ABSTRACT

This article presents GEMS, a contemporary model of volunteer administration that address-es current and emerging needs and was developed by the authors. The GEMS Model illustrates the continuous process of volunteer administration through four broad categories which are fur-ther broken down into 18 phases. The model builds upon earlier models and addresses critical issues relevant to today's volunteer administrator.

The GEMS Model of Volunteer Administration

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INTRODUCTION

In order to effectively run quality vol-unteer programs, non-profit agency pro-fessionals must be competent volunteer administrators. Six volunteer administra-tion models utilized by non-profit organi-zations include ISOTURE (Boyce, 1971; Dolan, 1969), 4-H Volunteer Leadership Development Program (Kwarteng, Smith and Miller, 1988), the Volunteer Manage-ment Cycle (Lawson and Lawson, 1987), the Volunteer Professional Model for Human Services Agencies and Coun-selors (Lenihan and Jackson, 1984), L-O-O-P (Penrod, 1991), and the Bridge from Dreams to Reality (Vineyard, 1980). However, due to the rapidly changing environment in which most volunteer administrators find themselves, each of these models lacks one or more compo-nents we believe necessary for contempo-rary volunteer program administration.

Volunteer administration is a rapidly growing and evolving field. In order to serve the needs of society, volunteer administrators must strategically position themselves for changing audiences and clientele as well as a changing volunteer base. Innovative programs need to antici-pate and meet these requirements. The tools and techniques that volunteer administrators use to manage and devel-op programs must meet the challenges of new and emerging concerns. The GEMS Model was developed to deal with these issues and builds on the foundation pre-viously established by other volunteer specialists. It addresses the needs of today's volunteer administrators and includes components not found in earlier models.

The model consists of 18 phases within four distinct categories: generate, educate, mobilize, and sustain. It is shown as a spi-ral demonstrating how volunteers move from phase to phase and are retained, dis-engaged, or redirected to another volun-teer assignment within the non-profit, volunteer organization.

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REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Briefly described below are some of the volunteer administration models currently in use.

The ISOTURE Model (Boyce, 1971; Dolan, 1969) contains seven volunteer management components (identification, selection, orientation, training, utilization, recognition, and evaluation). It was developed and is used by the Cooperative Extension Service. *Identification* of volunteer opportunities within the organization, including writing job descriptions, is the initial component. Effective *selection* matches volunteers' knowledge, attitudes, and skills with the volunteer opportunity. *Orientation* acclimates volunteers to the organization and its mission as well as to their specific job responsibilities. *Training* provides the knowledge and skills to ensure volunteers will be successful during the *utilization* phase. *Recognizing* individuals for their contributions and *evaluating* volunteer performance and the volunteer program completes the model.

As its name suggests, the 4-H Volunteer Leadership Development Program (Kwarteng, Smith and Miller, 1988) was conceptualized for use with 4-H volunteers. This model contains six components that are depicted in a circle: recruiting, training, motivating, recognition, retention, and supervision. *Recruiting* is the sequence of steps or actions involved in the enrollment of volunteers as 4-H club leaders. *Training* prepares volunteers to be club leaders through an understanding of the philosophy and objectives of the organization, the role of the volunteer, how to plan and conduct activities, and how to utilize educational materials and resource people. *Motivators* are the intrinsic or extrinsic forces that influence individuals to begin and continue volunteering. *Recognition* includes any formal and/or informal favorable attention given to volunteers to provide a sense of appreciation. *Retention* includes any action taken to reduce volunteer turnover. *Supervision*, an on-going process, is defined as "the enabling actions used by agents to facilitate the work of volunteer leaders" (Kwarteng, Smith, and Miller, 1988).

The Volunteer Management Cycle (Lawson and Lawson, 1987) was developed to underscore the essential role of volunteerism within the religious community. It consists of eight components: *planning, clarifying volunteer tasks, recruitment, orientation, training, support and maintenance, recognition,* and *evaluation.* This model is depicted in a heart shape, with the planning function at the center of the heart.

The Volunteer Professional Model for Human Services Agencies and Counselors (Lenihan and Jackson, 1984) is a model prescribing a process of assessment and integration that allows community agencies and professional counselors to engage in more effective volunteer activity. Unlike previous models, this one is designed specifically for those who are encouraged by their employer or company to serve in volunteer roles with human service agencies. It targets newly emerging agencies or established agencies that are starting new volunteer programs. The model consists of six steps depicted in a "Y" formation and is unique in that it integrates and balances the needs of the agency with the needs of the professional who is volunteering.

In this model, *step one* is an information gathering and assessment stage. The agency identifies its organizational needs and estimates the time and skills that will be required of the volunteer professional. In *step two,* the agency develops a plan of action based on its needs and the skill level and time requirement it seeks from volunteer professionals. *Step three* is the matching phase when prospective volunteer candidates are approached and interviewed. In *step four,* an agreement is negotiated with the volunteer professional. In *step five,* the volunteer task is performed and in *step six* recognition is provided to the volunteers.

