

ON YOUR WAY

A WORKBOOK FOR VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

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14 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108

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To Our Readers —

In the process of working with volunteers and interns over the past three decades, we have found that there is little help for people who want to take charge of their own placements for their own purposes.

Volunteering and interning have always been valuable experiences. Today, with our understanding of the role experiential learning plays in adult lives, these opportunities have increased significance.

We have written this workbook as a self-help guide. Use it to assess your needs and skills to find volunteer or internship placements which are right for you and to make the best use of your placement.

You can use it alone or you can organize a group to go through the book together. You're on the path to creating a satisfying and useful experience for yourself. We wish you well.

Sandra Kahn
Debra Sherman

FORWARD

This little gem of a book is premised on some of the newer ideas about learning — especially adult learning — and applies them to the volunteer/intern approach to personal development.

One such idea is the concept of competency-based education. The nineteenth-century model of education on which our whole educational enterprise has been based defined the purpose of education as being to inculcate knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values. The ideal product of education was perceived to be “the educated man” — a phrase that gained popularity before the women’s liberation movement. The faith was that if we just poured enough knowledge into people they would be better people and would make use of their knowledge.

This faith first started being put into question with the issuance of the Flexner Report on medical education in 1910 which found that medical schools were turning out doctors who were “knowledgeable nincompoops” (my paraphrasing). They scored high on knowledge-recall tests but performed poorly when applying

this knowledge to patients. His main recommendation was to build into the basic medical education program an internship and/or residency in which the doctor would gain some practical experience under supervision in applying knowledge to patients before being allowed to practice on his or her own. This was an early form of competency-based education, although it wasn’t labeled as such until much later. But it did start a stream of thought that perhaps the purpose of education should be to produce *competent* people — people who knew how to apply their knowledge.

This stream of thought got some attention from educational philosophers such as John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead, and others in the twenties and thirties, but it wasn’t until after World War II that it began affecting educational practice. The knowledge explosion and technological revolution that characterized the post-War era alerted educational practitioners to the accelerating rate of obsolescence of knowledge and skill and stimulated them to start experimenting with educational programs geared to developing competence. Compe-

tency models began being constructed as the basis for organizing instruction and assessing performance outcomes, first in vocational programs, then in professional schools, then for management training, and lately in general education programs. We now know that the way to develop competent people is to have them acquire needed knowledges and skills in the context of their application, not in isolation from use.

The volunteer/internship program described in this book is competency based. It starts with an identification of the competencies required for performing the various volunteer jobs and then provides guidelines as to how the volunteers can use their internship experiences in developing needed competencies.

A second foundational idea in a twenty-first century model of education that is emerging is that the essence of education is *learning*, not teaching. We now know that people learn most effectively and retain more of what they learn longer when they engage in an active process of inquiry, when the learners take the initiative

in making use of the resources of content experts, supervisors, material resources, and peers to achieve their self-defined goals. Self-directed learning is the purple phrase in the lexicon of the new education. And you will notice that in following the procedures described in this book you will be put into the role of being a self-directed learner. You will be helped to take responsibility in assessing your own learning needs, identifying the resources available to you in meeting these needs, planning how you will use your internship as a learning resource, and evaluating your learning outcomes.

A third key concept in the new model is experiential learning. It was John Dewey who first proposed that we learn best from the analysis of direct experience — "learning by doing." Recent research on cognitive styles supports the fact that when we learn on our own, in real life, we follow the sequence of (1) having a concrete experience, (2) reflecting on that concrete experience to identify the specific knowledges and skills we need to acquire to improve

our performance, (3) gaining those knowledges and skills in the form of principles and abstractions, and (4) experimenting with the application of those principles and abstractions to real situations. This is precisely the sequence you are guided through in this book.

A fourth concept in the new model is wholistic learning — the notion that it is the whole person that changes with learning, not just a part of a person. For example, when I first started to learn to use a personal computer, I thought of myself as learning some new psychomotor skills. But gradually I realized that I was thinking differently (to be specific, that I was thinking more precisely), that I was feeling differently about computers (I was less anxious about them), and that I was placing a higher value on the information revolution.

I think that the same thing applies to learning to be a volunteer. The new competencies you gain through this experience will enrich much of the rest of your life. Have a joyful experience.



Malcolm S. Knowles
Professor Emeritus
North Carolina State University



WHY AM I READING THIS BOOK?

