

# Recognition Preferences of Ontario County 4-H Volunteers

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## Introduction

- Volunteers are essential with over 500,000 serving nationally in 2017 (Annual Report, 2017).
- Volunteer retention is important when knowledge & connections gained are considered.
- This study explored volunteer recognition as a retention tactic.

## Literature

- Maslow's (1954) theory of "Hierarchy of Needs" proposes that all human behavior is motivated by underlying needs.
- Clary, et al. (1998) identified six categories of reasons for volunteerism. | Values | Understanding | Enhancement | Career | Social | Protective |
- Volunteer recognition has been associated with increased volunteer satisfaction (Kang & Cho, 2015; Davis, 2000; Gonzalez, 2009).
- Altruistic/ intrinsic motivation is the most common motivation reported by 4-H volunteers (Culp & Schwartz, 1998; Culp, 1997; White & Arnold, 2003; Schmiesing, Soder, & Russell, 2005).

## Objectives

- Describe the volunteer roles and demographic profile of Ontario County 4-H volunteers.
- Describe motivation and recognition preferences of Ontario County 4-H volunteers.
- Determine the relationship between volunteer characteristics and their motivation and recognition preferences.

## Methods

Quantitative, nonexperimental study descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment & biserial correlations

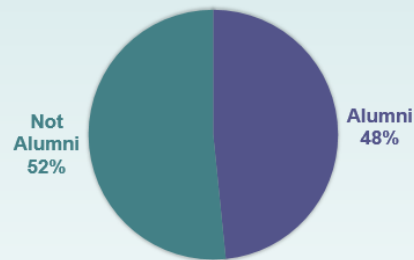
**Instrument:** Volunteer Function Inventory with demographic questions and recognition matrix

**Population:** Ontario County 4-H Volunteer census (94 total)

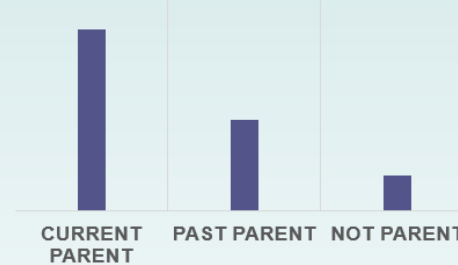
**Distribution:** Electronic via email, following Dillman's recommendations for reminders | 66% response rate

## Results

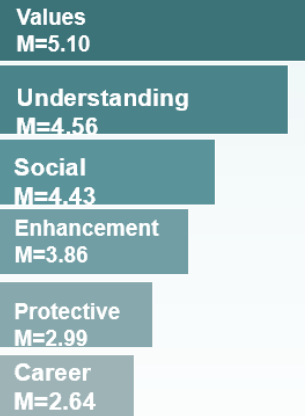
### ALUMNUS STATUS



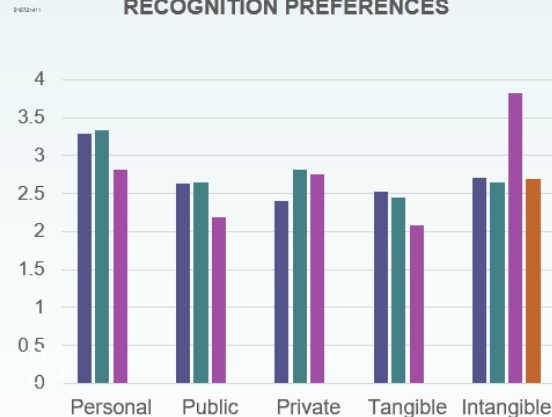
### PARENTAL AFFILIATION



### VOLUNTEER MOTIVATION



### RECOGNITION PREFERENCES



### MOTIVATION CORRELATED WITH RECOGNITION PREFERENCES

	Values	Protective	Career	Social	Understanding	Enhancement
Private	0.38	0.41	0.39	0.23	0.22	0.40
Public	0.25	0.35	0.33	0.25	0.19	0.37
Personal	0.16	0.32	0.17	0.10	0.06	0.32
Tangible	0.26	0.39	0.45	0.31	0.31	0.42
Intangible	0.48	0.25	0.41	0.23	0.38	0.44

## Recommendations | Application

### Foster the growth of strong affiliations within the 4-H program.

- Most current volunteers have a strong affiliation with the 4-H program as a parent, as an alumni or both. Affiliation is an important motivating factor for some volunteers (Fritz et al., 2000; Ismet, 2000; Culp & Schwartz, 1999)

### Develop more support and professional development opportunities for volunteers.

- Understanding as a top motivating category. Some studies show that lack of support and training can have a negative effect on satisfaction and retention (Culp, 1997).

### Implement a personal recognition strategy with a youth contribution emphasis.

- Values (genuine concern for human need) had the highest mean score among Ontario County 4-H volunteers.
- Seeing youth succeed was the most important recognition or reward followed by personal recognition methods such as verbal praise and thank you notes.
- Receiving recognition from youth was most meaningful based on ranking scores.

## Recommendations | Research

### How can the program build a strong affiliation?

- More specifics are needed to understand how to accomplish building strong affiliations.

### What volunteer training opportunities are attractive to volunteers?

- Because understanding was ranked highly as a motivation, developing volunteer learning opportunities was recommended. However, more information should be gathered about what learning topics and modes of delivery are attractive to volunteers.

### Would correlations be more substantial with a larger population?

- The population of this study was not very large (only 63 respondents), so the correlations between volunteer characteristics and motivation and recognition preferences might be more substantial if this study was re-administered with a larger population.