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ALLEN LAEL, FOR THE CHRONICLE

Dan Douglas, head of a volunteer center in Owensboro, Ky., visits a Girls Incorporated after-school program. He is pressing charities to think more ambitiously about "how volunteers can work more directly on real problems in the community."

## Volunteers May Swamp Charities

*Presidents' summit raises questions about groups' ability to use the help*

By MARINA DUNDJERSKI and HOLLY HALL

**T**HOUSANDS OF AMERICANS may soon be flocking to the doorsteps of charities nationwide in response to a call to volunteerism from President Clinton and other prominent political leaders. But unless charities make big changes in the way they deal with people who want to give their time and energy, the influx of volunteers will make little difference in solving social problems, non-profit leaders say.

To shine attention on the importance of community service, Mr. Clinton and three former Presidents are gathering in Philadelphia this month for the Presidents' Summit for America's Future, an unprecedented, bipartisan event.

The three-day meeting, to be chaired by Gen. Colin Powell, will bring together delegations from nearly 150 towns and cities, as well as thousands of

corporate, foundation, and government officials. They plan to develop concrete ways to inspire more people to volunteer and take other steps to help America's young people.

Already, more than 120 organizations have pledged to take action to help kids.

The Timberland Company, a shoe manufacturer, says it will pay each of its 5,000 employees to take a week's worth of time off to volunteer to help young people. Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America is pledging that it will double the number of mentors for youngsters in the next three years. Ronald McDonald House Charities will give \$100-million over the next five years to support research on neuroblastoma, a cancer that occurs chiefly in children, and to programs aimed at preventing child abuse, drug abuse, and youth suicide. And state workers in Texas promise to link volunteers with one million well-

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### Promising a Fortune

David Van Andel (right) has been named to head a medical-research charity being created by his billionaire father, Jay Van Andel, the co-founder of Amway, who has pledged to leave the bulk of his fortune to charity. Story on Page 9.



### Hiding Behind a Badge

The federal government and 21 states announced last week that they were cracking down on a growing type of charity fraud: appeals in behalf of police, fire, and other public-safety agencies. Story on Page 19.

A complete guide to this issue appears on Page 4.

# MANAGING

Governance and Regulation

## Volunteers May Swamp Charities

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fare families who need help in becoming self-sufficient. (A full list of commitments that organizations have made begins on Page 39.)

Many in the non-profit world laud the mobilization of so many elements of society to help children, but they raise serious questions about the summit's emphasis on increasing the number of volunteers.

"Organizations do not necessarily need more volunteers, they need to focus on volunteer management," says Susan Ellis, president of Energize, a Philadelphia consulting and publishing company. "I have 100-per-cent faith that we can get more volunteers, but I do not have 100-per-cent faith that we can get organizations to use them."

What's more, some charity leaders say, the needs of poor children have grown so severe following the overhaul of the welfare system and other governmental cutbacks that voluntary efforts alone cannot transform the lives of many kids.

In spite of such concerns, many in philanthropy say it is essential that the United States find new ways to put the spotlight on the importance of volunteering.

Rebecca Rimel, president of the Pew Charitable Trusts in Philadelphia, which has provided \$1.4-million to help sponsor the summit and follow-up activities, says her foundation did not give money to volunteer projects until a few years ago. She says Pew leaders realized that volunteerism could help rekindle Americans' sense of civic responsibility.

"We look at volunteering as one tool to getting Americans to re-engage," says Ms. Rimel. "Along with voting or attending a town meeting, it's helping them think they can make a difference."

### Problems With Training and Supervision

Charities face many obstacles to guaranteeing that their volunteers do make a difference.

Some organizations say they are too financially strapped to train and supervise volunteers as effectively as they would like. In the fierce competition for resources, many groups admit that efforts to raise money to provide services get first priority. At 1,300 institutions surveyed by Independent Sector, fewer than half of the chief executives could say how many volunteers worked at their organizations or how many hours' worth of time they donated.

While volunteers are often perceived to be a source of free labor, they rarely are. A study of Big



United Parcel Service allows workers to take up to two hours a week to volunteer. It also encourages community service among employees. Above, employees help build a house at a Habitat for Humanity house.

