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The World of Volunteer Administrators:  
Two Case Studies of Role Functions  
and Organizational Environment

Harold W. Stubblefield  
Leroy Miles

College of Education  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University  
Blacksburg, Virginia

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Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University,  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

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## Part I Introduction

The two basic approaches to deriving competency models are the consensus approach and on-the-job observation. A competency model derived from the consensus approach describes what a person occupying a particular role in an organization should be able to do. In the consensus approach, someone prepares a list of competencies derived from the literature and experience, submits the list to practitioners and experts for validation, and repeats the process until the researcher is satisfied that consensus has been reached. Such an approach was taken by the Association for Volunteer Administration (1984) which has given leadership to identifying competencies needed by administrators of volunteer programs. A set of competencies have been identified and are currently used as the basis of the AVA certification program. Several other studies have validated the AVA competencies. The AVA competency model is a valuable tool for validation of competencies, promotion of professional development of practitioners, and development of university curriculum for volunteer administration programs.

A competency model derived by the consensus approach has limitations. The model does not describe what the person actually does, i.e., how he/she actually performs the functions described by the competencies. Nor does the model describe the environment in which these functions are performed. An alternative to the consensus approach is on-the-job observation, which provides data about the "real" world of the administrator of volunteer programs (Dick, Watson, & Kaufman, 1981). An analysis of the role functions that the volunteer administrator actually performs and the organizational environment in which these functions are performed could enhance understanding of the competencies required of volunteer administrators. The results of such a study would provide information about how volunteer administrators actually implement competencies and the support and constraints the administrator experiences in the environment. The work of curriculum developers in universities and professional associations in identifying relevant content from the appropriate theoretical and applied disciplines would be enhanced.

### Statement of the Problem

This study addressed two interrelated questions: What were the role functions that the volunteer administrator or performed? What was the organizational environment in which the volunteer administrator worked?

## Research Design

The descriptive case study design was used to examine the roles of the volunteer administrator and the organizational environment in which these roles were performed (Egon & Lincoln, 1981; Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Patton, 1980). A case study design is often confused with qualitative methods of research, but the case study is properly classified as a research strategy. Yin(1981) stated: "As a research strategy, the distinguishing characteristic of the case study is that it attempts to examine: (a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident"(p.59). (emphasis in original) The phenomeon studied was the formal role of the volunteer administrator (Lofland & Lofland, 1984).

As a descriptive case study, this study was not intended to evaluate the worthwhileness of the volunteer programs in these two agencies. The study did not diagnose problems or assess the effectiveness of the programs.

A structural analysis was conducted. The role of the volunteer administrator was studied in relation to her position in the organization and the relationship she had with persons occupying positions in the organizational hierarchy. Hence the study sought data about the volunteer program and its operation from the administrator of the volunteer program, from the supervisor of the volunteer administrator, heads of administrative units in which volunteers worked, staff persons who supervised the actual work of the volunteers, and the volunteers themselves.

### Selection of Cases

For this exploratory case study, two case study sites were selected to provide a basis for comparison between organizational settings. A sample of convenience was used. The criteria for selecting the cases were that the organization employed a salaried, full-time volunteer administrator and the organization would permit the research team to conduct the study there. A staff member of the Center for Volunteer Development contacted the volunteer administrator in several organizations to identify those who fit the criteria for the study and who would be willing to participate in the study. The project co-directors then contacted by telephone four potential volunteer administrators. Two were excluded because they were part-time and had other assignments in their organization. The two sites selected were a public school system and a state mental geriatric hospital.

## Data Collection

An interview schedule was prepared for each of the persons to be interviewed: the volunteer administrator, the supervisor of the volunteer administrator, head of the administrative unit, staff members, and volunteers. Separate interview schedules were developed for each category of respondents to solicit information about the respondents' perspective of the volunteer program and the role of the volunteer administrator.

The public school site was visited first. The project co-directors conducted a two hour interview with the volunteer administrator and a one hour interview with the assistant superintendent. The volunteer administrator selected two elementary schools for the interviews with persons directly involved in the use of volunteers. Approximately a month later, one project co-director returned with an interview team consisting of two staff members of the Center for Volunteer Development and three doctoral students in Adult/Continuing Education. Approximately two and one-half hours were spent in each school interviewing the principal, the building coordinator, three teachers, and three volunteers.

The state mental geriatric hospital was visited second. The project co-directors conducted a two hour interview with the volunteer administrator and a one hour interview with her supervisor who reports directly to the superintendent, the chief administrative officer of the hospital. Approximately a month later, the two project co-directors returned with an interview team consisting of one staff member of the Center for Volunteer Development and two doctoral students in Adult/Continuing Education. Interviews were conducted with one department head, four staff members who supervised volunteers, and four volunteers.

Members of the interviewing team participated in a training session in which they were informed of the nature of the project and the data collection procedure to be used. The interview schedules were reviewed and feedback solicited about their understanding of the interview schedules and their comfort in asking the questions as they were worded.

