# THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

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## ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

**The Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) is the professional association for those working in the field of volunteer management who want to shape the future of volunteerism, develop their professional skills, and further their careers. Members include volunteer program administrators in a wide variety of settings, agency executives, association officers, educators, researchers, consultants, students—anyone who shares a commitment to the effective utilization of volunteers. AVA is open to both salaried and nonsalaried professionals.**

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**Two major services that AVA performs, both for its members and for the field at large, are Certification and Educational Endorsement. Through the Certification process, which recognizes leaders of volunteer programs who demonstrate professional performance standards, AVA furthers respect for and appreciation of the profession of volunteer administration. Similarly, AVA Educational Endorsement is given to those workshops, courses, conferences and training events that provide opportunities for professional growth in volunteerism.**

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**For further information about the ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION, contact AVA, P.O. Box 4584, Boulder, CO 80306.**

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# CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS

The Fall 1989 issue of *The Journal of Volunteer Administration* (Vol. VIII No. 1) will feature articles related to program planning and evaluation pertaining especially to volunteers, volunteer programs and volunteer program administration. We invite your participation in contributing to this issue. Consultant and trainer Nancy Macduff will guest edit this issue.

Manuscripts are welcome on the full range of issues, ideas and research. Individual research, philosophical pieces, descriptions of successful processes to develop new programs, innovative approaches to research and development are acceptable. Evaluation articles can describe systems used, the results of evaluation, processes adaptable to other programs.

All submissions are reviewed by qualified professionals in the field. Manuscripts must be submitted by July 1, 1989, according to manuscript guidelines which are available in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration* or from the Association for Volunteer Administration office (P. O. Box 4584, Boulder, CO 80306). All submissions are juried by contributing editors and submission does not automatically imply publication.

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# Volunteer Visitors for Patients with AIDS

**Joan A. Dumont**

*AIDS is the most feared and dreaded disease in our lifetimes. Its explosive growth, its strange symptoms, its deadliness, and the mystery of its origins and future course all set AIDS apart from familiar diseases.*[1]

In the early days of AIDS when there were only a few AIDS patients at Bellevue Hospital Center and other hospitals across the country, a small volunteer program was established at Bellevue to provide socialization and comfort for these patients. In February 1984, seven volunteers were trained to visit three to ten hospitalized adult patients; recently 35 volunteers made 450 visits within a month to many of 130 patients with AIDS.

This paper describes the development of the Volunteer Visitor Program at Bellevue Hospital Center in the hope that the program can be a model. It was born of necessity in a hospital that was in the forefront of caring for AIDS patients even before the medical manifestations of the disease were clearly defined. These seriously ill patients had complex medical and psychosocial problems which professional staffs were trying to solve. Equally important, many patients were isolated, lonely and frightened and needed sensitive human contact. People from the community concerned about persons with AIDS came forward as volunteers to participate in the formation of the Volunteer Visitor Program. This was one of the first structured hospital programs with volunteers specifically visiting AIDS patients and assisting beleaguered staffs who provide their care. It was clear from the start that volunteers make a difference in socialization, in struggles with fear and hope, and in the total case management. Perhaps other institutions or agencies planning to utilize volunteers with persons with AIDS can benefit from the trials and errors, problems and successes encountered at Bellevue.

## BACKGROUND

Bellevue Hospital has cared for New York City's residents for more than 250 years. It has provided medical treatment since its origins as an almshouse and has turned no one away regardless of race, color, creed, nationality, or income.

One of the largest municipal hospitals in the country, Bellevue Hospital Center today has 1200 acute care beds and extremely active Outpatient and Emergency Services. It is affiliated with New York University Medical Center, whose clinical and research staffs have contributed not only to the care of patients but also to understanding of their diseases. NYU physicians have been deeply involved with AIDS research and treatment.

The Volunteer Visitor Program began in 1983 at Bellevue Hospital after Mead Bailey, a Bellevue chaplain and board member of the AIDS Resource Center, suggested that there were caring community people who wished to provide companionship to hospitalized persons with AIDS. The Aids Resource Center (ARC) is a nonprofit organization in New York City formed to meet the growing needs of Persons with AIDS (PWA's) which provides housing, support services, and pastoral care. ARC was a pioneer in developing services which were not available to PWA's and their families.

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*Joan A. Dumont*, Director of Volunteer Services at Bellevue Hospital Center in New York City for eight years, developed several hospital volunteer programs to meet emerging inner city health needs, including the program described here. Active in local, state and national professional organizations, she was a founding member of the New York State Association of Directors of Volunteer Services (in Health Care Facilities). She is a member of the NYC Mayor's Voluntary Action Center Task Force on AIDS and on several advisory committees for agencies serving sick children. She is presently a consultant in volunteer management, and her interest lies in assisting programs utilizing volunteers to help AIDS sufferers or ill children.

Chaplain Bailey, already seeing PWA's as patients at Bellevue, was keenly aware of the lack of supports and services for them. He seized the opportunity to bring the resources of a community agency into a public, teaching hospital to try to meet some of the needs of patients with this baffling disease who were often alone and ostracized.

Planning for this program took several months. The AIDS Resource Center worked with the directors of Social Work and Volunteer Services and the chaplains to lay foundations within the hospital. First, approval to proceed was required from the hospital administration. Since Bellevue is committed to providing medical care for the sick poor, this was easily obtained. (Some hospitals were not supportive of such programs since they did not want to acknowledge the presence of AIDS in their facilities or the fact that special care was required.)

Bellevue had already formed a hospital-wide AIDS Task Force comprised of representatives of departments which had staff working with PWA's. Active members included physicians, nurses, health educators, social workers, administrators, and staff from the Infection Control, Personnel, Patient Advocacy, Methadone Maintainance, Child Life, Therapeutic Activities, Food Service, Housekeeping, Employee Health Services, and Community and Public Relations departments. Task Force members were encouraging and helpful in establishing the volunteer program. They were aware of the multifaceted approaches needed in this crisis.

The Task Force also assisted in promoting educational efforts so that all hospital employees, no matter what their jobs, were informed about this new and frightening disease. More specific information was required in many instances for better care of PWA's. In addition, it was necessary for staff to learn how to work with volunteers as well as patients in these new circumstances.

A program protocol, description of volunteer duties, and plan for training were developed. These initial steps as well as supervision, support, arrangements with staff on the units, recruitment, screening, and assignment were carried out by the directors of Volunteer Services and Social Work with help from volunteers. The first volunteer, one of the original ARC group, had difficulty keeping in touch with the other volunteers due to his employment commitments. The second volunteer was a seminary student, also from ARC, who was able to be more involved. He worked closely with staff and volunteers and was invaluable in forming the foundations of the program. As the program grew, the directors needed more help with many functions; and a part-time coordinator, who later became full-time, was hired. The two departments continued to jointly manage the program and oversee all aspects.

## THE PROGRAM

Volunteer Visitors at Bellevue visit adult patients with AIDS or AIDS Related Complex during their hospital stay. These patients are usually critically ill, have little hope of recovery, are faced with profound medical and social problems, and may have few family or friends. A visit might include a bit of conversation, listening to what may be troubling a patient, bringing a sandwich or soda, running an errand, or simply sitting and holding a patient's hand.

The program coordinator assigns volunteers to visit patients and works with the volunteers and staff to assess the needs of patients. In addition, he is responsible for the organization of all aspects of the program, is in constant contact with the volunteers, and conducts training and support meetings. He has expanded services for patients and broadened the role of volunteers now that he is full-time. As noted above, at first volunteers had assisted in coordinating and training functions. However, responding to the need for more and consistent staff, the Auxiliary to Bellevue provided the half-time salary for a professional coordinator which was supplemented by a grant from Chase Manhattan Bank to make the position full-time.

Thirty-five volunteers made approximately 450 visits to 113 of about 130 hospitalized AIDS patients in the month of May 1988. Since the program began in 1984, men and women, artists, clergy, members of church groups, professionals, people in business, students, retirees

and others who are not working, PWA's, people of all ages, both gay and nongay, have come forth. Although patients were primarily male homosexuals in the early days, now more than 80 percent of hospitalized PWA's at Bellevue are minority, intravenous drug abusers, and an increasing number, perhaps 10 percent, are women. Many of the volunteers are white, middle class, who require information about substance abuse and minority cultures in addition to discussion about ways to relate to disenfranchised people.

*Recruitment*

The first group of volunteers was referred to Bellevue through the AIDS Resource Center, which continued to help with recruiting, particularly with seminary students and clergy for whom AIDS was a new and compelling issue. Recruitment information and program descriptions periodically are sent to churches, community groups, and local papers. Articles in magazines and newspapers about the plight of PWA's have stimulated people with the desire to help to come in on their own. AIDS organizations and community volunteer centers have referred candidates, and word of mouth has brought PWA's as well as friends of patients and other volunteers. Recruiting of more minority volunteers and appropriate recovered substance abusers is indicated.

The flow of candidates has been slow but steady. During the past year, 75 potential candidates were trained in five training sessions. However, a continuous supply of new volunteers is essential as there is turnover due to burnout, even with good support and opportunities for taking time off. More than 150 volunteers have taken the training; 35 are currently active while several others are on leave.

*Screening*

Candidates for this program are not easy to assess. People who are caring, compassionate, sensitive to others, have a good sense of self, can listen, can advocate, and possess a sense of humor have emerged as having good potential as Volunteer Visitors.

There is a vast range of applicants, each with different reasons for wishing to volunteer and each with an unusual personal story. A widow in her 70s wanted to help because she was indignant that "nobody cared about people sick with AIDS." A married couple, an actor and actress, volunteered because they had known people with AIDS through their work. A writer concerned about PWA's was also looking for experience to help him decide upon a career change. Others have had loved ones who have died of AIDS.

All candidates were screened upon first telephone contact by the Director of Volunteer Services who later interviewed them. Although a second interview originally was conducted by the Director of Social Work, now this responsibility lies with the program coordinator. It is important to note that the screening process continues through the training, at which time any problems related to the candidate's joining the program perceived by either the program staff or the candidate are resolved. A candidate who is unsure may, with more knowledge and self awareness, find the impact of involvement too great and decide to leave. Or, as in only a few cases, the program staff will suggest another assignment, perhaps not in direct contact with AIDS patients, at Bellevue or another organization.

*Training and Support*

All volunteers take the training in two four-hour sessions prior to being assigned to visit patients.[2] The training in June 1988 was the fourteenth program. Modifications and additions have been made through the years, reflecting the acquisition of new information, changes in the patient population, and volunteer feedback. Although individuals come in with varying amounts of information and diversity of experience, all must take the Bellevue training in order to ensure a baseline of knowledge.

The first training session provides an introduction to AIDS, including infection control, psychosocial aspects of AIDS, profiles of drug abusers, spiritual issues, and the role and responsibilities of the volunteer. During the second meeting, a PWA discusses living with AIDS, and participants explore their feelings and attitudes about issues such as illness, death and dying, minorities, homosexuality, and

substance abuse. Questions and open discussion are encouraged. These sessions are productive and promote the expression of true feelings and responses. The motivation of the participants creates a positive and dynamic tone that contributes to their learning.

A vital component of this program is the monthly support meeting. Conducted by the coordinator, there may be speakers to provide new information and perspectives but there is always opportunity to share in discussions about patients, issues, and emotions. These meetings are meaningful for the volunteers and also give the coordinator insights and information about patients and the operation of the program.

The "buddy" process by which most volunteers start their visiting is a valuable part of education and support. Usually, a new volunteer will accompany an experienced volunteer in one or two visits to patients, learning not only about visiting but how to find one's way around the hospital since the patients are on many different units. These first visits ease the way for new, nervous, and eager volunteers.

*Operation of the Program*

All candidates, no matter where they may be placed at Bellevue Hospital Center, must be medically cleared before they can volunteer. Specifically, they must have had a medical checkup within a year prior to serving and be cleared for hepatitis, rubella, chicken pox and tuberculosis.

Upon completion of medical clearances, volunteers obtain a jacket and identification which they must wear whenever they are serving in the hospital. It is imporant that the Volunteer Visitors are clearly identified to signify primarily to patients that they are visiting because they choose to do so, an important message in light of all the fears about AIDS. Also, they are often spotted by staff and asked to give additional assistance.

The coordinator first meets with patients, asking them if they wish visitors. Each volunteer is assigned one to four PWA's to visit and continues to visit the same patients while they are in the hospital. Some patients may have several volunteers who visit at different times but are part of an assigned team. The volunteer team will often meet together or talk on the telephone in order to discuss each patient's needs. The use of teams with team leaders relieves the coordinator in a variety of ways but he is readily available for the volunteers.

A typical visiting experience for a volunteer with four patients might be as follows:

Patient A is new and recently diagnosed. He says he wants a Volunteer Visitor but is not feeling well enough to talk, and he is wary. The volunteer stays only a few minutes and says that he will be back another time.

Patient B had been discharged the previous day.

Patient C is in her room and pleased to see the volunteer whom she has known for many months during her hospital stays and clinic visits. There is easy talk about things they share as their friendship has grown. The patient reports that she will be released to an apartment with nursing coverage through the efforts of her social worker and the volunteer.

Patient D was difficult for this volunteer. An intravenous drug user who initially was moody and skeptical about the Volunteer Visitor's reasons for spending time with him, he had recently appeared glad for the visits and was able to talk. The volunteer had brought in a milkshake, which he had stored in the refrigerator in the Nursing Station. The Volunteer Visitor scheduled this visit at the end of the day so that he could spend unlimited time with the patient. Patient D was not in his room. He had died that morning.

The foregoing synopsis of 90 minutes of volunteer time produced a wide range of emotions for this volunteer and for which no one can ever be fully prepared.

It is obvious that volunteers in this program must be able to deal with diverse situations and feelings. Many bring extraordinary experiences and exceptional strengths. When asked in the initial interviews about knowledge of or contact with people who are substance abusers, some volunteers report that they, themselves, are recovered alcoholics or drug abusers. They have benefitted from "Twelve Step" or other recovery programs

and continuous support from their groups. They want to be Volunteer Visitors because they are grateful for their own recoveries and want to pay back. They bring with them an established pattern of helping others.

The Volunteer Coordinator plays a key role in providing support to all volunteers, particularly in their time of stress or sadness. His sensitivity and knowledge of the volunteers are vital not only in matching volunteers to patients but also in supporting their continuing relationships with patients. He is the resource and referral person who tries to obtain solutions for the problems patients present which, since the volunteers are not visiting as professionals, must be handled by appropriate hospital personnel.

The Volunteer Visitors have become part of the team at Bellevue. They handle themselves well, working along with various professional staffs, and are respected for their willingness to assist in many different ways as well as for their dedication to the patients. They also share with their peers in support meetings, giving and gaining, and contribute much of themselves at other times. Recent examples of their expanding activity are the formation, with supervision, of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and other support groups for patients as well as groups for adolescent children of AIDS patients.

## A BROADER VIEW

Many aspects of this program are unique, reflecting the unusual characteristics of the disease compounded by the problems of the inner city. Patients have numerous medical problems and little hope for a long life. Their medical conditions change as do their related psychosocial problems and behavior. Hospital personnel and volunteers are called upon to help PWA's deal with pressing life and death issues, some of which contributed to their contracting the disease.

This program has been described with emphasis upon structure and management with several points that should be highlighted. Volunteers have given PWA's extra care, companionship and a personal touch for which paid staff lack the time, and sometimes interest or ability. A community agency brought volunteers to a public hospital which was unprepared to try to deal with this emerging crisis. The hospital responded quickly and gradually built a sound volunteer program. The strong cooperative efforts of two hospital departments in the successful management of a program with issues that involved many patients, different staffs, and volunteers are also important to note. The rallying of forces in crisis, even in a large, unwieldly institution, has been spectacular.

Today, the Volunteer Visitor Program is established with a four-year track record. The number of patients keeps on growing with changes in the demographics of the population. Volunteers will continue to make a difference, but more and varied groups should be recruited. They will need more education about the problems of the patient population, about minorities, about people who are disenfranchised and have been in trouble with the law. The needs of patients with AIDS are so numerous and complex that volunteers will be asked to assist with a range of tasks, some of them new, from leading AA and NA groups to providing escort services, home care, and office help. There is much that volunteer administrators will need to do to support these efforts.

Volunteers have made a significant impact on the care of patients with AIDS at Bellevue Hospital Center. They have provided the extra human resources to enhance patient care, to give hope to people who are in discomfort and despair, and to make life a little better for many individuals, even if for only a very short while.

## APPENDIX A

VOLUNTEER VISITOR PROGRAM
Training Sessions

| Topic | Instructor |
|---|---|
| Session I | |
| Introductions | Director of Volunteer Services |
| Psychosocial Aspects of AIDS | Director of Social Work |
| AIDS 101 | Health Educator |
| Substance Abuse | Substance Abuse/Health Educator |
| Death and Dying | Program Coordinator |
| Session II | |
| Living with AIDS | A Person with AIDS |
| Spiritual Aspects | Chaplain |
| Patient Advocacy | Patient Advocate |
| Hispanic Concerns | Staff from Hispanic Agency |
| Role Play and Discussion | Program Coordinator |

FOOTNOTES

[1]Peter Hiam. "Failing the AIDS Test," *Harvard Magazine*, March-April 1988, p. 35.

[2]See Appendix A.

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*The author would like to extend special thanks to Robert A. Crescenzo, Director of Social Work at Bellevue Hospital Center, for his professional leadership in the development and management of this program as well as for his advice in the preparation of this article.*

*In October 1987, The Volunteer Visitor Program at Bellevue Hospital Center received an award from the New York City Mayor's Voluntary Action Center for the service of its volunteers to patients with* AIDS.

