

Just a Few Issues Having an Impact on Volunteerism - 2000

(from the perspective of Susan Ellis)

In the Community at Large

- Rapid advances in technology, especially the World Wide Web--and its effect on time and stress.
- Budget-cutting and downsizing--in both the nonprofit and for-profit arenas. And the opposite trend of mergers and mega-corporations.
- For-profit companies moving into formerly nonprofit/government service areas.
- The aging of the population and the evolution of the "sandwich" generation; major shifts in racial and ethnic demographics.
- Divorce, single parenting, delayed parenting, choice of no children; redefinition of the concept of "family."

In the Volunteer Field Itself

- Continuing changes in the vocabulary of volunteerism; divestiture from the word "volunteer."
- Cyberspace resources for recruiting volunteers and for educating/connecting volunteer program managers (global); "virtual volunteering" options.
- Universal desire of new volunteers for short-term, goal-oriented assignments--and the proliferation of "one time" days of service.
- Tapping into the changing family: families volunteering together; service projects specifically for singles; need to provide volunteers with daycare for both children and seniors.
- Possible opportunities posed by the UN's International Year of Volunteers 2001.
- Still-unresolved questions about "mandated" service: student graduation requirements; welfare reform; court-ordered.

Now, what does your crystal ball tell you?