AVA

THE JOURNAL OF
VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

ASSOCIATION FOR **AVA** VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

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, nonprofit, and for-profit settings who choose to join with AVA to promote and support effective leadership in volunteerism.

AVA is an association run by its members. Active committees include: Professional Credentialing, Ethics, Fund Development, Organizational Relations, Communications, Member Services and Network Development. Members also plan the annual International Conference on Volunteer Administration, a major event held each year in a different city in the United States or Canada. This conference provides participants the opportunity to share common concerns and to focus on issues of importance to professionalism in volunteer administration.

Two major services that AVA provides, both for its members and for the field at large, are a professional credentialing program and an educational endorsement program. Through the process that recognizes leaders of volunteer programs who demonstrate professional performance standards, AVA furthers respect for and appreciation of the profession of volunteer administration. Similarly, AVA educational endorsement is given to those workshops, courses, conferences, and training events that provide opportunities for professional growth in volunteer resource management.

Finally, AVA produces publications including informational newsletters and booklets and *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*.

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EDITORIAL

Parts are often mistaken for wholes. Ideas are viewed as complete when they are incomplete. Relationships are considered well formed when they are insufficiently formed. Were these parts recognized for what they are, and were we to work toward their completion – were we to keep "becoming" as individuals – we would be better off as persons, as corporations, and as institutions. (DePree, 1989)*

This issue covers a variety of topics that focus on developing both skills and leadership abilities for managers of volunteers. These studies remind us that there are many aspects of the work we do and there is a continuing need to review and evaluate the individual pieces to help make a more comprehensive whole.

The first article, presented at the 2003 International conference on Volunteer Administration, is a comparison of volunteers engaged in the work of arts organizations in the United States and Germany. The author explores the types of activities volunteers are engaged in, how well volunteers are integrated into the institution, and the advantages and disadvantages of volunteer programs in the arts.

Leadership Practices of Ohio AmeriCorp Directors and Coordinators explores five leadership practices and the ability of AmeriCorps Directors and Coordinators to use effective leadership practices as well as professional experience in the direction of their programs. *The Journal* has not had many opportunities to share research about our colleagues in AmeriCorp.

Barry Boyd also focused on leadership abilities in *Why Johnnie Can't Lead,* as he discusses 12 barriers to acquiring volunteer leadership competencies and highlights the importance of organizational leadership to eliminate the barriers.

The fourth research article, *Volunteer Screening Practices* assesses volunteer screening and management practices with recommendation for strengthen skills and practices among leaders of volunteers. *Volunteer Attrition: Lessons Learned from Oregon's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program,* is the second part of a study published in an earlier issue of *The Journal.* A trained team of volunteers conducted a telephone survey with former volunteers to gather information about why they had left the program. Managers of volunteers may have little control over personal factors, such as volunteers' health issues, but program factors, such as poor support, agency policies and role conflicts can be addressed to make volunteer work more volunteer friendly.

The Research in Brief article by Safrit and Schmiesing is the first part of a larger research study to qualitatively identify valid and reliable components of effective volunteer management. This is a summary of the first phase of the project that identified eight management components that will be tested broadly in the field.

The final article, *The Ball Toss Exercise,* is a training guide to help managers of volunteers build teamwork and group cohesiveness.

These studies encourage us to look at the parts of the work we do and recognize how they contribute to our "becoming" professionals and leaders.

Mary V. Merrill, Editor

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*DePree, Max (1989). *Leadership is an art.* New York: Dell Publishing, p 143.

CORRECTION: Page 19 of Issue 22, Volume 3, 2004 contains an error on the chart Nonprofits: Satisfaction with VolunteerMatch Volunteers. The graph should read 48% Very satisfied; 42% Somewhat satisfied; and 10% Very/somewhat dissatisfied.

ABSTRACTS

Research

- **Volunteering in Cultural Institutions:**
  A Comparison Between the United States and Germany
  Gesa Birnkraut, Hamburg, Germany

While volunteering in the arts in the United States is already a very important factor for the arts sector, this development has just started in Germany. This research is the first to take a look at the standard of volunteer activities and volunteer management in the arts not only in the United States, but also in Germany. A quite important factor is the different history of volunteerism and the founding of the arts institutions in both countries. Negative and positive potentials as well as strengths and weaknesses of volunteer activities in the arts are focused in comparison between the United States and Germany.

- **Leadership Practices of Ohio AmeriCorps Program Directors and Coordinators**
  R. Dale Safrit, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
  Chadwick J. Wykle, Washington, DC
  Joseph A. Gliem, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate leadership practices of Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators. The Leadership Profile Inventory (LPI) was used to collect data from a census regarding five leadership practices: (a) Challenging the process; (b) inspiring a shared vision; (c) enabling others to act; (d) modeling the way; and (e) encouraging the heart. Program directors identified all five practices as utilized at least "fairly often," while program coordinators identified all five as engaged in "usually." Even though the overall leadership mean scores for both Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators are positive, the researchers expected higher scores. Although national leadership development training is provided to AmeriCorps professional staff, these opportunities must be offered to expanded program audiences. Volunteer administrators' abilities to combine visionary leadership with efficient management will be critical not only to the continued success of AmeriCorps programs, but to all volunteer based programs as well.

- **Barriers to the Development of Volunteer Leadership Competencies:**
  Why Johnnie Can't Lead Volunteers
  Barry L. Boyd, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

More than 109 million Americans volunteered for nonprofit organizations in 1998, carrying out almost one-third of the work of the organizations. A nation-wide Delphi study was conducted to identify the competencies that will be required by volunteer administrators (VAs) during the next decade as well as barriers that prevent VAs from acquiring such competencies, and how those barriers may be eliminated. This article discusses 12 barriers to acquiring volunteer leadership competencies, as well as 21 methods for addressing those barriers and motivating volunteer administrators to acquire them. It is recommended that organizations make the acquisition of these competencies a part of the employee's performance expectations, and should redirect resources to assist volunteer administrators in acquiring the competencies. Organizations must also create an organizational culture that values the contributions of volunteers and the role of the volunteer administrator.

- **Volunteer Screening Practices, an Essential Component of Volunteer Management:**
  Implications from a National Study of Extension Professionals
  Cathy M. Sutphin, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA

Volunteers are a critical resource. As we have increased the numbers of volunteers, we have also expanded the duties of volunteers who work with vulnerable clientele, thus increasing our organizational responsibility to provide effective volunteer screening and management. This study assessed volunteer screening and management practices among Extension professionals nationally. Findings provide a picture of the community standard of care within Cooperative Extension. The study also provides implications for those in volunteer leadership in Extension and other volunteer organizations. In addition, the study suggests several areas for future research which would benefit the profession.

- *Volunteer Attrition: Lessons Learned From Oregon's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program*
  H. Wayne Nelson, Towson University, MD
  F. Ellen Netting, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
  Kevin Borders, University of Louisville, KY
  Ruth Huber, University of Louisville, KY
  A telephone survey of 136 active and 170 former volunteer ombudsmen asked the two open ended questions reported here. Both groups were asked to identify "the most discouraging aspect of the ombudsman's job," and former ombudsmen were also asked why they had left the program. Responses fell into four general groups (each with numerous sub-categories): (a) Program Factors (supervision, training, policies), (b) Personal Factors (health, family, time), (c) Power Factors (volunteer status, legal authority), and (d) System Adversity (troubled facilities, resident impairment, poor enforcement and so forth). Although the Personal Factors group emerged as the number one ranked reason for quitting, program factors (led by the sub-category of poor supervisory support) emerged as the most discouraging aspect of service, and was the second ranked reason for quitting. Implications are discussed with recommendations for reducing volunteer dissatisfaction and turnover.

Research In Brief
- *A Suggested Model for Contemporary Volunteer Management: Qualitative Research Bridging the Professional Literature with Best Practices*
  R. Dale Safrit, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
  Ryan J. Schmiesing, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
  Since the early 1970s, numerous authors have suggested models for effective volunteer management. Some have been based upon perceived best practices and actual field experiences. Others are purely conceptual entities built around a focused organizational context and named with an easily-remembered acronym. Still others have emanated from administrative or academic paradigms rather than applied volunteer management contexts. The purpose of this exploratory qualitative research was to identify valid and reliable components of effective contemporary volunteer management based upon both the published professional literature as well as contemporary best practices. The researchers utilized a practitioner-research approach involving both actual volunteer administrators (practitioners) and volunteerism experts (consultants). Eight volunteer management components were identified by practitioners and nine by experts, encompassing three holistic categories: (1) (Personal) Preparation; (2) (Volunteer) Engagement; and (3) (Program) Perpetuation.

Ideas That Work
- *Building Volunteer Group Cohesiveness and Teamwork: The Ball Toss Exercise*
  Steve Dunphy, Indiana University Northwest, Gary, IN
  Professional volunteer administrators and not-for-profit managers sometimes express frustration with coordinating and developing cohesiveness among their employees and volunteers. An exercise is detailed involving the tossing or popping of a beach ball among participants for the purpose of building group cohesiveness, improving communication and developing espirit de corps. The exercise is both didactic and fun. Participants learn the importance of group initiation, cooperation and control in order to accomplish a task. The idea is to take a "first step" towards removing employees and volunteers from their cubicles of self-imposed isolation and moving them into the ranks of a cohesive, motivated and productive work force.
  A number of learning outcomes that result from the exercise are specified in the "debriefing" section. These outcomes specify what the volunteer services manager and his or her staff can take back to the organization to improve group productivity and job performance.

Volunteering in Cultural Institutions: A Comparison Between the United States and Germany

Gesa Birnkraut, Hamburg, Germany

INTRODUCTION

Volunteering in the arts is only a small portion of the voluntary sector, but a very vital one for cultural institutions in the United States. In Germany there is a strong tradition of volunteering, mostly though in the social or socio-cultural field. There is also a high rate of volunteers in small arts institutions in rural areas. But very few of the higher level arts institutions in Germany utilise volunteers. The following research results aim to show the actual standard of volunteer effort in the arts in the United States and in Germany, and to describe the chances and risks of these activities for the institutions and the volunteers.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of volunteering in the United States and in Germany is paradoxically very different and very similar at the same time. Many of the developments that resulted in the strong communitarianism in the United States arrived with European immigrants.

In Germany and in all of Europe there is a very long tradition of taking responsibility for the community one lives in—to take responsibility in political and social fields. In the late 18th century, many registered societies and charities were founded, most whose sole purpose was to educate their members. A multitude of music and literature societies were founded as well as amateur choirs (Gall, 1989:196). Since then, Germany has maintained a very strong network of registered societies for the recreation and education of its citizens. In these societies there always has

been and still is a lot of volunteering. Though Germany has a strong tradition in volunteering in the amateur arts field and the socio-cultural field, major arts institutions have almost no volunteers. A reason for this might be that in the early days the ruling aristocracy founded most of the arts institutions in Germany (Birnkraut, 2003:80). Every noble court had its own musicians, painters and actors. But in the 19th century there were also a lot of initiatives originated by interested citizens who founded theatres and financed opera houses. After a while, the city government partly or wholly financed these institutions. In 1918—after the First World War—all noble court institutions were transferred into the hands of the state. This development has continued today where most of the major German arts institutions are heavily subsidized by the state. German arts institutions still have concerns about private money and the influence of private donors on the arts, so the government took over much of the responsibility of the single citizen for the arts. This had a strong influence on the attitude of institutions towards volunteerism but also on the attitude of the single citizen regarding volunteering for arts institutions.

In the United States there has been, from the beginning, a very strong tradition to help the community. It was a vital part of the Puritan religion to take charge of one's own life but also to give back to the community. Americans are more or less still educated in this sense: "You are going to get a lot in this life but you have to give a lot back, too." (S. Stevens, personal communication, 2001).

Dr. Gesa Birnkraut earned a masters in Business Administration and Arts Management and researched the topic of volunteering in arts institutions, comparing the United States and Germany in her doctoral dissertation. She was general manager of the Institute for Arts and Media Management in Hamburg, Germany and launched her own consulting company for arts management and volunteer management in 2004.

