

Recognition and Awards at the Local Level Peer-to-Peer Teleconference - Notes

The items posted in this section are notes from conversations that are not reviewed or approved by the attendees. The information is not intended to override guidelines, policies, and procedures listed elsewhere in the LMSC Guide to Operations or elsewhere on www.usms.org or in the USMS rule book.

July 10, 2018; 5:30 – 6:30 pm PDT

Facilitator: Sally Dillon

Content Experts: USMS Recognition & Awards: Ray Novitske (Chair), Megan Lassen, Vice Chair

Attendees: LMSC Development Committee Chair Michael Moore, R&A Committee members Cathy Kenner, Ginger Pierson, Laura Val, Lori Payne, and Nadine day, LMSC DC committee members Lisa Brown, Jerry Clark, and Bruce Rollins, Becky Clevenger (SP), Celia Wolff (NC), Jim Clemmons (SR), Ann Sanders (NC).

Sally introduced the teleconference goal: to discuss recognition of volunteers at the LMSC and Club level. She noted that many LMSCs present annual awards such as a “Contributor of the Year” award. It would be considered a significant award and would likely include a special gift or trophy of some sort. The R&A committee has encouraged this type of award for many years and there are resources on the USMS website. Scroll to the bottom of any page and select . . . Guide to Operations, then Awards. Located on this page are two categories:

- Results from surveys done in 2010 and 2014 by the R&A committee and
- Sample Award Templates (Appreciation Award, Coaching Award, Contributor award, and Distinguished Service Award) - all developed by R&A. The templates were designed to give LMSCs and/or clubs guidance when developing an award for volunteers.

The goal of this conversation is to recognize a broader group of individuals for their volunteerism.

Question: Who are the volunteers in our LMSCs?

Responses: Board members of clubs and LMSCs, meet officials, timers, hospitality organizers, and meet personnel. A volunteer is anyone who steps up to do something that they’re not paid to do. Coaches often volunteer beyond what they are paid for. Those who volunteer for clubs/WGs: social director, snack bar organizer, and those who bring snacks. Webmasters, editors, those who manage the social media options. Those who advocate for the pools to keep them open. Those who volunteer to take part in ALTS programs. There is an abundance of volunteers at every level of Masters Swimming!

Question: How do you recognize or thank these people?

Responses: Sometimes you don’t, but there are many ways to give credit, with little cost, for the contributions volunteers make. Include names in the newsletter - expressing thanks, handwritten thank you notes, announcements and recognition of volunteers at a meet, list names in meet programs, post names on the website or social media, distribute list of volunteers with the results, give out certificates, recognize volunteers in email blasts.

Rewards for volunteer service could include gift cards or gift certificates, sweets from a local business, small gifts from a local artist, handwritten notes on official stationery offering thanks for contributions. Officials are sometimes thanked by paying for hotel stays or making donations to their local official’s association. Meet officials and timers receive hospitality (food/drink) throughout the meet. Formal awards would be appropriate for those recognized once a year, such as a plaque to the aforementioned Contributor of the Year Award. At the Club level, select a swimmer of the month; usually for involvement as an athlete or their volunteerism. Publicize all awards. Coach of the Year awards often expect contributions beyond the coaching responsibilities. LMSC had a booth at a sports convention and volunteers got a t-shirt.

Question: How many have heard of the USMS Volunteer Store? Do you know its purpose, or the items?

Responses: Ray explained that a USMS member, not on the R&A committee, suggested that we develop USMS branded products for recognizing/rewarding volunteers that could be purchased in relatively small quantity and used particularly by LMSCs and clubs. The products became available in early 2017 and the

current options are: Koozies (25 for \$21.25), Pens (25 for \$23.75), Shopping bags (\$50 for 25), Tervis Tumbler (8 for \$80), and Note Pads (25 for \$18.75). The products say “volunteer”, “volunteer extraordinaire”, or “I’m a volunteer. What’s your superpower?”. They are not intended for individuals to purchase for themselves; a minimum number of each is required for an order. The link to the Volunteer Store can be found on the USMS Awards page in the introductory paragraph at <https://www.usms.org/admin/awards/>

Question: Are there any suggestions for new items?

Responses: Provide a link to Swim Outlet – it was noted that the USMS products there do not have “volunteer” on them. Still good ideas for rewarding service, but they don’t identify the owner as a volunteer.

Ideas for “volunteer branded” products:

- Pocket on back of cellphone – peel and stick
- Metal drink container **
- Bag tags (for luggage)
- Key chains
- The current shopping bags – the logo needs to be larger
- Spiral notebooks – different sizes
- New “sayings” on the products

Question: Cathy, tell us about the recent LMSC inquiry that you led.

Responses: The inquiry was designed to find out which LMSCs were recognizing volunteers, if there were questions that the R&A committee could answer, or if the LMSCs had suggestions. Only 21 of the LMSCs responded.

Question: Cathy asked what R&A could do for the LMSCs.

Responses: It was suggested that templates for certificates be made available to LMSCs that could be used for various recognitions. Templates of a few different designs would be ideal. It was suggested that we could use what the National Offices uses for the USMS Service award; we would need to talk the NO for that. Ray mentioned Thank You cards that the committee previously considered, but they were not completed; a task for the R&A committee to undertake. Michael suggested that we keep track of what type of awards LMSCs are doing and Sally reminded all to look at the 2014 survey that was mentioned earlier; it provides a good resource for types of awards. Visit the websites of LMSCs that have awards for volunteers (listed in the survey) for more ideas.

Cathy said that the R&A subcommittee may not continue with current survey, but they would like to have some photos and stories about volunteers to submit to Streamlines. Ray noted that the purpose of the survey was to promote local awards and to get some metrics as to what is currently being done.

Question: Spreading the word on social media - do you post photos and/or words of thanks on social media to call attention to volunteers?

Response: SPMS has informally done this, but not regularly. For example, Rita Simonton received a Lifetime Achievement Award recently and photos were posted on Facebook. Cathy suggested using #usmsvolunteer when you are recognizing your volunteers on Twitter, Instagram, and FB; it can be tracked by the R&A committee. Ray said that if this takes off, the NO publications might pick up on it. Sally noted that awards that are given out in the LMSC need to be announced on Facebook, Twitter, websites, and other media outlets.

Ray also mentioned that this is not just a mission for the R&A committee. USMS President Patty Miller has included recognition of volunteers in the Strategic Plan; encouraging and recognizing volunteers is important for the future of USMS.

In closing, we are not suggesting that you recognize only those people who receive special awards, but also to improve the recognition of the volunteers who help USMS function from day to day; those who make your clubs, LMSCs, boards, and meets better.