

# EDUCATE ~ ENGAGE ~ EMPOWER

## THE POWER OF RECOGNITION

### TIPS

**Be Specific:** Instead of "good job," say "the way you organized those registration folders saved us an hour of time." Specificity proves you were actually paying attention.

**Timing is Everything:**

Recognize effort as close to the event as possible. A thank-you note two weeks later is nice; a thank-you note the next morning is impactful.

**Know Your Audience:** Some members love a public shout-out at a meeting, while others are mortified by the spotlight and would prefer a handwritten card.

**Celebrate the "Invisible"**

**Tasks:** Don't just thank the chairperson. Thank the person who stayed late to help fold chairs or the member who consistently proofreads the newsletter.



#### Why Recognition Matters

Recognition isn't just about "being nice"—it is a vital retention strategy. When volunteers feel seen, their sense of belonging increases. Studies show that people don't leave organizations because they are busy; they leave because they feel their contribution no longer makes a difference. Educating ourselves on the psychology of appreciation helps us build a more resilient GFWC.

#### Creating a Culture of Gratitude

Engagement starts when appreciation flows in all directions, not just from the top down.

- **Peer-to-Peer:** Encourage board members to thank one another during meetings.
- **The "Spotlight" Moment:** Dedicate three minutes of every meeting to a "shout-out" session where anyone can recognize a fellow member's hard work.
- **Beyond the Plaque:** Engagement can be as simple as a phone call just to check-in, showing you value the person, not just their productivity.

#### Recognition as a Stepping Stone

Recognition will only increase a volunteer's satisfaction and willingness to further participate.

- Recognizing someone's talent is the first step in empowering them for future leadership. When you tell a member, "You handled that conflict beautifully," you are giving them the confidence to take on a larger role next year.
- Use recognition to validate the skills they didn't know they had, turning today's volunteer into tomorrow's GFWC MA leader.
- Spread your recognition to all members, include the quiet ones or the behind-the-scenes volunteer.
- All members are integral members of the team, you don't want someone to feel like "Free Labor"
- Small tokens of appreciation are appreciated – have fun picking them out. (a tea bag for keeping the club out of hot water or a jump rope for "jumping in to help")