Donating money shows this, as does spending time for the institutions one cares for. This illustrates differences between the founding of arts institutions in the United States and Germany. Devoted citizens not only donated the first funds but also initiated the support of the community and founded most of the arts institutions (Dobkin Hall, 1992:39). As for most arts institutions in the United States, first there was the community's wish to found a symphony orchestra and then they started raising money and hired professional artists. Support and financing of these arts institutions remained in the hands of citizens and were not handed over to the government. To this day, the citizens still have the responsibility for arts institutions; without citizen support, they could not exist.

THE RESEARCH OUTLINE

A qualitative design was used for the research. More than 60 interviews, each about one hour in length, were conducted with volunteers from arts institutions. The qualitative research was aimed at recording the engagement of volunteers in cultural institutions in the United States and Germany. The research focused on the attitude of the institutions and their volunteers to specified problem areas. It also concentrated on the evaluation of the volunteers and their integration into the organizations. The interviews were held with partially standardized interview guidelines. The main topics of the interview guideline focused on the following questions:

- the collection of data and facts, the organization and content of the individual programs
- the recruiting process
- the relationship between employees and volunteers, especially volunteers and artists
- threat of loss of positions, professionalism and responsibility
- results of volunteer activity
- introduction of management theories
- basic advantages and disadvantages of the engagement of volunteers, and,
- motivation of the volunteers.

Further interesting topics that occurred during the interviews involved the profession of manager of volunteers, corporate volunteering and the general trend of volunteerism.

The research concentrated on four types of cultural institutions: symphony orchestras, art museums, operas and theatre. In each city the institutions with the highest profiles were interviewed, i.e., in Chicago, interviews were conducted with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Lyric Opera, the Goodman theatre and the Arts Institute.

The interviewees were always managers of volunteers. In Germany, in institutions without volunteers, the person who would be most likely responsible for a yet to be founded volunteer program was interviewed. In most cases this was the head of communication or the marketing manager. In each institution volunteers were also interviewed.

RESULTS

Based on the interviews, a variety of results has been found—some of them self-explanatory and some of them surprising. In this article, a broad overview of the general results are given.

Who has volunteer programs?

While all 26 interviewed institutions in the United States engaged volunteers, only eight out of twenty institutions in Germany had a volunteer program, with six being museums.

How many volunteers were involved?

In the United States, the number of volunteers ranged from 70 up to 1,600, The German institutions had between 1 and 170 volunteers. Figure 1 shows that there is no clear pattern between what kind of arts institution uses how many volunteers. Museums and symphony orchestras in the United States tend to have more volunteers than do theatres and opera houses. The figure includes all 26 American institutions that were interviewed (Museums: Seattle Art Museum, Denver Museum for Nature and History, Dallas Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Arts Institute of Chicago. Opera houses: San Francisco Opera, Washington Opera, Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera,

FIGURE 1

Number of volunteers in the different programs of the interviewed institutions
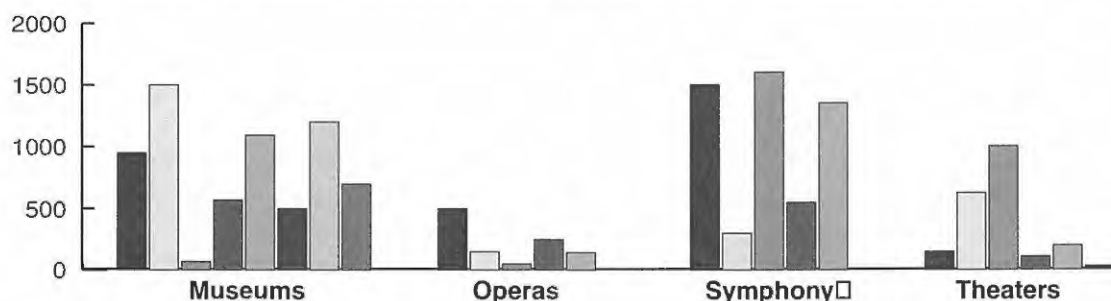
Lyric Opera of Chicago. Symphony orches-
tras: San Francisco Symphony, Seartle Sym-
phony, Dallas Symphony, Philadelphia Sym-
phony, Chicago Symphony). There was no
significant relation between rhe number
of staff and the number of volunteers.

FIGURE 2

**Number of volunteer programs
founded over the years**
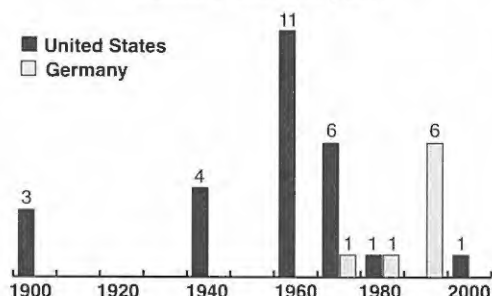
When were the programs founded?

The programs in the United States were
founded mostly in the 60s and 70s, but there
were some that were as old as 98 years, found-
ed in 1904. The existing volunteer programs
in Germany were mostly founded in the 90s,
the oldest founded in 1976 (Figure 2).

There are parallel phenomena here,
because both countries went through hard
economic times in the described periods, sug-
gesting that volunteering often has its origins
in difficult economic times.

Profile of the volunteers

In United States institutions the average
volunteer is female, in her sixties and with a
fairly well established background, education
and financial situation.

Fields of volunteer work

Volunteers in arts insritutions in the
United States work in a wide variety of jobs,
including
- fundraising
- archiving
- guiding or giving pedagogical lectures,
  helping the curator
- doing translations
- selling tickets
- ushering.

A clear role of the manager of volunteers is
finding the appropriate job for every volun-
teer and not the other way around.

The research shows that American art
institutions have specialized their volunreer
programs in different areas:
- In theatres and operas volunteer work is
  concentrated on admissions and ushering.
  This, however, is only the case in institu-
  tions that are not unionized. Volunteers
  are frequently given free admission as a
  reward.
- The symphony orchestras engage most of
  their volunteers in fundraising, and in the
  last few years also in education. Sympho-
  ny orchestras in the United States use edu-
  cation programs as an active tool to
  strengthen the bonds with the community.
- Museums focus on informational guest
  services and also develop broad education-
  al activities with the help of volunteers.
  Volunteer guides are a special type of vol-
  unteer because of the long and rigorous
  training they have to go through before
  they start working. Guides often go
  through one or even two years of training

including weekly lectures by curators, one to two days of library work per week, and written and oral exams. For these positions volunteers have to sign long-term commitments (for example, a three-year contract at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City). Despite the difficult requirements and the long training period, there are waiting lists for these positions.

The six institutions in Germany that work with volunteers are museums. They engage volunteers in museum shops, at information desks and for guided tours.

Integration into the organization

Volunteer programs are integrated into cultural institutions in the United States in a variety of ways. Some are subsumed under the personnel department (Seattle Symphony), some belong to the development department (Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony). Some have their own department directly under senior management (Metropolitan Museum of Art). Sometimes the volunteer activities are included in the organization as special events (Oregon Shakespeare Festival, San Francisco Symphony) or in the sales activities of the shops (New York City Opera). There are many different possibilities that have developed over the years, which are not always favored by the acting managers. It is the person who initiated the volunteer program in the institution who almost always made the initial decision. Interestingly enough, once a decision about the organizational setting is made it does not change even if the initiator is no longer part of the organization and/or the management feels that their volunteer program is not located adequately in the organization.

The German institutions also do not have uniform prerequisites. Only the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart has a job description characterizing the duties as volunteer coordination. All the others belong to the first generation that has initiated volunteer programs and are thus the precursors of these projects.

Structure of volunteer programs

The structure of volunteer programs plays a very important role in their success. The bigger a program gets, the better the organisational aspect has to be; the clearer the needs of the institution and the needs of the volunteers are identified, the more efficient the program is. Figure 3 shows the various instruments/processes that are used by American and German institutions. In Germany, however, these structures are often not used for the management of volunteers.

Attitudes about volunteerism

In Germany there is a general concern that the work to operate a volunteer program is greater than the benefit. Most of the institutions do not see any potential areas of work for volunteers—which clearly illustrates that the major arts institutions in Germany are still quite well staffed. Moreover, there is a concern that the volunteers will not represent the institution properly.

FIGURE 3

Percentage of volunteer programs using the described instruments
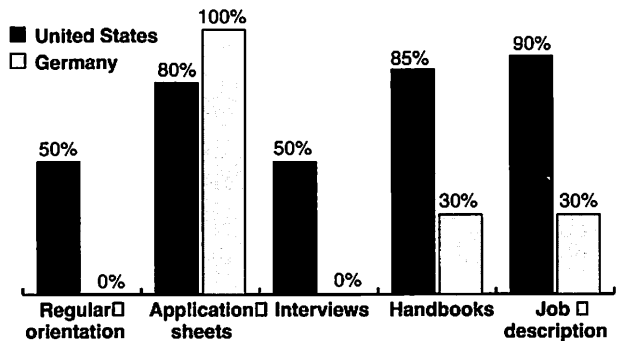
An impressive result from the research was the trust American institutions have in their volunteers. Most of the managers of volunteers interviewed—especially in the education and the guide programs—have their volunteers represent their institutions to all of their visitors, potential donors and customers.

In Germany, the institutions do not see potential work fields for volunteers and thus do not see any potential volunteers either.

The institutions already working with volunteers in Germany experienced an enthusiastic response to their first call for volunteers.

While expecting no more than 20-30 people, the actual turnout was 200-300 people.

Arts institutions in the United States gave no reasons against volunteerism. Most of the American institutions stated that the programs executed and supervised by volunteers simply would not exist without their support.

Advantages and disadvantages of volunteer programs

Two main advantages were named by the American institutions:
- volunteers are their ambassadors in the community and with potential sponsors
- volunteers serve as motivators of a multitude of programs that only exist because of them

Of course, the advantage of the massive financial gain of having 1,500 volunteers working for the institution without raising the personnel expenses can not be denied.

The disadvantages were that founding a volunteer program requires an investment in time and money. There is a certain dependence on the volunteers. If volunteers stop working on a project, this results in additional work for the staff. Sometimes it appears to be easier to work with paid employees than to work with a volunteer.

In general, German institutions that already work with volunteers named the same disadvantages. They explicitly stressed the fact that time and money have to be invested in a volunteer program before it pays off.

Volunteer manager as a profession

In the United States, the profession of manager of volunteers has been fighting for acceptance since its beginnings 40 years ago. Many of the managers of volunteers found themselves in this job either because it was vacant or because it was the only way to be promoted. The acceptance, importance, and interpretation of the position varies greatly in different institutions. The reasons for this probably lie in the many important personal attributes that are necessary for the position of manager of volunteers:

Creating and communicating a shared vision; embracing diversity while nurturing pluralism; accepting change and managing ambiguity; acting within shared values and championing ethical behavior; linking effective management to personal leadership; reflecting. (Safrit & Merrill, 1999:28-43)

Many managers of volunteers in the United States are aware of a wide field of professional training but don't see the necessity to participate in special training (Pirtle 2001). Networking between managers of volunteers in different cultural institutions is a fairly recent development thanks to the initiative of a few.

In all the American institutions that were interviewed there was a special, permanent manager whom volunteers could address. The positions differ, however, in the paid status of the manager, the number of staff in their division, and whether the management of volunteers is only a part of their job (Figure 4).

Only two institutions had a "volunteer" coordinator of volunteers. In the case of six coordinators, their work with volunteers constitutes only a small part of their position, and there were two half-time positions. All others devoted themselves full-time to working with volunteers, and had up to seven additional paid staff in their division (four institutions had over five employees, and five institutions had up to three co-workers).

The manager of volunteers position has existed in the interviewed institutions from 36 years to less than five years. Seven institutions have had the position for more than 20 years.

FIGURE 4

Percentage of institutions that employ managers of volunteers.

■ United States
□ Germany

	Fulltime	Parttime	Volunteer	None
United States	16%	8%	2%	0%
Germany	0%	5%	1%	2%
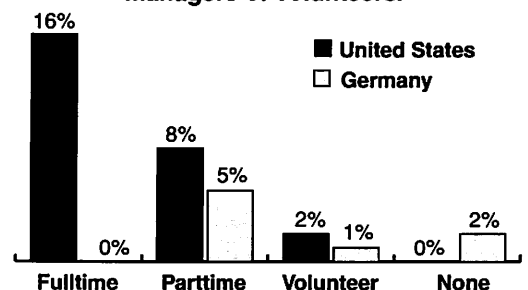
Three reported having the position from ten to 20 years, six have had a manager from five to ten years, and three have had the position for less than five years. These facts illustrate the long tradition and importance of the position in cultural institutions in the United States; they also show that compared to the social sector, i.e. hospitals, in the United States the profession of manager of volunteers in the arts in Germany is fairly young (Ellis). One can also see the different attitude of management towards volunteer work in the United States compared to Germany.