The L-O-O-P Model (Penrod, 1991) is another leadership model used by Coop-

erative Extension professionals to direct volunteer programs. L-O-O-P, an acronym for locating, orienting, operating, and perpetuating, is illustrated with arrows between the categories to show that volunteer administration is a continual process. By utilizing this model, volunteers are linked with organizational mission and project goals through their personal interests and are recognized for their accomplishments. *Locating* involves identifying potential volunteers, learning about their needs and interests, matching them with appropriate tasks, and obtaining their agreement to perform the volunteer assignment. *Orientation* familiarizes volunteers with the organization and the specific project with which they will be involved. The orienting process outlines policies, procedures, benefits, expectations, goals, and objectives. The learning process continues as the volunteer participates in the organization *(operating)* through exposure to new ideas, people, or methods. *Perpetuating* the involvement of volunteers is important for organizational growth and is essentially a two-fold

process including evaluation and recognition. "Evaluation is needed because volunteers want to know how they're doing. Recognition is important because volunteers need to know their work is appreciated and necessary" (Penrod, 1991). Recognition of the volunteers' accomplishments relates their contributions to the organization's success.

The Bridge from Dreams to Reality (Vineyard, 1984) is a an arc-shaped "bridge" in design consisting of 12 components. The model is grounded in a "dream" and proceeds through the arc in a 10-step sequence that includes *goals, objectives, action plans, job design, recruiting, interviewing, placing, training, supervising,* and *evaluating*. The bridge is exited when the "dream" becomes "reality." The entire arc is undergirded by *recognition* (which takes place at each step of the model) and *feedback*.

THE GEMS MODEL
The GEMS Model was conceptualized and developed building on aspects of previous models. It is shown as a spiral illus-
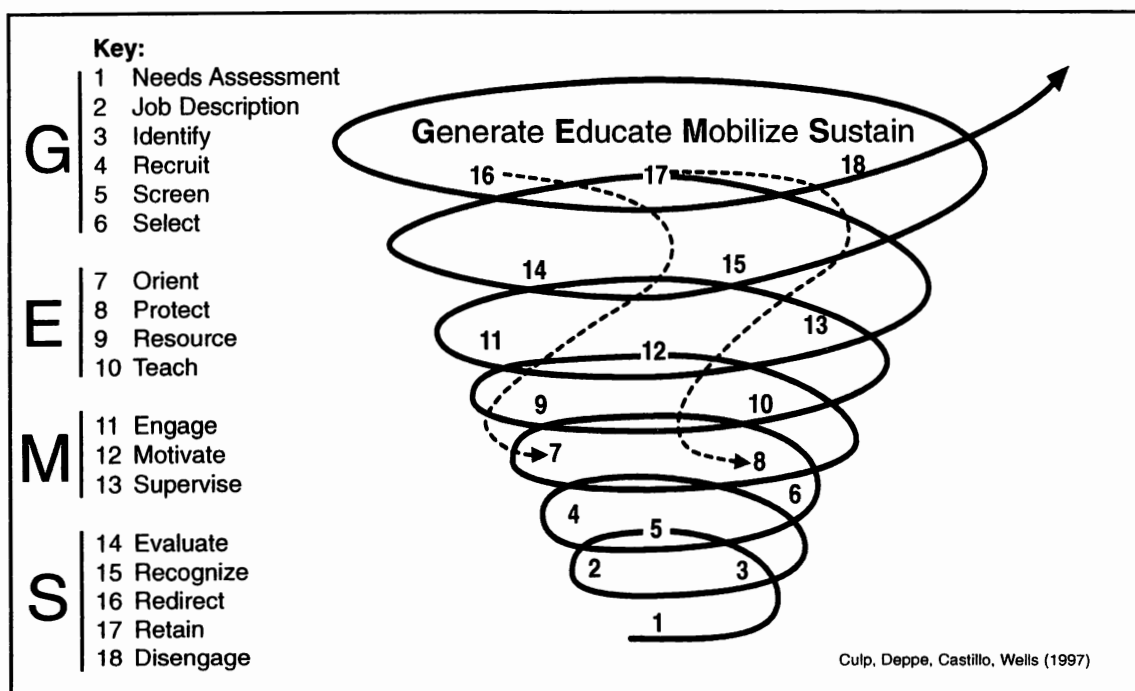

Figure 1
The GEMS Model
A spiral profile of volunteer administration.

trating that volunteer administration is an ongoing process. It may be effectively utilized in any type of volunteer or service organization. The model consists of four broad categories: generate, educate, mobilize, and sustain. These four categories are broken into eighteen phases (see Figure 1).

Generate

Generate includes six phases: conducting an organizational needs assessment, writing job descriptions, identifying, recruiting, screening, and selecting volunteers.

Volunteer opportunities within the organization are identified through a *needs assessment*. These identified volunteer needs are then defined in written *job descriptions*. Job descriptions include the title of the position, time commitment, requirements, duties, supervisor, and benefits. Potential volunteers are *identified* and *recruited*. This process includes developing a list of qualified individuals and groups to be contacted and actively promoting the volunteer positions to them. Targeted recruitment is based on the marketing premise that everyone is not a prospect for every product or service. "Because organizations need to use their resources effectively, they must target their recruitment efforts to the most likely prospects" (Fisher and Cole, 1993). The volunteer's needs, interests, knowledge, skills, background, and attitudes are surveyed through the *screening* process. Additionally, risk management practices should be considered during the screening phase to protect the organization from liability. *Selection* is then based upon the volunteer's ability to perform an appropriate activity or task.

