ve won our hearts!” (chocolate hearts); “Our volunteers are red hot!” (cinnamon red hot candies); “You’re worth a mint to us!” (peppermints or chocolate mints). You could have a different one for each day of the week.
- Provide flowers for your regular volunteers near the volunteer sign-in location. Suggestions: camellias from someone’s yard, paper flowers made by art students, flowers donated by a florist, a vase of red carnations with a note inviting volunteers to help themselves to one, or a bouquet of fabric rose buds with note attached. “For all you do this bud’s for you!”
- Decorate volunteer station in office with helium “Thank You” and “I Love You” balloons during CIE Week.
- Make little potpourri bags for your volunteers using squares of netting and tie with ribbon. Use red and pink colors for Valentine theme.
- Provide volunteers with pads of paper with school insignia or a special saying printed on it. These can be ordered inexpensively through the district’s print shop.
- Provide volunteers with appreciation certificates and, perhaps, plaques for your outstanding school volunteer nominees.
- Decorate a prominent bulletin board with a volunteer appreciation theme. This may include student thank you notes, poems, or pictures. A list of creative bulletin board themes, with related activities and thank-you gifts, is attached, thanks to our talented Teacher Production Lab staff at the Sivia Center.
- Honor your volunteers each morning on the P.A. system.
- Hang a large, laminated, computer banner thanking your volunteers outside, perhaps in the area where parents drop off and pick up students.
- Paint front windows/glass doors of the school with hearts and flowers and the message “We Love Our Volunteers.” (Note: Paint on the outside so it can be washed off easily!)
- A large valentine signed by all school faculty and staff near the sign-in table.
- Send valentines to volunteers from principal, volunteer coordinator, teachers, and/or students. Can be handmade, bought, or use printed cards from the District School Volunteer Program.

- Faculty can wear buttons “We Love Our Volunteers” during CIE Week. These can be made at a minimal cost and can be used again in the fall for recruitment.
- Letters to the editor can be sent to the local newspapers and news releases to the local TV stations mentioning the contributions of volunteers at your school.

Note: Provide a form for teachers to complete with names of classroom volunteers to be sure no one is missed from the volunteer sign in lists when making a list of volunteers to be invited to recognition events.

REMEMBER: The best types of recognition don’t require excessive investments of time and money—just thoughtfulness.

Principals Recognition

- Put a message saluting your volunteers and partners on your school marquee.
- Announce Florida Community Involvement in Education Week to the faculty and encourage them to participate in showing appreciation to volunteers and partners.
- Mention volunteer and business partnership contributions and express appreciation in any memo, newsletter, e-mail, etc. sent home to parents. Also announce any planned volunteer recognition activities in your written communications. You might profile your selected Outstanding School Volunteers in the school newsletter.
- Send individual letters (can be one standard letter to all with individual names typed in) to each school volunteer or partner.
- Prepare a “Dear Volunteer” letter expressing appreciation and providing a coupon good for a free cup of coffee in the school cafeteria, inviting volunteers to enjoy refreshments provided in the office during CIE Week, etc.
- Invite School Board members and/or district administrators to volunteer recognition events. Ask them to offer a word of appreciation to your volunteers.
- Ask several faculty members to speak a few moments at your appreciation event on what having volunteers means to them and their students.
- Invite your volunteers to stop by for a personal chat and coffee and donuts (may want to give a specific time and place.)
- Send your volunteers a letter of thanks with a red heart coupon, which could be redeemed for a free school lunch (possible paid for by PTA or school hospitality committee) during CIE Week. (You may want to limit this offer to volunteers with a certain number of hours, such as 20 or more.) Phrase invitations so that the volunteers could join the student or class with whom they volunteer.
- Include mention of CIE Week in morning announcements over the intercom that week. Encourage students and staff to express their appreciation to volunteers and business partners.
- Send a “Phone Home” or mass e-mail message to all families during CIE Week, thanking them for their involvement and support.
- Send letters of appreciation to volunteer groups that serve the school:
 - In-school groups like booster clubs, PTA, SAC, etc.
 - Community groups that may have provided volunteer services to the school such as Foster Grandparents, R.S.V.P., UF fraternities and sororities, community service clubs, etc.
 - Adopt-A-School business partners and other supportive business.
- At the February meeting of the PTA or SAC, recognize these groups as volunteer organizations and express appreciation for their contributions to the school.