Why am I reading this book?

- I am burned out; do I want to make a career change?
 - I enjoy helping people; where can I do it?
 - I'm in a dead-end job; how do I make a change?
 - I've been a housewife for many years; how do I re-enter the working world?
 - I've just graduated from college with a degree in English literature; what can I do with my degree?
 - I have skills I'm not using; where can I put them to work?
 - I have twin sons who are six months old, but I don't want to stop outside work completely; how can I balance it all?
 - I will be let go from my present job next month because of a cutback; what can I do with my skills?
 - I'm on vacation from school for the next three months; how can I fill my time with something interesting?
 - I'm tired of the corporate rat race; how can I get out?
 - I want the corporate rat race; how can I get in?
 - I'm in the midst of a divorce; how can I earn a living?
 - I'm retiring in two years; what will I do with my time then?
 - I've been ill and out of the job market; how can I get used to working again?
-

Reasons for Volunteering

You may have several reasons for considering volunteer work or an internship. Look at this list and check the reasons that add up to motivation for you.

CONVENIENCE

- Volunteering allows people to do meaningful work at times that fit into busy schedules comfortably. When you volunteer — and often when you intern — you can set hours to fit your needs as well as the institution's.

SATISFACTION

- Volunteering and interning are ways of doing a job that needs to be done, but for which there are not sufficient funds available.
- It's a way of helping others who need services.
- It's a way of feeling like a useful part of a group.
- It's a way of supporting something you believe in.
- It's a way of feeling good about yourself because you're giving of yourself.

LEARNING

- Volunteering and interning give you an opportunity to learn experientially — not just from a book — but by really doing.
 - You can learn to assess your own skills.
 - You can learn a new skill.
 - You can polish a skill you already have.
 - You can transfer skills you've used in one area into another.
 - You can get valuable work experience.
 - You can get oriented to a new work environment.
 - You can develop goals based on your skills and interests.
-

THE FIRST STEP

It's overwhelming; what should I do?

Ask yourself five questions . . .

- **Who Am I?**
- **What Do I Want To Do?**
- **What's Out There?**
- **How Do I Take Action?**
- **What Exactly Will I Do?**

Who Am I?

As a person who has worked . . .

As a person who has skills . . .

As a person who has roadblocks . . .

WHO AM I?

First identify your experience as a worker

As a paid worker I did _____

As a volunteer I did _____

As a homemaker I have _____

As a hobby I enjoy _____

If you go to volunteer and the Director of Volunteers asks you what your work experience, paid or unpaid, has been, write your answer here after looking back on what you just wrote.

My work experience _____



Now identify your skills

Here are two kinds of skills you may have used in your work:

ADAPTIVE SKILLS

These are skills that describe the kind of person you are. Check whether you use these skills often, sometimes or rarely.

- 1. Self discipline** — can I set a goal and follow through?
 Often Sometimes Rarely
 - 2. Reallability** — can people count on me?
 Often Sometimes Rarely
 - 3. Sociability** — can I work happily with other people?
 Often Sometimes Rarely
 - 4. Leadership** — can I influence other people?
 Often Sometimes Rarely
 - 5. Creativity** — can I think of new ways to do things?
 Often Sometimes Rarely
-

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

These are skills that describe the kinds of things you can do. Check whether you use these skills easily, adequately or with difficulty.

- 6. Manual** — can I work with my hands?
 Easily Adequately With Difficulty
- 7. Research** — can I look up useful information?
 Easily Adequately With Difficulty
- 8. Clerical** — can I do paperwork?
 Easily Adequately With Difficulty
- 9. Artistic** — can I draw, sing and/or dance, etc.?
 Easily Adequately With Difficulty
- 10. Written** — can I organize ideas on paper?
 Easily Adequately With Difficulty
- 11. Interpersonal** — can I teach, help or listen to people?
 Easily Adequately With Difficulty
- 12. Mathematical** — can I work with numbers?
 Easily Adequately With Difficulty
- 13. Mechanical** — can I work with machines?
 Easily Adequately With Difficulty
-

THE SECOND STEP

WHAT DO I WANT TO DO?

Areas of interest . . .

Putting it all together . . .

AREAS OF INTEREST

Here is a list of several general areas of interest with volunteer or internship possibilities which you could explore to find the kinds of places you could go to. Put a check before any item that interests you.

