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EDITORIAL

It is up to civil society to progressively work towards changing mindsets, to change characters and to change attitudes.
                    Xanana Gusmão

This first issue of *The Journal* for 2003 speaks of the value and challenges of inclusiveness, from the global perspective of building civil society to a focused perspective for building effective boards. These articles encourage us to embrace the potential to change thinking, ideas and behaviors through volunteerism.

The opening article is the keynote address of Mr. Xanana Gusmão, President of Timor-Leste, from the 17th International Association of Volunteer Efforts (IAVE) World Volunteer Conference. Mr. Gusmão reminds us that in many countries of the world volunteerism is more than individual acts of compassion or assistance. It is about the development of a civil society that has the power to build community, respect differences and value fraternity and solidarity.

Linda Graff and John Vedell share attitudes towards volunteerism and inclusiveness from the perspective of volunteers, and perspective volunteers, with disabilities, as well as from agency personnel. Their voices are shared through the direct quotes of focus group participants. These words are like a mirror reflecting positive and negative experiences.

The third article by Miller, Schleien and Bedini explores barriers that volunteer managers perceive to including volunteers with disabilities, with specific emphasis on individuals with developmental disabilities/mental retardation. The authors offer strategies and considerations for developing inclusive volunteering. They conclude that volunteering has the potential to build communities that recognize the unique contributions of all citizens.

The study of 4-H volunteers in Pennsylvania explores the potential of the Internet as an educational delivery system that can provide information "on-demand" in an easy, fast and cost-effective manner as well as being a powerful recruitment tool for potential volunteers and interested youth. The Internet offers us new opportunities to create volunteer communities that can include those who have previously been excluded because of disabilities or restricted transportation and schedules.

Joe Clark's commentary offers volunteer administrators ideas for increasing participation by people with disabilities by making web sites more accessible. Written for volunteer managers and not the IT technician, Joe offers easy, inexpensive ideas for accommodating the large numbers of people with disabilities who are online. We are reminded again that community is built in many ways. (I came across Joe on the Internet, reading an interview (Slapshot.org) about his new book, *Building Accessible Websites.* He graciously agreed to write this article for *The Journal.*)

Our last article is a best practices model for the selection and retention of quality volunteer trustees/board members. The importance of this community of leadership volunteers is critical to all aspects of our organizations. The authors show that by developing a comprehensive nominating process, organizations can serve the diverse needs of the community, as well as ensure inclusiveness at the board table.

Building inclusive communities of volunteers, through the Internet, at the board table, or through the engagement of people with disabilities, nurtures civil society and reflects the values of fraternity and solidarity.

Mary V. Merrill, Editor

ABSTRACTS

- *Volunteering, Reaching Out for Reconciliation and Peace*
  His Excellency Mr. Xanana Gusmão
  Keynote Address to the 17th IAVE World Volunteer Conference
  Peace must derive from the peace of mind within each human being, between individuals expressed in the solidarity between communities, expressed by tolerance within societies until it reaches the level of mutual respect between countries. In this standardized world of questionable values, volunteering is a movement worth pursuing. The spirit of volunteering, amidst a society or a community, is a nobler way of working for it does not demand for benefits but rather a sense of responsibility.

- *It Shouldn't Be This Difficult: The Views of Agencies and Persons*
  With Disabilities on Supported Volunteering
  Linda L. Graff and John A. Vedell
  In 1997, eleven agencies in Waterloo Region (Ontario, Canada) committed to "supported volunteering" launched their "Opportunities for All" project, which aimed to discover the potential for supported volunteering in local community agencies. For purposes of Opportunities for All, supported volunteering means ensuring fuller participation in volunteering by persons with disabilities through the provision of additional placement assistance, volunteer placement development and accommodation, coaching on the (volunteer) job, and/or other forms of needed support. The project design included a) a literature review, b) a survey of 197 community agencies in Waterloo Region, and, c) focus groups with volunteers, prospective volunteers and agency representatives. An earlier article focused on the results of the community agency survey. This article addresses the results of the focus groups, including some encouraging findings as well as some striking examples of barriers to the development of supported volunteering.

- *Barriers to The Inclusion of Volunteers With Developmental Disabilities*
  Kimberly D. Miller, M.S., CTRS, Stuart J. Schleien, Ph.D., CTRS/CPRP, and
  Leandra A. Bedini, Ph.D., CTRS/CPRP
  Given the current need for a greater volunteer pool from which to recruit and the potential benefits that individuals with disabilities could gain from volunteering, a study was designed to explore the prevalence of volunteers with developmental disabilities (DD/MR) in the United States. Also, barriers and benefits that volunteer coordinators perceive to the inclusion of individuals with DD/MR were identified. It was found that volunteers with disabilities accounted for only 5.7% of the volunteer pool, volunteers with DD/MR only accounted for 1.1%, and barriers such as staffing issues and transportation were prominent. Optimistic findings included the perceived benefits to including individuals with DD/MR and interest in learning how to accommodate volunteers with disabilities. Implications of the results are discussed and recommendations for future research are provided.

- *4-H Volunteers and the Internet: A Partnership for the Future*
  Claudia C. Mincemoyer, Ph.D.
  This descriptive study surveyed 4-H volunteers in Pennsylvania to determine if they are receptive to receiving curriculum projects and resources from the Internet. The study also examined current rates of accessibility of the population of 4-H volunteers and frequency of access to the Internet. By determining likelihood and frequency of access to Internet resources, policy and direction is given for curriculum and resource dissemination to 4-H volunteers across the state. Implications for other volunteer organizations are also discussed as Internet accessibility and use increases.

Volunteering, Reaching Out for Reconciliation and Peace
by
His Excellency Mr. Xanana Gusmão
Keynote Address to the 17th IAVE World Volunteer Conference

It is a great honor to be here, representing the people of Timor-Leste, at the 17th IAVE World Volunteer Conference. I warmly thank the organizers of this Conference, namely Dr. Kang and Madam Liz Burns, for giving me this opportunity and for challenging me to further reflect upon this important theme and its implications.

A reconciliation process compels one to reflect upon the universality of pain, suffering, and forgiveness. These feelings know no boundaries — they are the human condition. Sometimes the pain is so overwhelming that talk of forgiveness seems like another insult — people who talk to perpetrators of injustice are accused of insulting the victims. Initiating dialogue with a recent foe is a difficult process. In this sense, I come today from the field of sorrows where the sea of sadness washed our shores for so many years that we even lost names of those for whom we seek justice. I have heard the same words from our brothers and sisters in other places in the world. We know from our knowledge of history that civilization evolved from brutality, but also that peace followed great wars.

What then does a tolerant society in the 21st century do to speed up the healing process? Truth and Reconciliation are important elements but the parties must become engaged — dialogue is the primary objective and conditions for an effective exchange of views a basic requirement. Getting the opposite sides to the table sounds like a simple negotiation but reality is very complex. People have different perceptions.

Let me explain the situation in Timor-Leste in more detail. In 2000 we strove to revive dialogue and many meetings were held starting with Jakarta and including gatherings in Singapore, Tokyo, Denpasar and Baucau, Timor-Leste. These meetings were largely aimed at promoting dialogue with the pro-autonomy leadership.

It must be acknowledged that the people did not agree with these meetings and we were accused of distorting the spirit of reconciliation. We reflected deeply on this message from the people and resolved to identify another mechanism. On the other hand, reconciliation could not be strictly limited to this period of our history. The reconciliation process is one that has been ongoing, even during the armed struggle stage, and covers a period of over two decades.

Our process of reconciliation began in the aftermath of events before the invasion of Timor-Leste by Indonesian military, in August 1975, when the two main parties engaged in a brief but violent clash whose effects are still felt today. To this, we must add the process arising from the violence in September 1999 perpetrated by militia groups organized, structured and funded by some sectors of the Indonesian military determined to block the self-determination and independence process of Timor-Leste.

The need for us to formulate a National

Reconciliation Policy became clear as well as the need for all the parties involved, government, judiciary, and civil society to be guided by a single Code of Conduct without which our efforts at reconciliation were bound to fail.

All of the government bodies agreed that reconciliation should offer a means whereby the perpetrators of human rights violations can sit together with the victims and community leaders. From here commenced the second phase of the reconciliation process mostly concentrated on the September 1999 violence. With the announcement of the unqualified support of the Indonesian authorities, we proceeded to organize meetings at various localities along the border in both the north and south of the country, including in the enclave of Oecusse-Ambeno, as well as in Bali and West Timor.

Throughout this process I have witnessed tense encounters, which ended with tears being shed and embraces of forgiveness exchanged between former foes. Such meetings allowed us to dispel many of the concerns regarding personal revenge, which persisted.

In each of these meetings, we emphasized the importance of justice being done. Whilst we recognize that many international organizations take exception to our approach, our position continues to be that we must allow the perpetrators of crimes to meet with victims before they decide to return to Timor-Leste and to face trial there.

We advocate a reconciliation process whereby justice is meted out to perpetrators but which eschews revenge, resentment, and hatred.

This is a very complex issue. To start a reconciliation process requires a balancing of interests. On one hand the interests of justice and on the other hand the interests of a suffering community who follow a leader who is unwilling to return for fear of punishment.

As I said earlier, a good knowledge of the laws of Timor-Leste and attitudes to those

suspected of serious crimes is necessary to facilitate the reconciliation process.

A good deal is spoken ourside Timor-Leste on the subject of trauma. In East Timor's case I believe trauma is experienced at a personal level, but it is not a generalized phenomenon. Personally I believe that we must view trauma from another angle, that is, as it may be experienced by the family members and particularly the children of those facing prison sentences of 10, 15, or even 20 years.

Reconciliation must be meaningful. I am of the view that reconciliation succeeds only when East Timorese society stops being haunted by the ghosts of conflicts of the past. We have already proudly shown to the world that, in spite of 24 years of violence and suffering which culminated in September 1999, the East Timorese people desire to live in harmony and to attain true peace of mind. The two elections, which took place within the space of 7 months, were carried out peacefully and with an exceptionally high level of popular participation.

We agree with the need for justice. After all, this is a political process and not merely a judicial one. That is why, in my programs (and I was elected President on the basis of my programs) I defended strongly the need for amnesty for those already indicted and serving prison terms.

I have already mentioned that the process requires a balancing of interests. I wish to include here the national interest of guaranteeing political and social stability. This must include stability along the border and strengthening our cooperation with Indonesia, in particular its eastern region. Only thus can we further our development process and attain its main goals.

We must see our reconciliation efforts as a means of consolidating national stability and of contributing to world peace.

In this so-called globalization era we all hoped the world would enjoy a type of economic order with a high level of technological development that would enable us to find solutions and seek ways to eradicate poverty,

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hunger, disease and ignorance from the world.

But after all, we now live an era of mistrust, an era where feelings of violent hatred and revenge are gaining ground almost everywhere.

It is very sad to note that at the same time values of freedom and democracy and principles of tolerance and mutual respect are becoming a conscious part of individuals, we also have to regret the rise of intolerance and the systematic use of terror, which hinders constructive dialogue.

Given this fact now that we have entered the new millennium, it is urgent that all peoples of the world unite around the sacred goal of building peace.

Peace cannot be the privilege of a few and an "offer" to all others. Peace is the most fundamental asset of every human being. Peace is not the mere absence of conflict nor is it the mere agreement between countries to avoid war.

Peace must derive from the peace of mind within each human being, between individuals expressed in the solidarity between communities, expressed by tolerance within societies until it reaches the level of mutual respect between countries.

Peace of mind means that people feel truly free; free from psychological or political pressure, free from economic pressure or social tension, free from past trauma, free from the daily shortcomings, and free from the fear of what tomorrow may bring.

Peace is the outcome of the needed interaction of behaviors within a society which, then, breeds policies by the governmental bodies. In this sense, peace must be an act of sovereignty by the people. If each citizen lives at peace with other citizens, every people and every country will live at peace with other countries.

Towards this noble objective, the reconciliation of spirit and minds gains even greater importance.

In a democratic society, difference is the basis of fundamental principles of individuals. However, there is still intolerance, whichever its character or nature and whichever form it takes to be expressed, in already established and stable democratic societies.

Difference has many dimensions to it and should not be perceived merely in its political content, in the form of freedom of speech, be it in developed societies or in developing and poorer ones, such as ours still undergoing a post-conflict situation.

The complexity arising from difference is the result of repressed feelings, of accumulated feelings of frustration and aspirations.

Therefore, the peace of mind we envisage must be the outcome of a long but permanent effort towards reconciliation.

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People's attitudes and the behavior of individuals should be understood in the context of spontaneous reactions, which become irrational because they are not self-controlled, or as residues of hatred and revenge.

The shift towards accepting compromise can only be made if it arises from the conscious acceptance of the norms of tolerance and mutual respect, which, in turn, will encourage the values of fraternity and solidarity.

But this will not be possible without the reconciliation of minds.

Reconciliation is a process with a personal and a social dimension. It must mature within each individual so that society may unite around the values of tolerance and mutual respect.

Reconciliation is not a simple process and therefore it is not an easy one, but it is also not impossible to achieve.

And, without reconciliation there is no peace.

We have established a Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in Timor-Leste. Efforts are being undertaken to organize its presence in every district and subdistrict to ensure greater efficiency in seeking

solutions amidst the local communities at village and hamlet level.

The Commission has a mandate that covers all forms of non-physical violence, such as threats, persecution, burning of houses, plunder, killing of live stock and so on, but all blood crimes must be channeled to the judiciary system.

In some areas of the country the Commission has successfully initiated its work by promoting dialogue among conflicting parties. This has led to a commitment to join hands to forget the past and reject violence, which is the most common price paid for "doing justice with one's own hands".

There is still much to be done. Above all, there is a need for a collective awareness to seek the truth and demand for justice but in the context of reconciliation so that future generations may live without memories of the horrors of war.

This will also be a way to give due value to the sacrifices made to free our Homeland. Such sacrifices will only be honored when we reach an equitable level of development based on a steadfast determination to eradicate poverty.

We will be able to say that those sacrifices were worthwhile when we reduce infant mortality, when every Timorese family has a house to live in, drinking water and food, when every child attends school and the population has access to health care.

If this does not happen, the grief lived in the past will not be healed and the reconciliation will be a lot harder to achieve. Stability will continue to be an aspiration.

If the reconciliation process is to be comprehensive and deeply rooted in society it is most important tbat, at political level, there is a collective awareness on the need of such a process.