# Good Works Day Camp: A Unique Approach to The Healthcare Personnel Shortage

**Nelda P. Quigley**

*Encouraging young people to explore hospital career opportunities is an essential long-term strategy to increase interest in healthcare as a positive career alternative.*
Robert McNeil, Massachusetts Hospital Association Director for Human Resources and Administrative Services

*I liked surgery! It was fun and very exciting. And it wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be. I had fun because I got to see what really happens in surgery. I was assistant surgeon along with Christina L. We got to help with the stitches.*
Lori B., Good Works Day Camper

## THE PROBLEM

Comedian Lily Tomlin once said that if kids grew up to be what they said they wished to be, the world would be full of ballerinas, cowboys and nurses.

This was a funny line, but today's critical shortage of nurses and other healthcare professionals sadly belies Lily's prediction.

The American Hospital Association and American Organization of Nurse Executives found in separate surveys that RN vacancy rates (budgeted but unfilled positions for which hospitals are actively recruiting) have more than doubled over the past four years.[1] Moreover, interest in nursing as a career has fallen precipitously among college freshmen in both community colleges and four-year institutions. The University of California, Los Angeles, national survey of first-time college freshmen indicated a fifty percent decline since 1974 in the proportion of full-time women students planning to pursue nursing careers, in contrast to an almost threefold increase in the proportion interested in business careers.[2]

## COMBATING FALSE PERCEPTIONS

Childhood perceptions of nursing and other healthcare professions are, in part, to blame for the current crisis. In focus groups conducted in the local high school, we learned that today's young people believed nursing careers to be: boring, poorly paid, lacking glory and/or social status, too exposed to disease, only for sweet old ladies, too physically demanding, demeaning, and requiring too much preparation.

Talk about an image problem!

## THE ROOTS OF A SOLUTION

The Candy Striper/Junior Volunteer Program has long been recognized as a feeder program into Nurse Aide courses and other hospital training and work opportunities. Elsa R. Gibbons, Director of Volunteer Services at Newington Children's Hospital, (Newington, Connecticut), recently conducted a survey of young volunteers who had served at her hospital over the past four years. She found that of the respondents who were still in high school, fifty percent indicated that their volunteer activity led them to pursue a specific health-related course of study in preparation for college or work. Furthermore, sixty-two percent of the respondents who were enrolled in college indicated that their volunteer activity influenced their course of study as well as their career choice. Although we have never conducted such an official poll at

*Nelda Prothro Quigley* holds a Master's Degree from the Newhouse School of Communications, Syracuse University (NY). Presently the Director of Volunteer Services at Beverly (Massachusetts) Hospital, a 233 bed acute care facility, Ms. Quigley formerly coordinated the Volunteer Services/Career Exploration Program at North Shore Community College at Beverly where she also served on the faculty for the Division of Continuing Education. She currently serves as the Vice-President of AVA's Region I and President-Elect of the Massachusetts Association Directors Healthcare Volunteer Services.

Beverly Hospital, an informal survey has indicated that the above results hold true for our hospital as well.

## CULTIVATING NEW IDEAS

When Beverly Hospital's nursing division decided to enhance recruitment and training efforts, The Evelyn Lilly Lutz Foundation funding enabled the development of a comprehensive program designed to encourage career growth and advancement not only for nursing but all healthcare professions.

We realized early in these efforts that we needed a vehicle to reach children younger than those we traditionally contact. Since child development research indicates clearly that children nine to eleven are at their most impressionable age, this group became the target audience for our efforts to make early and lasting positive perceptions concerning healthcare and healthcare careers.

## A UNIQUE APPROACH

It was not until our community school teachers threatened to strike that Beverly Hospital administrators hit on an idea that eventually grew into a unique approach to this challenge. Fearing a deluge of "sick-calls" from nurses whose children were affected by closed classrooms, we huddled in conference seeking an appropriate support system for our employees. Our brainstorming led to the idea of providing day care "with a twist" for affected families. Candy Stripers would be called on to help oversee the children's activities. These activities would include visits to various departments to see firsthand what Mom or Dad did at work. I offered to draw on my own experience as a former camp director to lead songs, arts and crafts, and other fun time fillers.

The teachers did not strike, our day care plans went on the shelf, but we had sown the seeds for the Good Works Day Camp.

## GOOD WORKS DAY CAMP

Our purpose was to introduce children to healthcare and healthcare career options in a calm, comfortable format, as well as to provide the opportunity to meet new friends and enjoy new experiences. Enrollment was limited to employees of Beverly Hospital and Northeast Health Systems which is our parent organization. We built our staff from five categories of volunteers: young people aged 14, Beverly Hospital and Ledgewood Nursing Care Center employees, corporate volunteers, physicians, and traditional adult volunteers.

## YOUNG PEOPLE

Our day camp counselors were recruited from the ranks of our Candy Stripers. Each counselor was selected on the basis of maturity, familiarity with the hospital, interest in healthcare as a future career, and experience with younger children. Affectionately called "shepherds," their responsibilities included keeping our campers in the right place and on schedule. The age difference between campers and counselors was small enough to ensure that our activities interested both groups but far enough apart to distinguish the leaders from the followers.

## EMPLOYEES

Each department wishing to participate in our program was asked to invite a staff person to welcome the campers, direct the activity, and to design an appropriate hands-on activity to demonstrate the nature of the department's work. This "Department Liaison" was required to attend planning meetings, submit an outline of the activity and complete an evaluation following the campers' visit.

There were other ways in which the hospital staff became involved. In one instance, a hospital employee was granted release time from work to direct our camp skit. This activity was in no way related to the work of her department. In another instance, a laundry worker designed and stitched the hospital scrub shirts which were our version of a camp uniform.

## CORPORATE VOLUNTEERS

Comfortable as we all were in our own areas of expertise, conducting the more traditional aspects of a day camp such as sports and games or arts and crafts posed a challenge. We scouted out a "playing field" (the hospital's award winning gar-

den!), checked out a book on "new games" from the library, and tried to remember what were our favorite games when we were nine. Fortunately, two young professionals from a nearby biological laboratory enthusiastically supported our idea and offered to help out. Their company's support for our efforts was evident when we requested and were granted "release time" from work for our two "coaches."

## TRADITIONAL ADULT VOLUNTEERS

When it comes to volunteers these days, it seems there is no such thing as "traditional." I use the term here to mean adults from the community who are recruited for specific assignments for which they receive no financial compensation and which are performed during their leisure time. Our arts and crafts director was such a person. She was recruited from the local artists' guild as a person who could work well with both the young and the elderly. Located at the nursing home on our campus, our art program was our only intergenerational activity. Under the volunteer's direction, the residents and the campers created a mural depicting the campers' experiences and impressions of healthcare gained during the camp's five days.

## PHYSICIANS

One of the high points of our camp week was our visit to surgery. The physicians' support and active participation in this experience enabled us to perform an almost real-to-life appendectomy on a five-foot-high stuffed animal. Acting under the direction of both a surgeon and anesthesiologist as well as other operating room staff members, the surgically gowned and masked youngsters obtained an insider's view of the teamwork required in the operating room.

The prime motivator in gaining the physicians' involvement in this project was, as it was for everyone else whose help we enlisted, professional pride. It is a rare person who does not enjoy talking about his or her area of expertise and a rarer one who does not enjoy a young appreciative audience—especially in the face of today's widespread misinformation and negative perceptions.

## BENEFITS

The first exposure to the hospital environment for many children is in the emergency room—unfortunately, this is usually a negative experience. A happier experience is participating in our Child Care Course offered four times a year to youngsters 11 years and older. But the Day Camp concept was tailor-made for the age group we wanted to reach. We knew that we were on the right track when one of our campers suffered a knife injury while whittling at home. Because he felt most comfortable with us, he insisted that his parents bring him to Beverly Hospital's emergency room rather than to the one his parents had used previously.

In addition to raising our campers' comfort level with the hospital, Good Works Day Camp also complemented our current day care services by providing unique summertime activities for our employees' children, a benefit which is available through no other hospital's human resources department that we know of.

## IMPACT ON VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT

The impact on the Volunteer Department's future should not be underestimated. We have left our young campers with impressions not only of healthcare career opportunities, but we have also modeled career exploration through volunteering. Our follow-up will include regular invitations to other opportunities to learn with us at Beverly Hospital. We have developed a computerized "tickler file" to alert us when our campers have reached an appropriate age to take advantage of other programs such as Candy Striping or nurse's aide and other courses.

Finally, and just as importantly, the Good Works Day Camp has broadened our employees' perceptions of volunteerism in a number of ways. Each employee's own contribution to the program was voluntary and outside his or her job description. By personalizing the role of "volunteer," each person has gained a new insight into the nature and importance of volunteers.

The healthcare workers' stereotype of who volunteers are and what volunteers do is understandably limited to the unpaid staff within their own departments. If all they have ever witnessed of a volunteer's participation in healthcare is one person answering the phone or filing, that may be all they know of volunteering. A new awareness was heard in comments expressing surprise at our corporate volunteers' interest in assisting with the "hospital's problem."

Through the Good Works Day Camp process, we all came closer to appreciating the vast wealth of resources and help available from within our own ranks and the community at large. We also demonstrated the power—and the fun—that is possible when many seemingly unrelated entities can collaborate creatively to help meet challenges affecting our common future.

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FOOTNOTES

[1]Where Have All the Nurses Gone?, *Nursing Life* May/June 1987, p. 18.

[2]Astin A.W., and K.C. Green. *The American Freshman: twenty year trends*, 1966-1985. Los Angeles: American Council on Education/UCLA. 1986.

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# Young Volunteers in Action: A High School Community Service Education and Placement Model

**Martha Parks**

Young Volunteers in Action is a successful education and placement program for Rhode Island high school students. It is a part of the comprehensive services of Volunteers in Action, a statewide voluntary action center. After six years of trial, the program was formalized in 1987. The goal is to involve more young people in community service or, at least, to make them more aware of the concept. At the same time, a new source of volunteers is made available to Rhode Island public and private nonprofit agencies.

## BACKGROUND

Although the 1985 Gallup Poll indicated that 52% of the population of the United States between 14 and 17 years of age volunteered, Volunteers in Action statistics for 1984 showed that only 14% of our placements were in that age group. Therefore, we concluded that the majority of the student volunteers were involved on an informal basis, helping family or friends, or were engaged in one-time or short term activities, often under the auspices of an organized group such as the Scouts or church. In fact, teens were volunteering but still represented an untapped resource for most of the ongoing programs using our recruitment services.

A study of federal support to nonprofit agencies in Rhode Island in fiscal year 1981-1982 had substantiated what most of us already knew—area agencies had experienced significant cutbacks in funding and increased demand for services. During that period, the level of government suppport had dropped 8.8% compared to a national drop of 6.3%. At the same time, 40% of Rhode Island nonprofits were facing increased demand for service. Nonprofit agencies were painfully coping with these conditions and needed more volunteers to supplement overburdened staff. By necessity, volunteer coordinators were becoming more flexible in designing their assignments, both in terms of hours and job requirements. Many were quickly realizing that an eighteenth birthday did not make the difference between an acceptable and an unacceptable volunteer.

It was also felt that there were several factors in the Rhode Island economic and political environment which could provide incentive for student volunteer programs. In 60% of the Rhode Island cities and towns, the actual school budget is subject to voter approval at a town meeting. Voter support of the school budget, or school committee members proposing it, would seem to indicate approval of what the students are learning and doing in the community. If the students are seen as exercising some community responsibility, their image and that of the school should be improved. Perhaps the taxpayers might not feel any better about increasing budgets and taxes but they would not feel any worse.

Foundation reports, professional journals, and newspaper articles were emphasizing that all learning does not take place in the classroom. Although few in number, ongoing student community service programs in Rhode Island were receiving very favorable publicity. Credibility was improving.

The Roman Catholic Church also helped pave the way for a student program. Rhode Island is a predominantly Roman Catholic state, and the Church has had community service as part of its con-

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firmation requirement for 20 years. Most confirmation leaders had involved their classes in projects in the community as well as within the church. Thus many high school students already had some exposure to a more broadly based volunteerism.

Most importantly for the initiation of the program, the State of Rhode Island provided seed money for development, allowing staff time to work out some of the early problems.

Volunteers in Action had always made a strong commitment to student volunteers, but the time was right to launch a more formal program.

PHILOSOPHY

The Young Volunteers in Action program is based on the belief that altruism needs a heavy infusion of pragmatism. Students need to know what personal benefits they can get from volunteering—career exploration, job experience, self-confidence, social skills, community awareness and recognition, letters of recommendation and new contacts. In the words of a South Brunswick (NJ) High School student quoted in the 1987 Carnegie Foundation Special Report, *Student Service*: "In any experience, the kids need to get something out of it." Our program was designed to help students understand what a volunteer job could mean for them.

Another basic premise of the program is that each student should be volunteering for a unique reason or reasons which must be carefully considered in selecting placement. Although this is true of all volunteer placements, encouraging greater self-awareness and goal direction often requires more skill, understanding, and patience on the part of those interviewing students. Before committing time and effort, students need careful guidance as they match their needs with those of the community.

The program also requires that agencies using students provide the best possible program for the growth of the volunteer. Certain basic program principles, training and supervision most especially, are necessary to provide a satisfactory experience. Students have less experience and often need more structure in their assignments. They also tend to be less confident and need more support and recognition. Using students in a volunteer program requires extra time and effort, and unless the agency can give this to students they are not encouraged to become involved.

PROGRAM

The format of the program is quite simple. First, convince high school administrators that their schools can benefit from community involvement and then also convince the students. Second, provide those students who can make a volunteer commitment with the best possible placement to meet their needs and provide a greater awareness of the value of community service to those students who can't commit to volunteering.

School principals are contacted and, if they are receptive, a volunteer awareness and recruiting program is arranged for a school assembly, a classroom, or small group setting.

The surest way to get students to listen to the "pitch" is to have their classmates discuss their own volunteer experiences. In each school, at least four students who volunteer and are willing to talk about their placements are identified with the help of the faculty. In an informal panel presentation they discuss their particular job, what was learned from the placement, and how it met their personal needs. Being on the panel can be quite intimidating for students, especially when the program is done in a school assembly. The Young Volunteers in Action staff gives considerable guidance and support in preparing the students and meets with them to talk about the content and presentation of the material.

The panel is moderated by a staff member who also discusses volunteer opportunities in the particular community and arranges to interview students who are interested in a placement. The interview takes place in the school or the local Volunteers in Action office.

However, before any school program is done, selected agencies in the area are carefully screened and a site visit is made to determine suitability for student place-

ments. Certain criteria are used for the determination:

- Ease of access—Agency is on a bus route or within walking distance of school. Protected parking and walking if the assignment is after dark.
- Job descriptions—Well structured and detailed. Interesting and diverse assignments, not the jobs that adults won't do.
- Peer involvement—Opportunities to meet other students.
- Training and supervision—Staff available to train students and a designated supervisor available for them to report to on a regular basis.
- Volunteer/Staff Relationships—Enthusiastic staff that likes working with young people and is not too busy to provide adequate support.
- Recognition—Reassurance that the student is doing the job well. A letter for his/her job or college file.

Agency volunteer coordinators are called every three months to check on the progress of individual students and the number of hours they have contributed.

For those students who are placed, the Young Volunteers in Action program provides tangible rewards. They can be reimbursed for travel expenses, they are covered by liability insurance while on the job, they receive sweatshirts and certificates after 20 hours of service, and they're invited to a yearly recognition event. These incentives were made possible by a grant from the federal agency, ACTION. The students are also called on a regular basis by Young Volunteers in Action staff to check progress and offer assistance with any problems.

## RESULTS

In 1987 the peer presentation program was given in five schools with a cumulative audience of approximately 500 students. In the first year of the formalized Young Volunteers in Action program 193 teens were interviewed and 105 were placed. The 88 students who were not placed did not make the agency contact. The students who did volunteer contributed 2400 hours of community service.

One hundred agencies were selected for referrals. Students were placed in 40 of them.

Both students and agencies expressed general satisfaction with the program. However, several students reported that their volunteer jobs were not what had been described. Four agencies complained about students terminating without notice. Two complained of a lack of dependability and one of a poor performance.

Volunteers in Action, the State of Rhode Island, and ACTION have been very satisfied with the program. Although the number of volunteers is small, the quality and quantity of contribution is high. Staff time and commitment have been well spent.

## DISCUSSION

The importance of carefully interviewing the prospective volunteer cannot be emphasized too strongly. Aside from helping students to articulate their reasons for wanting to volunteer, great care must be exercised to help them work out the logistics of a placement. Aside from academic and extra-curricular activities, an increasing number of students have after school jobs. They attempt to fit a volunteer job where none can fit. Many also have transportation problems and are counting on busy parents to get them to an assignment. Some are from families where this is an impossibility or where parents are not supportive. Their enthusiasm sometimes clouds their common sense and they have to be discouraged—for the time being.

The interview also affords an excellent opportunity to emphasize the need for dependability and confidentiality. Many students have had little job experience and do not realize the importance of these factors. Care in interviewing students eliminates many potential problems.

The students like particular placements; hospitals are the first choice followed by day care centers, community centers, libraries, and environmental agencies. This information is very important to the Young Volunteers in Action

program which serves the entire state. Now agencies can be specifically targeted for participation with more assurance that students will actually be recruited for their volunteer programs. This cuts down on staff time needed for site visits and results in better relationships with participating agencies.

Young Volunteers in Action has made some Rhode Island schools more aware of the importance of community service as a part of the learning process. Favorable publicity has resulted in schools calling Young Volunteers in Action to participate. Administrators have also been encouraged to consider giving academic credit to students who choose to participate. Thus far, this has not happened, but two schools, one public and one private, are giving this idea serious consideration.

PROBLEMS

School contacts are very difficult to make. In developing and refining the program over six years, it has been impossible to introduce the program in one-third of the schools which have been approached. Without a personal contact, whether it be teacher, parent, or fellow staff member, it is almost impossible to gain access to the proper school administrators. They are busy and feel that the program would be added work for themselves and their faculty. Experience has shown that the program always needs the approval of the principal and that it saves time if this is where the original contact is made. If approval is gained, the principal is encouraged to designate a classroom or guidance faculty member to work out the details, specifically making the physical arrangements and helping select the students for the peer presentation.