During the interview sessions, each interviewer used a prepared introduction to explain the purpose of the interview to the interviewee. The interviewer handed a copy of the interview schedule to the person being interviewed, the interviewer then asked the questions and recorded the answers on the form during the interview. At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewer completed his/her notes and wrote out comments in full. A debriefing session was held after each site visit to solicit overall impressions about the environment and the volunteer program operation.

## Case Reports

For each case site, the notes taken on each interview were typed on a master copy under the appropriate categories with a code that identified the interviewee by position. The relevant information was then organized into these four sections: (a) the position of the administrator of volunteer programs, (b) the volunteer program, (c) the role functions of the administrator, and (d) the organizational environment.

Part II  
The World of the Administrator of Volunteer Programs  
in the Sullivan Public School System

The Position of the Administrator of Volunteer Programs

The school volunteer program was initiated in Sullivan in 1959 as a demonstration project of the Junior Women's Club. (The city is identified as Sullivan in this report. The name is fictitious to provide anonymity.) Classrooms were reportedly overcrowded and volunteers helped with non-professional duties such as working the libraries and checking out books from the private library (Sullivan had no public library then.) The Junior Women's Club supported the program financially for 18 months, the school system furnished the office space, the Club coordinated the program, and only Club members served as volunteers. After the teachers made a positive evaluation of the program, the program was opened to community volunteers. A half-time administrator was hired who was not a Club member; the Club believed it inappropriate for a community program to be run by a Club member. In deciding what qualifications the coordinator needed, the selection committee believed that personality attributes were more important than academic qualifications for this position. The second administrator was employed by the school system; the third administrator was also employed by the school system. She is also the current volunteer administrator, and in 1983 had held this position for 15 years.

The Administrator of Volunteer Programs is a staff member in the central office and works directly with the schools, principals, and teachers. The program was originally assigned to the Department of Instruction but two years ago became part of the Management and School Community Services. The shift was more fortuitous than planned. The number of assistant superintendents were reduced from three to two and responsibilities were realigned. She also goes to the Superintendent for some decisions, such as how to handle this request to use Sullivan as a site for a case study. In this staff position, the AVP receives the same kind of support as any other central office staff member: a part-time secretary, monies for attendance at professional meetings, and monies for publications upon request. The volunteer program does not receive a budget.

The unique function of the AVP in the school system is evident from the qualifications that were identified as important for any incumbent in this position. From the assistant superintendent's perspective, the AVP, like a preacher, has to get people to give voluntarily, and this task requires a special kind of ability. To him, a degree in volunteer administration is not important; it might even be harmful if the AVP wanted to

impose a structured program on the school system. Because the AVP connects the community and the school, the AVP has to know the community and the school system. Apparently, such knowledge is gained through living in the community and not through academic programs. Nevertheless, three sets of skills were identified as important: interpersonal skills, management skills, and communication skills. The AVP communicates what she learns from volunteers to the school division and communicates school division goals to volunteers and the community.

The incumbent has less formal education than would be required for her successor if the position became vacant. She has two years of college, but has taken several education courses from a college in the city and numerous inservice programs in volunteer administration. A bachelor's degree would be required for a new incumbent to work with people on this level.

From the AVP's perspective, human relations, marketing, and management skills are essential. The AVP noted that she has to work with two groups of people satisfactorily, to be on "everybody's side" without being "meally mouthed."

### The Volunteer Program

#### Functions of the Volunteer Program

The volunteer program serves two functions in Sullivan: (a) to provide a "bridge of communication" between the schools and the community and (b) to provide services to the schools to supplement the work of teachers and librarians. As a community relations function, the volunteer school program brings parents and others into the schools so that they may critique school practices and know where the tax monies go. Exposure to the school program is especially important for older adults who do not have children in school and need other reasons for supporting the schools. The assistant superintendent commented that the volunteer program creates good will in the community and reinforces the perception that the schools belong to the people. The community has a positive attitude toward education, but the school system has tremendous competition from private schools. Hence the need for community support is conditioned by this set of situational factors.

#### Types of Volunteers

There are five types of volunteers in the school. The largest group of volunteers are parents of children, followed by senior citizens, college and high school students, resource speakers, and special project volunteers. With the parent volunteers, the AVP works mainly through the building principal and administrator. With the other volunteers, the CVP works more directly. The AVP actively recruits senior citizens from retirement centers and places them in a school. Two colleges place students in Sullivan schools to provide an "early involvement" program for education majors or to provide



experience as teacher aides prior to student teaching experience. The AVP screens the students and provides supervision. High school students may also work as volunteers in the schools as a career exploration experience if they are considering a career in education. The resource speaker is a citizen in the community who has expertise on some topic that would be useful in a course. To secure a resource speaker, the teacher completes a form and submit it to the principal who in turn submits it to the AVP. The AVP maintains a directory of resource persons and she is responsible for contacting the resource person. Such a procedure assists in getting citizens to share their expertise with students; it also serves to prevent some persons from getting into the schools. As the Assistant Superintendent explained it, some organizations want to get their message across to the schools. Bankers, for example, think that school children and youth should know something about banking.