I am also referring to a National Policy whereby state institutions are the first ones to recognize the magnitude of the process. However, just because there is such recognition, in terms of commitment and support, it does not mean that the road to reconciliation has

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become any easier.

In the case of Timor-Leste, the best-known aspect of reconciliation is the effort made regarding perpetrators and victims of the 1999 violence.

However, there are problems emerging regarding conflicts amidst local communities because of events that occurred before 1999 and which are demanding due attention from the authorities in the country. At the same time, the population is demanding that the political parties involved in the violent events of 1975 take responsibility of their acts and ask the people for forgiveness. To date, this has not been possible to achieve.

From this you can see that this is not a mere political issue, a question of rhetoric or tbat it is enough to have the agreement of government and parliament on the reconciliation process.

To forgive is usually an easy thing to do. But the act of being humble, meaning to recognize mistakes and to apologize or ask for forgiveness is a very hard thing to do. It demands great courage — political courage if it refers to politicians, moral courage if it refers to citizens.

When people assume these attitudes, in full humbleness, then they will reveal a human dimension tbat will deserve the appreciation of all.

The participation of civil society in this process takes up great importance because of the complexity of the process.

Civil society is freer from certain interests and less submitted to political or economic pressure. The concept of civil society is too often attached to NGOs [Non Government Organizations]. Civil society should be perceived as including more than NGOs, which are often too professionalised and linked to policies of governments that assist them.

Civil society should be, first and foremost, the social conscience of duty of those who have the means towards the most vulnerable, of those who have access to knowledge towards those who have none, or less, access to information.

The spirit of volunteering, amidst a society or a community, is a nobler way of working for it does not demand for benefits but rather a sense of responsibility.

I do not wish to state that NGOs are unnecessary; they certainly are necessary in developing and underdeveloped countries for they curtail corruption and the mismanagement, which often exists in poorer countries.

What I wish to state is that we must encourage the work and active participation of the best prepared segments of our society in such varied and relevant areas as peace, democracy, reconciliation, solidarity, tolerance, education, health and ignorance.

In this standardized world of questionable values, volunteering is a movement worth pursuing.

In Timor-Leste we are undergoing a state-building process and our civil society is still experiencing its embryonic stage, as are many other sectors of our nation.

As President, I called upon myself the responsibility not only to nurture civil society but also to assist it in gaining a greater understanding of its role in the state-building process.

The State is its citizens and citizens must be better served in all aspects, so that the State itself may become sound and strong.

In post-conflict processes, civil society has an extremely important role to play. In such processes, conflicts are no longer of an armed nature but often breed generalized violence.

Such conflicts are often grounded on specific interests, which may range from political to psychological, from economic to social ones.

Too often, state institutions are inoperative because their action is mostly addressed to solve problems through appeasement. It is up to civil society to progressively work towards changing mindsets, to change characters and to change attitudes.

Civil society can take up the role of generating debate and dialogue. To accept debate and dialogue is the first step of reconciliation where there is respect for difference, where self-control is exercised and common values are identified as the common denominator leading to understanding and mutual respect.

The value of tolerance will reinforce the yearning for peace every human being aspires. But peace must stop being an aspiration to become reality.

One of the priorities of my term as President will be to continue to unite the Timorese people in the fight to eradicate poverty. In this sense, reconciliation is an essential element in the current process of national reconstruction as in the process of national development.

Early this month and following a number of visits to West Timor, I visited Kupang and Atambua to address the remaining East Timorese refugees in West Timor and the Indonesian authorities.

The small size of our population and the strong sense of community and social solidarity, which are a feature of many economically under-developed nations, have facilitated reconciliation amongst East Timorese. In addition, our people's strong ancestral links to the land have been an important factor in bringing refugees home in spite of fears of possible retribution.

Only a wise policy of Reconciliation can promote harmony within Timorese society and guarantee broad participation as the basic condition for social justice and the improvement of the living standards of the population.

Only then will independence have real meaning for a people who fought, suffered and finally won their right to live in freedom and independence.

We continue to count on the support and exchange of experiences of the democratic governments and institutions, which have assisted us thus far. We share the success we have attained so far with all of you, and we hope and trust that the experience of the small nation of Timor-Leste can contribute in a modest way to informing and enlightening your deliberations here at this conference and your work in the future.

Thank you.

"It Shouldn't Be This Difficult": The Views of Agencies and Persons with Disabilities on Supported Volunteering

by Linda L. Graff and John A. Vedell

INTRODUCTION

"Opportunities for All," a project focused on current and future supported volunteering in Waterloo Region, was launched by an inter-agency consortium called *The Resource Group for Supported Volunteering (R.G.S.V.)*, formed In 1997. The Trillium Foundation of Ontario funded the project. The R.G.S.V. comprised eleven agencies whose mission it is to a) serve persons with physical disabilities, or b) promote voluntary action in the community.

Philosophy

The philosophical basis for R.G.S.V.'s activities is:
- commitment to "assisting *all persons* to participate in satisfying, productive volunteer experiences...." Removal of "barriers to full participation by educating and supporting community members, identifying and developing resources that promote accessibility, and supporting individuals to cultivate their potential"
- belief "that *all persons* have the right to informed choice and equal access to fully participate in the opportunities they choose for themselves...." Belief "in encouraging independence, individual growth, mutual

respect, cooperative relationships, and partnerships within an understanding and welcoming community."

In context of the above philosophy, the overall purpose of Opportunities for All is: "To increase the community's capacity to open up new opportunities for all persons to exercise more control over their own lives and make a contribution to this community through volunteer work."

"Supported Volunteering" Defined

Supported volunteering is about helping marginalized persons become fully engaged in volunteering. The definition of supported volunteering typically encompasses a wide variety of marginalized populations, including, for example, persons with physical or sensory disabilities, persons with learning disabilities, persons with emotional or psychiatric disabilities, new immigrants, and persons of diverse cultural backgrounds. In short, any identified group of persons who may need additional consideration or assistance in becoming involved in volunteering can be encompassed by the definition. It is for this latter reason that in some supported volunteering projects youth and seniors have been included in the definition.

Linda L. Graff was the Director of the Volunteer Centre in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada for nearly 10 years and has spent the last 13 years operating her training and consulting firm LINDA GRAFF AND ASSOCIATES INC. Linda is the author of eight books in the field of volunteerism, including *By Definition* (policy development for volunteer programs), *Well-Centred* (policy development for volunteer centres), *Beyond Police Checks* (screening volunteers and employees) and *Better Safe ...* (risk management for volunteer and community service programs). She specializes in training and consulting on topics such as risk management, screening, policy development, board roles and responsibilities, trends and issues, and discipline and dismissal.
John Vedell retired in December 1995 after twenty-one years as executive director of Family Services of Hamilton (Ontario, Canada). Before entering the social service field in 1969, John served as a chaplain to Lutheran students in various universities in eastern Canada. He currently teaches life span psychology at Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario; is Secretary of the St. Joseph Immigrant Women's Centre of Hamilton board of directors; and is a volunteer peer reviewer in Family Service Canada's accreditation program.

For the purposes of the Opportunities for All project, the definition of supported volunteering was confined to "persons with disabilities." This was because the sponsoring R.G.S.V. largely comprised organizations that provided services to that client group, and that was where the R.G.S.V. chose to concentrate its efforts in this project. The term "disabilities" was left deliberately undefined. The R.G.S.V. decided early on that any person with a disability of any nature would be eligible for consideration in this research project.

Supported volunteering can entail a range of activities. These include:
• helping prospective volunteer placement agencies increase their knowledge about involving persons with disabilities
• providing a coach for the volunteer, and/or
• a centralized placement agency that a) helps not-for-profit organizations identify, modify or develop suitable volunteer placements for persons with disabilities, b) aids volunteers who have disabilities to identify their interest and abilities, and, c) refers those volunteers to potential placements in not-for-profit organizations in the community

Supported volunteering can include interventions on three levels:
• **Individual** – support for the prospective volunteer, including placement or workplace modifications, additional training or supervision, provision of a coach for a period of time and/or provision of a partner, either initially or on a continuing basis
• **Group** – training for agencies to enable them to be more inclusive
• **Systemic** – assistance for agencies in the development of appropriate infrastructure for management of a supported volunteering program

The R.G.S.V. hired a consulting firm, Graff and Associates, to conduct research on supported volunteering. The research design had three key components: a literature review, a survey of the current state of supported volunteering among local not-for-profit organi-

zations in the Waterloo Region, and focus groups with volunteers, prospective volunteers and agency representatives.

This article includes emphasis on the frequently discouraging experience faced by persons with disabilities who try to become volunteers despite the apparent interest of agencies in involving volunteers with disabilities. The data indicate that if supported volunteering is to flourish, agencies must receive considerable assistance in learning how to involve and support people with disabilities. (Even some agencies that have a mandate to work with people with disabilities do not always know how to effectively support persons who have disabilities different from those whom the agency is mandated to serve.)

FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Focus Group Construction
Based on information from the community agency survey[3], and questions arising therein, it was determined that this project component needed to gather detailed information from the following populations:
• agencies that currently (or have recently) involve(d) persons with disabilities as volunteers
• agencies that have not involved persons with disabilities as volunteers
• individuals with disabilities who are currently volunteering (or have recently volunteered)
• individuals with disabilities who have never volunteered

It was decided that interaction by representatives of the first two populations and by representatives of the second two populations in the focus group setting would be instructive. Accordingly, two additional focus groups were designed:
• a combination of agencies that currently (or have recently) involve(d) persons with disabilities as volunteers *and* agencies that have not involved persons with disabilities as volunteers
• a combination of individuals with disabilities who are currently volunteering (or have recently volunteered) *and* individuals

with disabilities who have never volunteered

Research Questions

A separate set of questions, created for each of the focus groups, are found in Appendix 'A.'

Sample Selection

To recruit agency representative participants to the focus groups, invitations were sent to the same mailing list that was used to conduct the community agency survey.[4] To recruit individual participants to the focus groups, agencies were asked to pass along an invitation to any persons with disabilities that they worked with whom they thought might be interested in assisting us with the research.

Schedule

All six focus groups were conducted in mid-September, 1998.

Reminder Notices

Reminder notices and/or phone calls were sent/made to all focus group participants to ensure their attendance.

The Sessions

The sessions were planned to run 1.5 hours, and this was the commitment made to participants.

A member of the R.G.S.V., acting as host, attended each session. The Consultant attended and introduced the focus group format and its purpose, and helped participants to understand that their contributions were welcomed at any time during the session. She indicated this was a research project and received participants' permission to tape the session.

The Consultant facilitated each session, asking the scheduled questions, and moderated conversations among participants. From time to time, the consultant or the R.G.S.V. member asked supplementary and clarifying questions.

THE SAMPLE

The sample included a total of 26 agencies, 24 (92%) were currently (or had recently) involved persons with disabilities as volunteers, and two (8%) were not currently involving persons with disabilities as volunteers. Of the latter two, one agency had never involved a person with a disability as a volunteer, and the other had what they considered only limited success in doing so in the past.

A wide range of agencies was represented among focus group participants, including representation from the following sectors: arts/culture, disability service, fundraising, multiculturalism, seniors, recreation, local government, nutrition and food services, health, and social services.

The sample also included 16 individual representatives; 13 (81%) had recently or were currently volunteering; two (13%) had tried to locate volunteer work, but had met with only limited success; and one person (6%), not yet volunteered and had not thought seriously of doing so.

There were a variety of disability types and severities represented among the focus group participants, including the following disabilities: mobility, vision, speech, developmental, cognitive, and mental health.

The ideal focus group size was set at eight to ten participants. Respondents were scheduled into sessions as much as possible to create groups of that size.

Upon completion of the focus groups, the audiotapes were transcribed verbatim. A thematic analysis was performed on the data collected from all six focus group sessions.

THE RESULTS
The Agencies

The experience of supported volunteering from the perspective of agencies ranged from "successful" experience to "not good" experience. Some reported "mixed" experience.

The following quotation describes a success story:

> *We did have one volunteer who...was pathologically shy. She asked to be at that front desk and we asked her "are you sure? You don't have to do this if you don't want*

to" and she did and we helped her, we supported her.... She went from being unemployable...she now works at [a local store]. But it took two years of us saying "It's okay.... If you don't want to do that, say.... We're not going to make you do anything you don't want to do."

An unsuccessful experience is reflected in these comments by an agency representative discussing interactions with volunteers with hearing loss:

...they get frustrated. We get frustrated and we lose the volunteer, which is not the ideal situation because obviously they can contribute. It's just we don't know how to adapt [to] their needs, they don't know how to adapt to our needs and we get caught in 'we don't want to offend you and you don't want to offend us' and things fall apart.

Mixed experience of both positive and negative aspects is reflected in the following commentary:

I find that it takes extra time.... You have to really be concise in what you tell them. You know, give them lots of steps. But it's worth it, because once it's done...these volunteers do some of the jobs that the [staff] would have to do if the volunteers weren't there. Washing the dishes, cleaning the bathrooms, doing some laundry, things like that, and that takes the [staff] away from the children. So, yeah, in the long run it's really worth it.

Factors Leading to Success
Agency representatives identified five characteristics required for a successful supported volunteer program.

The right 'fit' between a volunteer's gifts and limitations on the one hand, and the requirements and benefits of the volunteer position on the other. A concomitant of this is the importance of being honest with a volunteer candidate if an appropriate fit cannot be found for the time being. A negative illustration of this was the statement of one agency representative, who admitted,

when we don't have a proper match between what we need and what they can give, we just don't call back, and that's not professional, I know.

The importance of providing flexibility in job design and willingness to modify positions in order to accommodate volunteers who require such support. An example of this willingness was one agency representative, who said,

...I can build a job to fit anybody, and I'm more than happy to do it.

Another emphasized the need for persistence:

In my opinion, we need to at least make the effort. Our adopted philosophy is that every volunteer is given at least three times to try it out. We together decide if it's working out.

One more participant stressed the importance of flexibility when problems arise in the placement:

...we found a way to [change a volunteer's placement in a way] that she doesn't frighten people anymore. [The volunteer] thought it was a promotion.

That this is not always a simple thing to do was highlighted by a participant who spoke of the reluctance to involve persons with disabilities for the very reason that flexibility and adaptation is difficult in a frequently changing environment.