The placement rate, generally about 50%, has been disappointing in view of the amount of time spent by staff interviewing the students and selecting appropriate placements. However, this placement percentage compares favorably with that of the whole agency. Many students leave our interview full of enthusiasm, yet never make the agency contact. Follow-up has shown that these students go home and consider the commitment; they simply cannot make the hours available or cannot arrange the transportation. Perhaps at some later time these students will be able to volunteer and will remember that there is an agency available to help them find suitable placement.

Overenthusiasm causes some students to commit themselves to too many hours and rapid burn-out. Students are encouraged to start slowly and increase their hours if their schedule permits. The abrupt termination of some volunteers can be because of this factor. The students find it difficult to explain their scheduling problems to the supervisors and sometimes leave without notice. This problem is now being directly addressed in the interview process. Role playing helps students to express themselves more effectively should a problem arise.

Some students lack the confidence to try an assignment without peer support. When this is a factor, an attempt is made to also match them up with another student from their school. However, every effort is made to make sure that both students have a commitment to the placement and not just to each other.

Some students make short term commitments, less than 15 hours. They are generally fulfilling class or confirmation requirements. This may also be all the time the student has available. These placements have merit in that some jobs, especially one-time group projects, can be done. There is exposure to the community but less chance for individual growth. Agencies participating in the Young Volunteers in Action program simply do not have time to do the necessary training for short term commitments. Teachers and churches are encouraged to increase their requirements to at least 20 hours and students are encouraged to continue in their placement after the requirement is fulfilled. Agencies which have one-time group projects are asked to recruit their own volunteers, but Young Volunteers in Action staff suggests possible resources.

Agencies also present some problems, primarily caused by staff turnover. Staff seems to terminate as abruptly as volunteers, resulting in program inconsistency. We are frequently not notified of changes.

A conference will be held in 1989 for participating agencies in an effort to more thoroughly familiarize coordinators with the Young Volunteers in Action program and hopefully improve communications.

## CONCLUSION

Young Volunteers in Action is really an educational program with a community service component. The program's sponsors would like to see this component grow to its full potential but are not very optimistic unless students are offered greater incentive within their own schools. There are simply too many demands on their time and interests. Community service must be enhanced to give it a competitive edge.

School administrators can make community service programs effective by offering credit for involvement. This can take the form of a specific course or credit for volunteer work. It does take time, effort, and risk to develop a successful program, but it has been done in schools where the administration recognizes the significance of community service in the learning process. Until there is more open recognition of what student involvement can do for the individual, the school's public image, and the community, there will be reluctance to include it in the curriculum; until it can be, students will continue to struggle to find the time and energy to get involved. Young Volunteers in Action is committed to the development of a successful model which can be used to broaden the acceptance of student community service and its inclusion in the high school curriculum.

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# National Service: A Prospectus for Student Service

**John Battaglia**

If it is true that there can be as much as a fifty year gap between the time a concept is generally expressed and the time of its general acceptance, then a national youth service may not appear for another 15 to 20 years—if at all. By "national youth service" I mean a program in which all young adults between the ages of 18 and 21 would be required by law to volunteer a prescribed number of hours within a legitimate, recognizable, and certified human service agency in lieu of a military commitment. However, there are now several strong and persistent indicators which suggest a vigorous support for some kind of national youth service.

First among these indicators is the present surge in school-based volunteer service programs. In Atlanta's high schools, students must perform 75 hours of community service outside of the schools in order to graduate. In Detroit, the requirement is for 200 hours of service. Similar programs exist in Maryland and Rhode Island.[1]

Concurrent with the school-based volunteer service programs are the Federal Government's initiatives and programs to encourage and to promote volunteerism. Most notable of these is ACTION, which provides for the administration and the coordination of a broad spectrum of volunteer programs. More specifically, the Young Volunteers in ACTION program (YVA) has encouraged young people 14 to 22 years of age to participate in volunteer activities which would benefit the low income community and at the same time would offer a veritable cornucopia of volunteer opportunities. ACTION's YVA program ended in 1988 and was superseded by the Student Community Service Projects whose intent and purpose are to build partnerships between the school, the community, and today's youth in the effort to address poverty-related community needs.

Furthermore, there appears to be strong support among high school students themselves for a national service program as well, and that support is evident within urban-based school volunteer programs such as those in the New York City-Metropolitan area as well as those in statewide or national programs (*e.g.*, Minnesota Youth Service and the Student Conservation Association).[2] New York City's School Volunteer Program, begun in 1956, initially focused on freeing teachers from paper work. It later was expanded to include students who served both within and outside of public schools. Should the interest in a national youth service continue, that interest would incude most logically the possibility of student service.

Student volunteer service can take many forms. It can be elective or compulsory. It can be integrated into the overall school curriculum and be credit bearing, or it can be defined as a co-curricular activity. To be most effective, a high school student volunteer program should be integrated thoroughly into the school curriculum. A full-time staff person should be hired to develop volunteer opportunities; to identify, place and to direct all aspects of the volunteer program; and, finally, to serve as an active liaison to the community and to volunteer agencies. The volunteer coordinator would also seek out and encourage communication with local, state, and federal volunteer agencies. School-based student volunteer service programs have already attracted many notable proponents.

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*John Battaglia* has been the coordinator of Fort Lee (NJ) High School's School and Community Service Program for the last seven years. This elective service program has a yearly enrollment of approximately 150 students (from a school population of 800), with nearly 80% of those enrolled coming from the senior class. Over 26 schools and agencies are served by the student volunteers.

Dr. Ernest Boyer, past president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, stated that student volunteer service is one of the most powerful answers to what he terms a "sense of drift" among today's youth.[3] Additionally, a recent study by Richard Danzig and Peter Szanton which was completed for the Ford Foundation suggested that the nation's schools might serve as the conduit for national student service.[4] The Danzig/Szanton report outlined four models for national youth service: (1) mandatory school-based programs; (2) universal service; (3) a federally supported all-volunteer agency; and (4) a national draft. Of the four models, a school-based program might be the most acceptable politically and socially, and could possibly provide the most effective volunteer service.

Socially, a mandatory, school-based volunteer program would be the least intrusive to the educational, career, and family circumstances of those affected. High school students would simply treat volunteer service like any other prerequisite for graduation—a prerequisite which might be satisfied by serving before, during or after school and which is dependent upon a student's personal and academic schedule and the creative variety of volunteer opportunities from which to choose.

Therefore, such a program would suffer none of the hardships or potential detriments to family, career, or to personal freedom which might clearly be at risk within the other models identified by Danzig/Szanton. *Ergo, a priori* of a political definition, a mandatory school-based volunteer program would also be the model most acceptable.

Thus, lawmakers like Congressman Robert Torricelli (N.J., 9th District) have begun to promote the idea of a national youth service. Congressman Torricelli has asked a House Education and Labor subcommittee "to endorse his bill that would establish a commission to study national youth service programs."[5] Congressman Torricelli also sponsored a bill which would require young people to serve one year of national service to be completed any time between one's 18th and 21st birthday in an acceptable human service agency.

The support of Dr. Boyer, the research of Danzig and Szanton, and the growing political interest by Congressman Torricelli and others all give further indication of the credibility of national youth service. Another significant sign of the potential strength of a national youth service is the long and proven success of current student volunteer programs. Across the country, programs such as those at the Moses Brown School in Providence, Rhode Island, at the Taylor Allderdice High School in Pittsburgh, and at the Riverside University High School in Milwaukee all serve as testaments of community good will and civic responsibility and as educational vehicles for students to explore careers and to heighten self-esteem and self-awareness. In Fort Lee's (NJ) School and Community Service program, for example, approximately 140 students (from a school population of 800) elect to serve in nearly 30 human service agencies in and around the community. One-third of all volunteers serve within the public schools themselves as teachers' aides, student tutors, peer counselors, and as school aides. Another third serve within the community's department of parks and recreation and assist as coaches, pre-school helpers, after-school arts and crafts instructors, and as supervisors in the youth center. The final third of the student volunteers serve in such agencies as the volunteer ambulance corps, fire department, public library, local hospitals, and nearby nursing homes.

Many of the volunteer programs listed above are not new. They reflect years of trial and error and are the results of continued refinement in order to meet student/community needs and expectations. Their common denominator, however, is that they work. They work for the volunteer who may not have had his/her first "real life" experience outside of school except for volunteer service, and the programs work for the community and the volunteer agencies which receive an often badly-needed infusion of volunteer service. An example of one volunteer's personal assessment of the role of volunteer

service in his life is included herein as Addendum A and is printed with the volunteer's permission.

Should a national program of student volunteer service become a reality, agency volunteer coordinators would be the primary beneficiaries. Coordinators must be skilled in the areas of volunteer placement, training, supervision, and recruitment as they apply to the youth volunteer. The agency coordinator must also develop a rapport with the directors of school and college volunteer programs in his/her immediate area. The coordinator should give the school-based directors a clear and comprehensive appraisal of the agency's volunteer opportunities and of the agency's expectations regarding volunteer service. After an understanding is reached, both the agency coordinator and the school's director can develop strategies for recruitment and placement. The school's director is also the most valuable resource person for the agency coordinator in acquiring an initial understanding of a youth volunteer's credits and liabilities.

In the absence of a school-based volunteer program, the agency volunteer coordinator's first contact with the school should be with the principal and/or director of guidance. Most schools also have one or more service organizations, *e.g.*, the Key Club or Student Council, and it would be advisable to meet also with the advisors to these organizations.

In attracting youth volunteers, the key word is "saturation." A persistent and varied promotion of volunteer opportunities works best with an emphasis in the positive status of volunteer service *vis-à-vis* college applications and work résumés. In high schools, public address announcements should be coordinated with written invitations to explore volunteer opportunities. These invitations should be short and precise, and should state hours of service, nature of service, and any pertinent information on orientation and training. Group orientation and introduction sessions in school are also helpful in appealing to the school volunteer. Group meetings should be followed by individual conferences whenever possible, and potential volunteers should be encouraged to include any friends who might also have an interest in a particular volunteer opportunity.

In all cases, however, the prospective youth volunteer should be given a thorough sense of the proposed volunteer service. A "walk through" or trial period works best. At every turn, the agency volunteer coordinator should repeat the agency's expectations for volunteers, volunteer procedures, and all possible contingencies of the volunteer service. The youth volunteer should be given every opportunity to modify or to end gracefully his/her service after this initial get-acquainted period. Regular (albeit informal) meetings between the volunteer and the agency coordinator are most helpful during this time. Because of the many forces vying for the attention and the time of the youth volunteer, he/she should be treated with care and regard and without the threat of loss of self-esteem should a service be unrealistic for the volunteer. The youth volunteer should be encouraged to consider his/her service as a safe, positive, and predictable haven in an otherwise rather demanding and frenetic world. Given the above parameters, the youth volunteer can bring energy, innovation, and verve to any volunteer opportunity.

The most effective volunteer programs, then, would seek their fair share of youth volunteers. In considering high school seniors alone, the agency volunteer coordinator is faced with approximately 2.7 million potential volunteers. Should a national student volunteer program be applied to all high school students, the pool of potential volunteers reaches nearly 10 million. Of course, not all volunteer opportunities are suited for all youth volunteers. Restrictions as to volunteer age, maturity level, and temperament should all be considered in placement. As with most things, a volunteer coordinator will be more adept at setting these restrictions with time and experience than at first. Additionally, an agency coordinator must be aware that "too few" challenges may be just as damaging as "too many" with regards to a volunteer's morale.

In sum, I submit that the question is not whether or not a national student volunteer program will become a reality, but rather how can we best meet the challenge of an already strong and pervasive source of volunteerism: the student volunteer? The innovative agency volunteer coordinator will reach out to the schools and the universities and will accept the challenge. Through a program of outreach and of personal contact, the agency volunteer coordinator can effect a partnership between the schools, the agency, and the community which would capitalize on the energy of the youth volunteer.

## ADDENDUM A

*One Student's Personal Assessment*

Nothing can compare with the personal satisfaction and feelings associated with helping people. I am a member of the Fort Lee Volunteer Ambulance Corps and have made a difference. There are people who are alive today because I was there to help them. There are other people who can still walk and function normally as a result of properly executed vehicle extrication procedures. I provide the community with my services and at the same time have found something that I really enjoy.

The Fort Lee Volunteer Ambulance Corps is unique in that it requires its members to be in the building during their shifts. The reason for this is that Fort Lee is required to provide the George Washington Bridge with its services. During an average week, I work 15 hours. I have been elected co-chairman of the youth corps. I currently provide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Basic Life Support (BLS) to people in need. I am an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). My experiences on the corps have run the gamut. They have rendered me a more responsible person and have enhanced my leadership abilities. They have taught me to communicate clearly, react quickly, and make important decisions in a matter of seconds.

The corps has made me a better person. My greatest ambition is to assist in the delivery of a baby. It would be incredible to see a life come into the world. It would also be a change from the norm! I have a basic need instilled within myself to help others.

The most important factor in my life right now is to further my education. This education will allow me to achieve my goals, and enable me to continue to make a difference now and in the future.

—A *High School Volunteer*

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FOOTNOTES

[1]*Phi Beta Kappa*, November 1984, p. 5.

[2]*Education* USA, January 5, 1987, p. 139.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 137.

[4]Carole Douglis. Study Offers Blueprints for National Service Projects for Youths, *Education Week*, June 18, 1987, p. 7.

[5]J. Schott Orr. Torricelli pushes for teen service, *The Star-Ledger* (Newark, N.J.), July 1, 1987, p. 51.

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# An Interview with Don Eberly

**Donald J. Eberly with *The Journal of Volunteer Administration***

*The following article was developed from a conversation early in* 1988 *between* Mr. *Eberly and a* Journal *staff member.* The Journal *has noted the resurgence of interest in national service in recent years and posed a number of questions dealing with the likely impact of national service on volunteering.*

*The Journal*: The concept of National Youth Service raises a number of issues that deserve attention and debate. We have for a long time had a major concern that we wish you would help in addressing. Our problem is this: most of the writing focuses on the needs and interests of the young people themselves, while so little is written about the point of view of the community organizations with which the young people would work.

*Eberly*: If the imbalance you speak of is carried over to a program of national service, I would expect it to degenerate into another program where adults were trying to do things *to* young people and were having little effect. It is easy to understand the dependence of children and the independence of adults. The transition years are difficult. National service says to young people, "There is important work to do and your help is needed to do it." The only way to make this credible to young people is for them to perceive the needs and do something about them.

*The Journal*: Is National Youth Service something that should be considered "volunteer" or is it "voluntary" but a form of salaried work?

*Eberly*: The short answer is that young people would enter National Youth Service of their own volition, receive a living stipend during their service period, and receive an education and training entitlement proportional to their time in service.

We can thank Sargent Shriver and President Nixon for adding to the traditional meaning of "volunteer." As the first Peace Corps director, Shriver decided to call participants Peace Corps Volunteers. This decision led many people to assume they would serve without pay. The fact is that I visited a Peace Corps Volunteer teaching at Molusi College, Nigeria, in 1962—where I was a teacher and vice-principal from 1953 to 1956—and he was making more money than I had received as a paid employee of Molusi College. (The change in the cost of living in the interval was insignificant.)

Nixon chose to describe the non-conscript military that came into being during his term of office as the "All-Volunteer Force" rather than the more common "professional military" that had been used during earlier periods without a draft. How did he achieve the All-Volunteer Force? By substantially increasing the salaries and benefits of military personnel.

Because "volunteer" is over-used and because participants in national service would be neither unpaid volunteers nor paid employees, we need a different term for them. Professor Charles Moskos, a leading advocate of national service, uses the term "national servers." Several of the state and local youth service programs that have been springing up around the country refer to participants as "Corpsmembers."

*The Journal*: If the perspective is to be that the money involved is not a "salary" but is instead a reimbursement for expenses, then what dollar figure constitutes the boundary line between a salary and such simple reimbursement?

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*Donald* J. *Eberly* is the founder and executive director of the National Service Secretariat, a nonprofit organization started in 1966 to stimulate and facilitate the serious consideration of national service. He is the author of numerous books and articles on national service, and served as manager of ACTION's national service pilot project in Seattle from 1973-74.

*Eberly*: The stipend should be high enough to enable young people from poor and middle-class families to serve, and low enough not to attract young people away from paid jobs solely for economic reasons. I would place the stipend level today at about $6,000 per year. That is about $1,000 below the current minimum wage, which is almost certain to be raised in the very near future. When it is, the gap between minimum wage and stipend could be somewhat higher. It might be necessary to give higher stipends in high cost of living areas such as Alaska.

THE VALUE OF FULL-TIME SERVICE

*The Journal*: Are community agencies prepared to welcome young adults as workers? It should be noted that all too few agencies are able to utilize people between the ages of 16 and 22 as student interns or as regular volunteers. Despite a lot of lip service about wanting young people to become involved, the sad fact is that too many organizations shy away from working with this age group and from developing meaningful assignments that provide real work experience and/or opportunity to have an impact on the community.

*Eberly*: My experience in this area has been uniformly positive. In the purest test of national service to date—the ACTION-sponsored Program for Local Service in Seattle in 1973-74—some 200 public and private nonprofit organizations announced 1,200 positions for 18- to 25-year-olds over the course of a few months. That is the equivalent of 350,000 positions nationwide. I realize that many community agencies accept part-time volunteers and short-term interns as a favor to the participants because they recognize the value of the experience to them. In terms of services delivered to the needy, the volunteer who gives only four hours a week for 20 weeks may yield a net loss because of the staff time required for training and supervision of the volunteer. In Seattle, as in national service, sponsoring agencies could look forward to 2,000 hours of service. For an estimated $1,200 worth of staff time and actual expenditures, the typical sponsoring agency in Seattle received service valued conservatively at over $7,000.