- Hospitals
- Children
- Animals
- Recreation
- Arts and Crafts
- Business
- Churches
- People with handicaps
- Elderly people
- Museums
- Politics
- Prisons
- Counseling

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Write a statement which puts together the areas you have checked. For example, you might write something like:

I enjoy working with children in hospitals doing arts and crafts.

or

I'd like to be involved with the business part of working with elderly people.

Write your statement in this box.

Places

| _____

Now, look at the statements you have written in the previous boxes and rewrite them in the spaces provided on the following page.



MY WORK EXPERIENCE _____

THE KINDS OF THINGS I CAN DO _____

PLACES I WOULD LIKE TO DO THEM IN

THE KIND OF PERSON I AM _____



What are my Roadblocks?

Roadblocks make it hard to make decisions and to take action. Some roadblocks are erected by others and some we put there ourselves. Here are some roadblocks that exist because of your outside world:

- Responsibilities for others
- Lack of encouragement from others
- Financial problems
- Difficulty with transportation
- Being new to the neighborhood
- Others

Here are some roadblocks that you may have created for yourself:

- Poor time management
 - Indecision
 - Lack of confidence
 - Unsure what you owe yourself
 - Guilt
 - Too many unimportant commitments
 - Others
-

Write here a roadblock imposed on you by others.

Write here a roadblock you have created for yourself.

List five ways you can move around it to get on your way.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

List five ways you can take charge of yourself and remove this roadblock so that you can take action.

- _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
-

THE THIRD STEP

WHAT'S OUT THERE?

Doing research ...
Networking ...
Keeping Track ...

Now that you have looked at yourself, your skills and your interests, it's time to find out where the opportunities are. This means doing research that will tell you exactly where your path will lead.

DOING RESEARCH

1. Check the Yellow Pages of your phone book under *Volunteer Workers Placement Serves*. You may find agencies listed such as this one in the Boston phone book:

► Volunteer Workers Placement Service

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| Career And Volunteer Advisory Service | |
| 14 Beacon Bos | 227-1762 |
| Civic Center & Clearing House Inc | |
| 14 Beacon Bos | 227-1762 |
| Family Serv Assn Of Greater Boston | |
| 34 1/2 Beacon Bos | 523-6400 |
| Project Volunteer Power 417 Main Mai | 321-5933 |

2. Check your local Chamber of Commerce, large charities such as the United Way, your town or city hall, your public school system, and your local newspaper and ask for information and referrals for volunteering.

3. Read your local newspapers. Some, like the *Boston Globe*, have an "Opportunities for Volunteers" column. You will also find articles about agencies seeking volunteers.

4. Go to your local library. Often the reference librarian has information about placements for volunteers.

5. Many larger institutions such as hospitals and museums have Directors of Volunteers. Call one of these places if you're interested in the kind of work they do and ask for the Director of Volunteers. You'll find listings of museums and hospitals in the Yellow Pages.

There are also listings under *Vocational Guidance*.

NETWORKING

Another way to research volunteer and internship possibilities is by networking. Networking is talking to people and using them as sources of information and referral to other people. Most professional people learn to network early in their careers. It's a skill you can develop, too. Talk to people you know. Tell them that you're interested in volunteering/interning and the kind of work you'd like to do. Ask them if they know of any places you could work or anyone in that particular field. Then call either the place or the person. Don't feel hesitant about talking to someone you don't know. People like to talk about what they do and most will be happy to meet with you for what is known as an "informational interview".

At the interview, some of the questions you might ask are:

What are some different jobs in this field?

Do I need additional skills to do what I want even if the work is volunteer and not paid?

Are there people from whom I could learn these skills if I could arrange an internship with them?

Are there services I could provide in return for training?

Could you refer me to anyone else in this field? (Then you can call for an appointment saying, "John Smith of Services for the Elderly suggested that I call you.")

This is the beginning of a network. Successful networkers sometimes see 20 or 30 people on their way to finding the right placement.

KEEPING TRACK

Keep a notebook for recording your research. Write about each person you've spoken to describing the interaction and the information and referrals you've received. If you use a looseleaf binder, you can put in all the brochures and literature you've collected right after the page describing the contact.

Sample Page

June 3

Talked to Sam Smith, editor of the Oakville Chronicle. I called the newspaper (327-7100) — explained that I wanted information on volunteering outdoors. The operator connected me with Mr. Smith who told me to call John Richards of the Oakville Park and Recreation Department.