Adequate resources. The truism that adequate resources are necessary for a successful volunteer program, especially one that includes persons with disabilities, was emphatically stated by one agency representative as follows:

That's what we're hoping this project may end up, that we can say to somebody— 'God, if you want [the volunteer Action Centre] to be finding the right niche for different volunteers, we gotta have more money here.'

Another voiced a concern familiar to administrators of volunteers,

> One of the frustrations for [our organization is that] our funders have vigorously promoted volunteerism, but promote it only in terms of being a cost savings to the organization. I certainly have not seen volunteerism or experienced in the last eleven years as a cost saver.... We've benefited in many ways from the skills [volunteers] bring to the organization, but you need resources to keep good volunteers.

In support of the previous statement, another participant said,

> Sometimes when we are told to support volunteerism, and when our funders tells us that, we are told to do so only as a cost saving method, not because we have a moral obligation to do so. There's a dollar figure that must be attached to any obligation that any organization has around this table.

That same participant contemplated that policy makers, funders, and government bodies, rather than agencies, should be the target of lobbying on behalf of supported volunteerism.

Not surprisingly, participants emphasized that the lack of resources makes it difficult for agencies to enlist special needs volunteers, because special needs volunteers can require more time and resources.

An agency mission and service consistent with the involvement of supported volunteers. Some participants felt it is difficult to accept as volunteers any persons who have a disability or limitation that resembles the disabilities or limitations of the agency's client group. For example, one participant said,

> Staff would say, okay, I'm giving this volunteer just as much support as what I would a member, so where do we stop, where do we say they're no longer a volunteer....?

Sometimes the nature of the client population and their specific vulnerabilities pose limits on the type or extent to which volunteers with special needs can be involved:

> [A] major barrier has been [volunteers] need to have the perceptual level to understand when residents are saying things like, 'I'm going to go home,' or 'can you take me home?' that you can't take someone out the doors, that they're confused. Judgement is important.

Fortunately, the converse can also be true, i.e., when the work of the organization lends itself to the involvement of people of all sorts, capacities, and limitations as volunteers. This was illustrated by the following offering of a participant,

> ...we have volunteers of every description, every disability. There isn't one that I can think of that [we don't have].... We do...a whole range of activities so we're able to be inclusive.

Clients as volunteers

An increasing number of organizations are seeking to involve their clients ("consumers") as volunteers, in some cases on the board or in an advisory capacity. In other cases, organizations allow, even encourage, clients and ex-clients to participate in service delivery. The latter often is part of the recovery process of the client *qua* volunteer.

One organization spoke of two conditions for the involvement of their own clients as volunteers in a program: 1) approval from program clients, and failing that, 2) absence as a client from a program for six months before becoming a volunteer in the program. Another participant noted the importance of volunteering for clients, but added that it is better if they volunteer in some other agency. A third participant stressed the principle of inclusivity as it relates to special needs volunteers as well as to clients. Applying the principle, however, can lead to a "dicey" situation when the clients are reluctant to accept the ex-client as a volunteer.

Value added vs. volunteering as therapy

Very few organizations exist solely to give volunteers a place to volunteer, but rather, they invite volunteers to assist with accomplishment of the organization's mission. Accordingly, the "output" of a volunteer must exceed the "input" of time, energy and resources required to achieve and sustain the placement.

When input to the supported volunteer exceeds adequate return to the agency, supported volunteering moves from being "therapeutic," i.e., a useful tool in integration, recovery and healing, to "therapy," i.e., it becomes volunteering for its own sake. One agency representative described a situation in which this occurs. Students with special needs work along with paid staff, who later redo the students' less than adequate work. In that case, the involvement of students is chiefly of value to the student, not the organization.

In reaction to this description, another participant expressed discomfort tinged with anger:

> What's the point then? To me that's tokenism. [Such a practice makes me] furious, because they're obviously not being trained and counted as a person who's doing a job.

Clearly, achieving a proper balance between the resources input required to find or create the right position for the right volunteer and the productivity output from the volunteer in the position can be difficult to achieve.[5]

The right to volunteer and the obligation to be inclusive

Even though organizations rightly can expect a "return on investment," is there a responsibility on voluntary sector organizations to expend greater effort for special needs volunteers, regardless of an input-output imbalance? Is failure to do this discriminatory, a form of "ableism"?

A few focus group participants spoke to this question. One felt strongly that volunteers have the same rights as patrons of a facility:

> As far as I'm concerned, no one gets turned away because it is a public institution, and it's my job to find a way for them to fit in.... Sometimes I'm finding that it's really complex, but that's the way I feel about it.

Most who spoke, but not all, were sympathetic to this view, even to the point of saying inclusion is part of an agency's mission. The countervailing opinion was

> I take pride in the fact that we are able to find and research things to match people. But that's certainly not our mission. Our mission is [providing services to our clients].

All agreed, however, with the participant who said,

> I think to exclude people with special needs in the community, for any organization to do that, is not creating the kind of community we are all hoping to be part of.

The special value of supported volunteering to volunteers themselves

The feelings of productiveness, belonging, self-esteem, and so on, that volunteers can reap from their volunteer work can have special meaning to people with special needs. Agency representatives in the focus groups supported this claim on the basis of their experiences working with special needs volunteers. They spoke of the special sense of ownership special needs volunteers exhibit, their loyalty, and their sense of responsibility, all of which are, in effect, their contribution in return for the psychosocial rewards that being a volunteer affords.

Resistances

Administration and Board of Directors. Responses of participants with regard to the question of administrative support for inclusivity tended to be pessimistic in nature. For one participant the "biggest barrier" was the executive director and board of directors. Two agency representatives acknowledged an inherent irony: sometimes organizations that

resist deploying persons with disabilities as volunteers are the very organizations that try to find volunteer (and paid work) placements in other agencies for their own clients who are persons with disabilities. An even more damning irony was underscored by two other participants, one of whom offered,

> I work in an agency that specializes in serving people with disabilities, so it's rather embarrassing for me to come and say none of our volunteers have disabilities.

The second stated,

> ...I find it personally embarrassing...I felt...I didn't even know if I could come [to this focus group] because I use the Voluntary Action Centre to get volunteers, and I use them to place our clients [as volunteers in the community], and yet we're giving nothing back.

Clients. Sometimes agency clients are discriminatory, unaccepting, or racist. Participants noted that some clients are critical of their volunteers who are unemployed; they do not understand that the supported volunteers' disabilities are barriers to being employed. Others spoke of the discomfort some of their clients demonstrate in the presence of multiethnic volunteers. There were mixed opinions whether agencies should protect their volunteers from discrimination. Some organizations believe it is not part of their mission to attempt to change the attitudes of their clients, even if those attitudes are racist. Others refuse to collude with oppression, even when it is found within their own clients or constituencies. In any event, as one participant said,

> We can't always be super protective, but we need to be open and honest and communicate that to [volunteers] in all fairness to them.

Staff members. Clients are not the only source of resistance or discrimination that special needs volunteers might expect to encounter in some settings. According to the agency representatives, agency personnel can

sometimes be discriminatory, but resistance mostly falls into other categories. There may be union concerns about losing positions. Staff members may perceive volunteers, especially volunteers with special needs, to be a burden that requires extra work training and supervising volunteers. Also, some volunteers seek to socialize with staff members, many of whom do not have the time. "Volunteers drive me nuts; I can't get my job done," is a common expression by one agency representative's employees.

It would be incorrect, however, to think that all personnel, or personnel in all organizations, are resistant to the involvement of volunteers or to volunteers who have disabilities. For example, one agency representative reported

> [They] come to our team meetings, meet with our [staff]. We consider them part of the agency...like they're the professional coming in and providing a service to us, like a consultant would.

What would be helpful?

Participants offered much information about what they would find helpful in their development and operation of supported volunteering programs. Their thoughts are clustered into a number of specific areas.

Information on how to work with people with disabilities. One participant stressed the importance of open communication about limitations and accommodation needs. Persons in organizations that do not directly serve people with disabilities can find the thought of working with them scary, intimidating, or uncomfortable. The greatest fear is of being offensive to prospective volunteers. For example, one representative would be interested to know if a volunteer would be offended if asked about his/her ability to read and write.

Others stressed the need for basic information about various disabilities and how to work with people with disabilities. A participant who works with people with disabilities said provision of information could become the purpose of a cooperative community project.

Staff education was also cited as important. Internal and external "educators" could be important resources.

The most striking comment about the need for information came from persons that serve persons with disabilities, viz., that they feel discomfort in working with people with disabilities different from those found among their own client group. One participant, who works for an organization serving clients with a specific disability, noted how that organization works cooperatively with two other organizations, each of which serves clients with a different, specific disability. The goal is for each of the three to become knowledgeable about the types of disabilities clients of the other two organizations have. This approach could work equally well for those seeking information about work with volunteers having disabilities.

Ongoing support. Initial information is critical, but an ongoing source of information and support is also of great help to agencies integrating persons with disabilities as volunteers. A support worker, who places people with disabilities, finds that her availability contributes to the confidence and success of the volunteers to whom she is available.

Support is important also for those who supervise volunteers with disabilities. A participant spoke of receiving help from another agency to solve the meaning of a verbalization of a volunteer whose communication impairment made it difficult for her to make herself understood.

One agency representative said it well,

> We'd need a lot of support; someone to come in and say these are the issues, and this is how you deal with the issues.

Help to convince the board. One representative felt that assistance from outside is needed to help convince administrators and board members of the value of involving special needs volunteers:

> ...having some sort of background materials [so] we could go to the Boards and say, this won't take all my time or, this will not end up being an embarrassment to you, this will be a good thing for you, you will look good, let me do this.

Volunteers' honesty and disclosure. Several agency participants noted the importance of prospective volunteers being forthcoming about their own needs and limitations, for example,

> The key for us has been the more honest the volunteer is with us in the beginning, the less we're putting out fires down the road.

And,

> ...the [placements] that were positive resulted from up front and open communication from the beginning.

Assistance with job design and accommodations. Noted occasionally was the need for help to be creative with job design and accommodation possibilities, especially for prospective volunteers who have multiple disabilities.

The role of referral agents. According to one participant, in referring a person with a disability to an agency for volunteer work, the referring worker needs to

> know the services of the organization that you're going to be referring someone to, and know what their restrictions are in terms of resources [and] opportunities....

Another participant warns against giving the agency to which a person with special needs is referred too much information about the prospective volunteer lest

> biases and preconceived notions...get in the way of getting to know the person.

The role of the volunteer centre. As one agency representative put it,

> ...the connection with the Voluntary Action Centre is so crucial, because I get most of the referrals from there. The recruitment coordinator needs to know what our barriers and limits are, who we can accept and work with.

Special difficulties

Mental health issues. Several participants said they find mental health issues to be the most difficult or scary to deal with among volunteers with special needs. Unpredictability, excessive need for support, and brevity of commitment are some of the difficulties participants identified as associated with involvement of volunteers with mental health problems.

Multiple disabilities. Some participants spoke of the increased difficulties involved in placing special needs volunteers if they have multiple disabilities. One spoke of a volunteer who can't use his hands and whose speech is difficult. The problem for the agency in such a case is the demand on time that such a volunteer makes.

Another participant agreed that persons with multiple disabilities require lots of time, but that they have much to contribute:

> *It's just finding the right niche....Just trying to help them, that's what you want.*

Prospective volunteer fears. Among a variety of other difficulties mentioned, is, as one participant put it, a prospective volunteer's

> *...lack of confidence, depression, fear, anxiety, and they can't afford the bus fare....*

Some such persons need support workers to accompany them at least in the initial phases of the volunteer placement. This in itself can become a deterrent to volunteering, especially when the position involves one-to-one visiting or companionship.

Accommodations

While it is important to remember that not all people with disabilities will need accommodations in their volunteer placements, it became clear in the focus groups that a great variety of accommodations is required in support of volunteer involvement.

Some volunteers need assistance with writing. Other volunteers need attendant care. One volunteer, a board member with vision

impairment, was helped by using taped board minutes.

Many agency representatives made note of the extra time they spend with special needs volunteers, putting together the appropriate set of tasks into customized jobs that correspond to volunteers' abilities. A participant who works with a volunteer who has excellent phone manner and can write down messages gave an example of that. The job being considered for the volunteer also happened to include some tasks that were beyond her ability. The job was redesigned to accommodate the volunteer's capacity.

Deliberate vs. accidental inclusivity

One theme that arose consistently throughout the sessions with agency representatives is that supported volunteering rarely results from deliberate recruitment efforts on the part of the agency. Organizations are not systematically seeking special needs volunteers. Not one agency representative in this research indicated they the agency had launched any special recruitment drives or included any affirmative action messages in their regular marketing and recruitment activities.

Managers of volunteers will consider accepting people with special needs if the latter make the effort to apply, or if a third party referral agency makes the approach on behalf of the volunteer. The one exception is at the board level. Ironically, some boards deliberately seek consumer representation on the board, and in some cases, these consumers are people with disabilities. Some of these boards are the same boards that resist the involvement of people with disabilities through supported volunteering at the direct service level!

THE VOLUNTEERS

Three focus group sessions were held with people with disabilities who were volunteers at the time the sessions were held. Their responses to questions were categorized, and are listed below.

Motivation

Participants related a wide range of motives for their pursuit of volunteer work.

Here are some sample comments.

I think that my volunteer experiences had to do with finding out about something that really mattered to me, or knowing something was already there that really mattered to me. I wanted to support a cause that I was interested in.

I had been having some difficulty getting some full time paid employment, and I am qualified to work in that area. I thought that volunteering might help me in getting some contacts, and in showing people I can still do the job in spite of the fact that I have some visual impairments. So for me, it was...showing people that I do have the skills, and I do have abilities, and that they were able to trust me, and I was able to develop trust as well. It [also] helped me to further develop career goals. I then went back to school and ...decided to look at more of a social work profession, and doing the volunteer work allowed me to see if I had the people skills.

I've seen a lot of organizations, when they're fundraising, use the slogan, "Because you'll never know when you'll need it." To me, I think that's absolutely terrible. I think you should just be able to help people....

The rewards of volunteering

Participants stated clearly and enthusiastically what they get back from their volunteer work.

If they were to call me next year I would go back again , because I felt good, happy that I helped kids. They looked up to me, and that felt really good.

They found me a real neat place to volunteer. They care a lot about people, and they care a lot about me. It's wonderful. Some days I don't feel that good, and it still feels good that we can share our feelings for each other....We can find the support that we need.

