



Animal Sanctuary Caregiver Day: 25 ways to celebrate and recognize your staff's great work

1. **Free lunch and/or breakfast!** Bring your caregiver staff together with healthy food for their busy day.
2. **Snacks for the day!** If you have a dedicated staff kitchen or break room, stock it with special treats including fresh fruit, cookies, sweets, and a variety of coffees and teas.
3. **Pizza party!** Have some fun at a lunch or after work event and hand out some small awards or prizes to your staff.
4. **Taste test!** Host a festive vegan food taste testing for your caregivers with meatless burgers, vegan ice cream, cheese products, hummus, etc.
5. **Educational speakers!** Invite guest speakers to share information with your caregivers about the latest developments in animal care or other topics of interest.
6. **Staff-selected training/development!** Instead of choosing the speaker, give caregiver managers a set budget for each staff member, then give caregivers the freedom to select the training they want, such as a class or online course.
7. **Flex vacation day!** Give your caregivers one extra vacation day to use as they please; or put basic parameters on when they can use it.
8. **Volunteer!** Offer caregivers a full or half day off to volunteer at a non-profit of their choice.
9. **Employee recognition!** Send out some organization-wide emails throughout the day to recognize caregivers' good work, or post recognitions on public bulletin boards.
10. **Rewards & recognition suggestion box!** Reach out to your staff and ask them what forms of recognition and rewards are the most meaningful to them.

11. **Sanctuary awards ceremony!** Host an organization-wide awards ceremony to celebrate some of the biggest successes over the past year.
12. **Personalized thank you notes!** Personalized, handwritten notes to your caregivers are always appreciated.
13. **Caregiver of the month program!** Implement a program that allows staff to nominate their peers, and give a small gift and recognition to each month's chosen caregiver.
14. **Gift card/certificate!** A gift card or certificate for coffee, movie tickets, or a meal at a local restaurant is a simple way to show your appreciation.
15. **Connect over Skype!** Connect your caregivers with staff at another sanctuary or rescue center in another state or country, to meet and share some of their experiences (let us know if you are interested and we can assist in pairing you with another organization for the day).
16. **Compassion Fatigue awareness and support!** Bring a speaker to the sanctuary for your staff, or arrange for them to participate in a webinar (GFAS has a recorded webinar on the topic available on its [website](#)).
17. **Thank you from the Board!** Ask your Board members to sponsor a special lunch or after-work party! Caregivers don't often get a chance to meet your Board members, and this is a way to let your staff know that the Board appreciates their hard work.
18. **Introduce your caregivers!** Highlight each caregiver on social media with a photo and note highlighting their special talents and skills.
19. **Let the games begin!** Host a friendly competition, such as the most creative enrichment idea, with small prizes to the winners (ask your Board to donate the prizes!).
20. **Videos!** Create special videos to post and share to honor and to thank your caregivers.
21. **Sponsor an animal!** Have your Board members sponsor caregivers' favorite animals in their names.
22. **Inspire teamwork!** Create special clothing such as t-shirts, hats, fleece jackets, etc. with a group logo or motto.
23. **Pet participation!** Where possible and appropriate, allow caregivers to bring their dogs to work.
24. **Put it on display!** Create a caregiver "Wall of Fame" that features pictures, accomplishments, funny stories, and notes of appreciation.
25. **Extend the celebration!** Caregivers should be appreciated throughout the year! Establish a staff 'fun/continuing education/in-service day/etc.' committee to plan one event every other month, for the next year.