Our question of the day for our zoom chat was: What do volunteers want?

It is as important for you to consider what a volunteer needs from your program as it for what you need from your volunteer. Volunteers need sufficient support from your program to do the best work possible and make a genuine difference.

Below are a few tips:

* **An outstanding onboarding experience** – there is nothing more frustrating volunteer candidates than navigating a confusing onboarding process. As the person recruiting candidates for your programs, the last thing you want to do is make a bad first impression. Make the process easy and convenient. You do not want to them to feel that they are taking on too much before they even start. Also remember that your training is a key part to onboarding. One program suggested that after volunteer candidates have completed training, schedule a debrief meeting with them to answer any questions or concerns they may have as they move forward.
* **Strong Communication –** Volunteer candidates need you to communicate with them. We all know communication is key, but when it comes to volunteerism, that might be an understatement. Touching base with volunteers too little can leave your volunteers feeling lost and confused. On the other side, over communicating about things that don’t apply to them can leave them feeling overwhelmed. Communication can make or break a volunteer’s experience.
* **Impactful Results** – Volunteers want to make a difference. What most volunteers have in common is that they believe in the mission. Volunteers are passionate about the mission or cause and aim to maximize their contributions as much as possible. You know that sometimes the results are not seen as quickly as some volunteers may need. Here are some ideas to help volunteers see the difference they are making. Here are a few examples shared by programs of what they do:
* Sharing volunteer stories
* Providing opportunities for volunteers to share their own story
* Once a case has closed, some programs place celebratory signs in the volunteer’s yard
* Have judges share how volunteers make an impact
* Collect information about their skills, qualifications, and certifications. The best way to facilitate that passion is by harnessing each person’s skills to maximize their positive impact.
* **A feeling of appreciation** – a little appreciation goes a long way in retaining engaged and motivated volunteers. Showing you that you appreciate your volunteers is one of the most important and easiest way to make them feel valued.
* Host a monthly or quarterly volunteer appreciation lunch or coffee
* Send out a volunteer questionnaire to ask about their experience
* Say thank you or send a thank you note
* Send a card to volunteer’s spouse or family to let them know how much you value them
* Send a note from the judge
* Offer a thank you package with your amazing CASA swag
* If employed send a thank you letter their boss and share their impact or difference they make