June 4

Called John Richards (327-8400 ext. 261) made appointment, June 6, 1:30 Town Hall, room 306.

June 6

Met with John Richards. He described his program. I can volunteer in the Maple Street Program with the pre-school group. Told him I'd rather work with young adults. He referred me to Carol Sanders at the Green Mountain Club. Called her 224-9123, made appointment for June 8, 368 Center St. Newton - first floor, 10:00.

June 8

Carol Sanders saw me with a youth counsellor, Joe Krevisky. There's an opportunity for me to work with a group of adolescents on clearing a trail near Oakville. Since I won't have the car, they'll get me a ride. Will start next Wed. June 13 at 9:00. There's also a volunteer program leading trail tours, but I don't know enough about local trees. Carol says maybe I can arrange an internship with Bill White at the Nature Museum to learn about this while I help him with the teen group during this winter.

THE FOURTH STEP

HOW DO I TAKE ACTION?**The Resume****The Interview****Getting Ready**
Arriving
Interviewing
Following up



THE RESUME

THE RESUME

A resume is a useful way of presenting yourself and your skills to a volunteer director or internship supervisor.

- At the top of your resume, put your name, address, and phone number.
- Next, write "Volunteer/Intern Placement Objective". This is where you explain in general what you would like to do. It is a combination of "The Kinds of Things I Can Do" and "Places I would Like to Do Them In" which you wrote on page 18.

There are four other categories of information about yourself that you should also include in your resume:

- **Education** — list high school, college, and any other relevant training or courses you have had.
- **Experience** — list all the work you have done, paid or unpaid. If you had a number of jobs with titles, list the titles, for example, "Secretary, Newcomers Club". If you have not had many specific jobs, list the activities you have done, for example, "cared for elderly person during one summer" or "prepared meals for family of seven for ten years" or "drove carpool of children, ages 7 to 11 for 3 years."

- **Skills** — list all your adaptive and functional skills which you identified as being significant on pages 10 and 12.
- **References** — list three people, names, addresses, and phone numbers who have known you in situations in which you had experience and demonstrated skills.

LINDA COX / 37 Oak Lane Smithtown, Mass. 02338

Volunteer/Internship Objective: I seek a placement where I can work with animals.

This is an example of a resume which could be effective in securing a volunteer placement for Linda Cox. You can use it as a model when you write your own resume on the form that follows:

Education:

- Smithtown YMCA, "Woodworking for Fun and Profit", 1981
- Girl Scouts of America, "Leadership Training", 1980
- Education, "Creative Writing", 1976
- Western Shore Community College Continuing Education, "Creative Writing", 1976
- Smithtown Adult Education Center, "Building and Maintaining Your Aquarium", 1975
- Smithtown YMCA - 3 month course, "Handling Your Pet", 1973
- Secretarial Studies, 1966
- Smithtown High School, 1964

Experience:

- 1979 — Assistant, Church Office, St. Mary's Church
- 1978 — Brownie and Girls Scout Leader
- 1977 — Wrote column, "Know Your Dog" for Smithtown Gazette
- 1975 — Built and maintained salt water aquarium
- 1974 — Showed dogs at several county and state fairs; won 2 blue ribbons, 1 red ribbon
- 1973 — Owned and trained 3 West Highland White Terriers
- 1970 — Parent of 2 daughters
- 1968-69 — Secretary receptionist to Hoyt Bramwell, D.V.M., Smithtown Animal Hospital

Skills:

- training, handling and showing dogs
- organizing and conducting children's groups
- writing
- wood-working
- caring for fish
- greeting the public

References:

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hoyt Bramwell, D.V.M. | Rev. Joseph McCarthy | Mrs. Ann Dunlap |
| Maple Avenue | St. Mary's Church | Regional Director, Girl Scouts |
| Smithtown, Mass. 02337 | Main Street | 27 Chestnut Avenue |
| 479-2030 | Smithtown, Mass. 02337 | Glen Falls, Mass. 02300 |
| | 479-6862 | |

Use this form to develop your own resume.