I like the fact that I can help people. When they ask a question, I can find the information. It makes me feel good about

myself, because I can help them.

It's rewarding. I'm thinking of my teaching types of volunteer things, and I find it very rewarding when you see that light bulb go off in somebody's head that tells you they understand what it is you're trying to teach them.

Volunteering is fun. You meet different people that you wouldn't normally meet. People don't generally know how to talk to a person in a wheelchair, or go out of their way to talk to a person in a wheelchair.

People like me. They say, "Good morning! Welcome back!" I always am happy.

Deliberate vs. suggested involvement

Almost all volunteers in the focus groups were referred to volunteering through an agency from which they were receiving services. This was not surprising, because contact had been made with prospective focus group participants through disability-serving agencies; they would naturally refer their clients and ex-clients. Because of the skewed sample in the focus groups, therefore, it is not possible to comment on mechanisms used by other persons with disabilities to find their way into volunteering if they are not receiving services from an organization that encourages voluntary action among its clients.

Six of the sixteen participants identified that they had also used the placement assistance services of the Volunteer Action Centre, often in cooperation with the original referral agency.

Barriers to involvement in volunteering

Focus group participants experienced a number of barriers in their pursuit of volunteer work.

Physical limitations, accessibility, and accommodation requirements. Here are two quotations that illustrate some of the frustrations that volunteers with disabilities can encounter.

The bathroom was a bit of a problem, because the door that I could get through was a fire door, and we had to find a way

to leave that door open so I could get in, but it was a fire door.

I have a motorized wheelchair....This is good and bad. When I travel, I need a vehicle that can accommodate this big chair. I always find that...[it] is a real problem when it comes to reaching things. This means that file drawers and high cupboards are out of my reach. Even a photocopy machine is difficult. At work I'm responsible for ordering supplies and putting them away, and the supply cupboard is not accessible.

Transportation. The greatest number of participants noted transportation the most often as a barrier to volunteer involvement. Although public transportation was available for people with disabilities in the study community, pick up was often inconvenient. Some focus group participants had to leave their volunteer positions early because the transportation service arrived early. Others were observed waiting for transportation up to 20 minutes after a focus group session.

Expertise of the placement agency. Several of the participants who had experienced the most success in their volunteer work had placements in disability-serving agencies, and in particular, in agencies that serve clients with the same issues or disabilities as the volunteers themselves. In these cases, physical accessibility, attitudes, supportiveness and job design solutions all contributed to successful placements. Unfortunately, however, this openness cannot be taken for granted, as was suggested by one respondent:

It's ironic that most agencies that want to involve volunteers in volunteer work are helping the handicapped and yet they won't have them in their own organization.

Negative attitudes and ill treatment. Some of the focus group participants encountered appalling attitudes and hurtful reception in their efforts to find volunteer work. The responses in this regard were so strong that they have been summarized below in a separate, major section of this article.

Family overprotection. Several participants need to struggle to overcome the overprotection of their families in the process of getting out, getting about, and finding volunteer work.

...my mother said I wouldn't make it, and I did make it, and I proved to her that I could do it. My mother said, "You can't do it," and I said, "Oh yes I can!" I said, "I want to try and I want to express to you that I can do more things as a volunteer and be more independent and go to meetings and do things on my own and decide."

In response to the above, another participant said,

I'm relating to the mother issue. I think that growing up, I was always given the message, even though it was never said in a mean kind of way, "You can't do that," and "Oh, we can't ask you to do that," so I grew up thinking I couldn't do anything. It was big time protection.

A third volunteer added,

My sisters too. Sometimes they protect me. Sometimes you don't need that protection. You need to grow up on your own and say how you feel.

Accommodations required. Depending on the nature and severity of the disability, accommodations required by volunteers ranges from significant to virtually non-existent. There was, therefore, a variety of needs expressed by focus group participants, most of which are summarized here.

Physical accessibility was an issue for those in wheel chairs. Patience with, and assistance for, those with severe speech impairments is important. The visually impaired and legally blind volunteers require help ranging from bigger labels for key items, to advanced software and taped minutes of meetings. A participant who uses a walker requires help getting through heavy front doors that do not open automatically.

Participation in problem solving

Participants were asked what they found helpful with respect to the location or creation of satisfying volunteer placements. They spoke a lot about creative problem solving, and their role in finding or making accommodations that will work.

So I said to the...supervisor, can we make the nametags big and bold in big letters, and that worked out just fine.

I was on the board [of directors] in a location that was very dimly lit, and that was difficult for me, because I need good lighting....they started to give me a copy of the board minutes in a larger font....When I started [receiving board minutes in advance], ...I could use my own equipment at home, and that allowed me to read it in advance.

Being able to articulate one's needs was noted as an important asset.

When I go somewhere...I will tell them what my needs are....I don't think it's fair of me to go to a meeting and ask you to [meet my needs]. You don't know what my needs are...I always figure it's my job to put you at ease. That gets us through the first couple of meetings, and afterwards, people start saying, "Would it be easier if we do this or that?"....But it's important for me to start the ball rolling by making people feel comfortable.

Two participants discussed the importance of fighting for what is needed, and never allowing a situation to go unchallenged, because it will only make it harder for the next person to break down that barrier.

When you come up against a problem, you have to solve it, because that gives that agency, and whoever they talk to, the ability to use that experience....Sometimes it doesn't matter what you are talking about; if people have preconceived notions, they're going to keep them, but you need to address them and say, "can we resolve this?" If not, then you move on. You don't just leave....Unfortunately, if

there's a disability or a minority, or whatever, the next person coming behind you will have a harder time because you've already made it an okay practice if you don't object.

Several participants agreed that if the will to solve problems is not present in the placement organization, the struggle to find solutions is much harder.

Education for staff

Several participants believed that persons who work with volunteers could benefit from education about disabilities and accommodations.

I think that non-disabled people need to become more educated about a variety of severe and non-severe disabilities, and when people really understand a little bit more about what it's like to have a certain type of disability, and what it takes for that person to really function in the community, then I think they will truly have some understanding.

I've been in an employment situation with an agency that specifically worked with disabled persons and they, themselves, were not able to accommodate my visual needs, and my employment was terminated. I was just let go. I really firmly believe that it takes a lot of education and a real understanding before you get a workable thing happening.

Negative attitudes and ill-treatment

Perhaps the most dramatic, and discouraging, revelations that came from these focus groups were the appalling attitudes and hurtful reception that participants had encountered in their efforts to find volunteer work. In the first example, the volunteer needed accessibility for her wheelchair. In her first tries to volunteer she was confronted by physical barriers, and the treatment she received from various agencies along the way was shameful.

I called [a local agency] and they had me in for an interview, but then they didn't

call me back. I called them back and said, "Where are we here?" And they said, "You'll get called back," and so I waited for a week and I called them back. They said, "We don't want you here because we don't need you here," so, scratch that idea. Apparently, what they didn't tell me was that there were stairs to get in to the place—and me, I can't get up stairs. When I called them back, I asked them is your place accessible, and they said yes. But when I went there for the interview, I found that they had stairs. I said, "I thought your place was accessible?" And they said, "well, we're sorry, we forgot to tell you that we've got stairs." I said, "You fibbed!" I said, "I was believing that you were actually going to need me." They said, "Well, call us back and we'll reconsider," but the reaction I got was they didn't need me. So, scratch that idea.

Other volunteers, who often need only minor accommodations, and a bit of creativity, have had to push hard for their rights or struggle to find solutions.

I didn't have trouble with accessibility, but in terms of vision issues, yes. If I had gone to a particular place to volunteer and say I have vision issues, usually I get "Oh, hold the phone here!"

So I asked the person [where I volunteer]—she wanted me to roll money. I said, the rolls are too small and the print is too small. So she says, we'll make a chart up for you with coloured squares, and we'll put the amounts beside the squares and all you have to do is look at the charts. I said, gee, we could have done this before. I am so frustrated. I would like to help you with your workload, but if you can't help determine what I need to help me, I can't do the work.

Here's what one volunteer observed about attitudes among volunteer agencies towards people with disabilities.

The one thing I wanted to mention, I really believe—and I don't want to be dis-

criminatory here, because I'm not that way at all—but I truly believe that people who do not have disabilities have a harder time dealing with people whose disabilities are more severe. And whether you look severe or not. I have a visual impairment, and I am legally blind, but I don't tend to look blind. I don't walk with a cane, and I don't have a dog. I have friends who are totally blind who do walk with a cane and have a dog and they have a lot more difficulty than I do.

Several volunteers described experiences that insulted their dignity.

…they placed me…working at the database. After two weeks they put me in a separate room and every time I needed a new piece of paper I had to go out of the room and a long way away to get it. I said, this is not safe for me or them…and I'm not doing it….There must have been a negative attitude there….I have to fight every day for what I need.

I went through five weeks of training and at the end of it they said, most of our kids need physical activity and you can't do it, so we can't match you up with them. I was quite upset….I don't understand it, and I've never understood it. I can understand what they said that a lot of their kids have aggression that they need to let out, and so we can't match you up with anybody because all of our kids need to do sports and all of that, and I'm sure that's true, but to make a blanket statement that they can't match you up with somebody…it probably would have felt awful no matter how it happened, but I think it was pretty stinky of them to let me go through the whole training program and then tell me. Why wouldn't they have said right off the bat, we need somebody who can be physically active with these kids? They made me go through all of that and then told me, "No."

In this example, the difficulty is in the circumstance and the setting.

I'm not sure it's a negative attitude, but at a lot of functions, I need to go to where everyone is standing around and it is noisy and they can't hear me talk. I have a soft voice, and for them to bend down, it's uncomfortable for them, so I avoid a lot of those functions because you end up sitting by yourself a lot of the time. It's a combination. First, wheelchairs make people uncomfortable. Having a dog has been a big benefit because he breaks down barriers, but then when people are having to bend over to speak with you, they are uncomfortable and they feel like they are invading your space. Plus it's hard to hear. In most functions, if they could have a place where people could sit, it would make a big difference.

A volunteer who has severe multiple disabilities has tried hard through a number of positions that have not worked out for him. He is not completely discouraged yet, but the experience has been difficult. His conclusion is this:

They do treat you differently from other people. It's not right and it's not fair.

The future
When asked whether they would pursue more or other volunteer work in the future, focus group participants displayed a consistent undercurrent of fear and reluctance as they offered guarded responses. This non-verbal undertone may be a better indicator than words of the struggles people with disabilities go through to find volunteer work.

Advice for others
Despite their fears and the difficulties, participants had generally rousing, enthusiastic advice for other people with disabilities seeking volunteer work. This response came even from some of the same participants who expressed some fear for themselves and their future search for volunteer work.

I would say go for it! Volunteer where you want to volunteer.

Stick at it.

Make sure you like it.

Know what you want to do. Have an idea in your head and don't be afraid to try it. You have to have some courage.

It's important to get out there and try to network....So, word of mouth—people working together to connect you....Use your contacts.

One participant gave sage advice about realistic expectations:

I'm really practical, so I'd say, if you're going to volunteer, be realistic about it. Don't volunteer to be an astronaut if you don't even know how to do less. Your skills need to match the thing you want to do.

Others recommended getting some help:

Go to the Volunteer Action Centre.

Go call the K-W Habilitation Centre to get some help to get involved.

Help in the future
Participants were asked to comment on what they thought would make their future search for volunteer work easier.

Having contact people in agencies.

Agencies have to understand about different disabilities and where people are. Not to be afraid.

...education around volunteer opportunities, or whatever, but I think some education for ourselves around assertiveness and how to say, these are my needs or how to feel comfortable.

Some more ideas about who to call, where, what, when, how.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Because the purpose of the OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL project is "to increase the community's capacity to open up new opportunities for all persons to exercise more control over their own lives and make a contribution to this community through volunteer work," an initial assessment of where the

community is with respect to supported volunteering was an essential starting point for this project. The goal of the focus group research was to obtain more detail about supported volunteering in the Waterloo Region than was gathered in the initial community agency survey.[6]

The focus group research, based on six separate sessions with a total of twenty-six agency representatives and sixteen individuals, should not be considered a comprehensive overview of supported volunteering as it has been experienced by all, or even by a majority, of agencies or volunteers or prospective volunteers in the Waterloo Region. Information gathered here has allowed identification of key observations and issues about supported volunteering as experienced by this subset of agency and individual representatives. The data gathered here may be useful to guide further research.

Many organizations in the Waterloo Region are deploying volunteers who have disabilities, and there was a general sentiment among agency representatives in these focus groups that this is a good thing. Most agencies would fall short of feeling that they have an obligation to do so, but most felt that inclusivity is consistent with organizational values and a reflection of the type of community we all want to live in.

Other observations from the focus group research include:
• Involving people with disabilities as volunteers is not always easy and not always successful. It can absorb more time and energy from organizations and staff, all of whom are pressed to work harder in light of cutbacks and increasing service demands. Although it cannot be said with certainty how pervasive this pattern is, some staff in some settings are resistant to the involvement of volunteers in general, and seemingly even more resistant to involvement of persons with disabilities as volunteers. This resistance is, at least in part, due to increasing work pressures on staff throughout the service system, although discrimination and prejudice seem to play a part as well.

• Many agencies indicated a need for information about disabilities and the process of job accommodations, as well as a further need to learn how to work with people with various kinds of disabilities. Discomfort, ignorance, and embarrassment stand in the way of creative job accommodations and problem solving. Agencies also indicated a strong need for consistent sources of information and support—someone to call when help is needed—during the course of placements.

• Referral agents need to learn more about the nature of work and the limitations of prospective placement agencies, so that the volunteers who are referred have a good initial chance of finding success.

• Even though a significant proportion of placements do not work out or are short term, other placements, even those of a short term nature, turn out to be extremely productive, and play important roles in the happiness, well-being, and recovery of the volunteers engaged in them.

• It seems that for many volunteers who have disabilities, relatively minor and low-cost accommodations have made enormous differences in how possible and comfortable volunteer work can be. Without question, however, some participants need substantive accommodations, which when already present—as in the case of elevators and ramps—are nearly taken for granted, yet which pose absolute barriers when not in place.

• Some participants need help to determine what kind of accommodation would make the difference, but most of the volunteers in this research seemed able to identify immediately what their own needs are through long experience navigating through the other aspects of their lives.