Only one of the institutions interviewed in Germany had a part-time employee working exclusively with the volunteers. This half-time position at the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart was initially financed by the Robert Bosch foundation and was limited to three years (the end of 2002). At that time the museum integrated the position into their financial budget. Other institutions that work with volunteers have similar structures as in the United States. They have "volunteer" managers of volunteers and part-time positions. If you regard the newness of working with volunteers in big arts institutions, it is impressive that the few institutions actually working with volunteers also see the necessity to have at least part-time staff that are concerned with the management of volunteers.

IMPLICATIONS AND FOLLOW-UPS
Arts institutions in the United States are part of a much more economic market than is the case in Germany. Most institutions are dependent on the relationship with the community: on their visitors through ticket sales but also on private funding through time and/or money. Volunteers are seen as a vital part of the activities of the institutions. They are the ambassadors of the institution to the community. Volunteers are part of the unique selling point that each institution has to display in the United States market in order to survive the competition. Institutions and citizens both want volunteer activities as part of their life and both sides appreciate taking on responsibilities.

The German institutions still have a long way to go. As they are still being subsidized by the government, they might be in a better financial situation than United States arts institutions. But with budgets stagnating and/or sinking, and a rough economic situation that also affects ticket sales, the institutions have to find new ways of connecting with their audience. Volunteerism might be a way for them to change old habits. Another argument is that fundraising and education programs still are not developed as much as possible. Here is yet another chance to enhance existing or create new activities, possibly with the help of volunteers.

Volunteer effort can be most effective if a strong structure is implemented before starting to utilize volunteers. It is necessary to find the right place within the organisation and to have a maximum backup by the senior management of the institution.

For American institutions, this research allows a different perspective and shows that apart from all the success volunteer programs have, there still is the need for even more professionalism and improved networking. Long-range and strategic planning still have to be implemented as normal instruments for volunteer programs. The level of volunteering in the arts accomplished so far has to be the starting point for even higher efforts.

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Leadership Practices of Ohio AmeriCorps Program Directors and Coordinators

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INTRODUCTION

In the latter part of the 20th century, it became evident that the United States needed a new generation of leaders who had a clear vision and understanding of the concept of service and the role of public service (National Women's Law Center, 1993). Such leaders mobilize citizens to engage in volunteerism, community service, and national service efforts to meet the many needs of the nation's communities. The importance of leadership in community-based service is paramount. According to Kreitner (1995), leadership involves social influence over the voluntary pursuit of a set of collective objectives. Covey (1991) concluded that leadership is based on fundamental principles and processes, while Kotter (1990) described leadership as "a process that helps direct and mobilize people and/or their ideas" (pp. 3-4). Lappe and Dubois (1994) discussed the importance of active citizen leadership in effectively addressing America's social problems.

Numerous authors have advocated new leadership theories and thoughts during the past decade. Kouzes and Posner (1987) believed that successful leadership included five fundamental practices and that mastering these practices allowed leaders to accomplish extraordinary things within organizations. These practices included challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. Apps (1994) purported that

contemporary leadership must create and communicate a shared vision; build bridges between people and ideas; challenge ideas, structure, assumptions, and beliefs; take risks; embrace ambiguity; applaud serendipity; encourage artistry; tolerate discomfort; reflect on activities; and appreciate humor. Apps believed that leadership practices must transform with the times. "We have reached a time when most traditional approaches to leading simply do not work anymore" (p. 1).

In the volunteer administration profession, several authors have commented upon the critical need to integrate effective leadership with efficient management within volunteer-based community programs. Vineyard (1993) first articulated this need with her concept of "leadershift." The *Changing the Paradigm* project of the Points of Light Foundation (1995) further linked management with leadership of volunteer programs, while Merrill (1995) emphasized the role of volunteer managers as focal points for leadership of volunteer programs. Safrit and Merrill (1999) concluded that contemporary volunteer administrators must serve "as leaders in an emerging profession, going beyond designing systems of control and reward by displaying innovation, individual character, and the courage of conviction" (p. 40).

During the last decade of the 20th century, the national federally-sponsored AmeriCorps program was established. AmeriCorps programs focus on nurturing citizen service and

building leadership within communities (Bates, 1996). AmeriCorps was envisioned initially as a method of allowing Americans to address serious social needs in their local communities, and a way to reenergize the country's commitment to civic responsibility and service. The National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (H.R. 2010, 103d Cong., 1st Sess.) significantly modified legislation first passed by Congress in 1990, and created the contemporary Corporation for National and Community Service (Waldman, 1995). The mission of the Corporation for National Service, including AmeriCorps, is to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service (Ohio's Governor's Community Service Council, 1997). Citizens involved in national service, known as AmeriCorps members, address community needs related to education, human needs, public safety, and the environment.

Through the AmeriCorps national service program, the Corporation hopes to foster civic responsibility, strengthen communities, and provide educational opportunities to those willing to commit to service (Corporation for National Service, 1997a). AmeriCorps Programs are united by four common goals: (a) Getting things done through direct and demonstrable service that helps solve community problems in the areas of education, public safety, environment, and other human needs; (b) strengthening communities by bringing together Americans of all ages and backgrounds in the common effort to improve their communities; (c) encouraging responsibility by enabling members to explore and exercise their responsibilities toward their communities, their families, and themselves; and, (d) expanding opportunity by enhancing members' educational opportunities, job experience, and life skills (p. 4).

When one examines the community leadership link with AmeriCorps, it is essential to understand the leadership roles that exist within actual AmeriCorps programs. The Corporation for National Service defined an AmeriCorps program as:

A coordinated group of activities linked by common elements such as

recruitment, selection and training of participants and staff, regular group activities, and assignments to projects organized for the purpose of achieving the mission and goals of national service, and carried out with the assistance provided under the Act. (Ohio's Governors Community Service Council, 1997, pp. 8-11)

There are numerous stakeholders within a local AmeriCorps program, including AmeriCorps members, site supervisors, advisory board members, and community volunteers (Corporation for National Service, 1997b). The key leadership role in most AmeriCorps programs, however, belongs to the program director, and in some cases is shared with an AmeriCorps program coordinator. AmeriCorps program directors are directly responsible for the operation of an AmeriCorps program and are comparable to a volunteer program administrator. An AmeriCorps program coordinator serves more as a manager, working under the supervision of an AmeriCorps director and handling the day-to-day operations of an AmeriCorps program.

AmeriCorps program directors and, where applicable, program coordinators are jointly responsible for the ongoing operation of an AmeriCorps program within an agency or community based organization (Corporation for National Service, 1997b). Directors and coordinators are charged with such activities as recruitment, selection, and training of members, as well as overseeing the direct services being provided to the community. These individuals not only serve as the administrators of programs, but also are charged with the task of leading AmeriCorps in addressing local community needs and building volunteer leadership within those communities. AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators are the administrators and visible leaders of AmeriCorps programs in Ohio.

Since a key objective of AmeriCorps is to build volunteer leadership among AmeriCorps members and other community volunteers, the researchers believed it was impor-

tant to investigate current leadership practices among both program directors and coordinators. The researchers would suggest that AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators who are knowledgeable of leadership theories, trained in leadership skills, and have mastered various leadership practices are more likely to have the greatest impact within their individual community programs. Since the inception of AmeriCorps, however, there have been no valid or reliable studies of leadership practices among Ohio AmeriCorps program directors or coordinators. With ever increasing societal needs and ever changing positions regarding federal AmeriCorps funding, program directors and coordinators must assume even more critical leadership roles within local AmeriCorps programs.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate leadership practices of Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators. The researchers used a census to collect data from the target population of all Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and program coordinators operating AmeriCorps State and National programs as of October 1, 1998. A complete list of all AmeriCorps program directors' and coordinators' names and addresses was obtained from the Ohio Governor's Community Service Council, the administrative unit for AmeriCorps State programs and support for both State and National AmeriCorps programs in Ohio. The census included 34 directors and 28 coordinators.

The researchers utilized the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI, Kouzes & Posner, 1997), a standardized instrument to measure leadership practices among the target population. Kouzes and Posner (1987) first developed the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) for use with corporate and for-profit managers. In later samplings, however, target populations have included professionals and managers from public, private, and nonprofit organizations. Since the instrument is designed to measure leadership practices among managers and executives, and Ameri-Corps program directors and coordinators are

easily categorized as managers of both programs and people, the researchers held that the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) was a valid research instrument to use with the target audience.

The focus of the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI; Kouzes & Posner, 1997) is to measure leadership practices in five construct areas: (a) Challenging the process (searching out opportunities to change, grow, innovate and improve; and experimenting, taking risks, and learning from the accompanying mistakes); (b) inspiring a shared vision (envisioning an uplifting and ennobling future; and enlisting others in a common vision by appealing to their values, interests, hopes, and dreams); (c) enabling others to act (fostering collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust; and strengthening people by giving away power, providing choice, developing competence, assigning critical tasks, and offering visible support); (d) modeling the way (setting the example by behaving in ways that are consistent with shared values, and achieving small wins that promote consistent progress and build commitment); and (e) encouraging the heart (recognizing individual contributions to the success of every project, and celebrating team accomplishments regularly). Statements that described each of these practices made up the 30-item questionnaire inventory (i.e., six individual statements for each of the five leadership constructs.) The most recent (1997) version of the instrument places each item on a 10-point Likert type scale. The scale utilized is: 1 = almost never, 2 = rarely, 3 = seldom, 4 = once in a while, 5 = occasionally, 6 = sometimes, 7 = fairly often, 8 = usually, 9 = very frequently, 10 = almost always. The researchers calculated Cronbach's Alpha to measure internal consistency and the reliability of each leadership construct specifically for Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators. Internal reliabilities ranged from .52 to .87, with nine of the ten constructs above .74.

The researchers collected data for this study at an Ohio AmeriCorps program directors' and coordinators' quarterly meeting in Worthington, Ohio, on October 14, 1998.

All directors and coordinators who were present completed a written research questionnaire within the 30 minutes allotted for the activity. Those directors and coordinators not scheduled to attend the meeting were mailed a written questionnaire on October 12, 1998, so as to ensure that these directors and coordinators would complete the instrument in the same two or three day period as their colleagues.

Out of the 62 AmeriCorps directors and coordinators in Ohio, 45 (24 directors and 21 coordinators) completed the research questionnaire on-site. Surveys were mailed to the remaining ten directors and seven coordinators. Each questionnaire contained an identification number to assist in follow-up with nonrespondents. Nine of the 17 mail-survey participants (53%) returned the questionnaire by October 22, 1998. On October 23, 1998, the researchers conducted follow-up phone calls to remind the remaining eight nonrespondents to please return questionnaires. This resulted in the return of four additional surveys. A final response rate of 94% was obtained. Thirty-two (55.2%) respondents were Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and 26 (44.8%) were Ohio AmeriCorps program coordinators. No further follow-up was done with the remaining four nonrespondents (two directors and two coordinators).

All research data was entered and analyzed utilizing the SPSS 8.0 statistical program (SPSS, 1997). The researchers calculated descriptive statistics to meet the research objectives. Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) summative scores were calculated using the following ranges for each leadership construct: 0-6 almost never, 7-12 rarely, 13-18

seldom, 19-24 once in a while, 25-30 occasionally, 31-36 sometimes, 37-42 fairly often, 43-48 usually, 49-54 very frequently, and 55-60 almost always.

FINDINGS

Ohio AmeriCorps program directors identified all five leadership practices as utilized at least "fairly often" (Table 1). One leadership construct (enabling others to act) was identified as being practiced "very frequently."

Ohio AmeriCorps program coordinators identified all five leadership constructs as practices engaged in "usually" (Table 1). Three leadership constructs (enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart) were identified as being practiced "very frequently."

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study findings support the researchers' initial theory that Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) scores for Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators are above average for each leadership construct. The researchers also suspected that Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators, because of the nature of AmeriCorps and the national service movement, would score significantly higher in the following two areas: challenging the process and encouraging the heart. This observation only held true for Ohio AmeriCorps program coordinators in the area of encouraging the heart.