For more than 20 years, surveys have consistently shown a need for the kinds of help national service participants could bring to those in need and in the preservation of our natural resources. The Seattle experience also was consistent with a finding in 1966 that the number of positions open immediately was about a quarter of a million. Over the build-up period of several years that would be essential for national service, the needs would be translated into positions as approvals were given by boards of directors, unions, city halls, and others vital to the process; and as supervisors were identified and training programs were designed for those in national service.

*The Journal*: What will be the impact of national youth service on other programs that encourage young people to become involved in their communities? This especially is a question of meshing National Youth Service with existing campus service-learning programs. We certainly do not want to see a split between "blue collar" National Youth Service participants and "white collar" college program participants.

*Eberly*: There has not been enough experience to make an accurate forecast on this question. I have long favored a graduated set of service experience where children would do certain projects like planting seeds and delivering the produce to the hungry; persons of high school age would do part-time volunteer work and service-learning assignments over a semester or longer as well as full-time service in the summer; young adults would do a year of full-time national service; those in the adult work force would be eligible for service sabbaticals; and retired persons would do full- or part-time community service.

The answer to your question will be unique for each organization with a variety of youthful volunteers. Each will have to decide, in concert with those who serve, what is their best utilization. In many kinds of direct service, such as day care and elder care, it is important to have the same person there day after day. That

calls for someone in national service. However, if an organization wants to make a community survey, a cadre of short-term service-learning students would be appropriate since they could do the job just as well as those in national service, they could bring with them the expertise of a college statistics class, and the students might receive academic credit for the learning derived from their service activity.

*The Journal*: What is the connection between National Youth Service and already established volunteer programs? In other words, what might be the practical, day-to-day effect of the development of a National Youth Service on volunteer programs?

*Eberly*: If I were a director of volunteers, I would view national service participants as a valuable new resource. When I worked at ACTION, I occasionally asked directors of volunteers how many more they needed. The typical answer was, "As many as you can send us." National service participants could meet many of the needs for which unpaid volunteers are now sought.

In the Seattle national service experiment, the participants strengthened the delivery of services to the needy in two ways. First, they improved the quality by freeing professional staff members to spend more time with professional level concerns. Second, they added to the quantity of service delivered by expanding agency outreach to persons in need. Any agency that has more demand for its services than it is able to deliver will almost certainly be in a position to utilize participants in national service. They will join with paid staff members, unpaid volunteers, and service-learning interns for a stronger agency response to the need it was designed to meet.

National service participants would come in two modes: namely, individuals and teams. Most of those engaged in human service work would come as individuals, probably for periods of six months or one year. Teams would be employed to work on conservation and public works projects and on human service assignments that lend themselves to the team approach.

## A PROGRAM OF MANY DIMENSIONS

*The Journal*: Is National Youth Service intended to be some sort of vocational training concept? If so, are assignments going to be developed that provide real work experience or will National Youth Service follow the path taken by other Labor Department programs in offering jobs without future opportunities?

*Eberly*: Your question is phrased in a way that reflects the tendency to think of our problems and their solutions as one dimensional. Many of them are not. I'll cite just two examples. The Peace Corps and VISTA are programs of volunteer service. Yet I have talked with Peace Corps and VISTA Volunteers who joined because it was the best job—in a few cases, the only job—they could get. In addition, the Peace Corps or VISTA experience often leads directly to a career decision and sometimes to a job.

By contrast, the Job Corps is a training program for the poor and disadvantaged. But it is also a service program. In its early days, Job Corps enrollees in the Conservation Centers contributed tens of millions of dollars worth of conservation service as an integral part of their training. More recently, Job Corps enrollees in urban centers have built furniture and toys for day care centers and have done many other things, sometimes as part of their training and sometimes as volunteers on their own time.

Similarly, many national service participants would receive vocational training in connection with their service. For example, those involved in lead-based paint abatement would acquire skill in carpentry and painting and plastering. The important idea here is that the profile of benefits accruing to each participant would be unique to that participant. All can be expected to enter for a mixture of motivations: for some, adventure would be dominant; for others, the expression of altruism; for others, the acquisition of skills; for others, the desire to test a certain career; and so on. Correspondingly, the profile of outcomes for each participant will be unique. It will accord in considerable degree to the motivations for entering national service and it will of course depend on the service performed

and on the relationships that develop between the participant and persons served, the trainer, the supervisors, and other colleagues.

So long as sponsoring agencies have to train and supervise their national service participants and make a cash contribution of $500, they will see to it that participants have real work experiences. If not, they will release them. While the guarantee of appropriate job opportunities after service would distort the market and bring in central control to a degree few would favor, I would say this: Those who enter national service largely because they can't find a job will be in a better position to get a job than if they had remained unemployed. Those who are college-bound but want to get out of the classroom for a while will enter college with a much better idea of what they want to study—and will probably be better students—as a result of their national service experience. Since these two groups comprise, in my view, the majority of those who will enter national service, the net impact of national service on jobs and careers will be distinctly positive.

*The Journal*: What role might directors of volunteers play on the local level if a National Youth Service were formed?

*Eberly*: A number of them would be, or certainly should be, involved in the local entity that is administering it. They would join with educators, union leaders, business people, young people, public officials, and others in organizing and running it at the local level. In many cases, directors of volunteers would be the persons interviewing youth service participants and deciding which ones to invite to join their agencies. In the Seattle experiment, we insisted that such interviews be held prior to assignment and that they be held with the person who would become the direct supervisor of the youth service participant. This reduced the likelihood of misunderstanding on the part of the young person and the agency.

It is worth noting that under this system agencies are not guaranteed every applicant they choose. The typical youth service participant will interview at several places and may be in a position to select among several offers.

*The Journal*: Realistically, how soon might a National Youth Service plan be in effect?

*Eberly*: In two or three years. There are now about 8,000 18- to 24-year-olds in full-time, year-round, nonsectarian service projects. The national service legislation in Congress that appears to have the best chance of passage would offer matching grants to states and localities with youth service programs. By the time every state has a program and the national enrollment equals 100,000, I think we could say that national service has come into being. That would take two to three years after passage of the legislation. Theoretically, it could happen without any federal legislation, but I doubt that states and localities would be able to find the necessary resources by themselves.

## NATIONAL SUPPORT AND LOCAL DECISIONS

*The Journal*: What might be the differences in a National Youth Service scheme if a Republican or a Democrat were in office?

*Eberly*: That's a tough one. Who would have thought that Nixon would be the one to open the door to China and Reagan to melt away some of the Iron Curtain? The situation at the time will be a major factor. For example, if we are in a situation where everyone knows a peacetime military draft has to be restored, we will probably get a national service in which young men—and perhaps young women as well—have the choice of either military or civilian service. That in itself is a big difference from 40 years ago. At that time, the major alternatives to selective service were a professional military and Universal Military Training. Civilian national service has now replaced UMT as the second alternative.

Regardless of which party is in power, many people will be surprised to see a more decentralized national service than they were expecting. Because civilian national service is so often talked about and could become an alternative to military service, many people think it would be a hierarchical organization run by a civilian Pentagon. While there would be certain

federal requirements, such as no discrimination, no displacement of labor or of volunteers, certain stipend levels and provisions for health care, I would expect local decisions would be made about such matters as the organizations qualified to receive national service participants and the nature of the linkages with local schools and colleges.

*The Journal*: What might be the long-term effects of National Youth Service on volunteering by alumni of the program as they grow older?

*Eberly*: I don't see how they can be anything but positive. One of the major reasons people volunteer today is from a personal experience that convinces them of the need. Regardless of the reasons people enter national service, they will acquire first-hand experience with one or more important areas of human need. They will be working alongside part-time volunteers and recognize the contributions they make. I think I can safely predict that they will volunteer in large numbers and with greater effect than had they not been in national service.

The careers of national service participants will be similarly affected. Many will decide to make a career of geriatrics or literacy or prison reform as a direct result of their experience in national service.

*The Journal*: What can those in the field of volunteerism do to prepare for national service?

*Eberly*: First, study it. Many people make false assumptions about national service. The Statement on National Youth Service at the end of this piece describes a framework for national service. It is followed by a short list of the latest books on national service.

Second, discuss national service with your staff and your colleagues. Examine it at several levels: namely, as national policy, as youth policy, and as to its impact on your organization.

Third, consider how your organization and those you serve would benefit most from national service.

Fourth, if you live someplace that has a full-time youth service operation already in place—a place such as Philadelphia, New York City, Seattle or San Francisco—explore the possibility of engaging one or more of their servers or corpsmembers.

Fifth, offer constructive criticism on national service.

★★★★

STATEMENT ON NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE

The service needed by society—in such fields as education, care for the very young and the very old, conservation and municipal services—is enormous. Many of these needs could be met by young people from all walks of life. By helping to meet these needs, young people would be able to test themselves through service to society and would receive valuable experience for their careers. By having invested in their country while young, they would become better citizens as they mature. By having firsthand, constructive experience with major problems in society, they would be better equipped to deal with them in future years as parents, employers, leaders, voters, and volunteers.

In order to meet many of our most pressing needs and to permit young men and women to become engaged in the building of a better society, WE ENDORSE A PROGRAM OF NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE, which would have these basic features:

1. *Service opportunities would be available to all young people.* The main criterion for admission would be willingness to serve. All young people would be encouraged—not required—to serve and would be rewarded with an educational entitlement upon completion of service.

2. *Each participant would both serve and learn.* Learning would range from development of specific skills to growth in self-knowledge, problem solving, and working with people.

3. *Service activities would be directed and financed at the local level to the extent permitted by available resources, and would include projects organized and directed by young people.* Thus,

maximum local initiative would be encouraged.

4. *Service activities would be underwritten by a public foundation at the national level.* Such a foundation, which should be removed from political pressures but which would receive both Congressional appropriations and private contributions, would assure support for all needy projects.

5. *The basic* raison d'être *for national youth service is the need society has for the service of youth.* Main areas are tutoring, literacy training, day care, elder care, conservation, and various kinds of community service. By serving in these fields, young people would be able to test themselves through service to society and would receive valuable experience for their careers.

6. *Young people who seem poorly qualified by conventional standards could serve effectively.* High school dropouts are today serving as tutors, and doing a good job; others are receiving specialized training for responsible hospital positions. Each participant would receive the training and supervision needed for the assignment.

7. *There would be a transition phase.* Growth of national youth service would be constrained by identification of useful tasks, finding enough trainers and supervisors, and obtaining sufficient funding. The transition phase would permit experimentation with various techniques and activities.

8. *Participation would be by means of a contract, voluntarily entered into by all parties.* The contract would spell out the responsibilities of the participant, the sponsoring agency and the funding agency.

9. *Duration of service would range from a minimum of six months to a maximum of four years.* The value of the educational entitlement would be proportional to the time in service.

10. *Participation in national service would be viewed as fulfillment of a person's peacetime service obligation.* If a peacetime military draft is reinstituted, persons who are liable for the draft and who complete a period in national youth service equal to the draft period would be placed at the end of the draft queue, together with those who had completed military service.

This statement has been endorsed recently by Senator Daniel J. Evans; Representatives John Lewis and Leon Panetta; Mayors Henry Cisneros, Dianne Feinstein, Don Fraser, and Vincent Schoemehl; college presidents Derek Bok (Harvard), Johnnetta B. Cole (Spelman), Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh (Notre Dame), Donald Kennedy (Stanford), and Donna Shalala (University of Wisconsin); and former cabinet members John Gardner, Ray Marshall, and Willard Wirtz. Other leaders who support the Statement include Ernest L. Boyer (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching), George Gallup, Jr., LaDonna Harris (Americans for Indian Opportunity), John E. Jacob (National Urban League), and Jacqueline Grennan Wexler (National Conference of Christians and Jews). Among the organizations supporting the Statement are the American Veterans Committee, the National Alliance of Business, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON NATIONAL SERVICE


Coalition for National Service. *National Service: An Action Agenda for the 1990s.* CNS, 5140 Sherier Pl., NW, Washington, DC 20016. To be published in 1988.

Democratic Leadership Council. *Citizenship and National Service.* DLC, 499 South Capitol St., Suite 412, Washington, DC 20003, 1988.

Eberly, Donald J. *National Service: A Promise to Keep.* John Alden Books, PO Box 26668, Rochester, NY 14626. To be published in 1988.

Moskos, Charles C. *A Call to Civic Service: National Service for Country and Community.* Free Press, New York. To be published in 1988.

# Enabling College Students to Volunteer

**Catherine Milton**

## INTRODUCTION

Popular wisdom suggests college-age young people are very much part of the "me" generation with values that promote materialism over altruism. For the past ten years, surveys of incoming freshmen nationwide conducted by Professor Alexander Astin at the University of California, Los Angeles, indicate that these students have diminishing concern about social and political problems. The surveys also report a dramatic increase in the percentage of students who state that the primary objective of a college education is "being very well-off financially" (76 percent in 1987 compared to 44 percent in 1966).

Many have speculated on the reasons for these trends: some place the blame on our national leaders, especially our two most recent presidents who both ran on anti-big-government platforms; others have placed the blame more on the institutions of higher learning themselves, claiming that they have fallen down in the important role of training young people to be well-informed citizens. Others claim that the reasons are economic, pointing out that students feel the need to work in order to get a jump on their careers and to offset the costs of higher education. The need for increased financial security is viewed by many as competing with the desire on the part of college students to be involved in important societal issues.

Whatever the causes, the problem has been of concern to many leaders of higher education. In 1985, Frank Newman wrote a report for The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching called *Higher Education and the American Resurgence* in which he states (p. 31):

> *[i]f there is a crisis in education in the United States today, it is less that test scores have declined than it is that we have failed to provide the education for citizenship that is still the most significant responsibiity of the nation's schools and colleges.*

In 1985 the presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford Universities, with assistance from the Education Commission of the States, announced the formation of Campus Compact as a means of stimulating student involvement in public service on college campuses. Today, over 200 college and university presidents have joined the national coalition and helped the formation of state compacts in Michigan, California, and Pennsylvania. At the same time, legislators in California, Connecticut, Delaware, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Carolina and Vermont have passed laws which mandate that students attending state universities must "volunteer" a number of hours before graduation.

For the past five years I have worked to develop a program to involve college students in public service activites. Successful programs require support from the university at large, from community agencies seeking to use volunteers, and from the students themselves. The next sections present ideas that have been useful in the Stanford experience which I think will help others.

## HELP FROM ABOVE—ROLE OF TOP ADMINISTRATORS

Developing and administering a program to encourage students to want to volunteer is a challenge in an era when some of the disincentives—financial,

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peer pressure, academic programs which ignore the value of experiential learning—are very real. At those universities where volunteer programs are working well, several lessons can be learned.

First, the support of the president and other top administrators who are visible to the student body is very important. Students are faced with important choices about how to spend their time. While it is a given for many students that they will have to work while in college (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 1984 reported that 38.8% of all students worked part-time and 23.5% worked full-time), most new students arrive with important unspoken questions as to where they should put their energy: into studying, making friends, or volunteering. They are at a point in their lives when they are still open to advice from authority figures. I have heard many new student volunteers make such a comment as "I'm here to follow the advice given to freshmen by President (Donald) Kennedy" (the president of Stanford University). While there are examples of thriving volunteer programs that do not have the active support of presidents, most of these programs were established in an era when either the top administrator lent support or, as was the case at a number of universities like Yale and the University of California at Berkeley, an outside agency (the YMCA) established the programs by making a significant financial commitment.

Second, the support of the president, provost, and deans translates also into the allocation of resources to establish volunteer programs. An important resource is space, an identifiable place that is known on the campus where one can go if interested in volunteering or known in the community as the place on campus to find student volunteers. At Stanford we have a small building called Owen House which is home to the Public Service Center, at Brown University the Center for Public Service has space in an administration building in the heart of campus, and at Harvard the Phillips Brooks House is at the center of the campus. Equally important as an identifiable space is the presence of professional staff or faculty to administer the programs and ensure that the programs help fulfill the academic mission of the university. At a private university, support for staff also means approval for and assistance in fundraising so that an independent program endowment can be established.

## ROLE OF COMMUNITY AND FACULTY

Even if the administrator of a program has the active support from above, he or she cannot run a well-managed program without the active support of the community and of faculty. Training students to be effective volunteers requires assistance from faculty and staff as well as from community agencies. I consider it my most important task to help the students learn by doing without inflicting harm on those who are the objects of good intentions, but I am able to accomplish that goal only with the active help of experienced people in the community. Students who want to volunteer often approach their tasks with incredible enthusiam and energy. Most of the time, these traits are positive additions to the agency. The agency which is on the receiving end of such a volunteer can get new ideas for approaching difficult tasks, can feel reenergized about the importance of the task at hand—whether it is helping to feed the hungry, playing with children who are terminally ill, or running a voter registration drive in a poor community.

Working with students, however, can also present problems. The community agency desperately in need of volunteers can be greatly disappointed when exam period or Spring Break comes and it suddenly finds that the college volunteers are not available. Yet if these kinds of problems are anticipated and programs are planned in advance around the predictable school schedules, then success is much more likely. The administrators of programs on college campuses play the important role of mediators between student responsibilities and agency needs.

One example of a program that works extremely well within the constraints of the university calendar is a tutoring program at Stanford which matches 200 Stanford students with school children in the nearby Ravenswood School District, one

of the poorest in the state of California. For at least ten years, Stanford students, either as individuals or in groups, had volunteered to tutor in East Palo Alto. Students managed to establish one program which provided some continuity from year to year; but as this program had no formal relationship with the school system, teachers were usually unaware of what the tutors were doing at their Saturday morning tutoring sessions and the tutors were left unguided as to what to teach. The result was often frustration on the part of all involved.