The general conclusion drawn from this research is that, overall, locating suitable and satisfying volunteer work has not been easy for the largest proportion of volunteer and prospective volunteer participants in these focus groups. Most have encountered barriers and negative attitudes. Many have had to try several placements before finding one that

works. Although this can be said of anyone seeking to do volunteer work, some of the respondents in this research have experienced hurtful encounters and rude and inconsiderate behaviour along the way. Many feel trepidation when thinking about having to find new or different volunteer work in the future. Nonetheless, they are, as a group, enthusiastic about their involvement.

Volunteer work responds to a wide range of motivations, and is mostly a positive, rewarding, and enjoyable experience once the specifics of the position are worked out. Most of the participants in these focus groups found their volunteer work with the assistance of disability service agencies and the Volunteer Action Centre. Given the struggles they have encountered along the way, one wonders how other people with disabilities would manage without the assistance, information, and advocacy of referral agents such as have been involved with those in our research groups.

Although barriers to persons with special needs to do volunteer work are significant, they are surmountable. Success has often been due solely to the persistence and perseverance of the prospective volunteers who have continued to search for placements even after encountering obstacles, rudeness, and insults to their dignity.

For more information about the study or R.G.S.V., contact:

Opportunities For All Project
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ENDNOTES

[1] Formally known as The Regional Municipality of Waterloo, Waterloo Region, located 100 kilometres west of Toronto, comprises the cities of Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge, plus several towns and rural areas. The population of the Region in 1998 was 418,000, representing 155,590 households.

[2] Association for Volunteer Administration (Winter 2000). *Opportunities for All—The Potential for Supported Volunteering in Community Agencies.* Richmond, VA.

[3] Ibid., pp 10-16.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Nevertheless, it is important to note that the agency survey found that the input of resources to support volunteers with physical disabilities was often minimal.

[6] Graff and Vedell, op. cit.

Barriers to the Inclusion of Volunteers with Developmental Disabilities

by

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Being a volunteer is an important way for individual community members to be active and vital contributors within the community, to feel connected, and to be viewed as an asset to one's community. With over 56% of Americans volunteering (Independent Sector, 1999), it is evident that many of our citizens have realized the dual nature of volunteerism—while helping others and giving of oneself to meet the needs of fellow community members, one can also reap significant personal benefits. Research has indicated that volunteers benefit psychosocially in such ways as increased self-esteem, attitudinal changes, a sense of accomplishment, improved self-concept, reduced alienation, increased feelings of helpfulness, and a greater sense of social responsibility (Finn & Checkoway, 1998; Hamilton & Fenzel, 1988; Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998; Moore & Allen, 1996; Omoto & Snyder, 1990; Omoto, Snyder, & Berghuis, 1992).

IS EVERYONE BENEFITING?

Not everyone is reaping the personal benefits associated with volunteering. Despite the abundance of data gathered on the prevalence of volunteerism in the United States, little information has been gathered on volunteers with disabilities. To our knowledge, only two studies exist—a regional study conducted in Canada and a local study in North Carolina.

Graff and Vedell (2000) sampled organizations in the Waterloo Region of Ontario, Canada and found that 85% of the respondents had involved people with disabilities as volunteers within the past year. A similar study was conducted in Greensboro, North Carolina of organizations within the city that utilize volunteers (Phoenix, 2000). Only 2.4% of the volunteers in these agencies had an identified disability. Considering the fact that 19% of the U.S. population has some form of disability (Krause, Stoddard, & Gilmartin, 1996), a substantial disparity exists between the number of people with disabilities volunteering and those that could potentially be volunteering.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to explore the barriers that volunteer coordinators perceive to including volunteers with disabilities into their current volunteer ranks. Since individuals with developmental disabilities/mental retardation (DD/MR) are often excluded from community activities (Schleien, Ray, & Green, 1997), a focus was placed on them (e.g., autism, cerebral palsy, and mental retardation). Specifically, the following questions were addressed:

- What is the prevalence of volunteers with DD/MR within organized volunteer programs in the United States?
- What are the barriers that volunteer coordinators perceive to including volunteers with DD/MR into their volunteer forces?
- What are the benefits that volunteer coordinators perceive to including volunteers with DD/MR? Do these perceived benefits outweigh the barriers?
- What assistance is needed for volunteer coordinators to make their programs more diverse?

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METHODS

A stratified (by state) random sampling of 500 subjects from the United States was drawn from the year 2000 member base of the Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA). The 500 randomly selected members were sent a cover letter and survey to be self-administered, along with a self-addressed, stamped, return envelope. Using Dillman's (2000) technique for mailed surveys, a reminder card was sent to subjects who had not yet responded 10 days following the original mailing.

A 34-item survey instrument was designed for the purpose of this study. Professionals with expertise in the fields of volunteerism, disability, and/or research methodology reviewed the instrument to establish its content and face validities. Furthermore, the survey instrument was field-tested in Greensboro, NC with 27 volunteer administrators.

RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Of the 500 surveys mailed, 228 (45.6%) were returned. Two hundred fourteen (42.8%) surveys were usable, closely representing the overall U.S. membership base of the AVA. Respondents were distributed across 14 agency mission statements. Seven of the mission statements ranked substantially higher than the others. These included social services (18.8%), public service (16.9%), health (15.9%), education (10.1%), environment (7.2%), seniors (7.2%), and youth development (6.8%). Other agency mission statements included arts and culture (4.3%), community development (3.9%), sports and recreation (2.9%), community of faith (1.9%), fundraising (0.5%), and international development (0.5%). Only 2.9% of the respondents identified their agency's mission as being disability related.

Prevalence of Volunteers with Disabilities

Volunteers with disabilities represented only 5.7% of the overall volunteer pools.

> These results suggest that volunteer coordinators would probably have positive attitudes toward volunteers with disabilities, however, they probably have not been exposed to the possibilities. Therefore, promoting people with disabilities as viable volunteers may be an important strategy.

Only 1.1% of all the volunteers were developmentally disabled. Seventy-seven percent of the volunteer coordinators managed volunteers with disabilities and 45% managed volunteers with DD/MR.

Barriers

Perceived barriers that interfered with the inclusion of volunteers with DD/MR were identified (i.e., strongly agreed or agreed) at the following rates: staffing (i.e., lack staff necessary to supervise; staff lack necessary training), 66%; lack transportation, 56%; barriers of omission (i.e., never asked to volunteer; never thought to recruit; unsure how to recruit), 39%; cost (i.e., not cost effective; cost of additional equipment/resources; liability) 33%; skill deficit (i.e., job responsibilities too complex; individuals with DD/MR lack necessary skills), 32%; attitudinal (i.e., public would not be accepting; clientele not comfortable; other volunteers not comfortable; staff uncomfortable; administrators not supportive), 24%; and physical accessibility, 18%.

Surprisingly, attitudinal barriers ranked next to last in importance. Barriers of omission, however, were the third highest ranked barrier. Barriers of omission, although not necessarily a reflection of outwardly negative attitudes, are a reflection of society's failure to recognize the abilities and needs of individuals with disabilities (Schleien, Ray, & Green, 1997). These results suggest that volunteer coordinators would probably have positive attitudes toward volunteers with disabilities, although, they probably have not been exposed to the possibilities. Therefore, promoting people with disabilities as viable volunteers may be an important strategy.

In fact, volunteer coordinators who managed volunteers with disabilities were less likely to perceive barriers of omission or liability as significant concerns. Coordinators who utilized volunteers with DD/MR were less

likely to identify attitudinal, staffing, cost, or skill deficit barriers. Whether these volunteer coordinators perceived fewer barriers, and therefore were able to include more volunteers with disabilities, or they included volunteers with disabilities and later discovered that they experienced far fewer barriers than they perceived, is yet to be determined.

> The fact that they identified lack of staff training as a barrier does not necessarily imply their interest in receiving training. Therefore, their expressed interest in receiving staff training was encouraging.

Benefits

Eighty-one percent of the volunteer coordinators believed their agencies would benefit from the inclusion of volunteers with DD/MR. In fact, nearly two-thirds (62%) of the coordinators perceived the benefits to inclusive volunteering to outweigh the barriers. Coordinators who managed a greater number of volunteers with DD/MR were more likely to agree with this.

Further substantiating this result are the respondents' levels of interest in coordinating volunteers with DD/MR in their agencies in the future. Eighty-one percent of the respondents stated that they were interested in having volunteers with disabilities serve in their agencies in the future, 70% were interested in volunteers with DD/MR specifically.

Desire for Training

Only 26% of the respondents were not interested in receiving training on how to include volunteers with developmental disabilities. The remainder were either "interested" (32%) or "interested, but lacked the time or resources" (42%). Volunteer coordinators identified specific types of training that they needed: assessing individuals with disabilities (52%), identification of barriers and strategies for overcoming them (41%), disability awareness (38%), matching with volunteers without disabilities (35%), adapting volunteer tasks (32%), recruiting individuals with disabilities (30%), and breaking volunteer tasks into smaller steps (29%). Fifteen percent of the respondents were uncertain about the specific types of training that would be helpful.

The desire for training was consistent with their belief that staff lacks training (highest barrier at 66%). The fact that they identified lack of staff training as a barrier does not necessarily imply their interest in receiving training. Therefore, their expressed interest in receiving staff training was encouraging.

LIMITATIONS

The findings of this study are limited to volunteer coordinators within the United States. The possibility that volunteer coordinators who are members of the AVA are not representative of all volunteer coordinators must also be considered when interpreting these findings. Also, the results may not be representative of small nonprofit agencies, since many smaller agencies lack the resources to conduct an organized volunteer program or employ a volunteer coordinator.

Perceived staffing barriers may have had a negative impact on the stated interest in accommodating volunteers with DD/MR as well as interest in receiving training on how to accomplish this. Many of the respondents who indicated that they were not interested in the future utilization of volunteers with disabilities, and in receiving training on how to include these individuals, noted comments in the margins of the survey. Many of these comments indicated that they currently lacked staff resources and the time necessary to include additional volunteers with disabilities. The Graff and Vedell (2000) study included the option to reply that an agency was currently accommodating as many volunteers with disabilities as they were capable of handling. Such an option on our survey instrument may have yielded less disinterest in future inclusive volunteering.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The promotion of inclusive volunteering will require considerable teamwork. Collaboration across many key players is critical to any successful effort at achieving ongoing inclusion in the community (Germ & Schleien, 1997; Schleien, Ray, & Green,

1997). Inclusive efforts require the combined knowledge of disability specialists and advocates, volunteer coordinators, community volunteer center staff, and those who best understand the needs, skills, and preferences of individuals with disabilities (i.e., individuals with disabilities and their family members/care providers).

Assessing Attitudes

If volunteer coordinators are to actively facilitate more inclusive volunteerism, they must identify the reasons why barriers of omission exist in the first place. For example, coordinators must consider why they have not viewed individuals with DD/MR as potential volunteers or recruited them previously. They may find that these omissions are due to negative attitudes or perceptions that they are hesitant to admit to due to society's current focus on "political correctness," or they may be due to a failure to consider their fellow citizens with disabilities as possessing many viable skills. A self-evaluation of one's attitude toward people with disabilities may be an essential first step in creating a successful inclusive volunteering effort.

Strategies for Recruiting and Supporting Volunteers

Once attitudes and perceptions have been evaluated, specific strategies to recruit and support volunteers of varying abilities need to be designed and implemented. Networking with local advocacy organizations such as the ARC (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens) could prove helpful. A meeting with staff from the advocacy organization to voice a desire to recruit new volunteers, along with an appraisal of one's concerns and shortfalls in doing so, is an excellent starting point. Consulting with therapeutic recreation specialists on task adaptations, accommodations, and staff training, for example, may be necessary. Many therapeutic recreation specialists are trained in strategies that increase the successful functioning and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the community.

Volunteer coordinators should also consider the receptiveness of agency administrators. Without the support of management, policies that are exclusionary in nature and based on perceived versus realistic liability concerns could continue to prohibit the inclusion of volunteers with disabilities. Administrative support for the development and sustainability of inclusive efforts has proven to be an essential element in the success of these efforts. Volunteer coordinators should again consider soliciting the assistance of advocacy organizations, therapeutic recreation specialists, and self-advocates for assistance in gaining agency support for these new initiatives.

Community Collaboration

One way to facilitate a collaborative effort among volunteer coordinators, disability advocates, and individuals with disabilities is through the formation of an advisory board, whose primary focus is to broaden the volunteer base within the community. For those communities with volunteer centers, the facilitation of the advisory board would be an excellent role for their staff to play in making their community's volunteer base more inclusive and stronger. The advisory board should be comprised of a number of individuals representative across the key player groups addressed earlier, including people with disabilities. Strategies that the advisory board could address include:

- How to pair volunteers with disabilities with nondisabled peers, to volunteer cooperatively and help relieve the agency's "lack of staff to supervise" problem
- How to provide agency staff with the necessary training to increase their confidence and skills in including volunteers with DD/MR and other disabilities
- How disability advocates and family members can assess the preferences and abilities of volunteers with disabilities, to appropriately match them with community volunteer tasks
- What creative strategies and supports could be employed so that volunteers with disabilities have reliable and accessible transportation to and from volunteer sites?
- What supports could be implemented to ensure that inclusive volunteer efforts are sustainable and not merely temporary "special projects"?

FUTURE EFFORTS

This study has opened doors leading to a greater understanding of the barriers and potential for inclusive volunteering. However, many doors remain unopened. Perceived barriers to and benefits of volunteerism should be further explored from the perspective of the volunteers themselves. Little is known about attitudes toward volunteerism from the perspectives of volunteers or prospective volunteers with disabilities. The voices of those with disabilities should not go undetected regarding their personal experiences with volunteerism.

Research should be conducted on the outcomes of inclusive volunteering, including benefits to volunteers with and without disabilities, the agencies in which they serve, and the communities in which they live. A comprehensive understanding of what is to be gained from inclusive volunteering is likely to yield greater support for its implementation. We should also attempt to determine whether volunteers with disabilities are being included in greater numbers due to a shift in attitudes, or whether more positive attitudes toward volunteers with disabilities results from their participation.