Brothers/Big Sisters conducted by Public/Private Ventures, a Philadelphia research group, found that the charity had a waiting list of 30,000 kids nationwide who wanted to be matched with an adult volunteer. At a cost of \$1,000 to screen, train, match, and supervise each volunteer, it would cost the charity \$30-million to serve those children.

After Big Brothers/Big Sisters promised to double its number of volunteers to respond to the challenge of the Presidential summit, the charity began looking for ways to cut costs, says Tom McKenna, national executive director. One idea: Link public schools that have many needy kids with companies that can provide a steady source of employees to volunteer.

Even if charities can afford to bring in more volunteers, they often have a difficult time finding work for people who cannot donate much time due to family, job, and other demands.

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MIKE ARROYO, FOR THE CHRONICLE

people who volunteer has been rising, albeit slowly. Nearly one out of two Americans volunteered in 1995, according to Independent Sector. That is a 4-percent increase over the number who volunteered in 1993, and reverses a gradual decline in volunteering that Independent Sector had traced through biennial surveys since 1989.

**Providing Extra Incentives**

The number of volunteers might rise even higher if more companies decided to let employees take time off from work to carry out community service.

While most companies provide little or no incentive for volunteering, some are learning that volunteer projects help employees offset long working hours and make for more productive and satisfied workers in the long run. Giving time off also pro-

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## E-Mail Offers a New Way to Volunteer

By NICOLE WALLACE

**J**OANNE CANILLO, who supervises engineers at Hewlett-Packard, regularly volunteers to help Morgan Taylor, a sixth grader, learn about fractions, atoms, nutrition, poetry, and much more.

That would hardly be remarkable—except that Ms. Canillo lives in Washington State and Morgan lives in Colorado.

Ms. Canillo is part of Hewlett-Packard's ambitious "HP E-Mail Mentor Program," which matches employees who want to volunteer with students in fifth to twelfth grade. All the communication between students and volunteers is conducted via electronic mail.

Some 1,508 students in 246 schools in 40 states are now linked with Hewlett-Packard employees, most of whom do not live anywhere near the youngsters they help.

Those Hewlett-Packard employees are part of a slowly growing movement of so-called virtual volunteers—people who do their volunteer work on line. At a time when many non-profit organizations are still weighing the costs and benefits of using telecommunications, a handful of charities are giving thousands of people the opportunity to volunteer from their home or office computers.

Many charity leaders hope that the convenience of on-line volunteering, which can be done at any time of the day or week, will produce an influx of people who might have previously stayed away from volunteering because their schedules were too full.

**Fewer Hassles**

Ms. Canillo says donating time via the Internet allows her to avoid one of the biggest hassles of volunteering: the logistics of scheduling and travel. The lack of face-to-face interaction with Morgan took getting used to after 17 years of volunteering in more traditional ways, but that has not cut into the quality of the guidance she has been able to offer her young charge, she says.

Jayne Cravens, who has supervised numerous on-line volunteers, says charities have not yet figured out the full potential of letting people volunteer from their computers. So far, she says, charities have mainly recruited volunteers to build and maintain World-Wide Web sites, design and publish newsletters using desktop computers, and conduct research using the Internet.

Ms. Cravens, who works at Impact Online, a non-profit group in Palo Alto, Cal., is supervising a study of how non-profit organizations can best use on-line volun-

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### The Presidential Summit on Volunteering

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## Differences Between Volunteers and Non-Volunteers



David M. Grossman

	Volunteers	Non-volunteers
Did some kind of volunteer work when young	70.5%	37.5%
Spend time, socially, with friends from voluntary or service organizations	32.5	9.4
Consider volunteering important because it "allows me to gain a new perspective on things"	77.9	49.7
Gave some time in the past 12 months to help a needy friend or relative	80.8	54.3
Have a high school education or less	34.6	58.2
Attend religious services weekly	60.3	28.5
Believe that "you can't be too careful in dealing with people"	44.3	61.4
Belonged to a youth group or something similar when young	77.7	49.6
Agree that "it is in my power to do things that improve the welfare of others"	80.3	58.3
Belong to an organization other than a religious one	39.9	6.3
"I could not afford to give money" was an important reason for not making a charitable contribution	47.5	65.0
Gave some time in the past 12 months to help a needy person, excluding a relative, friend, needy neighbor, or homeless person	51.7	27.1
Consider major motivation for giving money or volunteering to be "keeping taxes and other costs down"	32.8	34.7
Consider major motivation for giving money or volunteering to be "enhancing the moral basis of society"	46.4	26.1
Agree that "the need for charitable organizations is greater now than five years ago"	85.7	72.5
Went door to door to raise money for a cause or organization when young	58.2	30.5
Consider volunteering important because "it is an important activity to the people I respect"	68.7	46.3
Consider volunteering important because it "helps me deal with some of my own personal problems"	40.0	35.6
Agree that "the government has a basic responsibility to take care of people who can't take care of themselves"	58.8	63.7
Have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in private and community foundations	40.0	25.1
Consider major motivation for giving money or volunteering to be "making good use of my free time"	42.5	25.1
Consider volunteering important because "I can make new contacts that might help my business or career"	23.2	22.2
Are retired	14.3	19.8

