

Volunteer Recognition: A Generic Skit Workshop

Evelyn Levine and Arlene Grubbs

The following is a generic skit that can be easily adapted by everyone for any kind of organization that uses volunteers. You may want to add more songs and/or use variations of the songs we wrote. If you write parodies as we did, be aware that you need to look into copyright privileges if you intend to publish your work. If you are lucky enough to find a piano player who plays by ear and can play along with amateurs, then you will have a production that cannot miss.

Using hats to define the characters is effective but you may want to try something else like leotards with different kinds of shirts and scarves. Remember, everyone is flattered to be asked to appear in the skit so do not hesitate to ask your CEO, board and staff members. There is a little ham in everyone. So, go ahead and try it. It's a lot more fun than luncheons or award dinners, and a great ice-breaker. Break a leg.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

NARRATOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VOLUNTEER

ADDITIONAL CAST: MINIMUM OF THREE TO PLAY STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

PROPS: HATS FOR EVERYONE, WITH LABELS FOR EACH CHARACTER

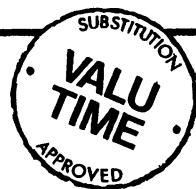
MUSIC: BEST TO GET PIANO AND PIANO PLAYER NEXT BEST TO MAKE TAPE OF MUSIC

ENTHUSIASM: ESSENTIAL

Evelyn Levine is Volunteer Coordinator of the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh and Vice President of Volunteer Administrators of Southwestern Pennsylvania (VASP). Arlene Grubbs is Volunteer Manager of the Visiting Nurse Association of Allegheny County and current President of VASP. The two women have written, produced and directed skits for three Pennsylvania Symposia on Volunteerism and the 1983 National Convention of the American Academy of Allergy and Immunology.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION SKIT

THIS SKIT IS SUITABLE FOR
EVERYONE'S USE. SUBSTITUTIONS
MAY BE MADE WITHOUT
AFFECTING THE ENTERTAINMENT
QUALITY OF THIS PRODUCT.



Distributed by
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The 1984 NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VOLUNTEERISM
Asheville, NC

VOLUNTEER
RECOGNITION
SKIT

NARRATOR:

THIS IS A STORY ABOUT AN AGENCY THAT IS HAVING PROBLEMS. IT'S NOT AN OLD STORY; IT'S NOT A NEW STORY. IT'S A GENERIC STORY. IT GOES THIS WAY:

(Executive Director and 3 staff members enter and pace in a circle.)

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE LAND OF ANYWHERE, THERE WAS AN AGENCY DEDICATED TO GOOD DEEDS. EVERYONE IN THE AGENCY WANTED TO DO GOOD DEEDS BUT SOMETHING KEPT GETTING IN THE WAY. NO ONE COULD FIGURE OUT WHAT IT WAS.

SONG #1 - "THIS AGENCY" *(Sung by Executive Director and 3 staff members)*

Sung to the tune of "My Kind of Town"

Once we were great
This agency
Carried its weight
This agency
Has the best people too
People who want to come through
Each day we pray
This agency
Finds a new way
This agency
Can't find its records
This agency
Can't serve more people
This agency
Can't get more funding
This agency
Needs smiling faces
This agency
Can't go on working this way
We're calling "May Day"

*"Volunteer"
enters*

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WAS DESPERATE AND DID NOT KNOW WHERE TO TURN. SUDDENLY THERE APPEARED BEFORE HER A PERSON WEARING AN UNFAMILIAR HAT. "WHO ARE YOU?" SAID THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR. THE PERSON IN THE UNFAMILIAR HAT REPLIED, "LET'S JUST SAY THAT TODAY I AM WEARING MY VOLUNTEER HAT." THE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HAD NO IDEA WHAT A VOLUNTEER WAS, LET ALONE WHAT ONE DOES. "LOOK," SAID THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, "I AM VERY BUSY AND I DO NOT HAVE TIME TO SIT AND CHAT WITH YOU."

*SONG #2 - "YOU JUST NEED A VOLUNTEER"
(sung by Executive Director and Volunteer)*

Sung to the tune of "I Wonder Why"

I need helpers but there's no one there
Work is stopping cause our staff's so bare
All day long I want to tear my hair
I wonder why, I wonder why
I keep tossing in my sleep at night
And what's more I've lost my appetite
For the one who said I'd never cry
My eyes are never dry, I wonder why

You don't need analyzing
It is not so surprising
That you feel like you need advice
Your heart goes pitter, patter
I know just what's the matter
Because I've been there once or twice
Put your head on my shoulder
You need someone who's older
I can say you should have no fear
Trust me now, here's all it takes
To remove those damn headaches
You just need a volunteer

*Executive
Director
and
Volunteer
pantomime
Narrator*

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WAS STILL NOT CONVINCED. "WHO WAS THIS UPSTART THAT THOUGHT SHE COULD SOLVE SUCH SERIOUS PROBLEMS?" BUT BECAUSE SHE COULD SEE NO OTHER WAY TO SOLVE THIS DILEMMA, SHE DECIDED TO PUT THE VOLUNTEER TO A TEST. "YOU SEE," SHE SAID, "WE ARE IN THE BUSINESS OF DOING GOOD DEEDS. BUT HOW CAN WE DO GOOD DEEDS WHEN OUR STAFF IS OVERWORKED, OUR FILES ARE A MESS AND NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT OUR SERVICE?" THE VOLUNTEER LOOKED OVERWHELMED. "AHA," THOUGHT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, "THIS VOLUNTEER TALKS A GOOD GAME. IT WILL TAKE A LOT MORE THAN A VOLUNTEER HAT TO SOLVE MY PROBLEMS."

