

Impact of Library Resources on Professional Development in Volunteer Administration

Lucy McGowan, CVA

During my second term as a volunteer on the Lake Oswego Public Library Board of Directors, I was assigned to assess the volunteer program because of its inactivity over a number of years. After six months volunteering as the temporary, non-paid, part-time volunteer coordinator, I prepared a report for the board. My recommendations were that there was a need for space as well as a structured plan for the organization to be coordinated by a paid, part-time person with supervisory skills. When the city approved a budget for the program, I was offered that paid, part-time management position.

It was a challenge and a fortunate opportunity to begin a new career, especially in a familiar environment, the library. The limited resources in the card catalog pertaining to volunteerism were referred to as "voluntarism." Turning to a research for volunteer agencies in the vertical file, I found some government and local brochures that led me to the discovery of Northwest Oregon Volunteer Administrators Association (NOVAA), an affiliate of the Association for Volunteer Administration. One of the member/mentors introduced me to AVA and its certification program.

The position required time and energy with volunteers, staff, and the public. To enhance my knowledge of dealing with human resources, I made a commitment to develop my personal library collection. Purchasing autographed books by those who were presenters at workshops I had attended became a hobby. Marlene Wilson's book, *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs*

became my Bible at work. Sue Vineyard's consoling *How To Take Care of You*, enlightened the evaluation of my personal life. Gradually, my collection continued to grow to include a variety of works, including: *From The Top Down* by Susan Ellis; *Library Volunteers—Worth the Effort* by Sally Gardner Little; *Building the Short Term Volunteer Program* by Nancy Macduff; and *Leadership Skills for the New Age of Non Profits* by Trudy Seita.

When I presented workshops at the Oregon Library Association, I displayed my personal library collection, along with the NOVAA and AVA literature. One year Val Ogdon, former president of AVA, addressed the library association about the current trends of volunteerism and its application to libraries.

Just imagine the compelling effect if all the professional networks were to support the concept of promoting and creating collections in libraries. They could be influencing factors if they would become a friend of their local library, contact the director and state their needs. They could offer to pay for a subscription, such as *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*. Or they could appeal to individuals and/or local organizations to help defray the cost for subscriptions and/or books, videos, and tapes. These would be available in the library for all the agencies. As we continue to develop the profession, we should expand our resources to include journals and publications on leadership, planning, evaluation, and human resource development.

Depending upon the demand for usage, the library may decide to carry subscriptions

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on its renewal list, likewise, with books, tapes and videos. If suggestions are submitted to the library, its Book Review Committee may consider adding those materials to the collection and/or research for current material pertaining to volunteerism.

Professional networks should always provide membership brochures, plus any literature regarding future workshops, for distribution through the library.

School and college libraries should also be considered. Professional networks need to be visible to reach the new generation. Consider linking web sites, marketing subscriptions to *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*, leadership journals and magazines, videos and tapes, future workshops and distribution of brochures.

Serving as Vice President of the Professional Development for NOVAA, I was inspired with an opportunity to form a library committee. NOVAA had a limited number of donated books stored in a box that remained with the board. Included were two copies of current issues of *The Journal of Volunteer Administration* to be shared by all. The committee agreed to the necessity for developing a collection pertinent to the profession of volunteerism and that it should be stored at a central location for all its members.

The proposal we presented to the NOVAA Board of Directors requested an allotment of a specific amount from the annual budget each year to be allocated toward building a library collection that would include AVA's journal, volunteer leadership, books-on-tape, and videos. Several libraries in the area were explored as the possible storehouse for the collection.

An agreement was signed with the Lake Oswego Public Library in Lake Oswego, Oregon, stating that the library would be responsible for ordering materials based on suggestions from the NOVAA Library Committee and would maintain the processing and distribution of the materials. The agreement

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stated the collection would remain the property of the library.

It was a win-win situation. The library administration was pleased with the increase of circulation, and proud to be the sponsors of a special collection. The adminis-

trators of volunteer services had access to resources that were available locally or via inter-library loans.

In 1996 at the International Conference on Volunteer Administration in Calgary, Canada, NOVAA received the AVA Regional Ruby Award for a group that developed and implemented an outstanding creative new program. The ruby represents freedom. The library mission advocates its services in "access to information that reflects diverse points of view in accordance with the Library Bill of Rights."

Today, 13 years later, the collection continues to grow. NOVAA continues to fund its yearly allotment, and its Library Committee continues to update the bibliography that is on the web site, www.novaa.org.