Educate

Educate includes four phases: orienting, protecting, resourcing, and teaching.

Volunteers generally have varying levels of knowledge about the organization and need to be *oriented* to the organization as a whole and to their specific job responsibilities. Orientation is beneficial in assuring they have accurate information regarding the organization's purpose, programs, policies, and expectations. Informed volunteers will represent the organization well, carry out their responsibilities effectively, and possess a positive attitude toward the organization.

Following orientation, volunteers enter the *protecting* phase, of the spiral. Four groups of stakeholders must be considered in the protecting phase: program participants or clientele, volunteer staff, paid staff, and the organization. During the protecting phase, volunteers learn about risk management strategies such as appropriate and acceptable behaviors, conflict resolution, and confidentiality issues.

The *resourcing* phase in this category includes providing volunteers with the resources necessary for them to complete their volunteer duties. These can include human resources (identifying other individuals who can provide support, skills, or services), educational resources such as curricula and materials, and financial resources such as the identification of sources of funding, budgetary guidelines, and fund raising strategies. Additional *teaching* or in-service opportunities related to specific skills and knowledge are provided to assist volunteers in successfully carrying out their responsibilities. Education should be conducted in a variety of ways (individually, through group meetings, workshops, or classes) and address multiple learning styles.

Mobilize

Mobilize has three phases: engaging, motivating, and supervising.

Volunteers are given the opportunity to *engage* in the task or activity they have been selected to perform and are given the tools to do so. Individuals are *motivated* to participate in volunteer activities for a variety of reasons. Administrators of volunteer programs should understand the motives that contribute to beginning, continuing, and discontinuing volunteer service. Understanding what motivates

volunteers when they are recruited contributes to the success of volunteer recruitment initiatives. Understanding what keeps the volunteer motivated helps volunteer administrators enhance the volunteer's experience and improves volunteer retention and longevity. Being aware of discontinuation motives allows the volunteer administrator to avoid them and also contributes to volunteer retention. The needs, skills, and knowledge of the individual volunteer will demonstrate how much and how often supervision is needed. During the *supervising* phase, volunteer administrators determine how well the volunteer is utilizing the available resources to perform the assigned task. On-going guidance, support, and advice from the volunteer program administrator, supervisor, or another volunteer can help lead to a positive and productive experience.

Sustain

Sustain includes five phases: evaluation, recognition, retention, redirection, or disengagement.

A volunteer performance *evaluation* will determine if individual and organizational goals are being met. Documenting work output and quality to learn from past accomplishments and mistakes is important. Written documentation is the framework for decision-making in new assignments, promotions, and recognition, and provides potential recommendations for the volunteer. Evaluation is ongoing throughout the four categories of this model and is conducted both formally and informally. Volunteers are recognized for their positive contributions to the organization and its clientele. Whether formal or informal, extrinsic or intrinsic, *recognition* helps volunteers feel they are making a meaningful contribution to the organization, its programs and clientele.

Retaining volunteers adds to programmatic strength and continuity. *Retention* is best accomplished by fulfilling volunteer needs, serving continuing motivations,

and providing the volunteer with a fulfilling relationship with the organization, its clientele, and other volunteers. A volunteer may be retained in the same capacity or redirected to another role within the organization. In either case, as illustrated in the GEMS Model, a volunteer may continue in the spiral by re-entering the education category. If retained, the individual benefits by acquiring additional skills to carry out volunteer responsibilities. If *redirected*, the volunteer will re-enter the GEMS spiral at the orientation phase, receiving new job responsibilities, knowledge, and the skills necessary to perform the assignment effectively. In some cases, even after redirection, a volunteer may be asked to *disengage* from the organization. If this is necessary, the process should be clearly defined and objective. At other times, a volunteer may disengage and choose to leave the organization for a number of personal reasons, such as a change in employment, family life, residence, interest, health or because of other commitments.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Although the models currently utilized by volunteer administrators have served an important role in providing a framework for volunteer programs, most do not completely address all of the issues facing non-profit professionals today. The GEMS model builds upon earlier models with the added advantage of addressing the emerging, critical issues relevant to present day volunteer administration which earlier models do not. These include: screening, protecting, resourcing, redirecting, and disengaging.

The GEMS Model contains eighteen phases illustrated in a spiral showing volunteer administration as a continuous process. The model is a management tool that can assist volunteer administrators to effectively coordinate volunteers and volunteer service delivery in non-profit programs.

The GEMS Model may be implemented at any stage in the life cycle of a volunteer

program based upon the current needs of the organization, its volunteers, and the volunteer administrator. The model allows the non-profit professional to identify the phase in which a program is currently operating or where there is the greatest need, and then proceed with managing the program by going to the next phase in the model.

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