After the Public Service Center at Stanford was established, an early goal became the establishment of a formal tutoring program with the Ravenswood School District. A grant from the San Francisco Foundation made it possible to hire a program director. Three years later, with an additional grant from the Stuart Foundation, we have added more structure to the program by using experienced tutors to help select and orient new tutors and be liaisons with each principal. We also work closely with teachers and the school system to specify realistic academic goals for the tutors and clear responsibilities. (We require a minimum of two hours per week and at least a six month commitment.) During the 1988-89 academic year we have a full contingent of tutors and have had to turn away those who were not able to sign up early in the quarter.

The program also has been successful in providing a variety of ways for faculty and students to get involved. Through the School of Education we can now offer preparatory courses for the tutors, which means that interested students can get academic credit for their training. Faculty have joined the effort by developing curriculum for the students; for example, a professor of linguistics worked with a sixth grade class on language skills. We also have an additional 250 students who are working weekly in the school district to provide physical education during the school day. Another group of students plans, raises funds, and runs a summer enrichment program on the Stanford campus for middle school children.

Whether an agency is seeking the assistance of one student volunteer or a group, it is important to structure the experience in advance. Requiring prospective placement agencies to fill out a form in advance describing the project or tasks, identifying the supervisor or mentor, and clearly stating the expectations in terms of hours, makes it more likely that the experience will be a positive one for both the agency and the volunteer(s). It is also important for all the volunteers to be trained or oriented in advance by the university staff, the agency staff, or a combination of both. And, in those cases where the orientation is done by the community agency, there should be a clear understanding that once orientation is completed, the student, if still acceptable to the agency, has an obligation to fulfill his/her commitment to that agency. Students are also more likely to want to volunteer for an agency that has some flexibility in hours expected or has some jobs that can be done from the dorm room—for example, a number of our students are glad to take "hot line" calls from their dorm rooms, do "office work," or work on special projects at a time that is convenient for them.

The community agency leader plays a pivotal role in maintaining a student's interest in volunteering in the community. Those individuals in the community who can comfortably join in partnership with the university to offer the students the opportunity to search for new experiences in the field are more likely to attract students who will be committed in the long run to the agency's goals. Students appreciate the opportunity to learn firsthand from their supervisors about the agency and what is expected. Students are eager for mentors and will be more likely to return to those agencies with staffs that take an interest in them and make them feel that their contribution will really matter. Students who are volunteering their time want to feel that they are making a difference.

The administrator of a college volunteer program needs to understand that for the program to succeed, in the long run, it must help fulfill the mission of the university to teach the student. Volunteering can provide the student with an opportunity to be exposed to a set of

situations very different from what they have encountered before. For example, one group of students last Spring volunteered to work in homeless shelters for a week. They were accompanied by a faculty member who had experience with mental health issues and public policy. None of these students had ever been in a shelter before and after the week's experience all were motivated to try to do something that would help alleviate the problems of the homeless. The students formed a task force to publicize volunteer opportunities in the nearby communities. One was asked to join a local government task force on the homeless; a few others are working with a faculty member on a report on the special problems of the children of the homeless; and all are committed to educating the college community about the problems through conferences and individual speakers.

We have formalized our relationships with the community and with the faculty by establishing an advisory committee and a faculty steering committee. On our advisory board we have asked the assistance of people who represent the many different "communities" whose support we need. Frank Newman, executive director of the Education Commission of the States, is obviously able to help with ideas from higher education; John Gardner, because of his wealth of experience in launching new ideas and new organizations helps us to remain entrepreneurial; California State Senator Becky Morgan has helped us begin a state internship program; and Charlie Mae Knight, Superintendent of Schools in East Palo Alto, helped us develop our tutoring program. Other members of the advisory committee bring skills and insights from their roles as directors of foundations, directors of nonprofit agencies that host our students, members of the Stanford Board of Trustees, and community volunteers.

A faculty steering committee composed of well-known and respected Stanford faculty has helped to guide the staff and students with advice on how to evaluate programs and the complicated process of linking the volunteer experiences to academic programs when appropriate. Members of the faculty committee also serve on selection committees for our fellowship and internship programs.

Faculty involvement is critical because in some instances what the community agency needs from the volunteer is more than what a student alone can offer. Students working with faculty are able to develop important research skills while contributing to the community. In some classrooms, professors have been able to integrate the volunteer experience into the curriculum either by helping to prepare the student for a particular volunteer experience (working with handicapped children, the elderly, or tutoring, for example) or have made it possible for students to learn the complexities involved in such a project as cleaning up toxic wastes. Integration of the volunteer experience into the curriculum can be an ideal arrangement: the community agency is more likely to have volunteers who have an intellectual understanding of the issues and the time to fulfill the commitments.

## CRITICAL ROLE OF STUDENTS

But the role of an administrator of a volunteer program on a college campus is more than simply putting together a well-managed program. It is also to blend together the best of student and administrator's abilities. A successful volunteer program designed for students must have students actively involved in all aspects of the program—fundraising, management, recruitment and training volunteers. The administrator's role is to encourage students to get involved, to try to make a difference, and to learn from their experiences.

There are a variety of incentives one can offer students. One obvious one is financial. For example, the idea for the East Palo Alto Summer Academy (EPASA) was that of a student who was a junior. He was encouraged by a public service summer fellowship program, which offered a stipend of up to $1200 to students who developed summer service projects. With his fellowship he designed and implemented a summer program for seventh graders from the Ravenswood School District that would encourage them to pursue higher education rather than drop out of high school. Funds for

...ship were provided by ... who, because of his own ...e, recognized the importance of ...ense summer opportunity.

Other important incentives are encouraging a sense of ownership of the programs on the part of students. Many of the most successful college volunteer programs are run by student organizations in close cooperation with a faculty or staff advisor. The students decide on priorities, have responsibility for fund raising, and pick their leaders. The advisor is supportive in a quiet way. One such organization is Stanford in Government (SIG), a student organization which was established 25 years ago to help students find internships in government. Every summer, SIG helps place over 100 student volunteers in government offices in Washington and volunteers have recently lobbied state legislatures and local governments to raise money to develop programs. Student leaders of such volunteer organizations learn how to manage a complicated organization, how to motivate volunteers, and how to create incentive programs for other students.

Programs like Stanford in Government work well because both students and administrators contribute important skills. For example, students develop the promotional materials since they know how best to reach other students, and student identification with the program allows a large percentage of its financial support to come from the student body itself. The advisor serves as a memory bank and can warn of possible problems, stressing the need to plan ahead. If problems arise with an outside agency, the advisor can be a representative of the university in an attempt to work out the best solution. The advisor also supports the program in those years when the student leaders are weak and assures continuity of the program by helping to select strong leaders to carry on.

## NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMS

A comprehensive volunteer program will attempt to serve a wide variety of students, and one important means of doing so is through a "volunteer clearinghouse" that is geared for the college community. A clearinghouse can provide an important avenue for students who are interested in a particular subject area, whether it be health care, the environment, education, or international development. By listing volunteer opportunities for students in these and other categories, the students have the chance to learn in a practial setting more about subjects they may be studying. At Stanford, we are now able to place more than 600 public service opportunities on the mainframe computer system so that students sitting in the library or in their dorm can browse through various listings and decide if they want to pursue some further.

Creating a successful volunteer program for college students involves finding the best way to get students to participate and ensuring that once they participate they have positive experiences. Variety is an important ingredient in any volunteer program designed for students because it is through variety that large numbers of students are first attracted to the programs and through variety that they are encouraged to expand and try new ventures. For example, all of the successful programs have their own techniques for recruiting new volunteers (at a university, a fourth of the student body may be new in any given year). Annual programs must be presented to reach these new students when they first come. "Community Fairs," "Open Houses," or one-day service projects provide easy and effective ways to interest students in volunteer opportunities.

If a one-day service project is programmed, planning with the community agency is required so that the students are made aware of how this project fits into the bigger picture. For example, students who are being asked to serve food at a program for the hungry need to be educated about the problem of hunger in the community and that what they may be doing is only a part of a larger solution.

Many students are uncomfortable volunteering alone. At Stanford, a number of students from the same dormitory often volunteer together on a weekly basis. Group projects help build a sense of com-

munity among students as they provide physical education to youngsters who do not have athletics at their schools, or collect food for the hungry, or help in a reforestation program.

CHALLENGES

The challenges in developing and administering a volunteer program for college students are many. At Stanford, we now have about half of the undergraduate population (approximately 3,000 students) involved as volunteers at some point during their college career. If we are to make these positive experiences for all, we need to continue to work to integrate the experiences into the overall educational experience for the student and to work to eliminate the severe financial disincentives that discourage students from becoming active volunteers.

The work on integrating public service with the curriculum has to be done by faculty, but the work on financial incentives is something that all involved can influence. There are several legislative proposals that have been introduced in Congress, and hearings are being held to consider a variety of college loan forgiveness programs based on volunteer service either during or after college. Anyone interested in nourishing a climate where volunteering is encouraged needs to take an interest in these proposals since they will have an impact if implemented. For example, if more states follow the lead that California and others have taken to "mandate" a certain number of volunteer hours for college students at state-supported institutions, what will be the impact on the community agencies which suddenly have to train and place thousands of "volunteers"? Without proper staffing at the college end, it could create confusion and actually end up discouraging future volunteers.

If, however, programs can be developed that will make it possible for students seriously interested in volunteering to have the opportunity to do so, then the likelihood is that those young persons will experience first hand the joy and satisfaction that can come from helping someone else.

*The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Anna Waring, graduate student at Stanford's School of Education.*

# An End to the "Me" Generation: Getting Students to Volunteer

**Wayne W. Meisel**

## INTRODUCTION

How can you get today's young people involved in community service? Aren't they all apathetic, too busy or too career-minded to think about things like service?

It is true that if you look at a student body as a whole it may seem uninvolved and uninterested in such issues as illiteracy, homelessness, hunger, or the environment. But get people alone or in small groups and you find that they are interested, concerned, worried and wondering what they can do to help, do something that will make a difference.

The following is a collection of thoughts on how to get students to volunteer, to get students working in after-school programs, meal programs, shelters, hospitals, nursing homes, day care centers, elementary schools, or to act as a tutor, a big brother or a big sister, a coach, or an instructor. Many of the observations presented in this article come from workshops and visits to campuses around the country.

If there is one essential thing to remember when recruiting, it is that you care about the young people with whom you are working. Care enough to listen, to respect their fears, to understand their situations, and to place them in experiences where they can be both successful and challenged.

Too often we scold students for not getting involved. If you understand the economic, social and political pressures and fears students face, you will understand that to scold them will not result in participation but instead will make them run away even farther.

Recruiting is not just a matter of having a couple of gimmicks that draw attention to you and your volunteer program, nor does good recruiting rest in slick advertisements or fancy endorsements. It occurs when you have all the pieces together. It occurs

- when you understand why people do not get involved;
- when you support and encourage students rather than scold them and make them feel guilty;
- when you, the students, and the society as a whole stop reading student inactivity as apathy and begin to understand the need to establish and maintain effective community service programs that will effectively tap and channel student energy and idealism;
- when you present service as something that is exciting and challenging, not boring and dull;
- when you demonstrate to the individual student the importance and the impact of his or her service;
- when each school develops and maintains a comprehensive broad-based community outreach program which supports an effective and efficient structure, effective leadership, and a powerful and exciting challenge.

The bad news is that there are no short cuts. The good news is that if you do these things, you will be successful.

## WHY DON'T STUDENTS GET INVOLVED?

In order to figure out how to get students involved we have to ask ourselves why young people do not get involved. Is it that they consciously choose not to get involved, or are there barriers which keep them from being active in the com-

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munity? If we understand that, then we can begin to develop a recruitment strategy. Students tell us that they are not involved because they

- are not asked.
- do not know about the needs of a community.
- do not know about service opportunities
- are not connected/affiliated with the community.
- are afraid of failure when working with people different from themselves.
- lack confidence in their skills and talents—they ask, "What can I do?"
- are overwhelmed by the complexity and size of the issues—they wonder "What difference can I make? What's the point?"
- have a difficult time with transportation.
- think they have no time.
- have a need to work for a salary.
- do not see it as a "cool" thing to do.
- report that there is no program at their school or "If there is, I don't know about it."
- do not like the projects that the service program offers.

The prevailing myth about students is that they are apathetic. Yet the above responses have little or nothing to do with apathy; they tend to indicate mechanical or structural problems. Rather than needing to develop a philosophy and value system, we need to develop a structure. We need to develop and support a leadership and present an effective and exciting challenge to bring the existing student idealism to the surface.

## APATHY: BREAKING THE SELF-FULFIILLING PROPHECY

The most important thing to establish for yourself, for others with whom you are working, for the general public, and for students themselves is that young people are not apathetic. O.K., maybe there are a few people out there who do not care about anything but themselves and could care less about their communities or anyone else but themselves. But they are a small minority, and they should not set the tone for the vast majority of the people who are concerned but often anxious, confused, and at a loss as to what to do.

If organizers or volunteer coordinators are allowed to subscribe to the notion that students are apathetic, then there will always be excuses for program's not being able to attract many young people; students are blamed for not being interested because "everyone knows that young people are not interested these days in community service."

Getting a majority of a student population to perform some kind of service during the school term takes work. It means getting the challenge out there, putting fear and shyness aside and approaching people. It may mean doing some outrageous things to attract attention. It also means having a solid program which is well-run and efficient, one that develops and depends on student leadership, and one which generates a supportive community for the young volunteers. Students respond to these things.

The following is some ammunition for you the next time you hear people talking about apathetic students.

*Apathy is the wrong word.*

Vegetables are apathetic, people aren't. When we say someone is apathetic it usually means that we have not taken the time to look at the issues that he or she is dealing with and to figure out what is actually going on.

*Apathy is an easy word.*

Apathy is a convenient word for people to use when talking about students. It takes the responsibilty off the organizer, the program or the school and places blame on the students. Students will respond to a good community service program.

*Apathy is a bad word.*

The biggest problem with using the term "apathetic" is that it is a very dis-empowering word. If people are told they are apathetic, they will act that way and thus a self-fulfilling prophecy is born. Stereotypes are very damaging and have

a multiplier effect; they are very difficult to change.

Idealism is a condition of youth, the nature of youth. If idealism among young people is not apparent these days, it is because we are not drawing it out, encouraging it, and supporting it. Too often we are failing to capture the imagination of young people and connect it with community service.

This is not a problem of a lack of values or idealism. A better description of what we are faced with is "structural apathy," a situation in which the weakness of the leadership, structure, and challenge in a program leans on student apathy as a scapegoat.

## HOW DO WE PERCEIVE AND PRESENT SERVICE?

In order to effectively recruit students to volunteer, we have to look at what type of image and presence service has at a school. Think about how schools and colleges present the challenge of service to students today.

*Question: What are students' attitudes about service?*

*Students respond: Community service is ...*

- boring.
- something you do when you can't do anything else.
- something you do when you feel guilty.
- what you do when you get in trouble.
- something for good students.
- something that is always in the back of your mind.
- nice but I have other interests.

### *Community Service is exciting and challenging*

There is nothing boring about community service. There is nothing boring about feeding hungry people, comforting those who are sick, or teaching a young (or old) person to read his or her first book.

### *Community Service is for everyone*

We often present service as if only certain people should do it and when a few get involved that means there is an adequate service program on a campus. Sometimes this is due both to intentional and unintentional design. Some schools will not allow students to participate unless they are honor students. Others offer service for everyone but then create placement opportunities only for those who are interested in more academic type of activities.

Too often we say "Oh, those people would never help out." People often do not even bother asking the athletes, or the computer whizzes, or the artists. People have stereotypes about them and often think that they would never want to get involved. They need to be asked and asked in such a way that they feel welcome and needed.

### *Community Service offers special opportunities for everyone*

There are those who say service is only for those who cannot do anything else. This is not true. You can, however, make a great meal out of leftovers. So, too, can you build a great community service program out of those who have tried for a team, a play or an organization and not made it. One recruiting tactic is to go to all the organizations at a school or a college that makes cuts and get the cut list. Contact the people who have heard the disappointing news. Console them and offer them an opportunity to do something with the interests, talents and time that they have. Ask a cut soccer player to coach, a cast-off director to direct a community play, a rejected actor to give acting classes or to act in a children's theater production, or an abandoned journalist to help start a junior high newspaper.

## DEALING WITH THE EXCUSES

People are frequently programmed so that when you ask them to do something, they automatically respond with reasons why they cannot. This often is a defense mechanism, a way to protect oneself from all the people asking one to do this or give that. While some of the excuses are valid and should be respected, more often people use them without much thought.

Students always have excuses. Many feel they are too busy. While students do have busy schedules, few students have their weekly calendars completely filled.

It is important to hear students out and respond positively yet firmly. We often times give too much validity to an excuse.

*Excuse #1: I have no talents.*

Students seriously wonder what it is they can do to help address community issues. If they respond, "I can't do anything," ask them: "What do you put on a job or college application? Certainly, you don't insist that you have no talents."

The listening ear will quickly find out what the student has done or does well. You will find that people can play the guitar or the piano, or were soccer players or camp counselors, know origami or enjoy being around older people. All these talents can be effectively used in the community and will give students outlets to express their skills and talents. They will feel fulfilled and affirmed.

*Response by the recruiter;*

The job of the recruiter is to draw out the skills of a young person, show how he or she can be useful in a service context and then work with that person on developing a placement where the skill and the need can be matched.

*Excuse #2: I have no time.*

Students' favorite excuse is that they do not have any time. All they have to do is produce a long reading list or a tuition bill they must finance by working long hours to show you how much responsibility they have.

People are afraid that if they get involved in any kind of community work, it is going to take up all their time. Perhaps they get this notion from some of the super-volunteers who are always involved in community service and have little time for anything else. Just because these people may have chosen to completely commit to volunteerism doesn't mean that everyone who volunteers has to be that way.

*Response by the recruiter:*

When students tell you they have no time, ask them to tell you what their week was like. Inevitably there are gaps in a person's schedule. People often think they are busier than they really are. By encouraging them to go through their schedule, you can usually get them to see that they have some free time during the week.