Resume _____

Volunteer/Internship Placement Objective _____

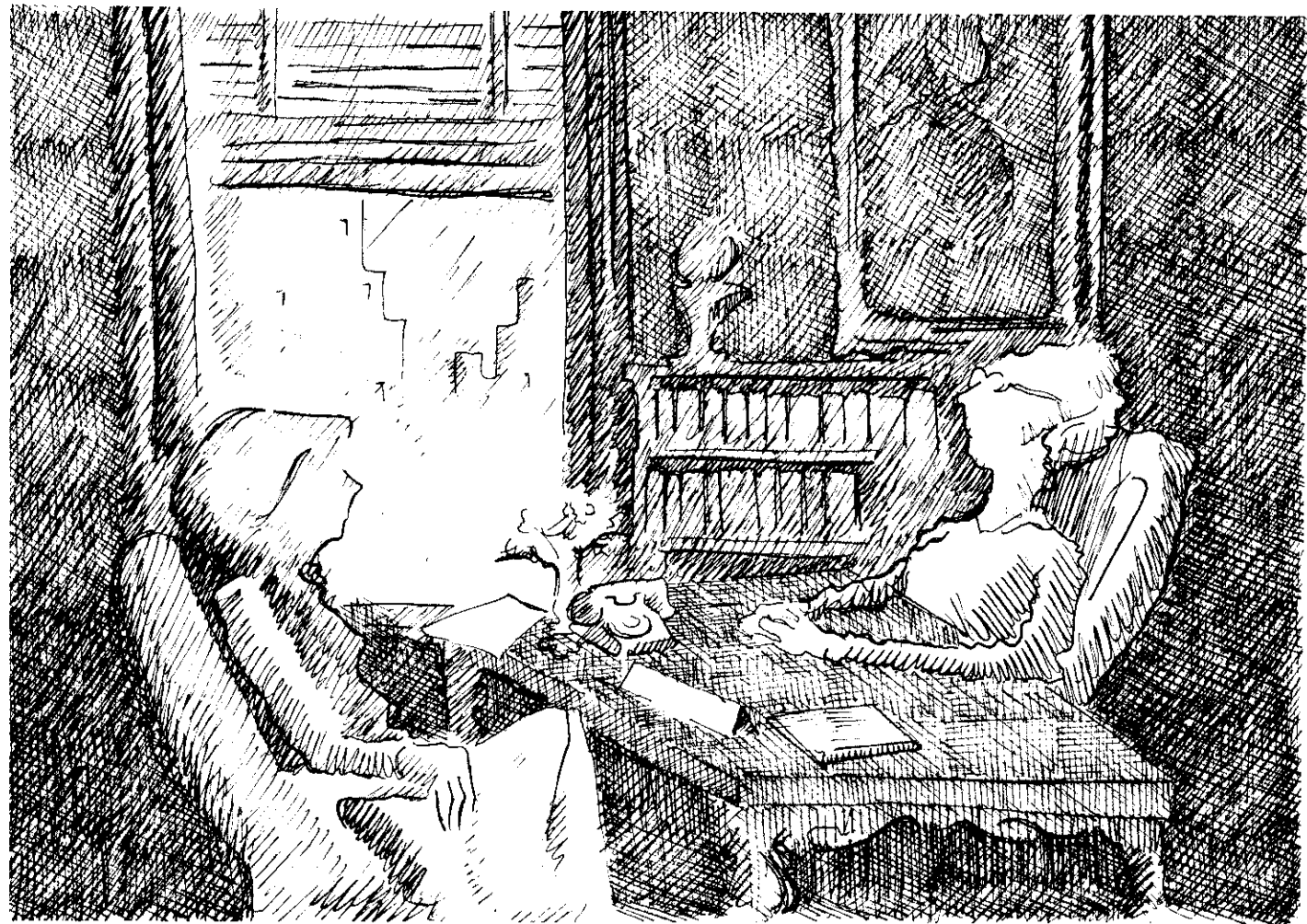
Education _____

Experience _____

Skills _____

References _____

With your completed resume you have taken the first step on the path toward your goal. You're ready now to set appointments for interviews.



THE INTERVIEW

THE INTERVIEW

Getting Ready — Appointments for interviews can be made by phone. Linda Cox, for example, would call the Director of Volunteers at The New England Aquarium, The Mass. Audubon Society and The Museum of Science. She would call the Mass. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and ask who was in charge of volunteer programs.

1. Prepare your interview materials. Your resume should be typed clearly with no mistakes. (If you don't type and you don't know anyone who can do it for you, you might want to call Town Hall and ask if anyone who works there does typing for a fee). If your work is the sort that you can show, you may want to take a few samples, such as design work or writing samples. Linda Cox would bring copies of her column, dog show certificates, a completed Girl Scout project, and a photograph of her aquarium. This is called your portfolio.

