



TO: USMS Leaders
FROM: USMS Recognition and Awards Committee
RE: Recognition of Service for Volunteers and Contributors at the LMSC and Club levels

June 6, 2011

Those of us who participate in USMS are aware that volunteers within our organization can contribute at every level—from the national “stage” to the local swim club. Recognition of volunteers can often be a key to their coming back for more. Whether it is a thank-you note for a job well done at a swim meet or a plaque honoring an LMSC officer for years of service, proper recognition of efforts made by Masters Swimming volunteers is very important.

An ongoing discussion by the USMS Recognition and Awards Committee has focused on how we can provide leadership to the LMSCs and clubs so they can adequately recognize their volunteers at the local level. A subcommittee made suggestions in 2009 and a year later the R&A Committee conducted a survey of LMSCs. We were surprised to discover that only a dozen of the 52 LMSCs actually have programs in place to recognize volunteers. The committee also conducted a well-attended workshop titled “Recognition of Volunteers at the Local Level” at the annual U.S. Aquatic Sports convention held in September 2010 in Dallas. Based on feedback from the clinic and the survey we created a list of ideas and sources for volunteer recognition.

We share these ideas and suggestions with you in the hopes that you will begin, continue or enhance recognition programs for the volunteers in your LMSC. While this communication is going directly to the LMSC leaders, we do hope you will pass it on to your clubs via your newsletters, Web sites and other media.

Suggested types of Awards/Recognition of Service

1. Distinguished Service/Significant Contributions – Recognizes a swimmer (or volunteer such as an official) who has made outstanding contributions to his/her own team, the LMSC, Zone, and/or USMS and the general swimming community beyond Masters. This could cover the previous year or a longer period of time. Sometimes given to both a male and female and often named after a pioneer in the LMSC or club.
2. Inspirational – often due to perseverance, sportsmanship, overcoming hardships and adversity.
3. Coach of the Year award – often due to motivation and support of team members, technical advice, service to the LMSC, or long-term contributions to Masters Swimming.
4. Contributor of the year – recognizes outstanding contributions during the previous year.
5. Honorary Emeritus – presented to LMSC swimmers 80 years old or older. Must have been a member for “X” number of years. The honoree’s USMS fees are paid for by the LMSC until the swimmer fails to register.
6. Most Dedicated – presented to the volunteer who puts forth a valiant effort in the previous year to keep the LMSC going.
7. Lifetime Achievement – presented to a LMSC or club member who has demonstrated continuous swimming accomplishments, outstanding volunteer contributions, and a lifetime of dedication and devotion. Usually a specific minimum of years must have been achieved (such as 10 or more).
8. Continuous Membership Recognition – rewards members for continuous membership at 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years (and more if data is available).
9. Special Services – recognizes an individual, organization, business or group that has gone the extra mile by contributing outstanding service to a team, club, or the LMSC.
10. LMSC Service Awards – honors individuals who contribute on the club level. Multiple awards presented each year, similar to the USMS Dorothy Donnelly Service Award presented on the national level.



Suggestions for Awards/Gifts

1. Plaques or trophies (individual and/or perpetual).
2. Engraved items that can be used or hung on a wall (i.e. dishes, crystal, mugs and clocks).
3. Logo shirts, towels, equipment bags, patches/badges, pins, framed certificates, luggage tags, and license plate frames.
4. ASCA registration or all-expense paid trip to conference (Coach of the Year).
5. Lifetime or yearly registration.
6. Incremental gifts.
7. Subsidized ceremony attendance fee (i.e. banquet fee).
8. Facility donation (\$).
9. Gift certificates.
10. Food and beverage gift cards.
11. Thank-you cards.

Suggestions for the nomination process

1. Designate a LMSC or club award custodian.
2. Develop criteria for each award.
3. Determine the time/location for the award presentation (i.e. banquet, major meet, board meeting).
4. Announce the award nomination process in the LMSC or club newsletters, by e-mail blast, or other available media.
5. Maintain award information, application process and history of recipients on the LMSC or club Web site.

One of the responsibilities of the USMS Recognition and Awards Committee is to maintain the history of USMS national level service awards. These lists and the nomination forms for future recipients are online at <http://www.usms.org/admin/awards/>.

Links to LMSC's award information on websites:

Colorado - <http://www.comsa.org/records/ServiceAward.html>
and <http://www.comsa.org/records/CoachAward.html>
Florida - <http://www.floridalmc.org/index.cfm?recognition=1>
Illinois - <http://www.ilmsa.com/johnsloanaward>
Indiana - <http://grinswim.wordpress.com/awards/>
Inland Northwest - <http://www.inlandnwmasters.org/history.html>
Michigan - <http://www.michiganmasters.com/Awards.html>
New Jersey - <http://www.njmasters.org/membership/cmrapawards.htm>
Oregon - <http://www.swimoregon.org/awards.php>
Pacific - <http://www.pacificmasters.org/general/awards.html>
Southern Pacific - http://www.spma.net/html.php?bdy=awards_criteria.htm
and http://www.spma.net/spma_awards.php

For questions or more information about awards at the national or local level, or to share your own ideas, please contact Sally Dillon, the R&A Committee chair at: awards@usms.org.