Individual Volunteer Recognition

- Decorate your door or a class bulletin board using any theme expressing appreciation for volunteers. In secondary schools, students could do the decorating.
- Utilize the various “punch outs” available with the Ellison press, either in the Teacher Production Lab at the Sivia Center or in your school media center.
- Prepare a personal note of thanks from the direct recipient of the volunteer’s time. (Teacher, student, media specialist, school secretary, etc.)
- Mark a large valentine from the whole class and have everyone sign it.
- If your class is planning a valentine party, invite your regular volunteers as special guests. Urge your students to make valentines for the volunteers. The students might even prepare the refreshments as a class activity.
- Make a huge valentine for a class bulletin board with the words, “Our heart is not as big as your love” and have all the kids in the class sign it.
- Our youngest students can draw a picture for the volunteer. Write the child’s name on each picture. Put the pictures together in a book for the volunteer and have the children sign it. Or have each child trace his/her hand, cut it out, write “Thank You” on it, glue it to a piece of paper, and write his/her name at the bottom. These can be made into a book and laminated if you wish. On the cover, write: “Dear _____, Thanks for the helping hand!”
- Have children draw pictures of volunteers helping in their class. Hang these on a bulletin board or wall and give them to volunteers after CIE. This activity becomes a teaching moment if the class holds a discussion of the concept of volunteering and makes a list of all the things volunteers do to help at the school.
- For special area staff (Guidance, Media Center, Music, School Office, P.E., etc.): Invite your volunteers to lunch or make some special “goodies” for them.
- Have flowers or balloons delivered to a special volunteer at school on her “Work Day” from the teacher and students.
- Teacher-written poem for the volunteer.
- Remember student volunteers (in-school volunteers, peer facilitators, university students, etc.).
- Encourage students who have special one-to-one volunteers (mentors, tutors, etc.) to write notes or draw pictures thanking their volunteers.
- Prepare your students to give a standing ovation as a volunteer arrives during CIE Week. Practice in advance.
- Special appreciation gifts from teachers are nice. (See following of ideas.)

Magnets (heart/apple shaped, etc.)	Stationary	Movie Tickets	Calendars
Coupons (fast food, yogurt, etc.)	Flowers or plants	Key Chains	Notepads
Special coffee/ tea samples	Balloons	Coffee Cups	Pencils or Pens

Note: Keep it simple and fun. The important thing is your personal thanks. Smiles and hugs go a long way! One school-level volunteer coordinator reported, “One teacher made me a loaf of home-made bread, another sent me flowers, and one made a valentine signed by the entire class—I loved that!” There’s a lesson here about what means the most to a volunteer.

Business Partner Recognition

(These ideas are especially nice for Community Involvement in Education Week!)

- Be sure to include business partners (bosses and any individual employees who are involved at the school) to school or classroom volunteer appreciation activities. Be sure to give your partners plenty of advance notice—at least 2-3 weeks.)
- Send a large banner or thank you card to post at the business, thanking them for their support of your school.
- Be sure to single out and recognize the business partners for their contributions at any group appreciation events you may be having. They'll appreciate the positive PR!
- Give your business partner a plant for his or her office with a personal note.

(These ideas are great at any time of the year!)

- Make a big poster to hang at the business. Have photos of volunteers especially people from the business) working with children, mount each photo on a colored heart and write a description of the volunteer activity beside it. At the top of the poster write “Volunteerism at (school name)” and at the bottom of the poster write “is good for the heart!”
- Always remember to thank businesses...notes from students are particularly effective.
- Provide space in the school to highlight partnership activities.
- Obtain birthdays of employees and have children send birthday cards.
- Provide choral or musical groups for special occasions.
- Provide businesses with an inside look at your school by offering a tour and explaining curriculum. Invite your Partner to shadow a teacher or administrator.
- Have the Student Government assist with planning partnership activities.
- Provide student art work for display at the business.
- Invite your Partner to serve on advisory committees, task forces, etc.
- Send monthly activity calendars and/or newsletters to businesses.
- Put businesses on your mailing list...communicate often.
- Provide visibility by submitting partnership information to be used in press releases, human interest articles, and school publicity



**The Alachua County
School Volunteer Program
Connecting Community and Classrooms**

Resources

Resources

The School Volunteer website on the Alachua County Public Schools website is a resource for forms and this Coordinator's Toolkit. The Teacher Production Lab located at the Sivia Center is another great resource for planning and carrying out your recognition events at a nominal cost. For more information please visit:

<http://www.sbac.edu/~volprog>

<http://www.sbac.edu/~tpl/>

In addition, please visit the following web sites for more helpful ideas:

positivepromotions.com

flpie.net

mentoring.org

thankscompany.com

quotegarden.com

volunteeringinamerica.gov

volunteerusafoundation.org

papermart.com

volunteerspot.com

orientaltrading.com

handsonnetwork.com

geographics.com/free_printablecertificates

simpletruths.com

appleseeds.com

three4me.com

energizeinc.org

volunteertoday.com

pointsoflight.org

independentsector.org/volunteer_time

floridaliteracy.org

allgreatquotes.com

baudville.com

fldoe.org/family

pricewisefavors.com

ourshareresources.com/resources

pinterest.com



**The Alachua County
School Volunteer Program
Connecting Community and Classrooms**

Forms & Handouts

*(See form links on Volunteer Website or go to
<http://www2.sbac.edu/~wpops/forms/Volunteer/index.html>)*

Listing of Forms and Handouts

*(See form links on Volunteer Website or go to
<http://www2.sbac.edu/~wpops/forms/Volunteer/index.html>)*

Volunteer Services Record

College Student Volunteer Services Record

Report of Faculty Volunteer Hours

Nomination for Outstanding School Volunteer Award

Community Involvement End-of-the-Year Report

Teacher Request for College Student Volunteers

School Volunteer Handbook

Golden School Inservice Verification

Faculty Orientation Form

End of Year Report Form