Neither program directors nor coordinators were identified as challenging the process "very frequently." As previously stated, this was surprising to the researchers in that their observations were that both AmeriCorps pro-

TABLE 1.
Mean and median scores describing leadership practices of Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators

Leadership Practice	Program Directors (n = 32)		Program Coordinators (n = 26)	
	Mean (SD)	Median	Mean (SD)	Median
Challenging the process	45.75 (6.64)	45.50	48.80 (6.35)	50.00
Inspiring a shared vision	44.56 (7.40)	44.50	45.30 (8.30)	46.00
Enabling others to act	50.80 (3.89)	51.00	52.20 (4.29)	52.00
Modeling the way	47.70 (6.16)	48.00	49.80 (5.24)	50.00
Encouraging the heart	38.10 (5.92)	39.00	50.50 (5.23)	49.00

gram directors and coordinators are quite often engaged in professional behavioral roles that are linked to "challenging the process" through volunteer efforts. AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators must challenge the process through a variety of ways, including working within the service field (i.e., traditional volunteerism); assisting communities to understand both AmeriCorps and the concept of national service; facing uncertain outcomes on the local, state, and federal levels; experimenting with new ideas and theories of service, leadership, and community; and searching outside the boundaries of their work organizations for support, both financially and personally.

Although Ohio AmeriCorps coordinators indicated encouraging the heart "very frequently," Ohio AmeriCorps program directors reported encouraging the heart only fairly often, which is two levels below "very frequently." In addition, the mean score for Ohio AmeriCorps program directors in the area of encouraging the heart was the lowest mean score for the five constructs of both groups. One reason for the significant difference in the area of encouraging the heart between program directors and coordinators could be the fact that, in many cases, AmeriCorps program coordinators work more closely with AmeriCorps members, service recipients, and host-sites or partners on a day-to-day basis. It is generally understood in the AmeriCorps model that a program coordinator would engage in more frequent practice of praising members, expressing confidence in their abilities, recognizing member accomplishments and services, motivating the corps, and working to instill an overall ethic of service. The assumption of these duties by program coordinators leaves AmeriCorps program directors the more bureaucratic tasks of program operation and administration, which can require less usage of the leadership practice of encouraging the heart. In the case that a program does not have a program coordinator, the AmeriCorps program director would be expected to engage in these behaviors as well.

Originally, the researchers believed that Ohio AmeriCorps program directors would

report higher mean scores in all five leadership construct areas when compared to Ohio AmeriCorps program coordinators. Generally, Ohio AmeriCorps directors have more professional experience, greater knowledge of national and community service, are serving in other leadership roles within the larger organization, and have obtained higher levels of education. Naturally, assumptions could be made that program directors should indicate higher or greater use of effective leadership practices, if only based on the fact that these individuals were serving as AmeriCorps program directors.

Study results indicate a definite contrast. Ohio AmeriCorps program coordinators indicated utilization of each leadership practice at a higher frequency than Ohio AmeriCorps program directors. The researchers suggest several possible connections. First, the possibility that the professional duties of program coordinators allow for more frequent development of leadership practices should be considered. The professional duties of program coordinators entail more frequent contact with AmeriCorps members. Program coordinators' prior life experience, both personal and professional, where they learned effective leadership, is also a possibility (although in the study, program directors reported more professional experience in every area than program coordinators).

Ohio AmeriCorps program directors reported "enabling others to act" as their highest construct and as a leadership practice it is used "very frequently." It is highly likely that successful mastery of this effective leadership practice has had some influence on the leadership development growth of program coordinators. Program directors who successfully delegate responsibilities, especially day-to-day management of members, could be assisting program coordinators to grow in the leadership construct areas of challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, and encouraging the heart. A strong correlation could exist with program coordinators' higher use of effective leadership practices and program directors' competency level in "enabling others to act."

It is important to recognize that Ohio

AmeriCorps program coordinators reported significantly above average results with three constructs: enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. These three areas could be expected for program coordinators since they interact on a more frequent basis with AmeriCorps members, program volunteers and service recipients. It should be considered, however, that several AmeriCorps program directors do not have program coordinators assisting them with program operations. In these scenarios, program directors perform all program-related management functions. This fact does not, however, seem to have affected the overall leadership mean scores for program directors.

Even though the overall leadership mean scores for both Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators are positive, the researchers expected higher scores to surface in each construct area. Although the Corporation for National Service offers national leadership development training to Ameri-Corps professional staff, this opportunity has not been promoted effectively in Ohio and participation by Ohio AmeriCorps directors and coordinators has been limited. Time management concerns with Ohio Ameri-Corps program directors specifically seems to be an issue shared commonly with the staff of the Ohio Governors Community Service Council. Many times, program directors have additional responsibilities within their agency or organization in addition to managing the AmeriCorps program, and do not feel they have sufficient time for in-service training beyond what is absolutely required from the Governors Community Service Council (only 34.4% of AmeriCorps directors reported participation in any leadership-related training in the 24 months immediately preceding data collection).

As AmeriCorps program budgets remain stagnant or even decrease, and the current debate over program funding continues (Joseph, 2003), AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators may need to focus even more closely upon their expanded leadership roles in nurturing and managing community volunteer leaders. These expanded roles may involve not only the five leadership compe-

tencies described by Kouzes and Posner (1995) but also the leadership capacities for volunteer administrators described by Safrit and Merrill (2000). Such expanded leadership roles must include creating and communicating a shared vision for volunteer programs; embracing diversity while nurturing pluralism among program staff, volunteers and clientele; acting with values shared by all program stakeholders and championing ethical behavior; accepting change while managing the ambiguity that results from our rapidly changing society; linking effective program management to personal visionary leadership; and, reflecting upon program purposes, processes, and products (i.e., goals and impacts.)

Finally, the researchers might question that although Ohio AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators reported above average scores on the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), is "above average" sufficient? The researchers believe that for the spirit of national service to blossom and to become an integral part of the nation's commitment to volunteerism, committed and effective national service leaders must be present in the field. This discussion is pertinent for all proponents of the national service movement. After all, how can AmeriCorps program directors and coordinators support and model effective leadership practices to AmeriCorps members, community volunteers, and the clientele they serve if they struggle with these concepts personally?

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Barriers to the Development of Volunteer Leadership Competencies: Why Johnnie Can't Lead Volunteers

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INTRODUCTION

Sue Vinyard (1993), noted author and speaker on leading volunteers, states:

> The volunteer coordinator of the next century will have to command a broader and broader range of expertise to be able to meet the challenges of leading volunteer efforts within organizations. Far deeper than knowing how to plan, organize, staff, direct, control, and reward, the Volunteer Program Executive will have to move far beyond these basic functions of management to embrace techniques and strategies that are both complex and interdependent (p.129).

Vinyard emphasizes that the volunteer manager of the future will need to empower the entire organization around her to be the best it can be (1993). She further states that managers of volunteers will have to manage their time to include the acquisition and assimilation of new knowledge. This may include reading extensively, attending seminars, or enrolling in graduate courses. Volunteer administrators (VAs) must also be able to transfer this information to the information users through appropriate communication methods. The VAs of the future must be adept at watching trends that may affect how they do business in the future. In addition, volunteer administrators must be adept at creating and maintaining a supportive, ethical, friendly, and productive climate for volunteers and paid staff. Do volunteer administrators possess these skills?

Fisher and Cole noted that most volunteer administrators are initiated into the profession through on-the-job or previous volunteer experience (1993). Few have formal advanced training in the administration of volunteer programs, management, or personnel experience. In fact, a study of the membership of the Association of Volunteer Administrators in 2000 discovered that 77.8% of volunteer administrators surveyed had received no formal training in volunteer administration prior to their first job experience as a volunteer administrator (Brudney & Schmahl, 2002). More than 26% of the members responding stated that at the time of the survey, they still had not completed any formal training in volunteer administration. About 25% had taken some college courses or completed university certificate programs. Almost 65% had taken some nonuniversity courses, but it is not known how many. A little more than 10% had a nonuniversity certificate in volunteer administration.

Numerous studies have identified the deficiencies of Extension professionals in coordinating volunteers and volunteer programs (Culp & Kohlhagen, 2001; Hange, Seevers & VanLeeuwen, 2002; King and Safrit, 1998). King and Safrit (1998), and Collins (2001) each found gaps between Extension professionals' perceived importance of volunteer management competencies and their competence in these areas. They believe that these gaps represent training needs for these professionals. Hange, Seevers & VanLeeuwen (2002) also found that agents' competencies in nine areas of volunteer administration did not match their perceived importance of those competencies.

Why is the competence of the volunteer administrator (VA) such an important issue?

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Let's examine the state of volunteerism in the United States today. The Independent Sector (2002) estimates that in 1998 more than 109 million Americans volunteered for nonprofit organizations and human service agencies, a 17% increase over 1995. These volunteers accounted for an estimated $225 billion dollars of services to these organizations, the equivalent of over 9 million full-time employees. More than 80% of nonprofit organizations in the United States rely on volunteers to accomplish almost one-third of their work (Ericksen-Mendoza & Heffron, 1998). Volunteers alone cannot improve their communities. Volunteers need the direction of volunteer administrators who can focus their efforts toward solving specific problems. Volunteer administrators not only recruit, screen, train, and supervise volunteers, they serve as a volunteer management "consultant" to other employees in the agency who utilize volunteers.

The competencies required for volunteer administrators to be effective are well documented. The Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) has defined the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by volunteer administrators as part of their professional credentialing program. Boyd (2003) independently identified a set of competencies that volunteer administrators will need in the coming decade that are in line with those promoted by the AVA. Schmiesing, Gliem, and Safrit (2002) also identified similar competencies.

In a 1999 study, volunteer administrators identified their own professional development as one of the most important trends affecting their profession in the coming decade (Culp & Nolan, 1999). What prevents those who direct volunteers from attaining the competencies needed to effectively do their jobs?

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to develop consensus among a panel of experts regarding the competencies that would be required by volunteer administrators in the year 2010 and to identify any barriers that volunteer administrators face in acquiring those competencies. The competencies identified in this study have been discussed in previous publications (Boyd, 2003); this article addresses the barriers VAs face in acquiring the skills and knowledge required to be successful in their jobs.

METHODS/PROCEDURES

This study used the Delphi technique for developing group consensus. The Delphi technique was first developed by the Rand Corporation in the 1950s. It is a technique primarily used for forecasting, policy investigations, and goal-setting (Ulschak, 1983). While the majority of its use in educational research has been in the area of curriculum development, it has also been widely used to determine essential competencies in many fields (Martin & Frick, 1998; Shinn & Smith, 1999). The Delphi technique uses a panel of experts in a given field to develop consensus regarding the answer to a specific question or series of questions.

This study required three rounds to achieve consensus among thirteen experts in volunteer administration. The panel of experts consisted of volunteer administrators, directors of regional volunteer centers, Cooperative Extension volunteer development specialists, and university faculty members from across the nation. These experts were identified by their reputation among volunteer administrators, their involvement in the profession, or their research and publication record in the field.

Round I – The initial round required the jury of experts to respond to three open-ended questions. The jury was asked to identify three to five competencies that they believed volunteer administrators would need in the year 2010. A competency was identified as a knowledge, skill, motive or characteristic that causes or predicts outstanding performance. They were next asked to identify any barriers that they perceived would prevent volunteer administrators from achieving these competencies. A barrier was defined as anything that impedes the acquisition of these competencies. And finally, the jury was asked to identify ways for organizations to motivate (both intrinsically and extrinsically) volunteer administrators to acquire these competencies or overcome any barriers. Fif-

teen of the original 20 members of the jury responded to the first round for a response rate of seventy-five percent. Dalky (1969) found that when the size of the jury was greater than 13, mean correlations were greater than 0.80, thus satisfying questions of process reliability.

Round II – Faculty members with experience in volunteer administration examined the statements identified in Round I to find commonalities among them and to combine similar statements. The original language of the expert jury members was retained without trying to clarify or interpret meaning. Combining similar statements resulted in 33 competency statements, 15 barrier statements, and 21 statements regarding motivation. These statements were used to create the instrument for Round II. In Round II, the jury was asked to rate their strength of agreement for each statement on a six-point Likert-type scale with 1= strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree. All fifteen members of the jury who responded in Round I also responded to Round II.