2. Learn all you can about the place you are going to beforehand. Get their brochures and any other literature they have. Talk to people who know what the organization does.
2. Review the skills and interests you have written in this workbook so they will be fresh in your mind. Practice so that you can say what your strongest interests and abilities are.
3. When you go for your interview, **DRESS FOR SUCCESS**. Your general appearance tells a lot about you and says that you are serious and businesslike.

Arriving — Get to your appointment on time. It's better to come by yourself. Introduce yourself and be ready to make some small talk before you get into the heart of the interview. This puts you and your interviewer at ease. For example, you may want to comment on the picture or plants in the office or the setting of the building. Don't launch into a long discussion about how hard it was to get there or to park. Be positive and upbeat.

Interviewing — There are two parts to the interview: The interviewer wants to find out about you and you want to find out about the volunteer opportunities.

1. The interviewer wants to find out about you.
 - a. Listen carefully to the interviewer's questions. This is sometimes hard to do if you're nervous, but try to focus on the key words you'll be responding to.
 - b. Make sure you answer the question that was asked. Remember that your interviewer doesn't know anything about you and your task is to explain yourself and the kind of volunteer work you want. This means that you may have to provide some background information about yourself and give specific examples in order to answer the question fully.

For instance, The Director of Volunteers at the Aquarium might ask Linda Cox why she's interested in working there. Linda might start with a general statement about her interest in animals and about fish in particular. Then she'd describe her work at the animal hospital, her dog training and showing, and she'd end up by showing the picture of her aquarium and describe how she built and maintained it.

2. You want to find out about the volunteer opportunities.
 - a. If you would find it helpful to take notes, ask your interviewer if she minds. Most interviewers don't object.
 - b. You might want to ask the following questions:
 - What kinds of volunteer opportunities do you have?
-

-
- What are the working hours? What is the minimum time commitment you want?
 - What kind of training do you provide?
 - What new skills could I learn?
 - What skills do these opportunities require?
 - Who will my supervisor be?
 - What kind of supervision will I have?
 - What do the other volunteers do?
 - What kind of working atmosphere is there — relaxed, business-like, high pressure, etc.?
 - Do you include volunteers in meetings, courses, or planning sessions?
 - Are there special activities for volunteers?
 - Is free parking available?
 - Are transportation costs reimbursed?
 - Are there other benefits this organization provides for its volunteers?
 - Can the skills I learn as a volunteer be used in a paid job in the future?
 - Are there opportunities for me to advance or change to other volunteer activities in the same organization?
 - Will you provide a reference for me?
-

Following Up — After every interview, *no matter how it turned out*, write a brief note thanking the interviewer for his or her time and interest. Keep a copy of this letter with your interview notes which should include dates and names and other important information. Linda Cox wrote this thank you letter to the New England Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.:

July 10, 1982

Joyce Gomez
Director of Volunteers
NESPCA
10 Main Street
Smithtown, Mass.

Dear Ms. Gomez:

I enjoyed our conversation yesterday and appreciate the time you gave me. Your work is most valuable but, as we agreed, does not offer the kind of experience I'm looking for at this time.

Thank you for your interest. I look forward to reading about your new program in the schools.

Very truly yours,

Linda Cox

Linda Cox

THE FIFTH STEP

What exactly will I do?

DEFINING THE JOB

DEFINING THE JOB

You may want to have several interviews so that you can make a well-informed decision about your volunteer placement — or you may find your dream opportunity at your first interview. In any event, when you have found the right spot, it's time to define the job you'll do.

Job descriptions are a way of making clear what you will do and who will help you do it; this is a good way to begin a job for both you and the agency. It makes supervision and evaluation easier, and you are more comfortable because you understand the expectations.

A job description starts with a clear, concrete statement about the work you are to do. It is followed by a rationale — an explanation of why the work is important to the agency. The specific tasks are then spelled out as is the time commitment.

For example, after Linda Cox submitted her resume and interviewed at the Mass. Aquarium, she knew it was the place for her. The job description she and her supervisor worked out started like this:

Job Description: Curator volunteer will assist the curator of aquatic mammals in the care and maintenance of the seals and sea lions and in related administrative procedures.