Show students that one or two hours a week can be a meaningful contribution to an agency or a particular person. It is also important to show students that they can get involved in service and still be able to do their homework, have friends, and feel a part of activities that are going on at school. Service programs must provide opportunities for all kinds of students and all types of time commitment. While most everyone can serve, not everyone has the same amount of time.

*Excuse #3: I am busy in the afternoons.*

Often people think that the only time they can serve is in the afternoon after classes are out. That leaves students with the hours between 2:00 and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Students say that they cannot get involved because they are busy at those times.

*Response by the recruiter:*

What is wrong with mornings, evenings, or how about the weekend? Many students, particularly upperclass high school and college students, do not have classes on a particular morning during the week and some do not have any classes on a given day. Yet many do not see these occasions as times when students can volunteer. Part of the blame belongs to the programs that do not offer placements at all times throughout the week. There is a need for people to provide services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Create opportunities for students to get involved at any time. Do not let them get away with the excuse that they cannot help because it does not fit into their schedule.

If we want young people to serve, we must create space for them to get involved. While some students have free time, many are programmed every minute of the day. Therefore it is important to create opportunities where they can volunteer without having to stop doing their homework, taking the courses they want, or being involved in other school activities. This can be accomplished by having service tied in to course work; creating summer opportunities; getting the clubs, organizations or teams of which they are already a part (student govern-

ment, chess club, baseball team, *etc.*) to do some kind of service program.

Athletes are particularly prone to this excuse or problem. Athletics is greatly valued at both the high school and college level. Because athletes are very visible people and have a high leadership potential, it is all the more important to try to get them to volunteer. Their participation validates service, makes it "cool" to do, and encourages other students to get involved. Athletes should not have to make the choice between athletics and service.

THE CHALLENGE OF SERVICE

There are those who would lead students to believe that service is something that is boring or something done because it is required. Some go so far as to suggest that it is not enjoyable. This is a grave misconception. There is a joy that comes with service. More often than not this joy is fun-filled. For example, some may consider it fun having a dozen kids hanging all over them, looking up to them, and looking forward to their return.

But service work is not always fun. Oftentimes students find themselves in desperate situations where there is violence, abuse, and little hope. It is important to note that there is a certain joy that comes even when serving in these situations. It is the joy that goes with helping out just a little, doing what one can and being there. In these cases one's service is not going to solve the situation but may bring temporary relief, support, encouragement, and hope.

Some people are afraid that students will volunteer for the wrong reasons. Actually we spend too much time worrying whether someone is doing something for the right reasons. Who are we to judge? People get interested for all kinds of reasons, some more altruistic than others. Young people initially get involved for any number of reasons including the desire

- to learn about a particular issue,
- to do something worthwhile,
- to ecape boredom,
- to make someone happy,
- to get a break from classes,
- to get their pictures in the paper,
- to make a difference,
- to put something on their college application resumes,
- to develop job skills.

They want to get involved

- because of their religious faith,
- because of their family backgrounds,
- because they want to serve their country,
- to be a part of things,
- to meet people,
- to feel they are valuable,
- to be a part of a community.

What attracts people to volunteer initially is not always the reason they stay with it. Thus if someone signs up to volunteer in a soup kitchen because it will look good on an application, the chances are that person will enjoy him/herself, get to meet some of the people, and begin to get interested and actively involved in the issue of homelessness.

Believe in the value of what we do and have faith that people who first got involved for a possibly questionable motive will remain involved for more valid reasons. Those who do it just for their résumé will not last long.

In presenting the challenge of service, people are often too afraid of taking the high ground. They think it will be a turnoff for students to hear that service is something important or that there is value in service both to themselves and to others. It is O.K. to underscore the fact that there are many benefits to and rewards for doing service, including job experience, or résumé building.

But there is a more powerful message in all this—that young people can make a difference, that they are a vital part of our society, and that their skills are needed now not only to address human needs but to provide an example and leadership for the rest of society. That is the most powerful message we can present and share, and it is one that everyone can understand regardless of race, religion, or culture.

Some people feel badly if there is self-interest involved when one is in a serving

capacity. Certainly there is self-interest in service. Joy, fun, doing something worthwhile, feeling important, giving of yourself, finishing a task, meeting good people, feeling a part of something other than your school work, learning a skill, learning about different individuals (and finding out they are not all that different), learning about an issue and what can be done about it, making friends—all these are in one's best self-interest. Do not worry so much about self-interest. If there were no self-interest, nothing personally at stake, then not many people would stay involved.

*Complementary needs: creating a win-win situation*

There is very much a sense of complementary needs when you are talking about students and the local community. Students have a need to go beyond the isolation and alienation they often feel while they are in school. The community has needs involving time, creativity, and human energy. These are resources and skills that young people have to offer. The match can be solid for both.

*Meeting students' needs*

When you're recruiting, you have to know your audience, you have to know what students want. It is not enough to know that community service is a good thing and it is something that we all should do.

People have a limited amount of time and have many ways to spend it (not necessarily good ones). If we want to get students excited and commit themselves to service, then we have to meet some of their needs in turn.

An organizer of a community service program has a responsibility to make certain that the community is well served by volunteer efforts. An organizer also has the responsibility to meet the needs of the volunteer. When both needs are met, you will have a strong and healthy program.

Any community service program worth its salt should be able to fill both needs. Too often we find our community service programs are based on internships whereby students go off one by one to different community agencies. In most cases the students never get together. They may never know who else is involved. They may not share, get a chance to work together, or meet the needs listed above. So what will happen? They will continue to do their internships but then they may get involved in something other than service to fulfill their needs as young people. A successful, comprehensive service program which establishes and maintains a community of students could fulfill those needs.

Even though community service usually means that students must go off campus, it can be thought of as a school or campus activity. It should be seen as something done by a member of a student body, not as something done outside school experience. Make it so rewarding that if students are not involved, they are missing out on something in their school experience.

## MECHANICS/STRUCTURE AND HOW IT AFFECTS RECRUITING

Throughout education we place a high value on excellence. We demand it on the football field. We demand it in the English department. But when it comes to community service and student volunteer programs, we have an attitude of "come what may," "some years it's up, other years it's down," and "we can't push it, it has to come from the students."

We can and must demand excellence in our community service programs. Community service does not just happen. Imagine the level of play of a football team if it did not have any coaches, any recruiting, or an athletic department to back it up. Imagine if the players had to fundraise so that they could arrange their own transportation. We need to present and push such analogies.

Community service often suffers from the "Something is better than the nothing" complex. Schools with a population of 1,500 students will have 30 students volunteering and think they have all the program they need. What about the other 1,470 students? What kind of opportunities and challenge are they being given?

*The 75% Solution*

There is a need to set a standard, a standard whereby everyone is challenged to get involved. An ambitious yet realistic challenge is to have over half the student body involved on a regular basis and another quarter involved occasionally throughout the term—thus the 75% solution.

It is not enough to set up shop in an office somewhere on campus, put a sign on the door, run a couple of ads, put up a couple of posters, fill up a file cabinet, and sit and wait for the people to come. If you are interested in recruiting you need to think not only about posters and ads but how your program is organized. There is a need to run a complete, comprehensive program that is appealing, attractive, that taps into students interests, that aggressively seeks students much the same way a development office will go after alumni. Again and again and again, first with a letter, then with a phone call, then a visit and then a function to attend.

*Poor organization impedes recruiting efforts*

Community service suffers from an inferiority complex. How many times have you heard the phrase, "I am *just* a volunteer"? Volunteer organizations often suffer from this same sense of inferiority.

Often the problem in recruiting lies in how the program is organized. Some of the problems that arise because of poor management and organization include:

- students who sign up but are never contacted,
- information that never gets out,
- students' names are lost,
- the long time lag betwen when a student expresses interest and when a student gets placed,
- not being organized at the beginning of school, thus launching a recruitment campaign several weeks after school has started; by that time, students have already signed up for other activities when the pitch to get involved in service is made.

Community service programs should be well run. Every student should be contacted and every student who signs up should certainly be called and placed. Too often people get excited about doing community work but then, because the group is poorly organized and no calls come, they lose interest or figure they were not needed and go off to do something else.

At one school in Hartford, CT, 200 students signed up at registration to get involved in the new community service program. The organizers were all very hopeful. At the first meeting 125 people showed up, at the second 50, and by the third only 30. Only 25 students ended up volunteering that term. The leaders of the organization were discouraged and convinced that the students at their school really did not care about community service.

That was not the case at all. In reality the students were interested but often did not hear about the subsequent meetings or did not care for the meetings they attended. They were poorly run and placements were not made quickly enough to maintain the initial level of interest and excitement.

The fact is that the organizers did not know how to run a meeting. Not only that, but they relied too much on the meeting itself. If people do not show up for a meeting, it does not necessarily mean that they are not interested. They may need only a personal visit or a phone call. Reasons students did not show up were because of conficts, they didn't hear about it, or they got tired of coming to meetings where nothing happened.

*The need for a daily challenge*

Too often the challenge of service is issued only once or twice a year. This is usually done in the form of an announcement, ads in the newspaper, the calling of an organizational meeting, or a fair where community people come and talk to students about getting involved. All these efforts are effective and necessary.

Recruiting, however, does not stop at the end of recruitment week or the end of an event such as a volunteer fair. There is a need to present a constant challenge to students to get involved.

- Every week in the school paper list new volunteer opportunities for students,

highlight specific volunteers and service programs.

- Get clubs, dorms and other organizations to take on specific projects and have the coordinator from each group make recruitment pitches weekly.
- Develop a newsletter that can be posted in homerooms or in dorms listing volunteer opportunities.
- Get classroom or dorm reps to make a weekly pitch or specific request at regular meetings of the class or dorm.
- Ask teachers and professors to recruit students from their classes.
- Have community leaders participate in classroom discussions and school forums.

One college linked each dorm with a neighborhood in the surrounding city. Because most of the students lived in the dorms, it followed that every student was involved in one way or another. Students would not only see volunteer advertisements in the school paper, but they would hear stories at dinner about the kids with whom members of the dorm were working. By bringing community service so close to home it became visible, available, and personal. When a specific request came up, people could make a special appeal to their dorm at breakfast, lunch or dinner and usually there was someone or a group of people willing to help.

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP AND RECRUITING

Recruiting places a constant demand on every service organization. Many assume that if they had only a few more posters, a couple more ads in the right places, they would capture the imagination of students and more would come and serve. While such efforts can help, they are not the answer to effective recruiting.

What may look like a recruiting issue is better described as a leadership issue. People are your best recruiters; in this area the students excel. They are walking, talking billboards.

We often fail to get students actively involved in the recruiting process. It is not enough to get students to post signs or make presentations in class. Involving students in recruiting helps give them ownership in the program and an opportunity to provide leadership both to the program and to other students.

For many it is enough to do their service work and to let it go at that. We need to tap their potential as recruiters.

The most effective way to recruit is to have students who are involved in a program recruit other students to get involved in that same program. Effective community service programs have student project heads who are in charge of running a specific program. For example, one or two students will head up a literacy project. Their responsibilities include initiating and maintaining contacts with the community, organizing orientation and training sessions, and keeping track of volunteer placements. Another responsibility is to recruit other students.

Student recruiters know what's good and what's not. They can break down the excuses and empathize with the fears. Because so much of recruiting is just "being there," students can be in more places than one full-time staff person.

It is important for people to be walking billboards. The message, the smile, and the joy that a person can convey is the most powerful recruiting device. Recruit with a grin. People will want to know the reason for the smile.

Creating strong leadership positions for students not only gets them involved in recruiting but allows them to be identified as community service leaders by their peers. When other students have a question or want to get involved, they do not have to wait until the next community service fair or for some serendipitous event to occur. They can approach the student directly.

As a junior in college, Maria Garcia decided she wanted to start a tutoring program. She needed the tutors. She set a goal for herself that each day over the course of a month she would recruit at least one person in order to reach the goal of 40. She would sit with different groups of people at meals, make a conscious effort to go to different kinds of events so that she would meet new people whom she could tell about her

program. At the end of the month she had her 40 and more.

All this is to suggest that when we think of recruiting, we should not just think of a few gimmicks. The gimmicks are essential, but it is important that behind your recruiting efforts you have a solid program. In the end, that will be your most effective recruiting tool. To put it in equation form:

"solid program = good experience for those involved = returning students = returning students with friends."

## CONCLUSION

### A *closing precaution*: *All revved up and no place to go*

Do not make your recruiting better than your program. Some organizers, in their excitement, realize that there is a great deal of student interest, dash off with a handful of new recruiting ideas and begin a massive recruiting blitz. Beware.

Get your house in order before you recruit, otherwise you may well get an onslaught of volunteers and not be ready to place them. Do your homework and take the proper steps. Establish your leadership, make your contact with the community, know how to get your student volunteers placed. For help on this refer to *Building a Movement* and *On Your Mark, Go, Get Set*, both published by COOL (Campus Outreach Opportunity League).

### A *Reminder*

There is a need to establish a strong presence on campus that validates service, makes it attractive and easy for students to get involved, and insures that there is quality associated with the service opportunities provided. Students often live with a herd mentality. For many there is a great fear of stepping out of line, being different and missing out. Therefore many people just go along with the crowd. Understand this about students and use it. Get the herd involved in service. In order to accomplish this, you must present a clear, united, and powerful message to all students, every day in a creative and effective way.

Apathy is not something you chip away at. With apathy come negative stereotypes, the indifferent chic that some students think is cool. Challenge those stereotypes and create more positive and empowering ones.

### *Four points to remember*

If you do not remember anything else from this article, remember these four things:

1) Students are not apathetic.

2) Community service is not boring, but instead it is exciting, joyous and for everyone.

3) You have colleagues across the country. Call on each other for ideas, support and joint programming. You are the best resource for each other.

And finally:

4) be outrageous, it is contagious . . . it is the key to recruiting . . . especially when working with students.

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*Editor's Note*: This article is part of a work in process and is published with the permission of the author. For more information about his new publication, contact Wayne W. Meisel, Director, Campus Outreach Opportunity League (COOL), 386 McNeal Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108.

ABSTRACT

*Symbiotic partnerships between corporate and nonprofit organizations can strengthen volunteer programs. However, since little systematic research has been conducted, better information is needed regarding the advantages, limitations, problems, types of relationships, and benefits of such partnerships.*

*Selected volunteer programs in three large corporations and four nonprofit organizations in Washington State were studied to learn more about how these two types of organizations might work together for their mutual benefit. The results show great potential for collaborative efforts, several potential pitfalls, and a need for more in-depth research and innovative partnering programs.*

# Building Symbiotic Partnerships Between Corporate and Nonprofit Volunteer Programs

**Rinee Snyder and Ronald M. Jimmerson**

## NATURE OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Many corporate volunteer programs exist on a very different operational level than do volunteer programs in nonprofit agencies. Whereas nonprofit agency programs are normally structured as "demand" operations, bringing resources in, corporate volunteer programs are usually the suppliers of personnel and funding to volunteer programs outside the corporation. While some corporations initiate and maintain community-directed projects on their own, these are the exception rather than the rule. As Ronald Speed, Director of Corporate and Community Responsibility at Honeywell, Inc., stated:

> *Rather than building the company's own capability, we believe we should help build the community's capability and then use it. In the majority of cases, our managers acknowledge the logic of taking advantage of community services. It is better, for example, to have a transportation system that works than to resort to van-pooling; better to have community child care than in-plant child care centers; better to have good-for-the-handicapped training programs at community centers than to create them from scratch* (Speed, 1984, *p.* 49).

There are several reasons why corporations are involved with volunteer programs including: (1) to enact and maintain a commitment to public interest in areas that benefit both the community and the corporation; (2) to help promote the company's business activities; (3) as part of public relations programs; (4) to maintain effective representation in principal community organizations; (5) to inspire team building, better personnel relationships, and higher productivity within the company; (6) to improve the company image, attracting top people to the company; (7) to allow employees to build new skills, establish new relationships, and feel more responsible for their paid positions; (8) to reward employees for a job well done by allowing them release time from their regular duties; and (9) to involve company retirees as follow-up, encouragement, appreciation, and recognition of their years with the company.

The voluntary sector consists of a vast and diversified collection of organiza-

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tions. Nonprofit organizations (the voluntary sector) are set apart from the two other major types of organizations in American society, government (the public sector) and business (the private sector), by the fact that they are privately controlled, do not pay dividends, have trustees who are volunteers, and turn profits back into their programs. If the primary goal of such an agency is not based on profit, then, in a broad sense, a nonprofit agency may be viewed as a collective vehicle in which people voluntarily pursue goals together that are not primarily remunerative and that provide services to society. Using this as a definition, a nonprofit organization may be seen as simply a collective form of voluntary action (Salamon and Abramson, 1982). Nonprofit agencies use charitable resources to impact a diversity of social, political, economic, and cultural objectives.

## PROBLEM

The major source of funds for many nonprofit agencies is the government (Urban Institute, 1983). The nonprofit sector has seen increased needs but because of budget cuts has experienced reduced revenue from governmental sources in recent years. Although increased private giving has offset budget reductions to a large extent, funding for nonprofits remains a concern.

As nonprofit agencies continue their need for funding and as more corporations become aware of their community responsibility, profit and nonprofit organizations are recognizing mutual benefits through program partnerships (Grahman, 1983). Unfortunately, program development in both types of organizations is rarely designed to facilitate cooperative relationships. Volunteer program guidelines have rarely been concerned with partnering and generally relate to developing new programs and maintaining existing efforts. However, as corporate volunteer programs become recognized as possible sources of alleviation from governmental and other financial restrictions, and as nonprofit agencies become recognized as potential vehicles for corporate-community good will, more information about volunteer programs is being requested from both the public and private sectors.