Round III – The purpose of Round III was to begin the process of developing consensus among the jury. Those statements that received a 5 or 6 (agree or strongly agree) from at least two-thirds of the jury responding in Round II were kept for the third round. Jury members were sent a third revised instrument and asked to re-evaluate each statement retained from the second round using a six-point Likert-type scale. Thirteen of the 15 jury members responded to this round. Dillman's Tailored Design Method (2000) was used for nonresponse follow-up. Frequency distributions were again used to select responses based on a two-thirds majority.

FINDINGS

The original 33 barriers identified during Round I were reduced to 15 in Round II. Consensus was reached on 12 of those barriers by the third round. These barriers are listed in Figure 1. The barriers fall into three categories: organizational barriers, individual traits of the volunteer administrator, and lack of opportunities.

FIGURE 1
Barriers that Discourage Volunteer Administrators from Acquiring Leadership and Management Competencies

ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS

Lack of organizational commitment/support to volunteers

Organizational hiring practices

Volunteer administrator has too many responsibilities other than volunteer administration

Other professionals in the agency are threatened by volunteers

An organization that doesn't foster a positive environment for the development of the individual

Lack of importance given to the role of volunteer administrator

INDIVIDUAL BARRIERS

Lack of knowledge of necessary volunteer management skills

Lack of basic understanding of volunteer systems and the drivers of those systems

Unwillingness of volunteer administrator to learn or change

LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES

Lack of pre-service or in-service training for volunteer administrators Lack of access to necessary training/education to acquire the competencies

(Boyd, 2003, p. 52).

Six of the barriers identified deal with organizational cultures where the use of volunteers to achieve the organization's mission isn't valued. The lack of organizational support may come from a lack of understanding on the part of the organization's leadership. Organizations that have a short history of utilizing volunteers may not understand that volunteer programs are not free, but require financial support as well as changes in organizational policies and attitude. Many volunteer administrators are saddled with too many other responsibilities, demonstrating a lack of importance given to that role in the organization. Such organizations also lack an environment that fosters the improvement and development of their employees. Volunteer administrators aren't encouraged to seek the development of needed competencies.

Lack of knowledge on the part of the volunteer administrator is also a barrier. How can volunteer administrators seek skills they don't realize they need? The fact that most

volunteer administrators enter the profession without any prior experience (Fisher & Cole, 1993) may account for their lack of understanding of volunteer systems.

While there are many books available, as well as a growing number of Web sites, on the topic of volunteer administration, many volunteer administrators still do not have access to accurate up-to-date information on managing and leading volunteers. This is especially true for volunteer administrators in rural areas where support organizations may not exist, Internet access is limited, and traveling to professional conferences and workshops is expensive.

Eliminating the Barriers

When asked to identify ways to motivate volunteer administrators to develop these competencies and remove any barriers, the expert panel reached consensus on 20 items. These statements are listed in Figure 2.

Organizational culture is implicated in both motivating volunteer administrators to acquire the competencies and removing barriers to their attainment. Recognizing the importance of volunteer contributions to the agency's mission, acknowledging and rewarding volunteer administrators for acquiring the competencies, and recognizing the professionalism of the volunteer coordinator position both internally and externally to the organization all require an organizational culture that values the contributions of volunteers. Paddy Bowen, Executive Director of Volunteer Canada, describes an organizational need to invest in the professional development of volunteer administrators, "Organizationally, we need to invest time and effort on our management systems around volunteers, from the board to the mail room" (2001, p.37).

It may be up to the volunteer administrator to develop such a culture within their organization. Evaluating the contributions that volunteers make to the organization and communicating those impacts to the leadership of the organization and to other stakeholders such as donors is crucial to establishing the essential contribution of volunteers. Such evaluations must go beyond dollars saved to describe impact on the organization's

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FIGURE 2

Motivation Factors and Management Practices that Encourage the Attainment of Volunteer Administration Competencies

MOTIVATING FACTORS

Require adequate pre-service training before hiring volunteer coordinator.

Require additional training as part of the job expectations and performance review.

Recognize the importance of volunteer contributions to the agency's mission.

Acknowledge and reward volunteer administrators for attaining the competencies.

Include the volunteer administrator in key decision-making and management meetings.

Recognize the professionalism of the volunteer coordinator position both internally and externally to the organization.

Express how volunteer management skills learned are transferable to other jobs and to personal life.

Profile success stories.

Create an environment and desire for life-long learning.

REMOVING BARRIERS

Orient volunteer administrators as to the complexity of the position.

Provide appropriate levels of guidance and support.

Reimburse staff for training/professional development.

Refocus positions to focus only on volunteer administration.

Offer graduate courses in volunteer administration.

Make sure volunteer program's goals and activities support the organizational mission/vision.

Allow flexible work schedules and official time to obtain needed training.

Realistically advertise for the required knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Provide access to professional development materials in volunteer administration.

Make technology and applications accessible to help volunteer administrators do their job.

Offer an exciting array of professional development opportunities.

(Boyd, 2003, p. 53).

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clientele or community (Culp and Nall, 2000). Making sure that the volunteer program is aligned with the agency's mission will also serve to underscore the importance of the volunteers. Volunteer administrators must also work with other paid staff to help them develop the skills and attitudes necessary for working with volunteers. In addition, VAs

must include other paid staff members in discovering ways that volunteers can contribute to the agency and in developing those jobs and job descriptions.

Agency leaders should recognize the importance and the complexity of the volunteer administrator's role. For most organizations, volunteer coordination is a full-time job. Releasing VAs from other duties to concentrate fully on leading the volunteer program would also give them time to acquire the needed skills. Leaders can also make the acquisition of competencies part of the performance appraisal system, rewarding VAs for their efforts at professional development. The acquisition of VA competencies should not cost the volunteer administrator. Agencies should be prepared to reimburse the VA for reasonable expenses related to their professional development. This may be especially important in rural areas where VAs must travel some distance for professional development opportunities. Investing in a professional development library could pay dividends to the agency since all paid staff members could improve their volunteer management skills.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In their study to identify trends that will affect volunteer leadership in the next ten years, Culp and Nolan (1999) identified the volunteer administrator's professional development as the second most critical trend. The implications are clear: organizations that depend on volunteers to carry out their mission must either hire volunteer administrators with these competencies or make opportunities and resources available for volunteer administrators to acquire them.

This study identified several ways that volunteer administrators can be motivated to acquire volunteer leadership competencies. While requiring adequate pre-service training and recognizing volunteer administrators for attaining the required competencies are both easily implemented management practices, the other motivating factors identified in this study may require a change in the agency's

organizational culture. Recognizing the professionalism of the volunteer administrator position, involving the volunteer administrator in the decision-making process, and creating an atmosphere that encourages life-long learning are factors that cannot be implemented overnight. Edgar Schein, in his book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* states that it is the prime task of the leader to manage the organizational culture (1996).

Multiple barriers may impede volunteer administrators from attaining these competencies. Strategic direction from the organizational leadership will be required to eliminate such barriers. Reallocating resources, aligning the volunteer mission with that of the organization, and redefining the volunteer administrator position to focus only on the volunteer program will greatly enhance the volunteer administrator's ability to attain the required competencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for organizations utilizing volunteers to achieve their mission:
1. Organizations should seek employees who have the necessary competencies in volunteer administration for volunteer management positions;
2. Organizations should make the acquisition of volunteer administration competencies a part of the employee's performance expectations;
3. Organizations should redirect resources to assist volunteer administrators in acquiring the competencies, including provision of educational materials, professional development time, and reimbursement for professional development expenses related to acquiring the competencies; and
4. Organizations should examine their organizational culture to determine if any of the barriers identified in this study are preventing employees from acquiring the needed competencies in volunteer administration.

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Volunteer Screening Practices, an Essential Component of Volunteer Management: Implications from a National Study of Extension Professionals

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INTRODUCTION

I have often envied the fact that my farmer husband can readily see the work that he has accomplished during the course of the day and over a period of time. In volunteer leadership, it is difficult to gauge the effectiveness of our work especially when providing statewide leadership to a large, complex volunteer program. It is similar to evaluating a farmer's work by looking at an aerial map of the farm: you can see the big changes but the smaller more subtle changes are hard to detect. Ongoing research is needed to assess the situation, identify needs, and monitor trends in volunteer development.

Given that volunteers are a critical resource for not-for-profit organizations, skilled management is required to interest and retain them, and to provide for the safe and effective involvement of our clientele (McCurley & Lynch, 1996). It is imperative that we continually strive to understand and incorporate the use of best management practices in volunteer leadership.

Over the past decade, volunteer leadership literature has consistently promoted the use of best management practices when engaging volunteers (Campbell & Ellis, 1995; McCurley & Lynch, 1996; Vineyard, 1996). Severs, Graham, Gamon and Conklin (1997) explain that the incorporation of best management practices is the foundation of an effective volunteer management system. In addition, there has been a repeated need to conduct research in this area (Ellis, 1985; Fisher & Cole, 1993; McCurley, 1994). Yet, as we examine our organizations, can we also document the progress made?

Increasing responsibilities have been assigned to volunteers and the paid staff who work with them. As we have increased the duties of volunteers who work with vulnerable clientele, we have also increased our organizational responsibility to provide effective volunteer screening and management. Those in volunteer leadership must develop systems to support the work of our volunteers (Vineyard, 1996). Now, more than ever, we must create meaningful volunteer roles based upon local programming needs. Since volunteers partner with paid personnel, their contributions should be recognized, and volunteer directors should remain current with national trends in volunteer development. As volunteer administrators, we should periodically examine our organization to ensure that we are both engaging volunteers at every level and using commonly recognized management practices.

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to assess the volunteer management practices of Cooperative Extension across the country. Results provide an organizational picture of volunteer screening, management, and involvement practices nationally. The 26-item survey was reviewed by a panel of experts and piloted with local-level volunteer administrators. The instrument was placed online and an electronic letter along with the URL was sent to 52 State and Tribal Extension Directors with a request that the person in their system giving direction and leadership to volunteer development complete the survey online. Two weeks later a hard copy of the original letter and a reminder were mailed to states that had not responded to the online questionnaire. Forty-one responses were received for a response rate of 79%.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS
Volunteer Involvement

Respondents were asked whether or not their system engaged volunteers in a variety of roles including conducting clerical and/or manual work, identifying educational programming issues or needs, planning educational programs, delivering educational programs, supervising other volunteers, evaluating educational programs, and marketing extension and/or extension programs. The survey revealed that Extension involves volunteers throughout the educational programming process. In the areas of clerical/manual work, identifying programming needs, planning and delivering educational programs, at least 95% responded that they engaged volunteers. However, findings indicated that there are three areas which present opportunities for increased volunteer involvement. Responses from 17.1% of the states indicated that they did not involve volunteers in the supervision of other volunteers. In addition, 9.8% indicated that they do not involve volunteers in the evaluation of educational programs. Lastly, 15% said that they do not engage volunteers in the marketing of Extension programs.

Volunteer Screening and Management

When asked if their organization had established criteria for screening potential volunteers prior to placement, 90% of those responding said they had. However, 29% (12 respondents) indicated they only used the criteria when screening potential youth development volunteers. The remaining 10% responded that their organization did not currently have established criteria for screening potential volunteers prior to placement.

When asked if the screening process was different depending upon the volunteer role, 12 (29%) responded that the process did not differ in relation to volunteer role. Twenty-seven responded that the process in their organization did differ based upon volunteer role. Twenty respondents (49%) said that the major difference in the screening process was that potential youth development volunteers were subjected to a more thorough screening process that included reference checks, inter-

views, and in some cases background checks.

State volunteer administrators were then asked to what extent their staff employed 15 different screening and management practices. The results are summarized in Table 1 in descending order from practices incorporated most often to those used least often.

TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics:
To what extent do Extension professionals in your state employ each listed screening and management practice?

