Big and Little Ways to Say “Thank You!”

Who needs appreciation?
• School personnel – teachers, aides, principal, secretary, attendance clerk, custodian, counselor, cafeteria workers, crossing guards
• Volunteers
• Community partners
• Guest speakers or presenters
• PTA members
• PTA board members
• Spouses of PTA board members
• Your family!

Things to Remember
• Be careful not to violate IRS rules regarding individual benefit
  o items must benefit teacher in their profession or benefit the classroom – not the individual
• School districts may have policies regarding accepting gifts
  o gifts must be shown as income
  o conflict of interest
• No gift cards! The IRS views them the same as giving cash
• Be careful about items that are donated – donations become assets of the PTA
  o cannot violate IRS rules regarding individual benefit
  o use in a silent auction with funds going back to the PTA
  o If it is not something you can purchase with PTA funds without violating individual benefit rules, then don’t solicit it as a donation!

Money Matters Basics
• Know your budget
• Use reimbursement vouchers – fill them out!
• Must have a receipt
• Sales tax not reimbursable – use tax exempt certificates when making purchases
• Do not go over budget – you may not get reimbursed!
• Need permission from membership for budget amendments
• Need permission from board for changes to your Plan of Work

**Little Ideas**

• Thank you notes – hand-written notes are always appreciated
• Thank you notes from students
• Certificates – create your own!
• Coupons for free stuff – many local restaurants are happy to provide lots of coupons for a free dessert or appetizer
• Thank you banner made by students to hang in school entrance
• Donate a book to the library in recognition of volunteer or teacher
• School or PTA logo items
• Items for the classroom
• Tote bag with planner and pen/pencil set
• Disaster/emergency kit for the classroom
• Push a cart of cold drinks and snacks through the halls periodically – or have stocked in the copy room for the wonderful copy volunteers

*Some appreciation ideas, with special thanks to friend and Super Hospitality Guru, Terri Sloma, tterrisloma@aol.com*

**Tokens of Appreciation**

• We think you’re noteworthy or Thanks for making a note-able difference! - Note cards or sticky notes
• We are wild about our teachers and staff! - jungle printed item
• Have a tea-riffic day or We think you are tea-riffic! - variety of tea bags
• Our teachers are hot stuff! - coffee mug or travel mug with hot cocoa or tea, a box of Hot Tamales candy, a bottle of hot sauce
• Have a cool summer or Our teachers are cool! - water bottle or something that holds cold drinks
• We shine brighter because of you or Our school is a brighter place because of you! - highlighter, candle holder, flashlight
• Our teachers and staff rock! - rock candy, pop rocks or painted rock
• Hugs and kisses especially for you - Hershey’s hugs and kisses in a pretty bag
• You’re a great catch! – package of gold fish
• We would go nuts without you or We’re nuts about you! - bag of nuts
• We think you’re “souper”! - soup mix
• We’re stuck on you! - salt water taffy or gum
• We’re lucky to have you! - rabbit’s foot
• You’re out of this world! - Milky Way candy bar or small globe
• We go bananas over you! - banana nut bread
• Anyway we measure it, you’re the best! - measuring spoon or cup or tape measure
• We think you’re “sew” great! - travel sewing kit
• You’re the key to our success! - keychain
• Our teachers rule! - ruler
• Our teachers leave a lasting impression! - permanent markers
• There’s no mistake; we think you’re the best! - an eraser
• We’re bursting with appreciation for you! – microwave popcorn
• Thank you for being a great “roll” model – Tootsie roll
• We’re bubbling with enthusiasm about you! – small container of bubbles

Create Your Own…

• Taco bar – add all the fixings: meat, toppings, sour cream, beans, rice, chips and queso
• Baked potato bar – Wendy’s is a great place to purchase potatoes for .99. Just add the toppings: steamed veggies, diced ham, chili, cheese sauce, grated cheeses, chives, and of course, butter and sour cream
• Potato-tini bar – Mashed potatoes are served in large martini glasses and topped with the same toppings as the baked potato bar
• Pasta bar – serve one type of pasta and offer different kinds of sauces: Italian Sausage, meatballs, meat sauce, Alfredo, marinara. Don’t forget grated cheese and garlic bread!
• Chili bar – have volunteers bring in crock pots of their favorite chili. It’s fun to have lots of different recipes! Supply the toppings
• Deli sandwich bar – instead of having the large subs delivered, set up a mini “subway”. Let them fix their sandwich exactly how they like it. Serve with a bag of chips and cookies
• Soup and salad bar – have committee members bring in their favorite soup or salad to offer a variety
• Ice cream sundae bar – offer all the toppings: chocolate syrup, whipped cream, nuts, sprinkles, M&Ms, etc.
• Pancake or waffle bar – Use frozen! Provide toppings: chocolate chips, whipped cream, strawberries, blueberries, and a variety of syrups. Don’t forget the coffee!
• Picnic lunch – have committee members or different grade levels donate salads (tuna, chicken, egg) or luncheon meat, chips, and drinks
• Smoothie bar – bring in different cartons of fruit juices (strawberry/banana, pineapple/mango, etc.) and fruit (strawberries, blueberries, bananas, etc.) for smoothies. Often, Smoothie King or Jamba Juice will donate the cups for keeping the drinks cold. Sonic will donate ice!
• Breakfast/fruit bar – bring in bagels and banana bread, different flavors of cream cheese, lots of cut up fruit, etc.