Rationale: The seals and sea lions are a permanent exhibit at the Mass. Aquarium and draw the most attention from visitors. Help is needed in administration, in maintaining the exhibit and in direct care to the animals in order to keep the exhibit open full time.

Specific Tasks:

1. Keep the habitat clean and free of debris.
2. Feed the seals and sea lions at public showing.
3. Assist in writing monthly reports on seal and sea lion exhibit to the Aquarium Director.
4. Assist in writing releases on the seal and sea lion exhibit for the Aquarium Newsletter.

Time Requirement:

1. One full day a week, preferably Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
2. One Saturday morning training session.
3. Optional attendance at Tuesday morning staff meeting.

Agency Commitment

A volunteer job description should also include what the agency will provide for the volunteer. Linda Cox's supervisor agreed to the following:

1. One Saturday morning orientation and training session.
 2. On the job training as required.
 3. Opportunity to participate in staff meetings.
 4. On-the-job supervision and periodic evaluations with letter of recommendation when needed.
 5. Designated desk or work space.
 6. Locker.
 7. Waterproof protective clothing.
 8. One day a week free lunch in the cafeteria.
 9. Free parking sticker.
 10. Invitations to Aquarium special events.
-

The following page is a blank job description from for you to use when you find the placement you want.

Name of Agency _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Name and Title of Supervisor _____

JOB DESCRIPTION

SPECIFIC TASKS

AGENCY COMMITMENT

RATIONALE

TIME COMMITMENT

YOU'VE ARRIVED

**HOW TO BE
A RESPONSIBLE
VOLUNTEER/INTERN**

THE FIRST DAY

**GETTING TO KNOW
THE ORGANIZATION**

**MAKING THE MOST
OF SUPERVISION**

**MAKING EVALUATION
WORK FOR YOU**

THE FIRST DAY

Prepare for the first day. We all have butterflies on the first day of a new experience, but there are things we can do to feel more confident. Don't expect too much too soon. Even with all your preparations your supervisor may not be too sure of what you can do. If there is not enough work for you to do, it may be that she wants to see you in action. Be prepared for a gradual integration into the process of the agency.

GET TO KNOW THE OPERATION

1. Try to find an organizational chart so that you will know where your department fits in the overall structure. Organizational charts are sometimes found in the Annual Report which are a good idea for you to read anyway.
2. From the Annual Report you'll also get an idea of the scope of the entire

organization's activities. This will give you a sense of the importance of your work and an idea of additional opportunities for you within the agency.

3. Most supervisors introduce the new volunteers to everyone; if your supervisor doesn't, it's perfectly acceptable to introduce yourself, saying, "I'm Linda Cox, Mary Smith's new volunteer curator." Try to remember their names and jobs when they introduce themselves to you. It's hard to remember it all at first, so bring a notebook and keep a daily log for a while.

Here's the first page of Linda Cox's log:

Daily Log Mass. Aquarium
 Date: 7/20/82
 First Day!
 Met the following: *Mary Smith*, Volunteer Administrator — awfully busy — juggling a lot of things at once — supposed to

supervise me but kept getting interrupted. *Timothy Smythe-Pratt*, Director of Aquarium, silverhaired, paternal.

Sandra Lawford, chic suburban volunteer in public relations — is in on Tuesdays and Thursdays — 3 kids in college.

Andrew Foley, Curator of Seals and Sea Lions, PhD from Berkeley, tanned, soft-spoken — took almost an hour to explain his department to me.

John Ramos, college intern from University of Miami — quiet and shy, earning college credit — marine biology major.

Have a little desk outside of Foley's office which I share with Ellen Greenblatt, another volunteer I haven't met yet.

Spent most of this first day following Andrew Foley around. He was very quiet so I had to keep asking him questions and taking notes. Borrowed the Annual Report from the library — Foley reports directly to Mr. Smythe-Pratt who in turn reports to the Trustees.

Next week I'll begin learning habitat maintenance with Vivian Lowry, a staff worker.

MAKING THE MOST OF SUPERVISION

Your supervisor wants you to be successful. However, supervisors have heavy work loads of their own. They can't be there all the time to help and support you; therefore, you must:

1. Think of ways to help and support them.
2. Look for tasks that need to be done; take the initiative but be careful not to take over.
3. Be positive and enthusiastic; *this counts for a lot.*

MAKING EVALUATION WORK FOR YOU

People often ask their supervisors, "How am I doing?" What they may mean is, ". . . tell me how good my work is." All of us want praise and that's a legitimate need. However, hearing an honest appraisal is useful, too. Just as many volunteer organizations don't provide formal job descriptions, so many don't evaluate volunteers regularly. You will want a written evaluation because it will help you do your job better and will also provide a basis for a future reference.