It is apparent that there is a need in today's society to create volunteer programs that can easily be aligned into partnerships that combine the structure and outward-reaching communication systems of many nonprofit agencies with the internally-supported and financially-assisted volunteer programs of corporations. However, there is a lack of accurate data regarding the advantages, limitations, and appropriate relationships associated with partnering.

## PURPOSE

Because of the paucity of studies which examine the potential relationships between corporate and nonprofit volunteer programs, this study was conducted to identify factors important to successful partnering. These factors can provide a basis for further study and/or act as guideposts for those contemplating developing partnering relationships between nonprofit and corporate volunteer programs.

## PROCEDURES

Because the purpose was to identify factors and questions, rather than to test theory or provide statistics which could be generalized to a larger population, the study relied on qualitative and naturalistic methodologies (Guba and Lincoln, 1985). Volunteer programs with diverse programs and goals were selected for study. Three large corporations in Washington State were examined: Rainier Bank; Chevron, USA, Inc.; and Honeywell Inc. In total, these corporations employ about 7,600 people. About 20% of these, or 1,520, are active volunteers. Four nonprofit volunteer programs were studied: the Washington State University 4-H program, the Washington State University Art Museum, Whitman County (Washington) Crisis Clinic, and the United Way.

Supervisors of volunteer programs in each of these organizations were selected based on their interest and commitment to the project. They were first contacted by phone or in person to ensure their understanding of the goals, clarify their time commitment, and reassure them of

confidentiality. A questionnaire with 32 open-ended questions was mailed to each supervisor followed by a telephone interview after supervisors had a chance to think about the questionnaire items. This procedure allowed for interaction and clarification of perceptions.

While these procedures do not ensure representative responses generalizable to a larger population of volunteer supervisors, they do provide us with contrasting views which raise important questions—the goal of this study. The use of a quesionnaire and follow-up interviews do give us confidence that respondents' views were accurately recorded. The questions raised by analyzing and comparing their responses should be useful starting points for others interested in this topic.

Questionnaire development was based on volunteerism literature and included questions grouped in five categories: (1) volunteer recruitment and selection; (2) volunteer needs and expectations; (3) volunteer activities; (4) financial considerations; and (5) program administration. The questionnaire was developed and refined through a series of reviews by a research committee.

Data collected from study respondents and analysis of research/writings related to collaborative corporate/nonprofit volunteer programs were combined to identify important factors and questions.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Findings and conclusions are presented in five sections related to those used in developing the questionnaire.

### *Volunteer Recruitment and Selection*

In the corporate and nonprofit organizations we studied, recruitment and selection were not distinctly separated. There was a tendency by organizations to accept anyone who volunteered to take a job. While this is a problem common to many volunteer organizations, it is perhaps more critical when attempting to establish partnering relationships because poor volunteer placement can threaten the partnership.

The nonprofit organizations studied relied primarily on paid advertisements and solicitation of potential volunteers by active staff. One nonprofit organization, an art museum, relied on a second party external to the organization for its recruiting. This "Friends" group's recruiting methods included contacting the local chamber of commerce and sending fliers to past members.

On the other hand, corporations did little to inform employees about opportunities to volunteer in nonprofit agencies other then irregular dissemination of information about available volunteer positions which was supplied by the nonprofits. For certain volunteer positions such as volunteer board member or chair positions, employees were selected individually by the volunteer program supervisor or other company supervisors. These were usually executive level employees who were chosen through informal channels.

Supervisors of corporate volunteer programs felt that their employees were motivated to volunteer by three major factors: (1) advancement of their careers, (2) skill building, and (3) corporate sponsorship for nonprofit activities. The last factor implies that employees are more apt to volunteer when the corporation sponsors nonprofit activities.

Our data related to recruitment and selection suggest the following:

1. Since nonprofits themselves are the primary source of data about volunteer positions available, they need to be sure corporate employees get specific up-to-date information.
2. Nonprofit and corporate representatives need to better understand each others' needs related to volunteer programs.
3. Nonprofit volunteer programs need to target corporate employees when advertising positions.
4. Positions need to be developed with the limitations and potentials of corporate volunteers in mind (*i.e.*, work hours, available time commitments, skills and interests).
5. Successful volunteer programs require careful placement of volunteers so selection processes must be developed through cooperative efforts of corporate and nonprofit organizations.
6. Consideration should be given to the utilization of a central recruiting office

which could act as a broker to provide job descriptions, identify volunteer qualifications, and facilitate partnership development.

7. Nonprofit volunteer organizations would be well served by spending time and energy to obtain corporate sponsorship of activities.

*Volunteer Needs*

Once volunteers are recruited and selected, their needs must be met in order to provide a satisfactory experience and retain them as volunteers. Although volunteer turnover rates were not specifically collected in this study, all supervisors interviewed considered them to be high. Corporate supervisors believed turnovers were primarily due to volunteer dissatisfaction with job duties or the nonprofit agency programs in general. They felt this was caused by lack of adequate supervision or support from the nonprofit agency and lack of fulfillment of volunteer expectations. Corporate volunteer supervisors suggested the following: (1) more supervision from the nonprofit agency staff; (2) better nonprofit volunteer program structure; and (3) evening work hours for volunteers to avoid conflict with the volunteer employees' regular work hours.

Supervisors in nonprofit agencies tended to think turnovers were caused by relocation, lack of time to participate, change of job, *etc.*—causes generally outside their control.

Another factor related to meeting volunteer needs was the use of written job descriptions. Written job descriptions were provided by nonprofit organizations for some positions. On occasion, corporations had job descriptions available to potential employee volunteers but not on a regular basis.

Information related to volunteer needs as supplied by the supervisors studied suggest the following:

1. There is a need to conduct further study to determine whether the disagreement about volunteer turnovers between corporate and nonprofit supervisors holds true in broader studies and to determine why these two groups of supervisors hold differing views.

2. Job descriptions for volunteer positions should be available. They are essential for recruitment, selection, communication with and retention of volunteers.

*Volunteer Activities*

In examining partnering potential of corporate and nonprofit agencies, it is important to examine the types of activities each is involved with and the level of involvement. As expected, the nonprofit agencies studied were very different in the types of volunteer activities offered. Nonprofit volunteer activities ranged from cleaning and clerical work to fundraising, consulting, and teaching. The corporations studied involved volunteers in a narrower range of activities. This selectiveness seemed to be related to the desire by corporations to support only those programs with broad appeal and which promoted the corporation's image.

In comparing the corporate and nonprofit agencies in our study, two factors became apparent:

1. There is a need to match corporate and nonprofit agencies based on goals and activities. For example, oil and petroleum industries might be more willing to support transportation for the handicapped while print/journalism and book industries might sponsor literacy programs.

2. Nonprofit volunteer agencies need to be selective in whom they seek to partner with, as well as the volunteer activities for which they seek help.

*Financial Considerations*

The nature of the organizational funding varied with the agency and proved to be complex in certain nonprofit organizations. The number of volunteers directly affected funding in some nonprofit agencies. This was especially important in those organizations where the funding was not primarily a governmental function. In one nonprofit agency, the number of volunteers (or hours volunteered) paralleled the amount of money the agency could write into its budget and request from support sources; in other words, the greater the number of volunteer hours, the larger the funding. Nonprofit agencies using the corporate volun-

teer extensively felt they had greater access to the corporate dollar.

During periods of business decline, corporate employee participation was more severely affected than the financial assistance that could be offered to nonprofit agencies. This was attributed to increased staff workloads derived from personnel cutbacks. Financial support of volunteer programs seemed to remain fairly constant even through business fluctuation because it was considered to be a source of corporate-community good will as well as good advertisement to the local community.

Two major factors seem important in light of these data:

1. Nonprofit volunteer organizations need to be wary of relying totally on corporate employee volunteers, since this source could decrease during financial downturns for the corporation.

2. Since financial support from corporations appears to be fairly stable even during business downturns, nonprofits would be well advised to utilize corporate volunteers to help them tap into corporate financial support.

*Program Administration*

Both corporate and nonprofit organizations studied had basic philosophies which included service objectives. Obviously this was the primary objective for the nonprofit volunteer organizations while it was one of many objectives for corporations. These nonprofit organizations relied heavily on volunteers. The volunteer supervisors of the four nonprofit organizations studied estimated that between 50 percent and 95 percent of their services were available because of volunteer support. Corporations, on the other hand, placed less emphasis on providing volunteers than on financial donations. Carrying out their commitment to community service and the emphasis on it can differ widely between these two types of organizations. This difference in emphasis creates perhaps the greatest obstacle to partnership programs.

Allen (1980) has noted, and the supervisors surveyed agreed, that a key to corporate commitment to volunteer programs rests with the chief executive officer (CEO). Allen believes that a primary source of motivation for corporate employees to volunteer is a positive attitude by their superiors or supervisors and the overall corporation itself. In larger corporations, the CEO is not normally the person directly responsible for volunteer activities, but often has a large influence on employee perception of volunteerism in nonprofit organizations because of his/her position and authority.

In the corporations surveyed, the community/public service activities were structured into long chains of command. The CEOs at the top of these chains were rarely found to be active in direct participation in volunteer activities. They instead acted as sponsors in the support and encouragement of volunteerism by corporate employees. Therefore, a primary motivation for corporate employees to volunteer was the approval of and recognition by their superiors in the sponsoring corporate workplace.

Our data related to administrative structures and the influence of top administrators suggest the following:

1. While there are differences in goals, emphases, and administrative structures, there appears to be enough common ground to establish corporate/nonprofit volunteer partnerships.

2. Differences in philosophies and goals of potential partners need to be clearly delineated before attempting to establish a partnering relationship.

3. More research needs to be done to better understand corporate views of volunteer program administrative structures, their impact on volunteer programs, and the role of CEOs and other corporate administrators in promoting and overseeing volunteer programs.

## SUMMARY

Our study of a relatively small number of corporate and nonprofit volunteer programs was designed to identify the factors important to successful partnering. While it provides few answers generalizable to other programs, it raises a number of questions and factors to consider in establishing partnerships. While many questions remain about how to initiate, carry out, and monitor such programs effectively, there do not seem to be any insurmountable barriers. It appears that

time spent by volunteer administrators in developing partnering programs could be highly productive.

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# Empowering a Profession: Leverage Points and Process

**Ivan H. Scheier, Ph.D.**

BACKGROUND

This is the third in a series of articles on empowering the profession of volunteer administration, understood broadly to include any volunteer or paid career significantly involving leadership of volunteers. By "empowerment" we mean enhanced status and respect for the careerists and the volunteers they serve. We also mean more generous resource allocation in support of the volunteer programs and groups served by these volunteer administrators.

The first article in the series looked at labels for what people generally classed as volunteer administrators actually do. We found frequent justification for broader, more inclusive, and hence more impressive titles such as "community resource development," "community relations coordinator," "human resource development," and "community-based support systems." We also found that a significant number of people who used to call themselves "volunteer administrators" or a similar title, were beginning to change their names to the broader (and we believe more powerful) names. The article (Scheier, 1988a) concluded that while "... it is all too easy for an uneducated (on volunteers) executive to downplay a person labelled as 'only' responsible for volunteers" that same executive might "... think twice, or even thrice before trivializing the work of a person who, as part of a seamless package, was bringing in not only volunteers, but also materials, equipment, money, information and community support."

The second article (Scheier, 1988b) moved from a narrow-broad polarity in professional self-concept to a subsidiary-autonomous one:

> *... insofar as volunteer administration continues to see itself as derivative, passive and dependent, others naturally tend to see us in the same way. Beginning to define ourselves as powerful, active and autonomous is the first step in becoming so.*

Suggested tactics here included: 1) concentrate more on settings, such as the entirely volunteer group and the freelance volunteer, in which volunteers are more independent and self-directed. 2) Concentrate more on what is special in volunteerism, hence where we are experts and teachers and thus more powerful. Examples of such specialness might be "intangible rewards are at least as important as money," and "building work around people is both feasible and effective." Finally, 3) take statements of the type, "how does X (*e.g.*, the economy) affect volunteerism?" and turn them around to statements of the type "how does volunteerism impact X (*e.g.*, the economy)?"

Impact is the theme of this third article in the series. The question is: how can our relatively limited resources be leveraged to produce maximum empowerment of the profession? This in turn breaks down into two major issues:

First, how much should responsibility for change depend on one person? Is the individual volunteer administrator to be our major "change agent," or should we be targeting a more widespread responsibility in the volunteer program-sponsoring organization?

Secondly, what is the best balance between sheer articulation of ideal standards for volunteer programs and more attention to how we *motivate* organizations and individuals to comply with these standards?

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## BALANCING INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Somewhere in the consensus philosophy of volunteerism, I sense a strong faith in the power of the individual: the belief that significant change in systems will occur as a result of bootstrap efforts by individuals, working largely alone. Probably this philosophy has shaped our primary approach to empowering the profession. The individual identified as the instigator of change is the Volunteer Administrator / Director / Coordinator.

In this key person, we seek the highest possible dedication and competence. Our continuing efforts to support him or her include a simple willingness to cheer, a readiness to counsel in times of frustration and stress, and an eagerness to instill a sense of being special—not everyone can do your job. The latter connects with programs to upgrade skills experientially and through more formal learning, then validate the achievement via certification programs or in other ways.

This mix of education and validation can be assessed on three levels: 1) the satisfaction and affirmation it affords the practitioner who participates; 2) increased ability to do his/her job; and 3) enhanced status and respect given the volunteer program and the volunteer administrator by the host organization—essentially, empowerment of the profession as we have defined it here.

On the first two levels, I believe current education-validation approaches are justifable, in part by current results and in part by their promise for the future. I am not nearly as sanguine about justification at the third level. To begin with, the approach seems to imply as typical a relatively unskilled volunteer administrator "holding back" an organization which is "rarin' to go." If we can just bring the volunteer administrator up to the organization's level of knowledgeable readiness, all will be well.

The far more typical situation is precisely opposite: a skilled, dedicated volunteer administrator frustrated by a relatively indifferent agency that is significantly innocent of real understanding of what it takes to effectively support a volunteer program. Here, it is the *organization* whose "competence" needs to be upgraded and validated *vis-à-vis* volunteers; system change must lead individual change, rather than *vice versa*.

Of course, there is always some hope of impacting organizations via the validated excellence of individual volunteer coordinators. But doing so on a widespread basis involves a kind of catch-22. Organizations which are least supportive of the profession are least likely to invest substantially in the time and money necessary for upgrading and validating the skills of a volunteer administrator. If the volunteer administrator "does it on his/her own" anyhow, this organization is less likely to appreciate and recognize the achievement, or heed suggestions based on the volunteer administrator's newly acquired expertise. Essentially, "the rich get richer while the poor stay poor."

### *Emphasizing Organizational Responsibility*

Recently, I sense movement towards wider organizational accountability for empowerment of volunteer administrators and programs. This certainly includes the volunteer administrator who is, or should be, part of the organizational team. But others will not be assigned specific supportive responsibilities. These other players will need to do some definite things; will be required to bring specific competencies into play. Almost always, the support team will include the Executive Director and the Board of Directors. Also frequently involved might be middle management, line staff, volunteers themselves, and perhaps even funding sources.

Thus far, Executive Directors or other top management are most prominent among the other players being held more responsible for the specific support of volunteer programs (and through them, volunteer administrators). The title of an important new book pretty much tells the story: *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success* (Ellis, 1986). Even more recently, volunteer program guidelines published by the National Association on Volunteers in Criminal Justice (NAVCJ, 1988) clearly distinguish between (p. 11)

*. . . policy guidelines (which) are the responsibility of the agency or institutional administrator to implement directly or to delegate with careful accountability (and) . . . operational guidelines (which) are the responsibility of the volunteer coordinator or person in a similar role, to implement with the full support of the agency or institutional administrator.*

Local volunteer centers are also starting to provide leadership in the effort to upgrade organizational support for volunteer programs. Thus, Akron, Ohio's volunteer center has just issued a "Volunteer Program Certification Manual" (Schumann, 1988). Note first of all that it is the *program* or *organization* which must earn certification, rather than the individual volunteer administrator. The monkey is placed on that broader back in statements such as these: "The administration of the organization shall approve the plan for the volunteer program and shall provide support for its continuing development" (Schumann, 1988). There are, of course, connections to the role of the individual volunteer administrator in statements which require that the organization ". . . have a position designated and filled to coordinate and be responsible for the volunteer program." The manual then describes this role in impressive terms, at least implying that the organization will treat this person with respect, pay a decent salary, invest heavily in his/her professional development, *etc.*—everything we've always yearned for. It is only the route to the dream that differs. Where before, the volunteer administrator was almost singlehandedly responsible for upgrading organizational support, here the organization is answerable for upgrading the role of the volunteer administrator.

## "MOTIVATING" FOR COMPLIANCE

The increasing assignment of program empowerment duties to host agencies doesn't mean that volunteer administrators as individuals can abdicate that challenge. Both together are far more effective than either alone. But neither will be effective unless *motivated* to discharge their responsibilities skillfully and faithfully. The point is, our job is not finished with the sheer *issuance* of guidelines, standards or other goal-targets. The most elegant standards are useless when ignored. An integral part of the standard-setting task is therefore the incorporation of features ensuring that people take these standards seriously, invest in them, and persist in implementing them on a widespread basis. How we might do this is the second main issue addressed by this article.

First, let's consider pathways to professional power which envisage the individual volunteer administrator as the key change agent, with validated competency as the enabling basis for change. The Association for Volunteer Administration's recently formulated five-year goals indicate how this might be accomplished (AVA, 1988): "Employers look to AVA standards in hiring volunteer administrators" and "Certified in Volunteer Administration (CVA) is acknowledged as the desired standard of effective performance for volunteer administration." The implication I draw from this is that if CVA became a general requirement for hiring in our field, volunteer administrators with CVAs would be more valued (empowered) by their employers. (Presumably, volunteer administrators *without* CVAs would no longer *be* in the field, after "grandparent"-type tolerance expired.)