Executive Director leaves stage. Volunteer looks puzzled, then she motions offstage and 2 other volunteers enter, carrying hats.

*Volunteers
form a
huddle
and put
on hats.*

AND INDEED IT DID TAKE MORE THAN A VOLUNTEER HAT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS. THE VOLUNTEER WENT AND TALKED TO HER FRIENDS. SHE TOLD THEM ALL ABOUT THE AGENCY THAT WAS DEDICATED TO GOOD DEEDS AND THEY IMMEDIATELY PUT THEIR VOLUNTEER HATS ON AND STARTED TO WORK.

SONG #3 - "VOLUNTEERS" (sung by 3 Volunteers)

Sung to the tune of "Cabaret"

What good is sitting alone in your room
Your skills are very dear
Come be a volunteer, old chum
Come be a volunteer
Put down the knitting, the book, and the broom
We need you, have no fear
Come be a volunteer, old chum
Come be a volunteer
Come join our band
Come lend a hand
Someone in need is out there waiting
You can start them celebrating
No use permitting some prophet of doom
To say that there's no help here
Come be a volunteer, old chum,
Really a volunteer, old chum
Come be a volunteer

*Volunteers
skip in
circle.*

IN NO TIME AT ALL, THE VOLUNTEERS HAD ORGANIZED THE FILES, STARTED A SPEAKERS BUREAU, APPEARED ON TELEVISION AND RADIO, RAISED FUNDS AND ASSISTED THE STAFF WHERE NEEDED. SOON EVERYONE IN THE LAND WAS TALKING ABOUT THE AGENCY THAT PERFORMS GOOD DEEDS. PEOPLE CAME FROM NEAR AND FAR TO LEARN THEIR SECRET.

Executive Director tries to shield Volunteers from audience view.

BUT NOW IT WAS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S TURN TO BE PUT TO A TEST BY THE VOLUNTEERS. "DO YOU REMEMBER HOW DESPERATE YOU WERE BEFORE WE CAME?" THEY ASKED. "WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT VOLUNTEERS?" THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SCRATCHED HER HEAD. "THIS IS WHAT I LEARNED. I CAN RELY ON OTHERS TO HELP IF I HONESTLY TELL THEM WHAT I NEED. WHEN PEOPLE WEAR VOLUNTEER HATS, THEY WILL GO BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY IF THEY ARE GIVEN IMPORTANT WORK TO DO. AT FIRST I DID NOT RECOGNIZE A VOLUNTEER BUT NOW THAT I KNOW WHAT THEY DO, I WILL GO OUT OF MY WAY TO RECOGNIZE THEM.

Volunteers
dance
around
Executive
Director

"HOW WONDERFUL TO BE RECOGNIZED!" CRIED
THE VOLUNTEERS. THEY DANCED MERRILY
AROUND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND SHE
KNEW THAT FROM NOW ON THEY WOULD ALL LIVE
HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

SONG #4 - "THAT'S VOLUNTEERING" (by entire cast)

Sung to the tune of "That's Entertainment"

The work that you never will shirk
Or the smile that cheers folks for a while
Or the aid when the back rent gets paid
That's volunteering (pause)
The fight that you make for a right
Or the tears that you dry up with cheers
Or the care when the cupboard is bare
That's volunteering
The spot could be hot and you're sweating like
mad
The place has no grace and you think you've been
had
You could feel awfully bad
When the cause that you cherish
Is making you feel quite bearish
But the kind of excitement you find
When you're part of a gift from the heart
It's a thrill when your dreams you fulfill
We all need to give
You've given your all
By volunteering

If you develop a skit, be concerned about the following task areas:

THE HOOK

WRITING

SONGS

DANCES

COSTUMES

CASTING

REHEARSING

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Then remember that you should use the left and right sides of your brain:

LEFT BRAIN

Don't rush the process

"Sleep on it"

zzzzzzzz

"you can't push the (river" =

Use brainstorming and stream) of conscious-

n
e
s
s

"That reminds me of...

"you won't believe what just
into my head

popped

"I have the w@ier*dest idea...

Doodle e

Be^a ml^s
i ss

LAUGH

PLAY AND HAVE FUN wheeee

RIGHT BRAIN

Ask yourself -

Is the story line connected
and clear?

Are the characters consist-
ent?

Do the words to the songs
make sense?

Is the skit too short, too
long, too involved?

Be willing to -

Throw out things that don't
seem to work

Add things that do work.

Learn when to stop tam-
pering.

Get critiques from others,
but don't cave in to them.

Remind yourself

Not to get too serious.

People need to enjoy work-
ing on this project.

This isn't Broadway...this
isn't Off Broadway...

this is only.....!!