### Role of the Principal

The use of volunteers is a system-wide policy but the building principal has responsibility for implementing and administering the volunteer program. In each of the elementary and middle schools, the principal is assisted by a building administrator and in some buildings by a committee. All schools have volunteers, but only the 14 elementary schools and the 3 middle schools have an organized volunteer program with a building coordinator (a volunteer).

The visits to the two elementary schools revealed that principals have varying degrees of involvement in the administration of the volunteer program. In School "A", the principal took an active interest in the volunteer program but left the actual operation to the building coordinator. This volunteer often worked 40 hours per week in this position. The building principal and coordinator had apparently worked out their relationship so that they were comfortable with this arrangement. The principal was certainly not indifferent to the program; he actively supported it and worked hard to make the program a success. But he appeared comfortable with the active leadership of the building coordinator.

In School "B" a different relationship between the building principal and coordinators (two parents shared the job) prevailed. The principal provided more direct supervision of the volunteer program. The building coordinators noted that they did most of their work at the beginning of the school year in recruitment, selection, placement, and orientation; they spent less time in the building after the program had gotten underway. The rationale for the principal's degree of control was not made clear, but the building coordinators revealed that one volunteer had caused trouble by talking about school events outside of school and sending letters to the newspaper that were not complimentary about the school. Apparently, neither the principal nor the AVP took direct action. As one of the building coordinators put it: "Eventually she quit volunteering on her own

because she got busy and had other things to do. It was really a blessing." The principal conducts orientation for her teachers about working with volunteers and has written a manual on the use of volunteers in the school, apparently because she believed that the system wide manual was not adequate. The principal also assigns volunteers to the teachers and librarian from the names of persons who completed applications.

### Role of Teachers

The ultimate responsibility for the use of volunteers rests with the teachers and librarians. In the Sullivan system, a set of volunteer jobs have emerged through the years: tutor children in reading and math, conduct art projects, assist with physical arrangements such as making bulletin boards, and assist the teacher with clerical work. Volunteers in the classroom are usually non-professionals assigned to assist professionals with their work. The assumption in the system is that teachers are capable of deciding what tasks can be performed by volunteers and of providing supervision to the volunteers.

### Program as Multiple Phases

The operation of the volunteer program at the building level is a multiple phase process that occurs cyclically. The volunteer program begins anew each fall with the beginning of the school year. The phases in the process include job identification, recruitment, selection, placement in classroom, job assignment, orientation, training, supervision, evaluation, and recognition.

1. At the beginning of the school year teachers identify jobs that volunteers could do and requests are sent to the principal. Parent volunteers are recruited through the school newsletter and letters sent home by each child that describes the jobs for which volunteers are needed. Once parent volunteers submit the application form, the principal and building coordinator review the applications and decide where the volunteers might be best placed. Volunteers are never refused a placement though some might not be placed in the job of their first choice. The principals and building coordinators, when asked, identified some reasons why some volunteers would not be accepted. School "A" principal in sixteen years had asked only one parent to stay out of the school.

2. Once the volunteer has been accepted and assigned to a classroom or the library, the building coordinator calls the parent volunteer and tells of the placement. Then the teacher or librarian normally calls and discusses the placement and arranges for the volunteer to begin.

3. The teacher or librarian provides the orientation to the classroom or library and any training that may be needed. Normally volunteers do not have to be trained, only given directions for the activities they are to perform. Teachers provide supervision for volunteers assigned to them which

typically involves prescribing a procedure for the volunteer to follow, keeping records of volunteer work with individual students, and discussing problems, usually in informal conversations.

4. At the end of the school year, the teacher or librarian completes an evaluation form on each volunteer. Each volunteer completes an evaluation form on the teacher or librarian and the volunteer experience.

5. Volunteers are recognized for their work in several ways: programs such as teas are given at the end of the year, certificates of appreciation, Christmas cards, children in the classrooms write thank-you-notes, gifts such as flowers or cookbooks have been given, and the volunteers are mentioned in the school newsletter.

#### The Relation of the AVP to Program Operation

##### The AVP and Principal

In the volunteer programs at the building level, the AVP has working relationships with the building principal and coordinator and what may be called occasional contact with the teachers, librarians, and volunteers. No formal meetings are held with the principals as a group regarding the volunteer school program. Most contacts occur when the AVP visits the school to assist in a task such as selection of volunteers, inservice for teachers, and orientation for volunteers. Other contacts occur to deal with specific problems or through routine visits. The AVP may routinely assist the principal and coordinator with recruitment and selection. In one school, the AVP reviewed the applications for parent volunteers with the principal and coordinator.