SOURCE: Independent Sector

## Call to Increase Volunteers: Can Charities Manage Them?

Continued from Page 23

vides charities with volunteers during the work day when many groups need them most.

The United Parcel Service pays employees for as much as two hours a week when they leave their regular jobs and go to work in schools or on projects to fight hunger and homelessness. The company also arranges numerous group volunteer projects, such as building houses for the needy.

Last year, the AT&T Corporation started giving its employees one paid day off annually to do volunteer work. Even though that could cost AT&T \$20-million this year alone, officials say that the company will benefit as much as the local charities where its workers volunteer.

"We're encouraging employees to be out there with AT&T hats on," says Marcy Chapin, AT&T's vice-president for community service and civic programs. "It shows the public as well as the employees that the company cares."

It is not just image-polishing that has led such companies to encourage more volunteering. Both employers and workers say the skills people learn through volunteering often make them better employees.

The Pillsbury Company in Minneapolis and Helene Curtis Industries, the Chicago cosmetics company, have in recent years developed community-service projects designed to improve employees' management, public-speaking, and other professional skills.

### Meaningful Jobs

Volunteer centers, which recruit and place people in community-service jobs, are also making new efforts to give busy volunteers meaningful activities that will keep them committed to a cause.

Simply serving as a clearinghouse of volunteer job listings, officials say, is no longer enough, largely because volunteers have become much more choosy about the causes and activities they want to pursue.

In Owensboro, Ky., the volunteer center now recruits teams of people who want to work on specific issues, such as child abuse or homelessness, and then sends them to work at several organizations that deal with those problems. Or the teams may come up with their own projects.

"If people want to make a difference in a certain area, we promise to place them where they will get the most impact out of volunteering," says Dan Douglas, the center's executive director. With the new system, he says, volunteers are likely to be more motivated and better informed.

"We also hope that this will spur agencies to think bigger," says Mr. Douglas. "Instead of just asking for help with office work, we want them to think about how volunteers can get out there and work more directly on real problems in the community."

Many charities do not give that kind of responsibility to volunteers, however, because they say they do not have the resources necessary to manage such efforts. Staff members who work with volunteers are rarely given the time they need to supervise volunteers effectively, say experts, usually because the staff members are saddled with many other tasks.

"When someone is recruited as a volunteer coordinator," says Colleen Harren, "the agency doesn't see that as a job that pays for itself, so they end up assigning other duties to that person." Ms. Harren used to manage volunteers at a charity that worked with retarded people before she became executive director of Court Appointed Special Advocates in Langview, Wash.

Even when they do work full time with volunteers, managers of volunteers are at the bottom of the pay scale. A study last year by Abbott, Langer & Associates in Crete, Ill., found that directors of volunteers earned a median salary of \$28,500, compared with \$42,000 for personnel directors and \$45,672 for chief fund raisers.

Some experts say that putting coordinators of volunteers at the bottom of the non-profit hierarchy is shortsighted, especially at a time

when top national leaders are trying to encourage more community service.

"The position of director of volunteers has never been more important," says Marlene Wilson, president of Volunteer Management Associates, a consulting company in Boulder, Colo. "If they do their jobs well, they are the gatekeepers of citizen involvement. With the transfer of federal funds for social services to the states, we will not make it in our communities without them."