Future research could consider the development of specific inclusion strategies as they relate to community volunteerism. Do strategies that are already identified as effective for the inclusion of individuals with disabilities into other community settings (e.g., recreation) apply to volunteer settings? From such research, a set of "promising practices for inclusive volunteering" could be developed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Considering the benefits that nonprofit agencies, and individuals with disabilities, have to gain from inclusive volunteering, this community initiative deserves further exploration. The potential for individuals with disabilities to develop vocational skills, or practice functional community skills, are two possible outcomes; however inclusive volunteering could be about so much more. Inclusive volunteering addresses the basic human rights to be valued by others, to experience the joy of giving of oneself, and to find pleasure in doing what one enjoys. It is also about communities recognizing the unique contributions that all citizens have to offer. It addresses becoming recognized, not only as the users of community resources, but as valuable contributors to community capacity. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) stated:

> *Every single person has capacities, abilities, and gifts. Living a good life depends on whether those capacities can be used, abilities expressed and gifts given. If they are, the person will be valued, feel powerful and well-connected to the people around them. And the community around the person will be more powerful because of the contribution the person is making. (p. 13)*

The time has come for everyone—regardless of ability level—to have the opportunity to "live the good life" by volunteering their time and giving of themselves to their communities using their abilities, making our communities more powerful, and in turn, better places for everyone to live.

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4-H Volunteers and the Internet:
A Partnership for the Future
Claudia C. Mincemoyer, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

The Pennsylvania 4-H Youth Development Program serves over 112,000 youth, ages 8-19, with the support of more than 10,000 teen and adult volunteers. Youth are enrolled as 4-H members in community clubs, project clubs, school enrichment experiences, after-school clubs, or as an individual member with an adult helper. 4-H curriculum is designed to teach life skills to enable youth to become productive, caring, and contributing members of their communities. Curricula (projects) and supporting resource materials are available, generally free of charge, from Pennsylvania's 67 county cooperative extension offices. Traditionally, 4-H volunteer leaders visit the local extension office to review curricula and supporting resources, obtain copies of project materials and receive training and support needed to effectively perform their responsibilities. Currently, a small percentage of Pennsylvania's curriculum projects are accessible on the Internet. This article explores the potential of using the Internet as a way to share curriculum resources with volunteers and discusses implications for virtually communicating, recruiting, and managing volunteers.

BACKGROUND

The Internet has changed the way that we receive information both professionally and personally. Computers have been a common productivity and communication tool in the workplace for many years;. However, use of the Internet in the home is now rapidly increasing. Kraut and Cummings (2001) characterize this shift as "domestication" of the Internet, or a move from using personal computers in a work setting, primarily for income-producing purposes, to more personal and household purposes. This shift is mirrored in Pennsylvania as more individuals now have computer access at home than at work (PaSDC Research Brief, 2000). Fifty-four percent of the people polled in the Penn State survey reported having computers in their home while only 43 percent reported having access to a computer at work. Of those with a computer at home, over 90 percent used it to access the Internet and 95 percent used it for electronic mail (PaSDC Research Brief, 2000).

As an educational delivery system, the Internet can be interactive, responsive to the needs of its users, and provide information "on-demand." Access to educational resources for 4-H volunteers, youth, and the general public, via the Internet is easy, fast and cost-effective. By not restricting access to registered volunteers, a 4-H presence on the Internet may also prove to be a powerful recruitment tool for potential volunteers and interested youth. Culp and Nolan (2000) report that successful volunteer recruitment depends upon effective marketing to targeted populations who have an interest in the organization, its clientele, or mission. They indicate that keeping an up-to-date home page and linking it to popular and related web sites will help the organization attract and keep volunteers. Ellis (2000) supports this idea in her overview of new trends in volunteering. She notes that the explosion of the World Wide Web not only helps with recruiting, but has also begun a new form of volunteering: virtual volunteering. Volunteers can complete assignments from their homes, providing valuable services to organizations. Cravens (2000) has researched and worked with over 100 organizations that now provide on-line volunteer opportunities. The increase

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in the number of volunteers willing to partic-
ipate in on-line volunteering experiences pro-
vides support for exploring other uses of the
Internet with volunteers, such as communica-
tion and curriculum delivery.

The author surveyed all 50 states 4-H web
sites to determine the extent of Internet-avail-
able curricula. Although many 4-H web sites
housed only limited numbers of 4-H publica-
tions, 34 percent of the 4-H web sites had at
least some curriculum resources. Several of
the state's 4-H web sites went beyond access
to a select number of publications. For exam-
ple, the University of Kentucky has over 50
projects and resources accessible through their
state 4-H web site <http://ca.uky.edu/agcol-
lege/4h/> on a wide array of youth topics
ranging from citizenship to woodworking.
None of the sites restrict access to the general
public.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In Pennsylvania, 4-H youth curriculum
committees, comprised of faculty, staff, vol-
unteers and youth,
determine new curricu-
lar priorities, curriculum
delivery methods, and
appropriate evaluation
techniques for 4-H
youth curricula. The
curriculum committees
are also responsible for
review and revisions of existing curricula.
During 2000, several of the curriculum com-
mittees discussed distributing curriculum
resources using the Internet as the sole deliv-
ery method. There were no accurate data to
support transferring curricula to Internet-only
delivered publications. Questions of availabil-
ity of access, frequency of access, and recep-
tiveness of volunteers to utilizing this new
delivery strategy were raised.

The purpose of this study was to deter-
mine if 4-H volunteers in Pennsylvania are
receptive to receiving curriculum projects and
resources directly from the Internet. The
study also examined current rates of accessi-
bility and frequency of access to the Internet
of the population of 4-H volunteers.

METHODOLOGY

The target audience for this study was cur-
rent adult 4-H volunteers. A stratified ran-
dom sampling process was used to select the
sample population. County 4-H coordinators
(n=67) were each sent 15 surveys to mail to a
randomly selected list of 4-H volunteers. A
4-H volunteer must be enrolled and screened
to be on a current mailing list. Lists are
updated at least every other year. A current
roster of 4-H volunteers reduces the error of
including names of people who are not in the
study population. Of the 67 counties in
Pennsylvania, 59 participated in the study
and mailed 885 surveys to 4-H volunteers.
A total of 554 surveys were returned. Howev-
er, 41 did not return a consent to participate
in the study and were not used, resulting in a
total of 513 useable surveys. A follow-up let-
ter with a replacement survey was sent to
non-respondents (Dillman, 2000). An addi-
tional 35 surveys were returned, thus 548 sur-
veys were used for the analysis yielding a 61.9
percent response rate (see Table 1).

TABLE 1:				
Number of counties participating and volunteers responding				
Number of counties participating	Surveys returned	Surveys received without consent	Surveys used for analysis	Response rate
59 (88%)	589 (66.5%)	41 (4.6%)	548	61.9%

The survey consisted of eleven quantitative
questions relating to availability and access to
the Internet and e-mail, likelihood of access,
frequency of access, willingness to provide an
e-mail address, and two questions related to
the demographic characteristics of the respon-
dents. One qualitative question was included
to ask respondents who were not very likely
to access 4-H curriculum materials and
resources from the Internet to indicate their
reasons. Responses to this question were put
into meaningful categories by the author. The
categories of responses were ranked by fre-
quency cited.

The survey questions were developed by
the author and reviewed by a state program
leader, an extension academic department
head, and four extension 4-H youth develop-

ment educators to establish face and content validity. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were used to analyze the data.

FINDINGS

The major findings of this study highlight the availability and accessibility of the Internet to our 4-H volunteers, and their willingness to use it to receive information regarding 4-H projects and resources. Reasons for volunteers who are extremely unwilling to use this technology are cited.

Computer and Internet access

Eighty-four percent of the 4-H volunteers in Pennsylvania own a computer. Over half (54.2 percent) of the volunteers who are employed have access to a computer at work. Of those who don't have a computer at home and are employed, an additional 3.9 percent have access to a computer at work. Thus, about three-quarters (75.9 percent) of the 4-H volunteers have a computer available for their use.

4-H volunteers were asked if they had access to the Internet from their home computer. Of those who had a computer at home, 69 percent had access to the Internet from this computer. Of those who did not have access at home, an additional 1.6 percent of the employed volunteers had access at work. A total of 70.6 percent of 4-H leaders who responded to the survey has access to the Internet either at home or work (see Table 2).

TABLE 2:
Computer ownership and access to Internet

	YES	NO	NA*	TOTAL
Own a computer	84.8%	15.2%		100%
Computer at work	58.0%	36.1%	5.9%*	100%
Access to Internet (home)	69.0%	15.8%	15.2%*	100%
Access to Internet (work)	38.2%	19.3%	42.4%*	100%**
Access to Internet at work or home	70.6%			70.6%

*not applicable—don't work or don't own a computer
**rounded to equal 100%

Frequency of access to Internet

About 52 percent of 4-H volunteers access the Internet at least once/week with 33.5 percent accessing the Internet more than once each week (see Table 3).

TABLE 3:
Frequency of access to Internet

	Frequency of Access	Frequency Percent
Once/month	50	9.3%
Twice/month	66	12.3%
Once/week	101	18.9%
More than once/week	179	33.5%
Don't access	40	7.5%
NA	99	18.5%
TOTAL	535	100.0%

Likelihood of accessing the Internet

Volunteers were asked how likely they were to access 4-H curriculum materials and resources from the Internet for use with their 4-H clubs (see Table 4).

TABLE 4:
Access curriculum information and resources

Likelihood of Accessing Information	Percent
Not very likely	12.1%
Somewhat likely	24.0%
Very likely	28.1%
Extremely likely	17.5%
NA	18.4%
TOTAL	100.0%*

*rounded to equal 100%

Using a four point Likert-type scale to indicate likelihood of access, 46 percent of the 4-H volunteers were very likely or extremely likely to access 4-H curriculum materials on the Internet, if available. Twenty-four percent indicated that they were somewhat likely to access materials from a web site. About 12 percent indicated that they were not very likely to access a web site for curriculum resources. The 12 percent of respondents who were not very likely to access the Internet for curriculum resources were asked to indicate reasons why they chose this response. Responses were categorized and are listed in order of frequency of response in Table 5.

TABLE 5:
Reasons for not accessing Internet

Reasons	Number of Responses
No access to the Internet at home	17
Computer for work use only	12
No time to access the Internet	10
Don't use the Internet often enough	8
No computer	7
Not computer/Internet literate	5
Technical difficulties with connections to Internet	2
Already using curriculum resources from other sources	2
Can't print for club members	2
Need personal contact	2
Printed materials are easier to access	1

Willingness to provide e-mail address to receive 4-H communications

Using a four point Likert-type scale, over 65 percent of the responding 4-H volunteers indicated that they are willing or extremely willing to provide their e-mail addresses to receive information directly from the state 4-H administrative department. The percentage of volunteers who were not at all willing to provide their e-mail addresses was about four percent (see Table 6). About 19 percent did not respond because they do not have e-mail capability.

TABLE 6:
Willingness to provide e-mail address

Willingness	Frequency	Percentage
Not at all	21	3.9%
Somewhat	30	5.6%
Not sure	28	5.2%
Willing	181	33.5%
Extremely willing	175	32.4%
Not applicable	105	19.4%
TOTAL	540	100.0%

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many benefits for volunteers and the extension organization to Internet distribution of resources. 4-H volunteers are willing to use this new technology to receive curriculum resources; thus, Cooperative Extension needs to rapidly provide resources to increase

our web-based curricular offerings. Findings from this study were shared with the curriculum developers in Pennsylvania to provide them with the rationale to develop web-delivered curriculum.

Computer ownership among 4-H volunteers is higher than the ownership rate for Pennsylvania citizens and can be viewed as an asset to our information delivery system. In addition to Internet-delivered resources, e-mail communication with volunteers should be explored as a cost-effective way to distribute newsletters, updates, information about meetings and other relevant information to our volunteer corps. These communications could come from either the county extension office or directly from the 4-H state administrative office.

Providing curricula and resources on the Internet via a volunteer web site not only allows the volunteer to access the publication or resource on-demand, but also provides an opportunity for Cooperative Extension to provide links for volunteers and youth to learn more about their topics of interest. 4-H can attract them with information that they need for use directly with their 4-H clubs and then help them to learn more, or further develop their areas of expertise.

Organizations, including 4-H, who want to reach all potential volunteers, need to be cognizant of those families who do not have access. Becker (2000) reports that only about 22 percent of children in families with annual incomes of less than $20,000 have access to a home computer, compared with 91 percent of those in families with incomes of more than $75,000. As organizations move towards higher levels of electronic communication, other avenues for accessing the Internet for those who don't have computers or Internet connections at home should be addressed. Schools and libraries often provide free Internet access for community members and can be a resource for volunteer information and opportunities available on the Internet.

Identifying reliability of access for the volunteer is also a factor in determining how an organization distributes publications and resources. Telephone connections in many rural areas are not at the same level as in

urban communities (Samson, 1998). There can be unexpected interruptions causing user frustration. Designing web-based curricula with the end user in mind is important. A "text-only" option should be available for all curriculum resources to decrease the time it takes to download a page to the web browser, thus reducing frustration and saving time.

The Internet should not replace volunteer connections to their local extension offices but provide a way to supplement curriculum information, provide information on a "need to know" basis, and open the door for those not familiar with the vast resource base in the 4-H youth development program and Cooperative Extension.

IMPLICATIONS BEYOND 4-H

Findings from this study conducted with the 4-H organization have implications for other volunteer organizations. Volunteers are accessing the Internet at rates that allow for frequent information sharing and updating. Similar to accessing curriculum resources, volunteers can receive updates and new information as soon as it is available. Internet distribution of information for volunteers also allows for rapid revisions and updates to ensure that current information is available to the volunteer population.

If volunteers are receptive and willing to use the Internet and communicate electronically, recruiting and involving volunteers online becomes a viable volunteer management tool. Communication is quick, cost-effective and timely. Volunteers also have the ability to network with each other, providing support as well as sharing information. Willingness to use the Internet to review and evaluate curriculum, distribute newsletters, policy updates and other volunteer resources requires a commitment of time and effort. Volunteer organizations should see this as an opportunity to go beyond basic e-mail communication and provide in-depth virtual information or volunteer development opportunities.

Increased access and use of the Internet may also provide an opportunity to reach those who traditionally would not volunteer. For example, Ellis (2000) discusses using the Internet to reach volunteers who have a dis-

ability or are restricted by schedules or other commitments. Internet resources and dialogue may allow them to provide viable volunteer services. Ellis (2000) also highlights the potential of developing an on-line volunteer mentoring program where existing volunteers may be able to mentor newly recruited volunteers.

The potential to capitalize on volunteer access and receptivity to Internet use is great for 4-H and other organizations that rely on volunteers to carry out their missions. Benefits can be realized for both the organizations and their volunteers.