##### The AVP and Building Coordinators

The AVP's major supervisory function occurs with the building coordinators. Bi-monthly meetings are held with the coordinators and individual meetings are held more frequently at the school or the AVP's office. Responsibility for administering the program usually rests with the building coordinator, though the extent of that responsibility varies with the school. One building coordinator described the AVP's function as (a) keeping records of the volunteer hours and jobs, (b) assisting with group affairs such as the orientation coffee, (c) chairing the bi-monthly meetings with building coordinators, and (d) sharing information about volunteer programs to improve the program. The other building coordinator described the AVP's role as (a) being the main resource for referrals, (b) being the "inspiration," (c) maintaining and monitoring the data and schedule, and (d) assisting the principal and coordinator to train volunteers.

### The AVP and Teachers

Helping teachers understand the importance of volunteers in the Sullivan system and the specific school and how to work effectively with volunteers is handled both formally and informally. The formal activities are the preschool workshop and faculty meetings. In both schools, the principals included sessions in the pre-school workshops on the use of volunteers. In School "A", the building coordinator talks to the teachers about volunteers and the principal enforces the idea that volunteers are to assist the teachers, not to check on the teacher. At School "B" the principal reviews the handbook that she prepared and encourages the use of volunteers. The AVP usually participates in this workshop. According to one teacher, the AVP explains the various uses of volunteers and encourages teachers to be sure that they treat the volunteers courteously and help the volunteers to understand what is expected of them. At School "A" the AVP and the principal discuss the volunteer program every other year at a faculty meeting. The AVP reported that she sometimes conducts a very brief session of 15-30 minutes at faculty meetings held prior to the beginning of the school day.

Teachers at School "B" reported that the AVP checked in with teachers periodically to see how things were going and to check attendance of high school and college student volunteers. Another teacher noted the AVP was good at finding special volunteers for special projects, had prepared the handbook guide to help teachers and volunteers, and made herself available. Another responded that the AVP had visited her when she first came into the system to explain the volunteer program. Teachers at School "A" reported little direct contact with the AVP.

### The AVP and the Volunteers

The AVP conducts the orientation for volunteers. At the orientation session, the AVP reviews the handbook for volunteers and explains procedures and ethics of volunteer work in the school. Volunteers are obliged to keep certain information confidential. The AVP explains the sign-up procedure, fire drill and disaster plans, and job descriptions of specific volunteer jobs. Volunteers are told how important they are to the school program.

Volunteers at School "A" reported little contact with the AVP except at the orientation session. At School "B" volunteers had more knowledge about the work of the AVP and apparently more contact with her. One volunteer commented that the AVP had set up the program and recruited the building coordinator, and another that she was involved with the city wide art workshop. A third volunteer stated that the AVP kept in touch with the volunteers, recognized the work that volunteers did, and "spreads her sunshine; we work with her; she just makes you want to do things; she likes us."

## The Environment of the Volunteer Program

During her 15 year tenure as coordinator, the incumbent has evolved a program of considerable strength that enjoys the support of the central office, building principals, and the community. The assistant superintendent attributed the support to the good work of the AVP.

Not all, however, support the volunteer program with equal degrees of enthusiasm. The AVP described the environment by telling a story told by Larry Decker, Director of the Mid-Atlantic Center for Community Education at the University of Virginia. When you went into schools to talk to principals about community education, you could expect that one-third would be for it, one-third against it, and one-third would go whichever way the wind was blowing. The same, the AVP said, was true about support of the volunteer program.

While the volunteer program enjoys support from the community and the school system, support for the program has varied through the years. The AVP noted that the volunteer program was "hot" now, partly because of President Reagan's influence. But the AVP does not derive much security from this observation. As she observed, a "bad" volunteer experience or episode could cause the AVP to be "ruffed." This sense of insecurity derives in part from the community relations importance of the volunteer program.

The AVP operates with little if any supervision. For example, the assistant superintendent to whom the AVP reports was changed two years ago. But when the project co-directors asked to interview the AVP's supervisor, the present supervisor suggested that the former supervisor should be interviewed because he would know more about the volunteer program. The volunteer program is not monitored at the central office for its effectiveness. For example, the AVP does not prepare an annual report on the volunteer program. She, like other central office staff, prepares a MBO plan each year and that plan constitutes the sole central office evaluation. Only indirect evidence of the program's effectiveness is solicited. The assistant superintendent gave as indirect evidence of the value of the volunteer program the improvement of test scores over the years. The contribution to community relations is assessed informally by word of mouth and by the absence of negative reports.

### Role Functions of the AVP

Several conclusions can be drawn about the role functions of the AVP. First, from a system-wide perspective, the AVP performs an oversight function for the volunteer program similar to the function performed by supervisors of curriculum areas and special programs. Though each school has autonomy in the operation of the

volunteer program, a central office administrator imposes considerable uniformity upon the schools, maintains a common schedule for recruitment, placement, and orientation of volunteers, and provides a visible symbol of the system's commitment to the volunteer program.

Second, the AVP functions as a boundary spanner or interface manager between the school system and the community. Volunteers are unsalaried human resources that the schools use to provide or supplement essential services. The AVP provides leadership in creating and maintaining a process by which qualified volunteers enter the school system to fill volunteer jobs. Conversely, the AVP also serves as the gatekeeper to keep undesired volunteers out of the system, as shown in her supervision of the resource speaker program.

