

## PROFESSIONALISM AND VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

"Professionalism" is not something that someone else can "assign" to us; it begins with our attitudes, behavior and self-concept. It is connected to formal training, but is also rooted in having a philosophical basis for action. "Professionals" operate within an ethical framework.

Volunteer administration is evolving and emerging as a "profession." The following statements are for consideration, discussion, disagreement, agreement, and debate.

- o Until the majority of volunteer administration practitioners view their work as a career instead of as a job, this will not be a profession.
- o It is more important to ask why something is being done than to seek "how-to's."
- o Volunteers are rarely "directed;" our job is to facilitate volunteer involvement.
- o Most organizations do not know why they utilize volunteers and have not articulated definitions or policies regarding volunteers. So why is it surprising that these organizations are muddled in their perspective on the manager of volunteers?
- o Having the opportunity to give input is ethically right in exchange for acceptance of volunteer time, efforts, and fundraising.
- o Volunteers are not the lowest category on the organizational chart; the director of volunteers is not one step above.
- o Is volunteering a right or a privilege?
- o Volunteering is a political act. (It is also nonpartisan.)
- o Volunteers are not a solution for inadequate budgeting. On the other hand, if a person chooses to volunteer when some program important to him or her is de-funded, who has the right to tell that person volunteering is wrong?
- o Unions will continue to use volunteers as pawns in contract negotiations so long as executive directors are uninformed and unwilling to stand firm.
- o Volunteer administration is non-salaried personnel management.
- o Volunteer administration is community resource development in its broadest sense.
- o Volunteer administrators should become more comfortable with fundraising...as an aspect of "resource raising."
- o Recipients of service should be enabled to have more say in the services they receive.
- o Volunteering is community involvement and is empowering. Are volunteer managers fearful of volunteer power?
- o Are we still embarrassed or apologetic to speak our titles out loud?