

**Communicate.**

## Expressing Appreciation to Partners

Remember your partners give to the school because they want to help improve the educational opportunities for the young people of our community. Marketing what your students have accomplished is the best thank you possible.

- Thank partners on ***school marquees*** or maintain a ***partner bulletin board*** so that school visitors can see ways volunteers assist the schools. Take photos of partnership events. Keep some, mail some to the LEAP office and send some to the partners.
- ***Media coverage*** is an extremely valuable thank you to a community partner. Make every effort to inform the LEAP office of newsworthy partnership activities (so they can be included in the Daily Post or nominated for LEAP awards).
- Have a column or ***section of your school newsletter*** where partnership activities are featured. Be sure to send copies of all of these to the business or organization mentioned.
- Introduce the chief executive or other representatives from the partner businesses and organizations at ***assemblies, faculty meetings, PTO/PTA meetings, etc.***
- **Send “Thank You” Notes:**
  - Acknowledge all donations and volunteer efforts in writing (letters and artwork from students are especially appreciated).
  - Occasionally write to the chief executive at the business/organization and express appreciation for his or her support. That can be an opportunity to praise their employees who have helped you.
- Include your partner on the ***school mailing list*** to receive newsletters, bulletins, invitations to school events, etc.
- Send partners ***tickets*** to school plays, concerts, or athletic events. Invite partners to ***lunch*** in the school cafeteria.
- Partners who depend on sales of goods or services especially appreciate the ***patronage of your school*** population.
- Use ***school newsletters*** and ***PTO/PTA bulletins*** to remind school families to thank and recognize those businesses that support the school.

- Many businesses enjoy the opportunity to **exhibit student art**. Be sure to ask about the amount of space available for display.
- **Choir, orchestra, and band performances** can be a real treat for an organization. Companies with large lobby spaces and a lot of customer traffic may especially appreciate musical entertainment.
- Send partner's employees handmade **birthday cards** from students.
- Deliver **treats** for a special event.
- Host **breakfasts/luncheons** to recognize volunteers from the organization.
- **Nominate partners for LEAP awards like:** The Shining Star Award or the Annual Five-Star Achievement or Luminary Awards.

## Value of Partnership Recognition

**Recognition is a key element in creating and sustaining an effective partnership.** It validates a partner's contributions and involvement. When a partner knows what they are doing is making a difference, they want to continue involvement and do even more. Five partners offer their perspective of the value of partnership recognition:

### **Betty Markley, Central National Bank**

- "The kids at Sunflower Elementary *send birthday cards to each bank employee* and 'half-birthday' cards to those who would have birthdays during the summer months. While it seems small, the staff just loves being recognized this way. The cards, made by the kids, are very nice and we display them at the bank. In doing so, our customers also become engaged in learning more about our partnership, as well as being aware of our employee's birthdays, which is fun!"

### **David Livingood, GLPM Architects**

- "When we get involved in a mentor relationship, the rewards are intangible. Watching a student learn and become excited about our profession is rewarding, but it is also helpful to receive a note from their teachers letting us know what the students shared with others in the school.

*We have been involved with several student recognition activities. It is rewarding to us when the staff, students and the parents approach us after the ceremony to share their thoughts and feelings of gratitude."*

- "One Valentine's Day, the Riverside PTO surprised us with a *giant Valentine signed by all the students* and treated us to Valentine cookies on all three shifts. What a treat!"

# More Appreciation Ideas

## Thank You Notes

Thank you notes are a quick way to let your business partner know you appreciate what they've done. It's also a learning tool for kids in terms of composition, hand writing, and manners.

It's important to remember that notes of thanks can come from kids, teachers, school groups (PTO/PTA, Site Council), principals, and even parents.

## Banners

This slightly larger scale project is one that typically delights the business partners. Thank you banners can be created by students and very colorful, making them a welcome addition in the business workplace. It's nice if the banner can be delivered by students to the work place. By taking the time to create and deliver the banner, you recognize your partner's importance.

## Newsletters

School newsletters are a great way to keep your business partner informed and recognize that they are important to your school.

Not only does the newsletter provide information about the school and community resource information, but may very well be welcome information to the employees of your business partner. Again, your partner may also recognize new opportunities for sharing by reading the newsletter.

Newsletters are a great opportunity to recognize your partners and share information with parents. By sharing that information with parents, they have the knowledge to assist in the recognition process by thanking your business partner.

## Recognition Bulletin Board

A well-placed bulletin board is a great ongoing communication and recognition tool. It can be displayed in a central location at the school where all parents, staff and students can easily see. It should be updated on a regular basis to keep your school community up-to-date on the activities of the partnership. Include photos, partner's logos, and upcoming partnership events.

## **Publicity**

The district communications office exists to assist with community relations, which may include communication with staff, students, parents, and the public, as well as media relations. Feel free to submit partnership information to the LEAP office to be included in the Daily Post (the daily staff newsletter). This is great recognition for your partners and gives other schools partnership activity ideas.

## **Annual Appreciation Event**

While a bit larger scale than some of the other ideas we've discussed, an annual appreciation event is certainly worth the effort. It's an opportunity to recognize Achievement Partners in front of the entire school. Often, it is an opportunity to get together with fellow employees and friends at the school. If your PTO/PTA sponsors some type of end of year dinner, be sure to include your partners. A breakfast gathering prior to an awards assembly is another idea worth considering. April is National Volunteer Month and offers a natural opportunity to set aside a special time for your partners and have it stand alone from the other school year closing activities.

## **Overview of Recognition Ideas**

- Newsletters/Calendars
- Recognition in school newsletters
- Introduce LEAP representatives at school events
- Thank you notes
- Complimentary passes to school events
- Invitations to PTO/PTA and Site Council meetings
- Partner recognition bulletin board
- Regular meetings
- Event photos

## **Overview of Special Events Ideas**

- Beginning of the year organizational meeting
- Appreciation breakfast, lunch or dinner
- Banners for display at the partner's place of business
- Holiday/Special occasion treats
- Year-end gathering of all partners for sharing successes and accomplishments