When the role is viewed in this context, then the qualifications required for the position and the expectations of the incumbent's behaviors become less ambiguous. For every other position in the school system, a clear set of educational and experiential qualifications has been established, and it makes little difference whether the person hired for the position is a native of the geographical area or not. Such is not the case for the AVP. Technical competencies are important, but these may be less important than knowledge of the community and school system and the ability to elicit trust from both the community and school system. Interpersonal competencies may, in this situation, be more important than technical competencies. A degree in volunteer administration, in itself, would not enhance an applicant's chance for being employed as the AVP if the position were to become vacant. ✓

Third, in relation to the volunteer program at the building level, the AVP operates most like a consultant (Lippitt & Lippitt, 1978), but the specific consultant roles vary according to the persons with whom she interacts and the phase of the volunteer program with which she is engaged. With the building principal and coordinator she functions as an information expert and advocate regarding the set of procedures to be used for recruitment, selection, placement, and orientation. With teachers she is formally related as a trainer/educator in pre-school workshops and faculty meetings during the school year. With regard to problems that arise in the operation of the program, she functions as an alternative identifier and linker and problem solver. In summary, she provides expertise about how to get volunteers into the school program, how to create a working environment so that volunteers feel accepted, appreciated, and useful, and how to solve disagreements so that both parties feel satisfied with the solution.

Fourth, the AVP serves as a monitor of the program through (a) informal and regular contacts with the principals, teachers, and volunteers, (b) regular contacts with the building coordinator, and (c) review of year-end evaluation reports. The evaluation forms completed by teachers and volunteers are sent to

the principal who usually reviews and forwards them to the AVP for her review. She identifies any problems that are reported and may discuss these with the principal if the problems seem severe enough. The problems are not discussed with the teacher or volunteer. No data are systematically collected and analyzed to identify recurring problems and used as the basis for intervention into the volunteer program.

Part III  
The World of the Administrator of Volunteer Programs  
in the Sunnyview Geriatric Hospital

The Position of the Administrator of Volunteer Programs

The position of the Administrator of Volunteer Programs (AVP) was created in 1974 when the hospital was changed from a state hospital for the treatment of tuberculosis to a state residential hospital for mental geriatric patients. The then superintendent believed that a volunteer program was important. He announced the creation of the program to the staff and said that he expected their support. The superintendent's decisiveness reduced staff opposition.

The AVP was employed in 1970 as an activity director when the facility served tuberculosis patients. When the hospital began to serve geriatric patients in 1974 she became the first and only administrator of volunteer programs. Volunteers had been used prior to this shift but the new emphasis on individual treatment could be met only with the use of volunteers; thus a full-time administrator of volunteers was needed.

The AVP reports to the Mental Health Coordinator who reports directly to the superintendent, the chief executive officer of the hospital. The AVP is a department head. The policies that govern the operation of the volunteer program are in the hospital policies and procedures manual. Before the Mental Health Coordinator's position was created, the AVP reported directly to the superintendent. The volunteer department presently has a clerical employee in addition to the AVP. Previously, the department had three staff members. Both the AVP and her supervisor believe that the number of the present staff is not adequate. A third staff member would be responsible for developing out-of-hospital programs for residents

There are presently no prescribed educational or experience qualifications for the AVP position. The present AVP does not hold a high school diploma. She believes that the requirements for the position are becoming more strict and that an AVP needs a college degree or experience. She reported that no AVP in the state mental health system had a college degree.

The AVP has a written job description. Monies are budgeted for departmental travel, and the AVP believed that the amount was adequate. She believes that she is compensated fairly but that other department heads make more money because they have a degree. If she had a degree she would have a higher job classification.

Both the AVP and her supervisor were asked to identify the six most critical tasks that the AVP has to perform. The AVP identified these as: (a) recruiting volunteers for service, (b)



recruiting donations, (c) providing progress reports on volunteer services, (d) providing support to the hospital, and (e) reeducating the community about the function of the hospital. The supervisor qualified his list by noting that the hospital was rural and isolated. He identified these as crucial tasks: (a) the ability to meet and work with the public, (b) knowledge of the geographical area and the people that comes from years of experience, (c) knowledge of the operations of the hospital and ability to work with people in key positions, (d) better than average administrative ability, and (e) compassion for people and people orientation. People orientation is the most important task for the supervisor.

The AVP defined the most important competencies that an AVP needed as (a) ability to work with all types of people and staff, (b) ability to handle emerging situations, i.e., spur of the moment decisions and meeting deadlines, (c) writing and record keeping, such as policy manuals, (d) public speaking, and (e) budgeting. When the supervisor was asked what competencies he would want if the position became vacant, he replied: (a) the person would have to have a B.S. degree as a minimum and (b) knowledge of the total operations of mental health and mental retardation.