But few managers of volunteers believe their jobs are viewed as that important. Because of low pay and stiff demands, many do not stay in their positions for long. That often means volunteer-recruitment drives are cut short, and volunteers are forced to cope with numerous changes in supervisors.

"We are constantly training new people at the same organizations," says Jackie Norris, director of Metro Volunteers, a Denver non-profit group that provides workshops for people who manage volunteers. "The volunteer coordinator is lowest paid, the first cut, and has the least resources."

Erin Adkins, manager of volunteers at the Bill Wilson Center, a family-counseling center in Santa Clara, Cal., almost left her job a few months ago. "I had one foot out the door," she says. "The stress had really come down on me, and I didn't have enough support." In addition to her regular duties, Ms. Adkins was asked to set up 100 "safe places," where troubled kids could get counseling, and to recruit and train volunteers to work at each site.

"Just the process of talking to people

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**"The position of director of volunteers has never been more important. . . . They are the gatekeepers of citizen involvement."**

# Charities May Be Swamped After Presidents' Summit on Volunteering



Colleen Harren of Court Appointed Special Advocates, which pairs volunteers with children from troubled families, says charities often undervalue people who manage volunteers: "The agency doesn't see that as a job that pays for itself, so they end up assigning other duties to that person."

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on the phone, finding out what interests them, getting them trained, and keeping them, is a full-time job," she says. Ms. Adkins eventually decided to stay on at the center, but only after her boss agreed to drop her other duties.

Not only do many coordinators of volunteers feel underpaid and overworked, but some also face a hard time getting the training they need.

Ms. Wilson, the Denver consultant, says she has taught 4,000 people in a training program for managers of volunteers that she ran at the University of Colorado for the past 25 years. But in recent years, charities became less willing to pay for the courses, she says, and financial problems forced her to close.

"People called to say they really needed the program," she says, "but they could not afford to pay for tuition or travel themselves."

To get around that problem, Ms. Wilson has produced a series of videotapes containing 20 hours of instruction on volunteer management. The tapes will be distributed nationwide to 500 volunteer centers.

## Volunteers Need Training

Managers of volunteers are not the only ones who need training. Volunteers themselves often need to be taught new skills if they are to accomplish what a charity needs them to do. But research suggests that even the largest non-profit

groups fail to provide training or to assess whether their volunteers have had or need instruction.

In a survey of national health charities conducted by the Points of Light Foundation, more than 60 per cent of the organizations reported that having "well-trained volunteers for specialized assignments" was a top priority, but only 14 per cent cited training as a way to improve volunteer efforts. Only 19 per cent kept any record of relevant training that volunteers had received.

The Points of Light survey is one of the few studies to examine what charity executives think about volunteers and how they are managed at their organizations. The lack of research on volunteer programs, experts say, is one reason why charities have little idea what practices work best.

The real value of such studies, experts say, is that they might shed some light on whether volunteers can make any difference in lowering the incidence of illiteracy, violent crime, homelessness, and other social problems.

"We have to focus on involving people not just for the sake of being involved but for the impact they will have on the problems facing our country today," says Ellen Hargis, president of the Volunteer Center of Tucson in Arizona.

"Volunteers have always been offered the chance to meet new people or learn new skills," she says. "But the bottom line is: Are things getting better?"

## The Presidents' Summit for America's Future



THE PRESIDENTS' SUMMIT FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE

**Purpose:** Summit organizers have said they want more people to volunteer to provide children with "an ongoing relationship with a caring adult or mentor, safe places to learn and grow, a healthy start, a marketable skill through effective education, and an opportunity to give back through community service."

**Who will participate:** Delegations of 10 to 12 people from nearly 150 towns and cities in all 50 states. Governors from each state will also send delegations of five people, and Congress will send a bipartisan delegation of about 40 House and Senate members. A total of 4,500 people, including 500 officials from national organizations, are expected to attend.

**Date and location:** April 27-29 in Philadelphia

**Sponsors:** Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (\$475,000), Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation (\$100,000), W. K. Kellogg Foundation (\$400,000), David and Lucile Packard Foundation (\$100,000), and the Pew Charitable Trusts (\$400,000 for the summit and \$1-million to evaluate its accomplishments.)

**Key officials:** Colin Powell, general chairman; Henry Cisneros and Lynda Robb, vice-chairmen; Bill Clinton, George Bush, honorary co-chairmen

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