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# The Importance Of Recognition: A Perfect Story For The Holiday Season

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This story involves a mentally challenged individual that works at a local supermarket. There was a time when the store presented an *"Employee of the Month"* award to its staff. This middle-aged man was a recipient of this award from time-to-time. He was so elated whenever he received the honor that he would brag about it and show off the plaque (that came as part of the recognition) to the store's customers for a weeks after.

One day, my friend asked the young man to help her load some bags into her car. In the conversation that ensued, she asked if he had received a recognition plaque this year. He said, no, and, went on to explain that the store had done away with the award program. He became clearly emotional and distraught discussing it. It seemed that it made him feel so sad that his work, which clearly helps him to define himself, was no longer being recognized for its excellence.

Seeing how much this person cared about this honor, my friend decided to take it upon herself to do something about it. So, every year at Christmastime, for the last several years, she gets a recognition plaque made—complete with this man's name and picture—and awards it to him in the parking lot when he helps her with her groceries. She tells me it really makes his day. Sometimes, in fact, he is so overcome that someone has taken the time to recognize his work that he often breaks down and cries when she gives him the award.

During this holiday season we need to recognize our highest contributors because it is important to say *"thanks"* and to celebrate those that make a difference.

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