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Understanding Web Accessibility
by Joe Clark

INTRODUCTION

All the features of the World Wide Web that make it appealing to nondisabled persons—the enormous range of information, the unfiltered opinions published by average people, the self-serve shopping, and more—also make the Web appealing to people with disabilities. However, statistics show that disabled people have a lower Web usage than people without disabilities. Volunteer administrators can increase disabled people's participation in their organizations' Web sites by "authoring"—that is, coding, writing, designing, and publishing—those sites according to standards that are generally easy and inexpensive to meet. By doing so, Web sites will be much more accessible to many disabled people.

How many disabled people are online?

The available figures on numbers of people with disabilities online are not very thorough, but they provide a reasonable indication.

Gerber and Kirchner's study (2001) summarizes the available data on visual impairment and computer and Internet use. They report that, in the United States, "[t]he total number of people ages 15 and older with any 'limitation in seeing' who report they have access to the Internet is just over 1.5 million (1,549,000).... [A]bout 196,000 people with a 'severe' limitation in seeing have access to the Internet."

People with other disabilities also use the Web. The Survey on Income and Program Participation or SIPP (Bureau of the Census, 2000) estimated the number of people with certain disabilities and "access" to the Internet. What "access" means is ambiguous, though, by the researchers' own admission:

it could simply mean a computer exists in the home or workplace that can be connected to the Internet, or it could refer to active Internet use by the person in question. Even with this ambiguity, the figures are still helpful:

- 21.1% of people with "vision problems" have Internet access (1,542,410 people)
- 27.2% of people with "hearing problems" (1,893,392)
- 22.5% of people with "difficulty using hands" (1,411,200)
- 42.2% of people with a learning disability (1,242,790)

By contrast, in the same survey, 56.7% of nondisabled people have Internet access. The disparity is considerable.

HOW DO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES USE COMPUTERS?

Even given the lower participation rate among people with disabilities, disabled groups are, in fact, online. But how do people with disabilities use computers?

Some disabilities, like hearing impairment, may require no modifications at all; people with those disabilities use the same equipment as nondisabled people. However, adaptive technology is commonly used by people with disabilities to customize equipment for their disability.

A person with limited use of the hands or arms may require a different input method, such as a large trackball, a modified keyboard, or software that works with one or more switches that can emulate a keyboard or mouse. A person with a modest visual impairment may use screen-magnification software that blows up the size of the entire display. Someone with a more severe visual impair-

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ment may use a screen reader—software that reads text, menus, icons, and everything else that is visible in a computer's interface says out loud in a synthesized voice.

WHICH DISABILITIES ARE MOST AFFECTED?

When it comes to accessible Web development, some disability groups need more attention than others. Blind and visually-impaired people top the list for the simple reason that the Web is a visual medium. Next on the list, and somewhat neglected, are people with mobility impairments, who find it difficult to move around complicated Web pages with dozens of links and other manipulable items.

Other disability groups are less likely to require accessibility—either because there is little on the Web that pertains to their disability (e.g., soundtracks are uncommon on the Web, so deaf and hard-of-hearing people do not face enormous barriers) or because the disability cannot be substantially accommodated without a rethinking of the Web as we know it (as with cognitive disabilities like dyslexia).

WHAT IS ACCESSIBILITY?

The term *accessibility* can be understood to mean accommodating characteristics a person cannot change (Clark 2003). A blind person cannot stop being blind when confronted with a visual Web page, for example, so blindness becomes an issue that requires accommodation.

ACCESSIBLE VS. INACCESSIBLE PAGES

It is impossible to declare a certain Web page "accessible" or "inaccessible" for the simple reason that there are too many provisos involved. Accessible to which groups? Under what conditions? Using which adaptive technology, if any?

However, it is possible to design Web pages according to published criteria, which, if implemented intelligently, will result in improved access by specific disability groups. *The* reference for Web accessibility standards is the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)*, published by the Web Accessibility

Initiative (1999) of the World Wide Web Consortium.

The WCAG provides a list of recommended practices for Web developers at three severity or importance levels. Priority 1 guidelines, if met, are "a basic requirement for some groups to be able to use Web documents." Priority 2 requirements, if met, "will remove significant barriers to accessing Web documents." Finally, Priority 3 requirements, if met, "will improve access to Web documents."

The three priority levels are standards that Web authors "must," "should," and "may" follow, respectively. The hierarchy suggested by the three priority levels has a strong basis in practical fact. A Web page that meets Priority 1 guidelines probably will be significantly easier to use for a wide range of disabled people, while Priorities 2 and 3 offer decreasing returns.

Priority 1 guidelines are generally easy to meet. Some example requirements:

- For every item on a page that is not text, provide a text equivalent. Every image on a page, for example, must carry an alternative or alt text that adaptive technology like screen readers can read out loud. A blind visitor to the Web site won't be able to see the image, but can read the text equivalent.
- If you use tables to display data, identify row and column headers. With that added information, a screen reader, for example, can turn a table of information into understandable speech more easily. (HTML, the markup language used to create Web pages, has many ways of identifying row and column headers [Ferg 2002].)
- Make sure that information is still understandable without colour. Some forms of colour blindness require care, for example, in combining red and green.

ADDING ACCESSIBILITY TO WORKFLOW

For volunteer organizations, it might not be difficult to add accessible Web design to the workflow of day-to-day Web publishing. Your site is probably based on templates that

are reused from page to page; if you update those templates to meet the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines,* you accomplish a great deal in a single stroke. If your organization publishes more text than images, meeting Priority 1 guidelines is almost automatic most of the time, since text is usually accessible to many disabled groups

A few difficulties can be foreseen, though. Some Web-design software makes it very difficult to control the exact contents of the HTML it produces. Your pages become much larger and more complex than they actually need to be—and harder to update. (It may be difficult to publish a table with correct row and column headers, for example.) Or you may be unable to alter the underlying HTML of your site, being limited to adding new content only. Or, in a more advanced case, your budget may allow you to post multimedia on your site, but you may not have allocated a budget to add captions (for deaf viewers) and audio descriptions (an ongoing narration track for blind viewers that explains what's happening in the video image).

However, those problems can often be overcome—e.g., some newer authoring programs produce compact, easily-updated HTML but are free or low-cost, and it is also possible to use free or low-cost tools to make multimedia accessible. Even if your organization cannot do everything possible to improve its Web accessibility, it's always possible to do *something*.

> Accessible Web development is generally not difficult or expensive and can benefit large numbers of people with disabilities who are online.

CONCLUSION

Accessible Web development is generally not difficult or expensive and can benefit large numbers of people with disabilities who are online. Publishing Web sites that meet accessibility guidelines is an easy way for volunteer administrators to significantly reduce barriers to participation by people with disabilities.

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Working With a Comprehensive Nominating Process

By Sue Inglis, Ph.D.
Sheelah Dunn Dooley, M.A., M.Ed.

In writing this paper, we have drawn upon our experiences associated with the nominating committee of the YWCA in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. The Hamilton YWCA is a 113-year-old organization, governed by a 15-mn member board, that works primarily in a policy governance framework including four standing committees, one of which is the nominating committee. The volunteer manager is a part-time contract position. We were motivated to write this article because we wanted to share the experiences we have had with the YWCA nominating process, as well as raise some of the related issues of volunteer leadership development and community representation associated with nominating. We hope to encourage volunteers, staff and community to accept the challenge of working toward a comprehensive, transparent nominating process. The five-part model we describe is adaptable to any non-profit organization, and is especially relevant for community based agencies striving to develop volunteer management resources that strengthen leadership within the organization and its community.

The work of the nominating committee is an essential part of the responsibilities of a board of directors, and one that warrants as much deliberation and intentionality as the process of hiring senior staff. The Canadian "Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector" (1999) recommends in its guidelines a nominating committee independent of management, proper planning for board succession and recruitment of new board members, and for clear policies concerning recruitment. These guidelines aim at ensuring constituency and client participation in governance, which in turn supports "openness, [that is] transparency of activities to the public at large" (page 25). In brief, recruitment procedures need to ensure quality trustees who can steward the organization through complex times.

All boards require a nominating process that at a minimum recruits new members with the necessary skills to steward the organization, provides vitality and good rotation of members allowing for continuity between "generations" of board members, and maintains a connection to the community. Typically, the nominating committee is a standing committee of the board of directors with its terms of references, duties and power included in the organization's Bylaws. Axelrod (1994) identifies the importance of having systematic selection, orientation and board development processes in place to strengthen the board's effectiveness. Nelson (1991)

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Sheelah Dunn Dooley is the President of the organizational development firm Dunn Dooley Associates (Dundas, Ontario) specializing in facilitating change in non-profit organizations. Sheelah is a National Trainer with the United Way of Canada and part-time faculty member at Mohawk College teaching in the Workplace Leadership Program, a program she helped establish. Sheelah has been associated with the Hamilton YWCA nominating committee as both a community representative and as a board member.

emphasizes the value of the orientation process.

We acknowledge that the work of the nominating committee is not done in isolation and involves a number of relationships internal and external to the organization. Internally, the nominating process involves working with the board of directors as well as with committees, the volunteer manager, and other staff, volunteers and member/clients. Externally, the process involves direct contacts with other community organizations and community members. There are also indirect associations with the community (e.g., influences from funders and trends in the non-profit sector) during the nominating process as the promotions, contacts, and activities unfold. These various relationships are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Relationships Within a Comprehensive Nominating Process
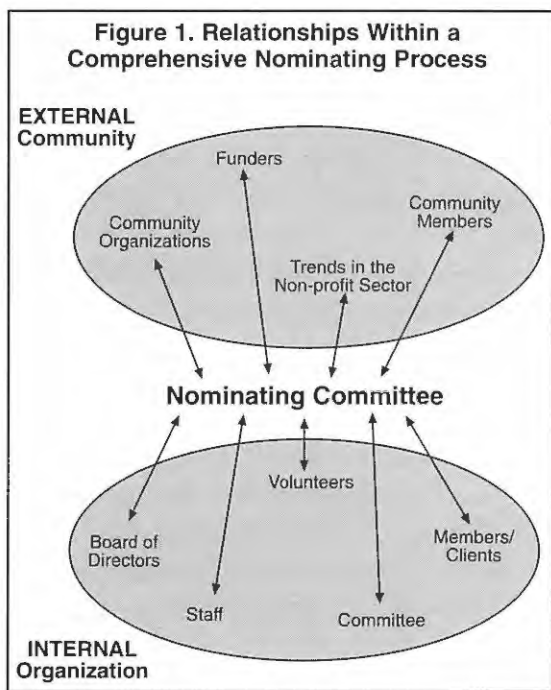
OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND TO THE NOMINATING PROCESS

The Hamilton YWCA "comprehensive nominating process" has five phases:
1. Board Charge and Needs Assessment,
2. Recruitment Strategy,
3. Candidate Selections,
4. Candidate Integration, and

5. Evaluation and Future Planning. Appendix 1 presents the phases with the timeframes we have experienced.

Timing

The nominating process we describe is ongoing throughout the year with a focus on the six months prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Our work takes a minimum of five scheduled meetings, plus one session for orientation, and one for interviewing candidates.

Committee Size and Membership

The YWCA nominating committee works well with five members plus the executive director as an ex-officio member. The volunteer manager works with us in the planning of promotions, and the candidate information session. The Bylaws state that the past-president is chair for a two-year term. The nominating committee includes two board representatives: one veteran board member and one relative newcomer to the board. The latter brings her recent experience as a participant in the nominating committee's work. Staggered two year terms for the three board members provide some year to year continuity. The final two committee members are recruited from the community—their selection is based on a demonstrated interest in the organization, their knowledge of the community, and expertise in areas such as community diversity and human resource practices.

PHASE 1. BOARD CHARGE AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The first steps include collecting data from existing board members concerning their intentions and aspirations regarding board work through a "quick response" form (see Appendix 2). We prefer to have board members think about areas of experience and expertise needed by the board before our request for specific candidate names.

From the collected data the nominating committee determines the number of new committee and board members needed, and drafts a list of "negotiable" and "non-negotiable" criteria for new board recruits. For example, "commitment to the mission of the organization" is a non-negotiable criterion, because every successful board candidate must demonstrate this quality for YWCA board membership. Negotiable criteria are those that are desirable to have, but not required, such as representation of seniors of the community, experience with policy development, or experience with partnership building. Ultimately these negotiables will be demonstrated by some—but probably not all—successful candidates. The nominating committee chair takes these determinations to the board for comment and/or information purposes, as part of the committee's regular report to the board.

During the first two meetings, the nominating committee also reviews board policies relevant to recruitment and the philosophy of nominating expressed by the board, and creates a time line for its activities. In this time period, the chair undertakes confidential exit interviews with departing board members and directs any relevant data back to the appropriate parties. For example, the chair may pass on information concerning board functioning and committee work to the chair, or report interview comments about the recruitment process, board make-up, integration or other information to the nominating committee. The committee is now ready to begin recruiting interested board and committee members.

PHASE 2.
THE RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

The recruitment strategy has three components: promotion of the board/committee recruitment process, briefing the interested parties, and interviewing candidates.

Promotions

YWCA promotions have an internal and external focus. We begin by advertising that the agency is looking for new candidates and will be hosting an information session for all interested. Internally, the committee requests the board, volunteer manager, committees and staff to "spread the word" that the agency is recruiting governance volunteers for the board. Eye-catching notices are posted around the agency, for example on members' notice boards in the front lobby where members, volunteers and guests will see them. Externally, postings include a fax to the agencies listed in the local index of non-profits, and notices (paid or otherwise) in the weekly and daily newspapers. The personal approach and word of mouth seems most successful in reaching potential candidates, especially with those who have previously expressed an interest in board work.

An Information Session

The second component of the board recruitment phase involves briefing the interested individuals. Potential candidates are invited to an information session hosted by the nominating committee, where they learn more about the board, committee work and the organization. This session also acts as a screening tool early in the process. Candidates are asked to "RSVP" for this session. We have had anywhere from three to twelve people attend these information sessions.

Our nominating committee works in conjunction with the volunteer manager in the design of the information session. Merrill (1996) has described the volunteer manager as a resource to the nominating committee. Similarly, in our model she/he is a staff resource as needed, and a key member in the information session design and in planning recruitment strategies.