For example, a young man did extensive research and wrote a report as a volunteer in a national environmental agency. A few years later, when he wanted to use this experience to get a job, his supervisor was gone and there was no written record of his work, and the report itself had disappeared. The young man's report had been circulated under the supervisor's name and there was no way for the young man to get credit for any part of that volunteer experience. *Don't let this happen to you!*

If there is no regular evaluation, ask your supervisor to use this form based on your job description. A review every three months is a good evaluative schedule. Keep a copy of the completed evaluation for your own files.

EVALUATION

Name _____

Period Covering _____ to _____

JOB DESCRIPTION**SPECIFIC TASKS**

1.

2.

3.

4.

Motivation

Attitude

Reliability

Overall Work Performance

COMMENT

Get a written reference from your supervisor. Usually a reference is requested when you, the volunteer, need it or are leaving your placement. However, sometimes the supervisor leaves first; in this case, you should be sure to get a reference before she goes. A good way to write a reference is to base it on the evaluation forms. Urge your supervisor to be as specific as possible.

JUST IN CASE . . .

NEGOTIATING A CHANGE

There are reasons for changing your placement:

1. You'd like to change the scope of your work within the department.
2. You'd like to move to another department within the agency.
3. You want to leave altogether.

Wanting to change may be a measure of a successful placement; you mastered the skills and you're ready to take new challenges. You may want a new volunteer job or a paid job. Several paid volunteer administrators started as volunteers in their own organizations. Many interns go on to paid jobs at the same worksite. If you're doing well and you're there when an opening occurs, you may be the logical person to ask.

Unfortunately, it doesn't always work so successfully. Sometimes there are personality conflicts, and sometimes, despite all your preparation, you are disappointed and dissatisfied with the work you're being given to do.

If this happens, you've got to look at the overall picture and analyze what's wrong and who's responsible. Writing it all down may help clarify the situation. For example, Linda Cox is having difficulty at the Aquarium. She might define the problem as:

"I'm not doing enough work from my job description and I'm doing too much typing."

Next, try to be objective and see if you had a part in creating the problem. Linda Cox might write:

"When the secretary left, I said I'd be able to do a lot of typing, and Andrew gave me all his correspondence to get out. When I finished that, Sandra had a lot of press releases to be typed and just handed them to me. Then John wanted me to type his research report. I didn't say anything but I missed my training session and a staff meeting, and didn't even get to see the seals. I guess I don't know how to say no and when I get angry I feel guilty and don't tell anyone what's bothering me . . ."

Now list the ways in which other people have contributed to the problem. Linda Cox might write:

1. "Andrew Foley — just took me up on my offer and didn't consider my needs at all.
 2. Then Sandra and John knew a good thing when they saw it and took advantage of me. Mary Smith is supposed to supervise me, but she's been doing a big program for some visitors and I haven't seen her for over two weeks."
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By now you can see the problem and all its elements more clearly. It's time to consider ways to solve it. Linda might conclude:

1. Make an appointment with Mary Smith to clarify who supervises me. Am I directly supervised by her as volunteer administrator, or by Andrew Foley as curator.
2. Negotiate with Andrew Foley around my job description.
3. Learn to say 'no' to Sandra and John without being unpleasant.
4. Sometimes I'm afraid to confront problems because I don't think it's 'ladylike'. I'll have to learn to deal with this better before things get out of hand."

If you run into problems, you might want to use this Problem Analysis Form.

PROBLEM ANALYSIS FORM

1. Define the problem. Be as specific as possible.
2. My part in the problem.
3. Other people's part in the problem.
4. Solutions.

Your problems, just like Linda's, may require negotiating skills. What is negotiation? Negotiation is the use of proper information to solve a problem within the reality of a situation. In order to negotiate, you have to have the necessary information and to articulate it. You must believe that you have the right to change things for yourself and others. This means understanding your position as well as that of other people, and feeling you're entitled to influence your situation.

POSTSCRIPT

This is not the end of the path. Your volunteer or internship placement has opened new roads for you to take that you might not have thought of when you started. We hope that this workbook has provided you with ways to understand your work needs and goals and to take action in your own behalf.

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