## The Volunteer Program

### Functions of the Volunteer Program

The volunteer program has three major functions: (a) to enrich programs and activities for residents, (b) to provide personal friendship to residents who do not have friends or family, and (c) to provide residents with meaningful contact with people outside the hospital. An important aspect of the volunteer program is the solicitation of gifts for residents at Christmas, Easter, birthdays, and other special occasions. The volunteer program enriches the quality of life of the residents who otherwise would have little if any contact with the world outside the hospital.

### Sources of Volunteers

The sources of volunteers are (a) individuals and groups from the community, (b) college students, and (c) court appointed volunteers. Individual volunteers range in age from the young to the old and most are women. Volunteers come as a group from churches (the largest source of volunteers in groups), Cub Scouts, and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that brings animals for residents to care for. College students come from a nearby college who are assigned to serve as "volunteers" at Sunnyview to gain experience in their major field through this experiential learning project. Court volunteers are assigned by the courts to do community service at the hospital; these volunteers are supervised directly by the AVP.

## Volunteer Jobs

Volunteer jobs are classified as administrative and service. Administrative jobs provide support services to the hospital staff and usually involve clerical work and transporting residents within the hospital. Service jobs involve the volunteer in direct contact with the residents.

Jobs that volunteers can perform are identified by the various department heads and the AVP. Department heads may request that volunteers be assigned or the AVP may offer to place volunteers. In any event, the department head has to approve the use of volunteers. The focused friendship program is considered part of the treatment program, and the treatment team makes the decision to include a resident in that program.

## Volunteer Recruitment and Placement

Volunteers are recruited in several ways. Some persons and groups in the community contact the hospital and ask to perform some service or activity. Staff members themselves recruit volunteers, and volunteers also recruit friends, family members, and organizational members to volunteer. The AVP systematically recruits through (a) speaking engagements, (b) orientation to groups about the volunteer program, (c) providing job descriptions to the local Voluntary Action Center that has a skill bank, (d) running ads in the newspapers, (e) asking present volunteers to identify prospective volunteers, and (f) soliciting volunteers from churches.

Volunteers are screened initially by the AVP who then assigns them to specific departments. The department head then interviews the volunteer and decides whether the volunteer is appropriate for the specific job. The department head usually has the supervising staff member interview the prospective volunteer, too, prior to the formal assignment. College students have little choice about their assignment. The college and hospital prepare a contract regarding the placement of students and the student's volunteer assignment is coordinated between the appropriate hospital department and the appropriate college department.

## Volunteer Orientation, Training, and Supervision

A formal orientation program for volunteers is conducted for groups of volunteers, if there are enough, or for individual volunteers. The AVP provides the orientation to the hospital. The hospital orientation includes a tour of the hospital, a presentation about the mission of the hospital and the characteristics of the residents, fire and safety rules, and policies and procedures about the rights of residents.

Orientation to the job and work unit is usually conducted informally by the department head or staff member. Orientation may include a presentation about the task of the unit to which the volunteer is assigned and the specific steps in the job to

which the volunteer has been assigned. Any training the volunteer receives is on-the-job training, usually in the form of explanations about what the job entails or the specific needs of the residents.

The supervision of volunteers is conducted usually by the staff observing the work of the volunteer, then discussing how the volunteer felt about working with the resident, and suggesting additional ways the volunteer could work with the resident. Closer supervision is given to volunteers in the focused friendship program. Volunteers are instructed about friendship involvement and how much response to expect from the resident. The social worker reviews the notes made by the volunteer after each visit. Before the quarterly staff review on the residents, the social worker talks with the volunteer.

The evaluation of volunteers is usually conducted informally: the staff observes the work of volunteers with patients and on some occasion a staff member will informally ask a resident how he/she feels about a volunteer. The staff gives immediate feedback to the volunteer if the volunteer behaves inappropriately or needs information about working with a resident. The AVP provides an evaluation form for each supervisor who is asked to evaluate each new volunteer after 1 to 6 months service. Volunteers who have served for a year are evaluated once a year. In some cases, such as religious groups, the AVP conducts the evaluation. A more formal evaluation is conducted of the college students. The supervising staff member gives a written and oral evaluation on each student to the supervising professor.

### Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers are formally recognized by the hospital once a year at an annual recognition ceremony that includes a dinner. In some years, they have received a plant from the greenhouse. The ceremony is held during National Volunteer Recognition Week, a certificate is given to each volunteer, and the outstanding volunteer of the year is announced.

### Staff Orientation and Training

No formal orientation or training of staff about the use of volunteers is provided. At one time a general orientation for staff was held; it was discontinued because of poor attendance. Now the AVP visits each department and talks about the use of volunteers. What orientation or training is done is usually conducted informally. One department head said that he talked informally with his staff about potential ways to use volunteers and how to handle problems that may arise with volunteers. However, one staff member reported that the hospital sent her to a professional association meeting that included training on working with volunteers and that she had attended a Department of Mental Health program on volunteers. One department head noted that he observes the interaction of staff with volunteers to see how the staff communicates with the volunteers and whether the

staff makes the volunteer feel welcome and valued in his role as a volunteer.