1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = occasionally, 4 = most of the time, and 5 = all of the time

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Provide volunteer recognition	39	4.54	.682
Enroll volunteers	39	4.38	.782
Provide training opportunities	41	4.17	.863
Interview potential volunteers	41	3.76	.969
Conduct reference checks	41	3.66	1.196
Use position descriptions	41	3.49	.810
Promote volunteers to new roles	40	3.35	.802
Use MOUs	41	3.05	1.264
Conduct state criminal checks	41	2.93	1.555
Review volunteer performance	41	2.85	.989
Disengage ineffective volunteers	41	2.76	.860
Conduct local criminal checks	39	2.33	1.108
Conduct exit interviews	40	2.22	.832
Conduct motor vehicle checks	41	2.12	1.288
Conduct federal criminal checks	39	1.64	1.013

Results indicate that Extension staff use nonintrusive screening tools more often than intrusive tools (Table 1). Screening tools used most often include the use of position descriptions (mean = 3.49), conducting reference checks on potential volunteers (mean = 3.66), and interviewing potential volunteers (mean = 3.76). It is interesting to note, however, that the means for all questions pertaining to what extent screening tools were used ranged from 1 = never to 3 = occasionally. Additionally, more intrusive screening tools

were used less often. Respondents indicated that they seldom or never used local (mean = 2.33), state (mean = 2.93), or federal criminal background checks (mean = 1.64). Respondents also said that they seldom (mean = 2.12) conduct motor vehicle checks to assess driving records.

In terms of volunteer management practices, respondents indicate that they enroll volunteers most of the time (mean = 4.38) as well as provide training opportunities (mean = 4.17), and recognition for volunteer contributions (mean = 4.54). However, when asked to what extent they used a written position description (mean = 3.49) or a memorandum of understanding (mean = 3.05) when involving volunteers, respondents indicated that they seldom do so. Further, they seldom (mean = 3.35) promote volunteers to new roles. Lastly, results indicate that Extension professionals seldom or never review volunteer performance (mean = 2.85), disengage ineffective volunteers (mean = 2.76), or conduct exit interviews (mean = 2.22) with volunteers as they leave the organization.

Implications for Extension

The volunteer development models most recognized by Extension professionals are the ISOTURE (Boyce, 1971) and the LOOP (Penrod, 1991) models. Both models incorporate volunteer selection, orientation, training, recognition, and evaluation of volunteers as important volunteer management practices. This study highlights the need for Extension, as well as other organizations, to evaluate current volunteer involvement and management practices and to make changes accordingly.

Results of this study reveal that, nationally, Extension emphasizes the use of nonintrusive screening tools, such as conducting reference checks, and interviewing potential volunteers. This mirrors the results of a study of several youth organizations conducted by Schmiesing and Henderson (2001). Each organization must decide when enough is enough and to what degree that these practices enable the volunteer director to effectively screen potential volunteers. The challenge, as described by Graff (1999), is to select the right combina-

tion of screening tools based upon the position requirements that generate sound placement decisions. State-level volunteer administrators must keep their fingers on the pulse in deciding to what extent their organization is implementing an effective screening process.

There are both advantages and limitations associated with every screening tool. Volunteer administrators, therefore, must select a set they feel is most appropriate not only for the position but for the organization as well (Graff, 1999). However, volunteer administrators at the local level and the volunteers themselves may consider tools normally considered to be nonintrusive, such as reference checks, to actually be intrusive. Thus, they may choose to incorporate lower-level tools such as the use of an application. This implies that, in any organization, top level volunteer administrators should consider conducting routine organizational studies. The results would help to establish benchmark data concerning the use of various screening tools, and offer a means of monitoring organizational trends and staff development needs.

Given that respondents to this study report that their staff incorporate the use of screening tools in a range from never to occasionally, Extension should actively educate volunteer development professionals concerning the need to properly screen potential volunteers. In addition, each state should develop an acceptable screening process and monitor implementation of the process. Effective screening can reduce risk in several ways including the identification of individuals who may not have the necessary skills, thus preventing the placement of those who may do harm, and allowing the best person for the job to be selected (Patterson, 1998).

This study indicates that Extension professionals engage volunteers throughout the Extension educational programming process and that they enroll, offer training opportunities, and recognize volunteers most of the time. Areas in which there are opportunities for growth in volunteer involvement include higher-level roles such as the marketing of educational programs and the supervision of other volunteers.

Implications for Volunteer Administrators

Even though volunteer administrators at the state level sometimes believe that there is an overemphasis on best management practices in training and research, this study highlights the need for the training and evaluation of the use of these practices. The study indicates that Extension should increase the use of best management practices by developing and using written volunteer position descriptions, promoting volunteers to new roles, using a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with community partners, reviewing volunteer performance, disengaging ineffective volunteers, and conducting exit interviews. In speaking with professionals from other organizations, it appears that these are common areas of concern among managers of volunteers. By increasing the use of best management practices, those providing leadership for volunteers will gain confidence in their skills and will therefore be more likely to place volunteers in more meaningful roles within the organization. Given turnover rates, both paid and volunteer, within nonprofit organizations, it is imperative that the volunteer administrator reinforce these concepts and practices on an ongoing basis.

Volunteer administrators should become more deliberate in developing a process for volunteer evaluation. This process begins with the development and use of written position descriptions. By conducting volunteer evaluations, we can help each volunteer reach their potential while assisting the organization in more effective volunteer engagement (McCurley & Lynch, 1996). Further, volunteers want to know if they are doing a good job and if there are areas in which they can improve. If feedback is not provided, the volunteer will lose respect for the supervisor and the organization (Lee & Catagnus, 1999).

FURTHER RESEARCH

This study raises the need for further research in several areas:
1. A discussion point concerning this study is the extent to which a state-level volunteer administrator has knowledge of local volunteer development within their organization. This suggests that top level volunteer administrators in similar organizations should be studied to gain a better understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and the impact that they have on others within their respective organizations.
2. Research should be conducted to compare volunteer involvement, screening, and management practices in Extension to those of other volunteer organizations. Such research could help volunteer administrators answer the question, "In terms of screening, when is enough really enough?" Further, such research would provide a more realistic view of various volunteer roles and levels of volunteer involvement.
3. Each state Extension organization should conduct similar in-state studies in order to assess training needs, establish benchmark data, and create a picture of the community standard of care for their respective state.
4. Additional research is needed involving successful volunteer administrators across organizations. The resulting information would be valuable to other volunteer organizations as well as people in volunteer leadership roles.
5. Research should be conducted to analyze volunteer administrator motivations involved in engaging volunteers in increasingly more meaningful work.
6. Further research is needed concerning the perceptions that volunteers, potential volunteers, and volunteer administrators at various levels within organizations have concerning the use of various screening tools. Results would be beneficial to volunteer administrators in selecting the most effective screening process.

FINAL THOUGHTS

It is our duty as volunteer administrators to challenge current thoughts and practices and to conduct additional research contributing to the field of knowledge. Given the research that has been conducted over the past 25 years, we can spot the big changes that have occurred. Hopefully, as we continue to plow the fields of volunteer engagement, we can apply current research to improve practices that will not only benefit our orga-

nizations but will ultimately benefit the communities in which we work.

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Volunteer Attrition:
Lessons Learned From Oregon's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

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LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

Many Long Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman Program leaders find it difficult to retain sufficient numbers of nonpaid advocates to investigate and resolve complaints on behalf of America's fast growing elder-care population. Although more than 8,000 volunteers assume this federally mandated resident-defense role, these are far too few to adequately monitor all of the country's nursing homes and other long-stay settings (Brown, 1999).

This shortage of volunteers is especially tragic given the mounting research lauding their vital contribution to the well-being of elder-care residents. Ombudsmen volunteers are firmly recognized in the literature as playing a critical protective role, and, more especially, as filling a unique void as vibrant defenders of patient rights (Harris-Wehling, Feasley, & Estes, 1995). Consequently, their effective deployment and solid support is seen by program leaders as absolutely critical to program success (Estes, Zulman, Goldberg, & Ogawa, 2001; Kusserow, 1991b). Although volunteer retention is a top national priority, it remains a vexing challenge.

Surprisingly there is no published research directly assessing former volunteer ombudsmen's stated reasons for quitting. Nevertheless, a number of role-impeding factors have been explored by a few scholars and government analysts. Most of these factors relate to the ombudsman role itself. These include opposition by facility staff (Litwin & Monk, 1987; Nelson, 1995), poor training and supervision (Harris-Wehling, et al., 1995; Litwin & Monk, 1987) and the fact that most volunteers serve in socially isolated, often dreary and emotionally depressing environments (Portland Multnomah Commission on Aging [PMCOA], 1989; Schiman & Lordeman, 1989). In 1989, local ombudsman volunteer administrators assessed the leading reasons for volunteer attrition and cited poor health as the top determinant, followed by role stress and strain, trailed by conflicting time commitments (Schiman & Lordeman, 1989).

In this paper, we examine what former volunteers themselves actually maintain as their reasons for discouragement and resignation. We begin with a brief overview, followed by study results, discussion and implications.

STUDY OVERVIEW
Context
The Oregon program began recruiting vol-

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unteers in 1981and has maintained an average of just under 200 in service over the years with an annual average turnover rate of about 22%. Given the difficulty of the ombudsman job, this rate does not, on the face of it, seem unduly onerous, but since other state volunteer ombudsman attrition rates are unknown, comparisons are not possible. Regardless, the Oregon program has been recognized for its effective "recruiting, training and retraining volunteers" (Kusserow, 1991a, p. 6). This is despite the fact that its tiny paid staff of eight represents one of the worst ratios of paid ombudsman program staff to volunteers in the nation (Harris-Wehling, et al., 1995), a situation that persists to this day.

To become certified, Oregon volunteers must complete 48 hours of initial training and pass a certification exam before they are assigned to a facility where they are expected to spend an average of 4 hours a week in service. They must complete an average of 8 hours' continuing education a year and are encouraged to attend monthly support group meetings facilitated by a paid regional supervisor who is also available via toll free telephone during working hours. Beyond this, however, these supervisors, who work out of the office in the state capitol, are rarely available in person to their volunteers.

Methods

As part of a larger study, four volunteers recruited from the program's recruitment committees (which are also staffed by volunteers) were trained in phone survey techniques. Over three months, they randomly contacted 136 active and 170 former certified ombudsman to ask the open ended questions reported here. Of those contacted, 96 (71%) active volunteers and 147 (85%) former volunteers responded. Both groups were asked to identify "the most discouraging aspect of the ombudsman's job." Former ombudsmen were also asked why they had left the program.

Two investigators independently reviewed each of the 147 response narratives, then categorized and ranked them in order of prevalence. The two ranked response lists were then jointly compared and adjusted for discrepancies in interpretation.

Study Results

The demographic profile of the 147 respondents is similar to that reported for volunteer ombudsmen nationally. Oregon volunteers were typically older (mid to late 60s in age) and overwhelmingly retired. Women outnumbered men by 2 to 1. Former volunteers had served an average of 26 months, compared to the average of 36 months collectively logged by those who remained in service.

Question 1: What factors were the most discouraging to your fulfillment of the ombudsman job?

Of 348 responses, 25 reasonably distinct factors emerged falling into five general groups (Table 1). The largest general group of 120 responses comprised Program Factors representing 34% of all discouraging factors. These perceived hindrances relate to internal problems the volunteer has with the ombudsman organization itself, such as training, supervision, program policies and so forth. Of the ten Program Factor subcategories the most important was "poor program support" (34 responses), followed by "conflict with the central office" (staff) (23 responses), and "inadequate training" (17 responses). None of the seven other Program Factors accounted for more than 12 responses, representing no more than 5% each of the total responses for "the most discouraging aspects of the ombudsman's job." It is important to note that although "Program Factors" emerged, albeit marginally, as the leading general group of most discouraging factors, the leading Program Factor sub-category, "poor program support" ranked only second in the list of 25 subcategories.