It seems to me such a strategy requires that most careerists will agree to go for a reasonably standard certification or equivalent validated competency. Is this happening? The best estimates I can make—and they are not nearly as good as we need—suggest a figure of about 100,000 volunteer administrators/coordinators/directors/managers/supervisors in the field today. I doubt if more than two or three thousand of these have some widely recognized official validation of competency—a certification, certificate, academic degree or significant set of academic credits in the field of volunteer administration.[1] What we have then is only about 2 or 3% of practitioners today officially validated/certified as volunteer administrators—possibly as few as 1% or as many as 5%; it doesn't really matter. No way can such a small percentage seriously impact the behavior of human service organizations and systems as a whole. At least roughly parallel would be a union

with 2% of a workforce demanding that employers with access to the other 98% hire only their 2% and invest especially heavily in their support.

Is it that practitioners haven't really heard yet about certification and other validated competency programs—or haven't heard enough? Possibly, yet I seem to recall that for at least twenty years, individual certification programs have been marketed to practitioners, often quite skillfully and intensively. This being so, we badly need a thorough representative survey of people who, knowing about validated competency programs, have chosen not to participate. We need to know why; we need to know what their other needs and priorities may be. Studies in progress (*e.g.*, Cole) should provide helpful information on the point.

Meanwhile, we can share impressions; here are some of mine. First of all, some people may be persuaded as we are: their *organization* needs changing for more than they do. Further, as a respected colleague and an advocate of individual certification programs once told me, she had no problem making it hard for incompetent people to pass themselves off as volunteer administrators. Neither do I. But what if we are making it hard for *competent* people to pass themselves off as volunteer administrators? What if, in the name of achievement, we are actually imposing economic sanctions? Only consider: your typical volunteer administrator is a highly motivated learner who yearns for recognition as a professional. That should produce widespread participation in competency acquisition and validation programs—or would, if practitioners could afford the time and money.

We will not find the answer to that particular question by surveying groups already certified as practitioners, especially those who are members of national professional associations—these demonstrably *can* afford such programs. On the other hand, a recent study which tried for a broader sample (Scheier, 1987) concluded that:

> *. . . what we seem to have here is people who, according to numerous other studies, tend to be poorly paid. Moreover, the present study further shows that about three-quarters of them are only part-time on the volunteer program, with almost as much time going to other functions. These people must therefore spread little (professional development) money and less time over several subject areas. . .*

Indeed, though these people do have some hands-on involvement with the volunteer program, their primary professional identification may be elsewhere, *e.g.*, as social worker, teacher, librarian, recreation worker, Executive Director of a small non-profit.

Like it or not, this group forms a large part of our constituency and our market for individual certification programs. We must therefore try to make such programs more accessible to them both time- and money-wise. There are some encouraging signs here. AVA, as I understand it, is seriously exploring ways in which its certification program might be better coordinated with local colleges and universities. Among other things, that would make certification more accessible to practitioners living in range of such colleges and universities.

## INCENTIVES FOR ORGANIZATIONS

On that happy day when everyone has a CVA, it will still matter a great deal whether employees attach much importance to that fact. Therefore, the motivation of organizations is a key consideration in the empowerment of professions—ours or anyone else's. At the very least, we must communicate to the organizations we wish to impact exactly what we would like them to do and who is responsible for doing it (see previous discussion). This means guidelines and standards for organizational support of volunteer programs and volunteer administrators. Largely ineffective here are obtuse descriptions of unreachable utopias. Instead, guidelines must carefully consider and incorporate in their preparation compelling reasons why target organizations should take them seriously. Simply *issuing* guidelines is a minor part of the challenge.

What, then, might motivate employers to invest heavily in the implementation of guidelines and standards for enhanced support of volunteer administrators and their programs? To begin with, the

guidelines and standards themselves must be:

1. credible, valid, and demonstrably based on consensus field experience of volunteer-involving organizations and volunteers themselves.

2. clear, understandable, and without jargon.

3. definite in distinguishing guidelines which are (a) the sole or primary responsibility of volunteer administrators, (b) the sole or primary responsibility of executive directors or others in the organization, and (c) a shared responsiblity of the volunteer administrator and others in the organization.

4. concise, especially when targeted on people who aren't volunteer specialists and presumably have other things to do besides peruse voluminous technical treatises on volunteer administration.

5. general enough to be flexible and flexible enough to be general, and this in several ways:

(a) allows discretion for differences in volunteer program setting without trying to detail every variation thereof. Thus, prison volunter programs require a certain obsession with security checks; most volunteer programs within churches do not.

(b) relatable to policy and advocacy as well as service volunteering.

(c) relatable to the broader functions of which volunteer programs are often a part, *e.g.*, "community resource development" (Scheier, 1988a).

6. do-able. This typically involves a delicate balance between the ideal and the realistic, perfection and attainability. For example, on merit alone, I believe a qualified volunteer administrator is worth at least $50,000 a year. Seriously. But I doubt if I would put that in a guideline for, say, struggling nonprofits (is there any other kind?) or a well-ossified government service bureaucracy. Guidelines which insist on the purely ideal, regardless of conditions in the real world, risk coming across as pure fantasy. At the other extreme, making compliance too easy ("$15,000 a year is okay") is counter-productive and somewhat hypocritical, too.

7. as part of do-able, *learn*-able. We must make it as easy as possible for people to understand and use the guidelines. Thus, the standards and guidelines currently under development by Ann Jacobson and colleagues include a self-study guide for users.[2] I would also hope that workshops on the guidelines can be made available concurrent with their publication.

Our first seven "guidelines for guidelines" have tended to move from more "internal" features (*e.g.*, clear, concise language), to more "external" incentives (*e.g.*, workshops which might or might not be associated with issuance of guidelines). That trend continues in the next several suggestions for motivating organizations to incorporate the standards and guidelines.

8. As noted earlier, a solid experiential basis will enhance guideline credibility (paragraph 1 preceding). Equally important is the widest possible participation in preparation of the standards and in endorsement of the finished product. An earlier set of standards and guidelines for the field of volunteerism (Jacobson, 1978) listed over 60 organizations and individuals as contributors, plus 19 national organizations as endorsers. A more recent guidelines and standards (NAVCJ, 1988) proudly acknowledges the participation of over 200 "co-authors." Next time around, let's add, for each community we can, prominent *local* endorsers such as the volunteer center; The Retired Senior Volunteer Program; the local professional association of volunteer administrators (DOVIA); the City/County volunteer office; United Way; college, church or corporate clearinghouses; the city human services department; the Junior League, and others.

9. The host organization's willingness to implement the standards should be "solemnized" in a written agreement which includes descriptions of benefits for observance of the standards.

10. Organizations relish recognition as much as individuals, and maybe more. Therefore, local professional associations can:

> *Join with the local volunteer center and/or* RSVP *and/or other interested groups to reward those organizations which comply with basic standards in their volunteer programs. These standards, of course, include adequate pay,*

*status and responsibility for the volunteer coordinator. As pioneered by the Volunteer Center of Tarrant County (Fort Worth) Texas, this is a carrot (vs. a stick) approach. Agencies that adequately observe volunteer program standards get a Certificate of Participation. Agencies exhibiting more than adequate performance get a Certificate of Excellence awarded in a public ceremony. There are no directly punitive sanctions but, of course, questions may be asked, and embarrassment ensue, when an agency does not get one of these certificates in a public ceremony, and/or public mention in the Volunteer Center's widely distributed newsletter (National DOVIA Network, 1987).*

Please note: the person who gets this award, or fails to get it, is the Executive Director of the organization, not the volunteer administrator.

11. Referral of volunteers as leverage. Yes, the occasional volunteer program, well-managed in a popular cause, still struggles to find things to do for all the wonderful volunteers who want to help. Most of the rest of us would dearly love to have that problem. Now, there is a pretty consistent pattern in the way volunteer-supplying clearinghouses react to this general shortage. Other things being equal, they favor referring volunteers to organizations they believe treat same decently. Conversely, they tend to withhold referrals from organizations they believe mistreat volunteers. Most everyone does this but hardly anyone talks about it publicly. Wouldn't it be more honest—and *effective* in empowering the profession—if we were explicit and organized, and documented our decisions every step of the way? To achieve this, the Volunteer Center or other clearinghouse could:

(a) Employ its own liaison/consultant/monitor volunteers, each assigned a small set of agencies receiving or wishing to receive volunteers from the clearinghouse. As consultants, these liaisons can positively help their assigned agencies meet the standards, affirm them when they do, and document it when they do not. Quite a few volunteer centers today have liaison volunteers of this type.

(b) Have people to follow up clearinghouse referrals of volunteers to agencies. This can be part of the agency liaison role described in (a) above, or it can be a separate role for other volunteer center people. Basically, this person tries to keep in touch with clearinghouse-referred volunteers to see how they are doing; this can be on a sample basis if follow-up on every volunteer is too large a task. In either case, good news is shared with the agency to which the volunteer was referred. Other kinds of news are also shared, along with efforts to clarify, negotiate and improve the troublesome situation.

(c) Involve the volunteers who have been referred by the clearinghouse as part of the program-monitoring process. Give referred volunteers ten questions or so either to ask their host agencies or to at least keep in mind on an ongoing basis. These questions can be on one side of a wallet-sized card, with instructions for their use on the other side. Sample questions might be:

"Do you have a job description for the work you're asking me to do?"

"What sort of training do you have for your volunteers?"

Agencies should receive copies of these standards-related questions and be advised that volunteers are using them. Indeed, agency input should be sought in original formulation of the questions.

The 10-question process will help referred volunteers give useful feedback to follow-up interviewers described in (b) above. The process also has *impact* on agencies by reminding them regularly of the importance of volunteer program standards.

The liaison, follow-up and ten-question suggestions will strengthen the use of volunteer referral as leverage in empowerment of volunteer programs/administrators. It does this in three ways:

- provides an information base for diagnosing and dealing with problems in the treatment of volunteers or volunteer administrators.
- where improvement fails to occur within a reasonable time, provides solid evidence on which to justify the clearinghouse's withholding volunteers from the agency.
- where treatment is good, justifies sending relatively more volunteers to the

agency, and is also a basis for public recognition of agencies which have effectively implemented volunteer program standards (paragraph 10 above).

Overall, this leverage strategy is a promising one. But it requires the collaboration of all volunteer-supplying sources in a community, *e.g.*, the volunteer center, the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, college, church and corporate clearinghouses.

12. Volunteers are one component of resource allocation; money is another. Executive Directors of agencies are inclined to take the latter very seriously. Here we are talking about *overall* funding of an agency, not just the volunteer program.

The providers of dollars can be United Way, foundations, government sources, religious groups, and/or corporations. Whichever they are, we should begin to approach them with the proposal that they make overall funding for an agency significantly contingent on meaningful, professionally-led involvement of volunteers. The arguments are persuasive. A viable volunteer program stretches available budget, strongly implies that the agency has credibility with the community and, at least potentially, is responsive to its input.

Does all this get us into too much "policing" of volunteer programs? Answer that question with another question: can we ever hope to upgrade volunteer programs until we are prepared to evaluate them? I expect, too, that funding sources are often called upon to attempt evaluation of functions far vaguer than volunteer administration. We have quite well-established guidelines and standards, after all, and ways of monitoring which do not unduly interrupt ongoing program operations (*see, for example, paragraph 11 above*).[3]

Public broadcasting provides one formal precedent for making significant volunteer involvement one condition for receipt of overall agency funding (Dennery, 1979). Informally, grantors occasionally confirm that this consideration (volunteer involvement) is implicit in their decision-making. In such cases, the consideration only needs to become more explicit and information-based.

## SUMMATION AND SPECULATION

Empowerment of our profession depends on acceptance and observance of quality guidelines and standards for volunteer programs. These standards must give specific directions to the host organization regarding appropriate levels of support and respect for the position of volunteer administrator.

We should continue to encourage measuring up to standards at two levels: the individual volunteer administration practitioner and the volunteer-involving organization as a whole. I do, however, believe that the second level, organizational responsibility, holds particular promise for the immediate future. Finally, in fulfilling that promise, we should give more attention to *motivating* organizations for implementation of standards. A dozen suggestions were made in that regard.

Lack of space and experience—not lack of nerve—prevents development of several other leverage possibilities. A few of these are indicated below, simply as "teasers" to deeper consideration.

- The increasing tendency of volunteer administrators to give recognition to *themselves*, for a change, should be applauded and expanded.
- More thought should be given this one:

  *Denver* DOVIA *asked each of its* 150 *members to provide basic data on* 1) *number of volunteers,* 2) *number of clients served by their volunteers, and* 3) *annual dollar value of volunteer services. The results ... were that*: DOVIA (*"represents," "accounts for," "helps make possible"*) 32,000 *volunteers serving over* 915,000 *clients with an estimated annual value of almost* 14 *million dollars* (*National* DOVIA *Network,* 1987).
- In addition to merit, money, charm, and luck, politicians get elected by *volunteers*—the ones who work in their campaigns! Spies who have penetrated the volunteer programs of all major North American political parties report them to be almost entirely innocent of any significant understanding of the principles of volunteer administration. As a profession, we could assertively offer

our expertise, on a volunteer basis of course, and call in some political favors later, perhaps.

- "So Long, Volunteers!" I think one reason Erma Bombeck's powerful essay haunts us so, is that there is an IDEA there, the nucleus of a strategy (Bombeck, 1985). Next National Volunteer Week, why not have volunteers all across North America walk off the job for ten minutes or so; just a short, friendly, symbolic strike. When it takes care not to endanger vital services, that makes a point, too.

FOOTNOTES

[1]I'm unable to find a palpably authoritative basis for either the 100,000 or the 2,000-3,000 estimates and would appreciate being advised of same, if it exists. The last thorough census of professionals that I know of arrived at an estimate of 60,000 practitioners in the volunteer administration field (Gowdey, 1976). I arrived at the 100,000 estimate simply by projecting a healthy growth in the fourteen years since this 1975 survey was taken. More recently, 1983-84 surveys suggest that as of today about 50,000 practitioners in North America belong to local or regional associations of people with a career or other serious interest in leadership of volunteers (National DOVIA Network, 1987). The assumption here is that an approximately equal number of practitioners are either unwilling or unable to join such associations. The estimate of 2,000-3,000 with "widely recognized official validation of competency" came from a quick scan of the number and percentage of people who put "CVA" or some similar designation after their names in a sample of about 7,000 names in directories of local professional associations, on mailing lists, and in correspondence received at the Center for Creative Community over the past 18 months. A "finagle factor" was added to try to adjust for people who had the initials but were not using them.

[2]Personal communication, May, 1988, from Ann Jacobson, Vice-President for Volunteer and Community Resources, Heart of America United Way, Kansas City, Missouri.

[3]Nowhere have I meant to imply that super-elaborate programs are necessary to ensure improved agency support of volunteer programs/administrators.

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# *Volunteerism Citation Index*

## Covering Articles

## Appearing During 1987-88

**David C. Colburn, Citation Editor**

The Volunteerism Citation Index (VCI) is published twice a year by *The Journal* as a service to our readers. It is intended to be a tool for learning what is being written about volunteerism by those in other professions, and as an on-going guide to current trends affecting volunteerism. VCI also assists those who are conducting research, and adds another dimension to the definition and formalization of our field.

VCI includes citations from both popular and scholarly sources generally available in libraries. Articles are selected because they relate directly to volunteerism and volunteers, *as defined by the subject matter*, not the source. Pamphlets, newsletters, dissertations, unpublished papers and most newspaper articles are excluded because they are too "fleeting" in availability and often difficult to track down in their entirety.

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# THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

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## GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS

### I. CONTENT

A. THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of knowledge about volunteer administration. Articles may address practical concerns in the management of volunteer programs, philosophical issues in volunteerism, and significant applicable research.

B. Articles may focus on volunteering in *any* type of setting. In fact, THE JOURNAL encourages articles dealing with areas less-visible than the more traditional health, social services, and education settings. Also, manuscripts may cover both formal volunteering and informal volunteering (self-help, community organization, etc.). Models of volunteer programming may come from the voluntary sector, government-related agencies, or the business world.

C. Please note that this JOURNAL deals with *volunteerism*, not *voluntarism*. This is an important distinction. For clarification, here are some working definitions:

*volunteerism*: anything related to volunteers or volunteer programs, regardless of setting, funding base, etc. (so includes government-related volunteers)

*voluntarism*: refers to anything voluntary in our society, including religion; basically refers to *voluntary agencies* (with volunteer boards and private funding)—and voluntary agencies do *not* always utilize volunteers.

Our readership and focus is concerned with anything regarding *volunteers*. A general article about, for example, changes in Federal funding patterns may be of value to executives of *voluntary agencies*, but not to administrators of *volunteer programs* necessarily. If this distinction is still unclear, feel free to inquire further and we will attempt to categorize your manuscript subject for you.

D. THE JOURNAL is seeking articles with a "timeless" quality. Press releases or articles simply describing a new program are not sufficient. We want to go beyond "show and tell" to deal with substantive questions such as:

—why was the program initiated in the first place? what obstacles had to be overcome?

—what advice would the author give to others attempting a similar program?

—what might the author do differently if given a second chance?

—what might need adaptation if the program were duplicated elsewhere?

Articles must be conscious demonstrations of an issue or a principle.

### II. PROCEDURE

A. The author must send three (3) copies of the manuscript to:

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B. Manuscripts may be submitted at any time during the year, but the following are the deadlines for consideration for publication in each issue:

for the *October* issue: manuscripts are due on the *15th of July*.

for the *January* issue: manuscripts are due on the *15th of October*.

for the *April* issue: manuscripts are due on the *15th of January*.

for the *July* issue: manuscripts are due on the *15th of April*.

C. With the three copies of the manuscript, authors must send the following:

1. a one-paragraph biography, highlighting the author's background in volunteerism;
2. a cover letter authorizing THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION to publish the submitted article, if found acceptable;
3. mailing address(es) and telephone number(s) for each author credited.

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