### The Environment of the Volunteer Program

The support of the staff and administration for the volunteer program has reportedly increased in the last few years as the state department has reduced the hospital's budget and staff. This effort has been part of the governor's announced intent to reduce the total number of state employees before he leaves office. Given reduced staff and monies, volunteers and donated materials for residents have become a necessity, not a luxury.

The AVP's supervisor considers the volunteer program to be important and verbally praises her for the program. He keeps informed about the volunteer program. On the occasions when department heads have said they didn't want to use volunteers, the supervisor intervened to compel the department head to comply with hospital policy about volunteers. He noted that "we don't know how to utilize volunteers totally." On occasion, the supervisor has intervened with the superintendent on behalf of the AVP. The supervisor believes that the hospital "would be in serious trouble" if the volunteer program were discontinued. Donations solicited by the AVP last year amounted to \$62,000.

The AVP has department head status and has ready access to her supervisor; sometimes contacts occur daily. The AVP submits a quarterly report about the volunteer program to the central office supervisor. The report is reviewed with the supervisor. They also meet annually for the AVP's performance evaluation.

The state department has a central office coordinator for volunteer programs. Quarterly reports are submitted, policy manuals about the use of volunteers in state hospitals have been written, and in-service training programs for the AVPs are held.

### The Role Functions of the AVP

*Job position*

The AVP in Sunnyview has department head status but works in a staff position with all departments and employees in the hospital. Her primary role in the hospital is the procurement and distribution of unsalaried human resources and donated materials. The procurement of donated materials is an important function. The hospital provides the basic necessities for the residents, but many of the "extras" that add to the quality of life have to come from sources outside the hospital. These materials include toilet articles, clothing, and gifts at Christmas, birthdays, and other special occasions. The role functions of the AVP can be described through the relationships that the AVP maintains with various groups in the volunteer program.

### The AVP and the Community

The AVP represents the hospital to the community and solicits from the community members their unsalaried work and material donations. She does this indirectly through public relations activity such as speaking to various groups and sharing the work of the hospital and directly through appeals to groups and individuals for their contribution of work and materials.

### The AVP and the Hospital Organization

Within the hospital the AVP operates as a personnel officer for the unsalaried workers. This responsibility entails the establishment of an office and procedures for identifying jobs volunteers can do, keeping records of the programs, and getting the unsalaried resources into the hospital's treatment program and administrative services.

### The AVP and Hospital Staff

The AVP works through the department heads who have final say about how volunteers will be used. That various departments will use volunteers is a clearly stated policy of the hospital, though at times the AVP has to encourage department heads to implement this policy. The AVP may at times work directly with staff about the use of volunteers, but the usual contact is through the department head. The AVP's contact with staff about volunteers is more likely to occur informally through routine visits in the hospital units or by staff members making specific requests or reports on volunteers. The AVP has no line authority over either the department heads or staff.

### The AVP and the Volunteers

The AVP is the official entry point of volunteers into the hospital. The AVP recruits the volunteers, conducts the initial screening, initiates the initial placement subject to approval of the department heads, and provides orientation to the hospital. The actual work that volunteers perform is supervised by staff members. The department head is the ultimate supervisor for volunteer work and the relation of staff and volunteers. When problems arise, the AVP functions more as a consultant than a line supervisor. But the AVP is not totally removed from the volunteers. Volunteers sign in at the AVP's office and often call her office when the volunteer has to cancel or change her scheduled work time. The AVP represents the hospital to the volunteer, i.e., serves as the designated hospital staff member to provide assistance to the volunteer. Thus the AVP at Sunnyview functions as an advocate for the volunteers (got a handicapped parking place for a handicapped volunteer), confidant who listens to the concerns of volunteers and how the volunteer work fits into their life (on one occasion the AVP advised a volunteer to take some time off because she was working too hard), interpreter of the hospital policies to volunteers, and central check-in-place for all volunteers.

### The AVP and the Residents

Residents move freely about the hospital and often stop by the AVP's office to ask for items and to inquire about letters and relatives. In many instances the AVP acts as a friend, confidant, and advocate of the residents.

Part IV  
Role Functions and System Elements

These two descriptive case studies reveal the complex working world of volunteer administrators. The world is complex because the AVP has to integrate into a working arrangement the expectations of four sets of persons or entities: the system or agency that employs the AVP, the staff that use volunteers to conduct the work of the agency, the volunteers who contribute their time and talents without financial compensation, and the community from which come the donated materials and unsalaried workers. With each of these elements the AVP carries out specific role functions. An analysis of the role functions in relation to these system elements provide a helpful vantage point from which to identify the role functions of AVPs. Figure 1 describes the role functions that the AVP performs in relation to each of these system elements.

With regard to the agency, the AVP identifies the agency's intentions for using volunteers and the functions that the volunteer program performs for the agency. The functions are not the same as the jobs or tasks that volunteers perform. In the case of Sullivan, the functions of the volunteer program were to enrich the school program by supplementing the work of teachers, librarians, and clerical staff and to promote community support of the public school system. The AVP's role then is to create a structure to implement these functions that promotes efficiency, i.e., does not disrupt the working routine of the agency and staff, creates good will in the community, and makes volunteers feel their work is important and have good feelings about the agency's work.