System Adversity was the second ranked overall group. It comprised 114 individual responses in five subcategories, representing 33% of all discouraging factors (Table 1). This group reflected the volunteers' vexation with various troubles of the long-term care system. The leading subcategory for this group, "lack of regulatory enforcement" (49 responses, or 14%), was the top-ranked subcategory overall. It was distantly trailed by "poor work by facility staff" (22 responses, 6%). The three remaining System Adversity

TABLE 1

Most Discouraging Aspects of the Ombudsman's Job

RESPONSE	n	%
1. Program Factors, n = 120, 34%		
1.1 Poor program support	34	10
1.2 Conflict with the central office	23	7
1.3 Inadequate training	17	5
1.4 Agency policies	12	3
1.5 Required to do monthly report	10	3
1.6 Problems with local volunteer leaders	9	3
1.7 Not enough local contact with volunteers	5	1
1.8 Problems with other volunteers	5	1
1.9 Job too big	3	1
1.10 Not enough ombudsmen	2	1
2. System Adversity Factors, n = 114, 33%		
2.1 Lack of regulatory enforcement	49	14
2.2 Poor work by facility staff	22	6
2.3 Difficulty communicating with residents	18	5
2.4 Ongoing issues with facilities	14	4
2.5 Issues overwhelming	11	3
3. Power Factors, n = 63, 18%		
3.1 Difficulty in effecting change	23	7
3.2 Role too adversarial	13	4
3.3 Conflict with facility staff	11	3
3.4 Personally ineffective in the role	10	3
3.5 Lack of authority	6	2
4. Personal Factors, n = 35, 10%		
4.1 Not enough time to do the job	25	7
4.2 Health	6	2
4.3 Transportation difficulties	4	1
5. Other Factors, n = 16, 5%		
5.1 Volunteer identified with the facility	9	3
5.2 No problems at facility	7	2
TOTALS	**348**	**100**

factors represented no more than 5% of all discouraging factors.

The third major group, Power Factors, reflects the ombudsmen's perceived lack of clout or authority to influence change. This section accounted for 63 responses, representing 18% of all discouraging factors. "Difficulty effecting change" led this group with 23 responses (but still only 7% of all discouraging factor responses). No other subcategory in this group represented more than 4% of all

discouraging factors.

Only one of the five subcategories of the fourth (Personal Factors) and fifth (Other Factors) ranked groups accounted for more than 3% of all discouraging factors This was the Personal Factor of "not enough time to do the job," with 25 responses accounting for 7% of all discouraging factors.

Question 2: What was your reason for leaving the program?

There were 166 responses to this question comprising 25 different categories (Table 2). Personal Factors clearly led the way, with 104 responses representing (63%) of the stated reasons for quitting. Of these, the foremost stated personal reason for quitting was health (24 responses), followed by family (15 responses), then, obtaining a paid job (11 responses, 7%). Eight other issues followed, ranging from time conflicts (10 responses) to no pay (2 responses).

The second ranked reason for quitting involved Program Factors, comprising only 45 responses (27% of the reasons for quitting), dispersed among nine subcategories. Of these, only "conflict with the central office staff" (13 responses, 8%) and "lack of support" (12 responses, 7%) appeared to be important.

DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTEER RETENTION

Our telephone survey indicates that taking time to ask former volunteers about their experiences can be very insightful. Using a well-trained team of current volunteers to make the calls appears to be a reasonable strategy. Former volunteers were typically eager to discuss their experiences, whether good or bad, and candor developed because of the shared trust of being a fellow volunteer. It was often difficult to close an interview due to respondents' eagerness to discuss their experiences and in some cases, to critique the program. Using volunteers to follow up with others who have terminated provides a follow-up mechanism that could lead to a better understanding of how to strengthen the program. This supports the value of conducting routine, volunteer-administered exit inter-

TABLE 2
Volunteers' Reasons for Leaving the Ombudsman Program

RESPONSE	n	%
1. Personal Factors, n = 104, 63%		
1.1 Health	24	14
1.2 Family	15	9
1.3 Paid job	11	7
1.4 Time	10	6
1.5 Burnout	9	5
1.6 Other interests	8	5
1.7 Personal	8	5
1.8 Developed conflict of interest	7	4
1.9 Served long enough	5	3
1.10 Wrong role for me	5	3
1.11 No pay	2	1
2. Program Factors, n = 45, 27%		
2.1 Conflict with central office staff	13	8
2.2 Lack of support	12	7
2.3 Local program tensions	5	4
2.4 Too much enforcement in role	4	2
2.5 Fired	3	2
2.6 Paperwork	3	2
2.7 Felt program staff dissatisfied with work	2	1
2.8 Not trained	2	1
2.9 Organization ineffective	1	.5
3. Power Factors, n = 10, 6%		
3.1 Feeling ineffective	9	5
3.2 Role too adversarial	1	.5
4. System Adversity Factors, n = 7, 4%		
4.1 Too stressful/depressing	3	2
4.2 Trouble with other government agency	2	1
4.3 Provider hostility	2	1
Totals	**166**	**100**

views as a sort of post hoc, needs analysis, something the Oregon program did not do.

Several of the categories that emerged as important in this study have implications for other programs. Indeed, Program Factors, which emerged as the most important discouraging factor and second leading reason for leaving volunteer service, presents an obvious beginning framework for assessing not only volunteer termination but how to retain current volunteers. Several factors in this group suggest areas for review: (a) *poor program support,* (b) *conflict with central office,*

and (c) *agency policies* appear to be perceived as important hindrances by a sizeable minority of active and former Oregon volunteer ombudsmen. It also seems that these three problems are interconnected.

Perceptions of poor program support are not surprising given the extreme isolation of Oregon's volunteer ombudsmen, who have very little contact with their paid supervisors, possibly seeing them for only a few hours every other month, if that. Many volunteers are also isolated from their peers. Research warns that this isolation may force volunteers to rely too heavily on frail residents for socio-emotional support (PMCOA, 1989). It may also cause them to turn to facility staff for help and companionship. This may cause them to assimilate provider (caregiving) values as opposed to their program's lawful reformist and rights-based principles (Nelson, 2000). This misalignment of values may spur much of volunteer-staff conflict as is suggested in some volunteer's concerns that paid staff were "too hard on the facility," "unfair," "too adversarial," and so forth.

One attempt by the program to protect volunteer ombudsmen from this co-optation was to rotate them out of their assigned facilities after two years of service. This angered a number of volunteers who had admitted to building close relationships with facility staff. Several quit. Other volunteers resigned after being assigned a "silent-partner" that was intended to protect them from frivolous or false accusations that were being directed their way.

Role conflict may also explain some of the tension between volunteers and staff. Role conflict occurs when volunteers perceive their role differently from others, including their supervisors. The ombudsman job entails many different facets, including those of advocate, mediator, resource broker, lay-therapist, educator and friendly visitor, among others. The extensive literature on role conflict predicts that role-conflicted volunteers will be easily frustrated by supervisors who try to enforce policies that seem inconsistent with the volunteer's erroneous job perceptions. Such misunderstanding may be very difficult to eliminate in programs where vol-

unteers are detached from the socializing influences of their leaders and coworkers (Harris-Wehling, et al., 1995; Nelson, 1995).

It is axiomatic, then, that ombudsman leaders must creatively increase volunteer support in order to ameliorate program tensions. Specific recommendations that might improve volunteer comfort with agency policies and procedures include the following.

Program leaders must constantly promote the agency's core resident defense values in all formal and informal communications to volunteers: initial and continuing education programs, bimonthly newsletters, monthly support meetings, telephone advice calls, awards ceremonies and so forth.

Program recruiters and screeners must promote realistic role expectations by neither overselling the ombudsman job nor hiding its "drudge" aspects. To do this will only breed frustration that may be problematic later.

Leaders must communicate the job's complex and exacting role dimensions through detailed position descriptions, the interview process, initial and ongoing training and other formal and informal contacts. The goal is to select the right person.

Leaders can reduce volunteer resistance to the somewhat displeasing task of complaint reporting ("too much paper work") by illustrating how such information can be used to identify problem trends and troubled facilities, so they can be targeted for intervention.

Leaders should prepare performance contracts that specifically address not only key job responsibilities but also the means by which the program will (realistically) support ombudsmen through training and other activities.

Although classic formal job evaluations may be difficult to effectively administer given the agency's tiny centralized paid staff (and tight budget), volunteers should be asked to self evaluate their performance at least annually. The goal is to encourage the volunteers' reflective assessment of their accomplishments in key job dimensions, including complaint handling and reporting, resident visits, hours in facility and so forth.

The program should identify and train veteran volunteer mentors to accompany new

volunteers as they begin their facility visits. These mentors will model appropriate behaviors that will help neophytes develop appropriate role behaviors and capabilities.

To reduce volunteer isolation, program leaders should provide formal and informal opportunities for ombudsmen to train together and socialize. They should also stress the importance of maintaining a professional "distance" from facility staff (who they are supposed to monitor).

Management should increase long-distance proactive management communication techniques via the telephone and e-mail to reduce volunteer isolation.

Management should form a volunteer advisory board that will explore and recommend ways to increase supportive and meaningful feedback to volunteers.

Ombudsman leaders should employ trained volunteers to conduct exit interviews in order to identify role conflict issues, sources of discontent, training needs and so forth.

Management should invite veteran volunteers to participate in agency staff meetings—especially those volunteers identified for the mentoring role. Although the number who may participate may be small (owing to travel time and expense) the volunteers' input will be valuable as will be their increased sense of job ownership and organizational loyalty. These enhanced pro-agency feelings will find their way back to the field where they will help motivate and influence others.

Above all, leaders must make volunteers acutely aware of how complying with program policies and protocols will directly lead to positive differences in the lives of residents.

Program leaders will have a more difficult time softening the effects of *System Adversity.* The literature is not optimistic about any major improvements in America's long-term care system in the near future. The best that an advocacy program may be able to do is to adequately prepare its volunteers to deal with the system's exceedingly frail clientele; its poorly trained and motivated front line staff; its insistent efficiency demands, endless routines and complexities; and its frequently disheartening austerity. Here again, program

leaders must prepare potential ombudsmen even before they join the program by creating realistic expectations about the nature and extent of the problems that will be encountered.

CONCLUSION

As long as a program relies heavily on older volunteers, health may lead the list of termination reasons. Programs with more resources may seek to develop ancillary roles, as Oregon has done in its large cadre of non-paid volunteer recruiters and, more recently, friendly visitors. Otherwise, all resources must be dedicated to the support and empowerment of those who are willing to engage in interpersonal conflict to benefit those who can no longer advocate for themselves. In the final analysis, only Personal Factors are beyond the control of administrators. Program Factors, a crucial major group of responses, are within administrators' control and it appears to be these factors that are particularly important to volunteers. The majority of circumstances that keep or drive away volunteers stem from situations that could be made more volunteer-friendly: therein lies the challenge.

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A Suggested Model for
Contemporary Volunteer Management:
Qualitative Research Bridging the Professional
Literature with Best Practices

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Numerous volunteer management models have been suggested to guide volunteer administrators' daily professional practices. The earliest published models were based upon the actual day-to-day practices necessary to establish and sustain a volunteer program. Boyce's (1971) I.S.O.T.U.R.E. approach to volunteer leadership development suggested seven practices inherent in effective volunteer leadership and management: volunteer identification, selection, orientation, training, utilization, recognition and evaluation. Wilson's (1976) volunteer management model focused upon the respective roles of a salaried volunteer manager, including establishing a positive organizational climate for volunteerism; planning and evaluating volunteer programs; developing volunteer job descriptions; communications; volunteer motivation, recruitment, interviewing and placement; and communications. Navarre (1989) addressed management issues related to grassroots volunteerism, including writing volunteer job descriptions and motivating, recruiting, interviewing, orienting, training, supervising, and evaluating volunteers. MacKenzie and Moore (1993) identified fundamental principles and practices that they

translated into pragmatic worksheets, while Ellis (1996) proposed a professional approach to volunteer management, targeting agencies that utilized a volunteer corps. Stepputat (1995) identified ten overarching categories necessary for successful volunteer management: recruitment; screening; orientation and training; placement; supervision and evaluation; recognition; retention; record keeping; evaluation; and advocacy and education. Brudney (1990) addressed steps for public agencies to use in mobilizing volunteers for public service, and Safrit et al. (1994) used Boyce's (1971) conceptual model as the basis for an applied Ohio 4-H Youth Development volunteer management curriculum called B.L.A.S.T.: Building Leadership and Skills Together.

Other published volunteer management models have been based largely upon an author's conceptual ideas regarding volunteer management. Kwarteng, Smith and Miller (1988) identified eight conceptual components to volunteer administration within Cooperative Extension: planning programs; clarifying tasks; and the recruitment, orientation, training, support, maintenance, recognition and evaluation of actual volunteers. Pen-

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rod's (1991) L.O.O.P. model suggested that volunteer management involved locating and orientating volunteers, operating volunteer programs, and perpetuating volunteer involvement. Culp et al.'s G.E.M.S. model (1998) reorganized the earlier works by Penrod and Kwarteng et al. by suggesting four main concepts in volunteer management: generating volunteer opportunities and prospective volunteers, educating volunteers, mobilizing volunteers, and sustaining volunteer efforts.