**Special Occasions**
• End of TAKS, End of semester, End of year, etc - Thanks for working your buns off! – Provide cinnamon buns and beverages
• Birthdays – Pick a certain day of the month (like the 15th) and provide a cake for all that month’s birthdays. Or deliver a cupcake on or close to their special day. For birthdays that fall outside of school months consider doing half birthdays

**Big Ideas**
• Honor someone with a Texas PTA Life Membership – [www.txpta.org](http://www.txpta.org)
• Honor someone with a Recognition Brick in their name at the TXPTA Headquarters – [www.txpta.org](http://www.txpta.org)
• Make a donation to the National PTA Endowment Fund in someone’s name – [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)
• Make a donation to the PTA’s or the Council PTA’s scholarship fund in someone’s name

**Thanking Volunteers**
• Send thank you notes
• Present each new volunteer with a PTA logo item or school logo item
• Give Volunteer of the Month Awards
• Feature volunteers on a bulletin board, in the school or PTA newsletter, in the local paper
• Smile and say “Good morning!”
• Write the CEO to praise a corporate volunteer
• Surprise them with a cup of coffee or cold drink – attach a cute note
- Organize an appreciation lunch or breakfast

**Thanking Community Partners**
- Maintain Partnership bulletin board near entrance of school
- Feature the business in a PTA newsletter
- Recognize partners at a PTA meeting and present with a banner made by students
- Present with a TXPTA Life Membership or create a Partner of the Year award
- Invite Partners to Convention or seminar
- Decorate Christmas tree at their business with ornaments made by students
- Put partners on your mailing list to receive your newsletters
- Provide choral or band groups as entertainment for company functions

**Teacher Appreciation Week**
- Remember to honor and appreciate the entire staff!
- Remember to run ideas past the principal!
- Have a theme to carry through the whole week
  - Take them to the Hawaiian Islands with Mahalo Nui Loa – “Thanks a Lot”
  - Do something different each day, with different grade levels assigned to bring in different items
  - Culminate the week with a luau and Aloha Shirt Day
- Leave a “secret box” outside each classroom for students to leave thank you notes, poems, drawings, or small gifts. Encourage handmade items, or items for the classroom, and always stress that it is optional.
- Wash cars of school personnel – get principal permission!
- Door prizes are fun, but remember no gift cards or items that violate IRS individual benefit rules
- Lunches at school are fine a few times a year; expensive lunches at other locations could be perceived as individual benefit
- Have volunteers provide the recipe for homemade items they have brought in. Copies can be left next to the item, or can be organized into a booklet to give to each teacher
School Board Recognition Month

- Invite school board members to a special function or luncheon at your campus
- Present them with a school t-shirt
- Appreciation message on school marquee
- Deliver a video of faculty or students saying “thanks”
- Buy an ad in local paper thanking them
- Mug with candy kisses or packs of flavored coffees and teas
- Add trustees and superintendent to your PTA mailing list

Dates to Remember

- Grandparents’ Day – 2nd Sunday in September
- Substitute Teacher Week – 2nd week of September
- National Custodians’ Day – October 2nd
- National School Bus Safety Week – 3rd full week in November
- National Education Support Day – 3rd Friday in November
- Elementary School Teachers’ Day – January 14th
- National School Nurses’ Day – Last Wednesday in January
- January is School Board Recognition Month
- PTA Founder’s Day – February 17th
- National School Counselors’ Week – 1st full week in February
- Student Volunteer Day – February 20th
- Texas Public School Week – 1st full week in March
- Diagnosticians’ Week – 1st full week in March
- March is Middle School Education Month
- March is Music in our Schools Month
- Professional Secretaries’ Week – 3rd week in April
- School Librarians’ Day – 2nd Wednesday in April
- National Volunteer Week – 3rd week in April
- Teacher Appreciation Week – 1st full week in May
- National Education Bosses’ Week – 2nd full week in May

Resources