We feel it is important that the nominating committee members lead the information session, and that they convey the tone and culture of the groups that the participants are

there to consider—the board and its committees. The goal is to present a clear picture of the board and its work. During the information session, participants receive background materials. The session becomes an ideal opportunity for potential candidates to see the culture of the board in operation, and to determine if the board assignment suits them. The committee members who are also board members provide information about the mission and services of the organization, the board governance framework, and the committee work. In this session, nominating committee members are very direct about board and committee time commitments, expectations, mission, financial overviews, current issues and community relationships. Staff (executive director and volunteer manager) offer support and technical details about operations. Our sessions seem most successful when questions emerge and the group informally discusses topics.

We also have the session participants complete an evaluation form. This includes their response to the value of the session, and an indication of their interest in board or committee work. If they are interested, we ask them to provide us with their name and contact numbers, and to submit a résumé or a letter indicating their volunteer and work history. Those attendees interested in board committee work are asked to specify their particular interest so that they can be contacted by the chairperson of that committee.

Interviewing the Candidates

The third aspect of the board recruitment strategy involves scheduling interviews with the potential pool of board and committee candidates. The nominating committee schedules interviews with candidates that appear to meet all non-negotiable criteria and at least some of the negotiable criteria for the board. All those who submitted a résumé or expressed interest in committees are contacted by the nominating chair. In spite of the perceived formality of the interview, we try to make the interview a relaxed conversation that models typical interactions of board and/or committee sessions. Face-to-face half-hour interviews work well for us, and can be held in blocks of time organized to meet the scheduling constraints of candidates. We arrange for a minimum of three committee members to be present, and ask the executive director to attend as a resource person to the committee.

We use a structured interview approach to ensure a fair process with the strongest likelihood of selecting the most suitable candidate. Prior to the first interviews, the committee develops an interview guide for the candidates based on the negotiable and non-negotiable criteria. We use a behavioral interviewing approach (Janz, Hellervik and Gilmore, 1986) which involves the committee asking candidates to provide specific examples related to our negotiable and non-negotiable areas. These become part of our "interview grid" (see Appendix 3). For example, as we are interested in candidates who can commit the necessary time to the work of the board, we ask the same question of all the candidates— "Tell us about previous volunteer experiences in which you were required to prepare for and attend monthly meetings." The committee members use the interview grid as a guideline for the interview, note taking during the interviews, and for subsequent discussions and decision-making.

We are aware that each candidate has already demonstrated a commitment to the organization by attending the information session and the interview, and therefore it is incumbent upon the committee to become familiar enough with the candidate to ensure the optimal volunteer selection and matching of individuals to positions. Sometimes it is necessary to be clear that there are more candidates for the board than there are positions available. The group can then explore with each candidate their interests with other available committees/opportunities. Finally, during the interviews we ask the candidate's permission to forward his/her name along to appropriate people in the organization to follow-up on the interviewee's expressed interest.

PHASE 3. CANDIDATE SELECTIONS

We believe nominating committees ensure consistency and transparency in their candidate selection when they use established group process decision-making techniques. Prior to discussion of any candidates, the committee reviews the criteria that will be used in the deliberations. On a large grid, usually on a blackboard or flip chart, the candidates' names are listed in column one, and the agreed upon criteria are listed across the top. One approach is to have each committee member privately assess each candidate on a predetermined scale (e.g., 1-10, ten high). Each person's scores are recorded, and the group then discusses any variations. At this point, committee members discuss specific examples drawn from their interview grid sheets to support differing views, and the group moves into consensus-seeking discussion on each candidate. After consensus is reached, the group conducts a final discussion of the overall mix of candidates selected relative to the data collected about the organizational needs.

The nominating committee can then consider board committee placements for identified board candidates, and for those who are interested in committee work. Names of candidates identified for committee and/or non-board volunteer assignments are forwarded to the appropriate individual(s) in the organization. It is appropriate to have the chair of the nominating committee be responsible for contacting all candidates soon after the interviews. Drawing in candidates not selected for the board is a challenging yet crucial aspect of the process. It is imperative that the president and committee chairs act on the new recruits interests as soon as possible.

During this selections phase, the committee draws up an executive slate of officers based on the interests expressed in board member's "quick response" forms. We have found it can be most helpful for the nominating chair (who, as past-president, will know the executive positions well) to have a conver-

sation with each person interested in executive positions to outline the commitments each position requires. This supports a candidate in their personal decision-making, career planning with the organization and can be especially important when more than one person has expressed interest in a position.

Throughout this phase the nominating committee gains insight into the skills and experiences of the newly recruited board members. For example, sometimes recruits have no prior board experience, but great passion and commitment for the organization. Other times it is combination of great experience in the non-profit sector, and only recent interest in the organization. This information is useful as a backdrop to the next phase of the process: integrating new members to the board.

PHASE 4. CANDIDATE INTEGRATION

New board members are expected to move into action quickly, as they assume legal and fiduciary responsibilities immediately upon joining the board (Deloitte & Touche, 1995). There are several ways to facilitate this integration. For example, at the YWCA, the nominating committee carefully matches the in-coming board members with "veteran" board members who serve as mentors for at least the first year. The board-buddy mentoring process reflects the board's mentoring policy. The guidelines address areas such as: involvement by the mentor in board orientation and training, frequent contact and communication with the new board member, and sitting together during meetings. If time allows, it is helpful to ask each newcomer to attend a board meeting prior to the AGM in order to become familiar with their mentor, other board members and board procedures. Mentors are encouraged to contact the new recruits to answer questions, to discuss the organization's upcoming events, and to begin to establish a two way exchange of ideas and information.

The integration phase also includes the

activities around the AGM. Two aspects seem to help in the introduction of the new board recruit to the membership and the organization at the YWCA. First, the mentor tries to link up with the candidate prior to, during, and after the meeting to help with introductions and discussion regarding the meeting. Second, the way in which the candidate is introduced to the membership is a consideration. As the nominating committee is responsible for introducing incoming board members to both the organization and the community, we have found it helpful to develop a profile on each candidate, highlighting their strengths and experiences relevant to the organization's mission and other non-negotiable criteria. This profile assists with external board promotional work when matching a board member to an opportunity to promote the agency.

Candidate integration is also facilitated through board manuals, orientation sessions, and board retreats. New board members should receive a board manual prior to their first meeting. This manual can include: long range plans, a board calendar of events, a board roster, listings of organization Bylaws and human resource policies, board policies (that includes a board job description), pertinent background history of the organization, and a listing of acronyms and definitions of key terms in the organization. We have had orientation sessions led jointly by board members and staff, or by board members alone. Sessions can be integrated into a board meeting, or be all or part of an annual board retreat. We have had great success at building working and personal rapport among members by establishing a retreat planning team that includes staff as resource members, two newly recruited members, at least one nominating committee member (that is, someone with whom new members are familiar from the interview process) and one or two other board members. These teams have created retreat agendas that are relevant to both new board members and veteran members, and

provide rich opportunities for board development.

PHASE 5. EVALUATIONS AND FUTURE PLANNING FOR THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The evaluation phase of the nominating process is ongoing. Each nominating meeting concludes with a brief evaluation of the meeting (usually verbal), and a review of the overall process. We attempt to evaluate each aspect in the process immediately following its completion. For example, board member exit interviews, information sessions, candidate interviews, orientation sessions and retreats all end with brief evaluation components during which we note any potential improvement for next year's work.

The committee's final task is to identify next year's nominating committee membership. Recruited members from the board and community will need to have the requisite skills and interests to build on the developments made within the nominating committee process.

Implications and Outstanding Issues

We believe that concerted attention to the nominating process, like any human resource development, will have rewards for the board and the organization as a whole. The success of the nominating process and its outcomes are crucially linked to the commitment demonstrated by the board and nominating committee members. It takes time and sustained effort to work through the various phases of the process — we believe the effort is well rewarded!

The use of the process we have outlined fosters relationships between the nominating committee and its internal and external contacts. First, the committee composition brings external community expertise to the board deliberations through the committee process. We have seen this bring invaluable assistance to boards, for example, in human resource management, governance, training and cul-

tural diversity. Second, newer board members who become nominating committee members are empowered by the process, and become more active, confident and comfortable at the board table than would be the case otherwise.

The mentoring process fosters two way appreciation. Veteran board members are reacquainted with the mass of information and apparent confusion facing a newcomer which in turns affirms their own level of knowledge. The newcomer recognizes the importance of their board role and the types of support they will receive.

The ideas presented in this paper offer practical ways in which nominating committees can increase openness and accountability.
- How can non-profit organizations ensure they serve the diverse needs of the community?
- How can boards increase representation around the board table in meaningful ways?
- How can boards tap into the full spectrum of human diversity (beyond narrowly defined demographic characteristics) and encourage the adding of diverse voices around board tables?
- How can the leadership needs of the community be most fully explored?
- What kind of leadership needs are most prevalent to the differing types of agencies in the non-profit sector?

Finally, the issue of assessing the usefulness of nominating committees to the overall effectiveness of the organization seems relevant to understanding. In asking and answering these types of questions, nominating committees and boards of directors will move closer to openness, transparency and accountability to their community and funders.

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Appendix 1 The Nominating Process Outlined by Phase and Time-frame.

	Phase 1. Board charge and needs assessment	Phase 2. Recruitment strategy	Phase 3. Candidate selections	Phase 4. Candidate Integration	Phase 5. Evaluation, future planning
1st* meeting	Confirm board task. Set time-frame. Plan for contact of committee chairs. Design board quick response form.				Meeting evaluation. Exit interviews. Report to Board by Chair**.
2nd meeting		Review quick response form board data. Set recruitment criteria, and target areas in community.	Draft interview plan. Finalize negotiables and non-negotiables.		Meeting evaluation.
3rd meeting		Finalize recruitment strategy. Assign recruitment responsibilities. Plan orientation session. Ask board to recommend candidate names.	First identification of criteria (non-negotiables and negotiables). Finalize interview grid.		Meeting evaluation.
			Orientation Session		
4th meeting			Review applicants's material. Plan contacts. Determine interview teams. Finalize interview strategy	Refer candidates interested in /selected for committee work to appropriate contact. Plan follow-up with all interview candidates.	Evaluate orientation session. Meeting evaluation. Evaluate interview process.
			Interviews		
5th meeting			De-brief interview process. Pool candidate behavioral data from interview grid. Select candidates for board and committees.	Assign candidates mentors. Delegate to committee members.	Meeting evaluation.
6th meeting	Review board charge. Design recommendations to board.		Update on acceptances.		Evaluate committee work. Plan for next year. Discuss community and board representatives to nominating committee for next year.
Board meeting prior to AGM	Plan report to board/ president.			Mentors contact mentee prior to meeting. New members visit meeting.	Review board meeting where recruits were guests. Meeting evaluation.
AGM				New members introduced to community.	
Board Retreat					
On-going	Awareness of board and committee needs.		Ensure appropriate follow-up on committee placements of candidates.	Mentoring follow-up, retreat planning and participation.	On-going.

Appendix 2 Quick Response Form

AGENCY'S NAME

To: Board and Committee Chairs
From: Chair, Nominating Committee

QUICK RESPONSE FORM TO NOMINATING COMMITTEE
A. Board Member Input
The information sought below will ensure board renewal and assist in addressing perceived gaps/needs around the board table.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO NOMINATING CHAIR AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

Name: _____

1.   STATUS: I intend to continue serving on the Board. ⌐   Yes   ⌐ I No
      I am interested in serving on the Executive.* ⌐ ⌐ Yes   ⌐ I No
      I am interested in serving on the following committees (please circle):
      list committees.

2.   When I think of our community and our organization, the voices that we are missing around the board table are:

      _____

      _____

3.   Other Comments:
      * Positions for year 2003 (typically two year) terms are: Vice President (usually succession to Presidency), Secretary, and Treasurer.

      _____

      _____

B. Committee Chair Input
The nominating committee will use the information collected in their search to identify potential committee members.

Name of Committee _____

Name of Committee Chair_____

1. Our committee has the following number of positions open for 2003: _____

2. Our committee is looking for the following skills/interests in candidates:

   _____

   _____

3. Other comments:

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

Appendix 3: Sample Interview Grid

BEHAVIORAL BASED OUTLINE	EVIDENCE OF NON-NEGOTIABLE CRITERIA	EVIDENCE OF DESIRABLE CRITERIA
	Demonstrated involvement in, and commitment to VISION, MISSION, GOALS, and VAL-UES of Agency / recognition that board has ultimate responsibility for affairs of Agency / aptitude for governance / will/hold agency membership / time commitment (preparation for Board, standing committees and ad hoc work, retreats, planning, leadership events).	Youth / senior / cultural diversity/ membership representative / business representative / community leader / non-profit governance experience. Previous Board experience.
Opening: During the information session you received a variety of information and a package. Are there any questions or areas of clarification we can answer now?		
Specific questions: How does your experience fit with the Agency vision, mission and values? What are the areas of greatest satisfaction you have experienced though your other volunteer experiences? Tell us about a time within your home, work, or volunteer experience where you have shaped policy and guidelines. What is your commitment to this type of work? Are you willing to do this type of work? There is a Board emphasis this year on work linkages within the community. What partnerships or collaborations do you have to make it stronger? Please tell us about an example of volunteer experience that reflects the type of time commitment we are asking of a Board member of this Agency? Tell us about some of your past volunteer experiences? Are you prepared to take out an annual Agency membership?		
Closing questions: Do you have any questions of us? (Describe the follow-up process)		

GUIDELINES

FOR SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS

Content

The *Journal Of Volunteer Administration* seeks to publish original manuscripts that provide for an exchange of ideas and sharing of knowledge and insights about volunteerism and volunteer management and administration. Manuscripts may focus on volunteering in any setting, in North America and internationally.

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5. Include an abstract of 150 words or less.

6. Double space everything: text, abstract, end notes, author's notes/acknowledgments, references, block quotations, appendixes, AND tables.

7. References should be italicized, not underlined.

8. Left-justify everything with a ragged right-hand margin (no full justification).

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The Association for Volunteer Administration, an international membership organization, enhances the competence of its members and strengthens the profession of volunteer resources management. Members include directors of volunteer resources in a wide variety of settings, agency executives, association officers, educators, researchers, consultants, students—anyone who shares a commitment to the effective utilization of volunteers.

Membership in AVA is open to salaried and non-salaried persons in all types of public, non-profit, and for-profit settings who choose to join with AVA to promote and support effective leadership in volunteerism.

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