With regard to the community, the AVP is the visible symbol of the agency and its interest in linking its work with persons and groups in the community who want to contribute materials or uncompensated work. The AVP interprets the social value which the agency promotes and identifies specific activities that volunteers can perform to further the agency's work. That is, the AVP may promote education or care of institutionalized geriatric patients as a social value, but she and the agency has to translate this social value into specific tasks performed by unsalaried workers. The AVP serves as the gatekeeper between the agency and the community, opening the door for some and closing the door to others.

In some sense, this community constitutes a public that is brought into contact with the agency through many means. In some cases, a natural alliance exists between the agency and parts of the community that makes the solicitation of volunteers easy: Parents have an interest in the education of their children. Church groups, civic clubs, and youth organizations need service projects. To other parts of the "public," the volunteer program has to be marketed.

With regard to the agency's staff, the AVP serves several roles. First, the AVP creates an administrative structure to get volunteers into the agency's programs, procedures, and mission. The AVP is responsible for "indoctrinating" volunteers to conform to the agency's routines and work procedures. In both these case studies, the AVP had responsibility for orientation of volunteers. The AVP also works with staff to identify new jobs that volunteers may perform. In these cases, the AVPs spent little time in orientation and training of staff. The agency's assumptions were apparently that staff, without training, could supervise volunteers to perform work that extended their own jobs. In informal and the infrequent formal contacts with staff, the AVP emphasized the creation and maintenance of a climate of acceptance of, and appreciation for, the work of volunteers.

With regard to the volunteers, the AVP provided no direct supervision over the work the volunteer did in the agency. Instead, the AVP (or through the building coordinator) maintained an office in which volunteers checked in. The AVP served as the personnel officer for volunteers, someone whom volunteers could turn for counsel. The AVP established different relationships with volunteers, serving for some as a confidant, encourager, or formal link with the agency.

The study indicated that AVPs have multiple role functions, though their official job title may be director, coordinator, supervisor, or administrator. The AVP in the central office of the Sullivan Public School System performed many consultant functions. She had no line authority over staff, could not enforce their work with volunteers with any rewards or punishments except psychic ones. While the AVP at Sunnyview performed administrative functions, she also did some public relations work, conducted orientation and training, and spent much of her time in consultant activities with staff and volunteers.

In both agencies, considerable importance was attached to the interpersonal competencies of the AVP. What the AVP must do is to create good feelings between persons who may disagree, interpret rules and regulations when volunteers do not want to follow prescribed procedures, or assist staff to recognize how their behavior alienates volunteers. The AVP must interpret agency policies about volunteers to staff who may be reluctant to incorporate volunteers in programs.

The consultant function of the AVP's role may be what the supervisors had in mind when they talked about the importance of interpersonal competencies. They did not minimize the technical competencies required of AVPs, such as recruitment, public relations, administrative skills, communication abilities, and others. But they did stress the necessity of "people skills."



Figure 1  
Role Functions and System Elements

<u>System Elements</u>	<u>Role Functions</u>
Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Implements volunteer program to carry out agency designated functions</li> <li>o Organizes and maintains structure to operate volunteer program</li> <li>o Defines staff roles in relation to volunteers</li> <li>o Monitors volunteer program for achievement of agency functions</li> </ul>
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Interprets social good/values of the agency to the community</li> <li>o Presents work that unsalaried workers can perform</li> <li>o Identifies publics in the community who have interest in agency's work</li> <li>o Admits elements of the community into the agency and screens out undesirable elements</li> </ul>
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Screens volunteers to determine fit between agency goals/needs and volunteer goals/needs</li> <li>o Places volunteers in jobs by determining fit between staff goals and volunteer goals</li> <li>o Orients volunteer to agency, volunteer program, and acceptable volunteer behavior</li> <li>o Relates volunteer work to the volunteer's life situation</li> <li>o Provides agency contact for all volunteers</li> <li>o Represents agency to volunteer</li> <li>o Recognizes and rewards volunteers for their work</li> </ul>

Staff

- o Orients and trains staff regarding volunteer program, agency expectations about the program, and the role of volunteers in agency
- o Identifies volunteer job
- o Places volunteers by determining fit between volunteer abilities and job requirements and fit between staff goals and volunteer goals
- o Monitors staff compliance with agency policies and procedures
- o Monitors staff supervision of volunteers
- o Interprets agency's rationale for use of volunteers
- o Interprets volunteer's needs to staff

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In both these agencies, the AVP appeared to occupy a unique position. Both had a recognized "niche" in the bureaucratic institution in which she worked. Nevertheless, expectations about the AVP's functions and qualifications had not been rationalized as carefully as had those for other positions, which had specific educational and experience qualifications. In each of the institutions, specific qualifications for the AVP seemed to be emerging but the institutional expectations had not been entirely rationalized. The AVP stands "on the boundary" between the agency and the community and "in the margin" within her employing agency.

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