Harshfield (1995) investigated the perceived importance of selected volunteer management components in western U.S. schools, while King and Safrit (1998) did likewise for Ohio 4-H Youth Development agents. However, no holistic research has been conducted that builds upon both published volunteer management literature and actual contemporary best practices in managing volunteers. Valid and reliable data resulting from rigorous applied research is needed in order to develop a contemporary model of volunteer management that is not restricted to a specific volunteer organization or program. However, before any quantitative research may be conducted investigating such a holistic volunteer management model, the authors believed that both the published professional literature on volunteer management and contemporary best practices in managing volunteers needed to be investigated in a scientifically objective, yet rigorous method.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this exploratory study was to identify components of volunteer management based upon both published literature and contemporary best practices. The researchers developed a qualitative methodology utilizing both deductive content analysis as well as inductive thematic development (Thomas, 2003.) According to Miles and Huberman (1994), "Qualitative researchers usually work with *small* [authors' italics] samples of people, nested in their context and studied in-depth" (p. 27.) Kuzel (1992) and Morse (1989) suggested that qualitative samples tend to be purposive (i.e., seeking out

specific individuals or types of individuals due to their direct connection or expertise with the focus of the research) rather than random as in broader, quantitative research. Consequently, the researchers utilized practitioner and action research concepts suggested by Jarvis (1999) as well as documented histories of national consulting, program management and professional leadership in volunteer administration to identify eight current managers of volunteers ("practitioners") and 11 current national/international consultants ("experts") to participate in the study. Seven individuals from each group agreed to participate.

The researchers asked the seven practitioners to reflect upon their day-to-day successful practices in managing volunteers and, based upon their reflections and real-life contemporary experiences, to identify effective components of contemporary volunteer management. Similarly, the researchers asked the seven experts to read two or three entire documents of published literature on volunteer management, to reflect upon their readings, and (based upon their reflections and the literature read) to also identify effective components. The researchers developed a theme identification work sheet to facilitate participants' reflections in identifying resulting components of volunteer management and submission of them to the researchers in short words and phrases.

The researchers analyzed the data initially by using constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). They read and reviewed the volunteer management components identified by both the practitioners and experts, and collapsed the initial data into reoccurring themes using a modified story boarding technique (Tesch, 1990.) The researchers employed triangulation (Cohen & Mannion, 1985) with two separate groups of volunteer administrators and one group of Ohio State University faculty familiar with volunteerism and qualitative research, in order to strengthen the integrity of the collapsed themes identified, resulting in valid volunteer management components and subcomponents.

FINDINGS

Based upon the data from the consultant experts, three overarching categories of volunteer management encompassing nine components (and subcomponents where appropriate) were identified (Table 1). Category I: Personal Preparation, including Personal and Professional Development, Serving as an Internal Consultant, and Program Planning; Category II: Volunteer Engagement, including Recruitment, Selection, Orientation and Training, and Coaching and Supervision; and Category III: Program Perpetuation, including Recognition and Program Evaluation, Impact and Accountability.

Three overarching categories encompassing eight components of volunteer management (and subcomponents where appropriate), were identified based upon the data submitted by the volunteer management practitioners (Table 2). Category I: Personal Preparation, including Personal and Professional Development, Serving as an Internal Consultant, and Program Planning; Category II: Volunteer Engagement, including Recruitment, Selection, and Orientation and Training; and Category III: Program Perpetuation, including Recognition, and Program Evaluation, Impact and Accountability.

No further collapsing or consolidating of the two respective theme groups was attempted since the purpose of the study was to explore conceptual components of contemporary volunteer management based upon published literature and contemporary best practices, rather than to derive an ultimate conceptual model.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The close similarity of separate resulting themes from consultants and administrators is noteworthy and warrants discussion. It is interesting that the consultants', not the practitioners', responses resulted in the inclusion of "coaching and supervision" as a component of volunteer management. In all correspondence and instructions, both the practitioners and experts were asked to identify specific components of volunteer *management*; however, the authors would argue that the resulting data more accurately

embody components of (more holistic) volunteer *administration*. The researchers recognize the potential for criticism that this observation borders on a discussion of semantics; however, we would suggest that this finding may be a result of the maturity of the profession.

The researchers suggest that the study findings are congruent with the three most widely used and/or contemporary models of volunteer management. The earliest literature in volunteer management, Boyce's (1971) ISOTURE model, suggested that volunteer leader development can be considered as seven conceptual categories: identification, selection, orientation, training, utilization, recognition, and evaluation. These results expand upon the identification ("Program Planning") and evaluation ("Program Evaluation, Impact and Accountability") components while adding two new aspects: "Personal and Professional Development" and serving as an "Internal Consultant."

The findings concur most closely with the five holistic professional competency domains suggested by the Association for Volunteer Administration's Certification Technical Advisory Council (CTAC) in October of 1999. They included: (a) Program Design, Delivery, and Administration (similar to the authors' proposed Program Planning); (b) Volunteer Resource Development and Management (similar to the authors' proposed Recruitment, Selection, Orientation and Training, and Recognition); (c) Program Performance Monitoring and Assessment (similar to the proposed Program Evaluation, Impact, and Accountability); (d) Individual, Group and Organizational Development (similar to the proposed Serving as an Internal Consultant and Coaching and Supervision); and finally (e) Standards of Professional Practice (similar to the authors' proposed Personal and Professional Development.)

Previous models of volunteer management (with the possible exception of Fisher & Cole, 1993), have not adequately addressed the personal and professional growth of the individual volunteer manager, this being further supported by the Points of Light Foundation (Allen, 1999):

... as we have discussed before [regarding volunteer management], volunteer coordinators were, in a way, a missing element. This is not to say that volunteer coordinators are not important—indeed, in an earlier piece we argued that the research leads to a more important role of internal consultant and change agent for volunteer coordinators. Rather, it underscores that it is not the mere presence or absence of a staff position with that title that makes the difference. It is the way the person in the position thinks, what he or she does and what the system is prepared to allow him or her to do—those are the critical differences between the "more effective" and "less effective" organizations. (p. 17)

The respective components of volunteer management identified in this qualitative research could serve easily as a conceptual foundation for subsequent and more pervasive quantitative research investigating the importance and competence of selected volunteer management competencies as perceived by contemporary volunteer administrators.

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TABLE 1

Components of contemporary volunteer management as identified by consultant experts in volunteer administration.

(Personal) Preparation

Personal & Professional Development	Participating in professional development opportunities
Internal Consultant	Understanding the organization; Managing risks; Staffing a volunteer program; Developing volunteer boards; Budgeting; Educating and working with colleagues; Creating an effective and positive climate for volunteers; Creating and nurturing a supportive work environment; Identifying supervisors of volunteers; Assessing the organization's readiness for volunteer program development
Program Planning	Understanding volunteers today; Assessing needs; Developing volunteer program standards; Planning/designing volunteer programs; Designing volunteer positions; Designing volunteer program tasks

(Volunteer) Engagement

Recruitment	Marketing volunteerism; Recruiting potential volunteers; Screening volunteer applicants
Selection	Interviewing volunteer applicants; Screening volunteer applicants; Placing volunteer applicants into appropriate assignments
Orientation & Training	Orienting volunteers; Supervising volunteers; Managing volunteers; Training volunteers
Coaching & Supervision	Coaching volunteers; Supervising volunteers; Managing volunteers

(Program) Perpetuation

Recognition	Recognizing volunteers; Rewarding volunteers
Evaluation, Impact, & Accountability	Evaluating individual volunteers; Evaluating volunteer program services; Evaluating impacts of overall volunteer program; Keeping records; Reporting accomplishments; Retaining/dismissing volunteers based upon evaluations

TABLE 2.

**Components of contemporary volunteer management as identified
by volunteer management practitioners.**

(Personal) Preparation

Personal & Professional Development	Networking; Advocating for volunteerism and volunteer administration; Managing stress; Participating in professional development;
Internal Consultant	Maintaining filing system; Solving problems; Managing finances; Using technology; Raising funds; Managing conflicts; Training professional staff; Identifying budget needs; Acting as an internal consultant; Preparing professional staff to work with volunteers; Developing volunteer opportunities; Establishing leadership roles
Program Planning	Assessing needs; Planning for volunteer involvement; Developing volunteer programs to address organizational mission; Organizing volunteer programs; Designing volunteer positions

(Volunteer) Engagement

Recruitment	Recruiting potential volunteers; Promoting volunteer opportunities
Selection	Matching volunteers to appropriate roles; Screening volunteer applicants; Interviewing volunteer applicants
Orientation & Training	Orienting volunteers; Training volunteers; Supporting and supervising volunteers; Communicating with volunteers

(Program) Perpetuation

Recognition	Recognizing volunteers; Organizing informal volunteer recognition; Establishing award process; Rewarding volunteers; Organizing a formal volunteer recognition function
Evaluation, Impact, and Accountability	Monitoring ongoing volunteer program; Measuring program impacts; Reporting program impacts; Evaluating volunteers' effectiveness; Evaluating overall volunteer program; Collecting data; Retaining/releasing volunteers

Building Volunteer Group Cohesiveness and Teamwork: The Ball Toss Exercise

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INTRODUCTION

Professional volunteer administrators and not-for-profit managers are often asked to find ways to get their employees and volunteers to improve their productivity, resolve conflict, and increase cohesion in order to "act as a group." Management textbooks describe "group cohesiveness" as one of the more important determinants of a group's structure (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). Without it, members do not desire to remain a part of the group. In fact, a number of deleterious consequences may result from employees and volunteers failing to work as a group. According to Kidwell and Mossholder (1997), a deterioration in group cohesiveness may negatively impact "citizenship behavior," among other things. So, what's the not-for-profit manager to do? He or she is juggling so many balls in the air that developing "espirit de corps" may be one of the last things on his or her mind. Perhaps the administrator or business educator can be of assistance by implementing a "can use now" exercise that lets the professional volunteer administrator stop juggling the balls and has the work group juggle one—all for the purpose of fostering teamwork, enhancing motivation and developing an energized, positive team environment. *Building Group Cohesiveness and Teamwork: The Ball Toss Exercise* may be just what professional volunteer administrators, business educators and/or not-for-profit managers are looking for. The exercise provides participants with an opportunity to initiate a group, and communicate ways to improve performance at the task while experiencing its successful implementation. An added bonus is that participants develop a feeling of accomplishment for a "job well done."

GROUP PRODUCTIVITY

Managers are regularly encouraged to assist various segments of the volunteer workforce with ways to improve group productivity. Unfortunately, work groups regularly break down into cliques and soon develop conflicting agendas that mask hidden animosities and resentments. Remember high school? Does it seem that certain employees and some volunteers are reliving their adolescence? *The Ball Toss Exercise* is designed to cut through these problems by developing a group *espirit de corps* all for the direct purpose of improving communication, which may indirectly result in the enhancement of employee and volunteer productivity.

Group cohesion shows up in the way members are attracted to each other and motivated to stay in the group. A number of factors such as face-to-face communication, time spent together, the severity of initiation, group size (eight to fifteen participants per group are recommended) and external threats all affect cohesiveness. *The Ball Toss Exercise* is a mixed gender activity because mixed sex groups generally report higher group cohesion then their all male (or all female) counterparts (Henry, R., Kmet, J., Desrosiers, E., & Landa, A., 2002).

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ITEMS NOT-FOR-PROFIT MANAGERS NEED

Two essential items are needed to play *The Ball Toss Exercise:*

1. **A beach ball.** The author recommends that the administrator or educator purchase an oversized beach ball with heavy duty plastic. A beach ball, four to six feet or larger in diameter, should suffice. A beach ball may be purchased at any number of retailers, typically for less than $5.00.

2. **Flag football sport belts.** Flag football sport belts are hooked around the waist. They contain two Velcro fasteners on each side of the belt: one on the left side, the other on the right. The fasteners typically hold 10-inch ribbons variously colored red, green or blue. These ribbons are easily detached when grabbed. The belts include ribbons and fasteners, both of which are quite inexpensive. These belts may be purchased from any reliable sporting goods store. *(Tip: make sure to purchase some "large size" belts for people whose waistlines exceed 44 inches.)*

The administrator should explain the game as follows:

Basic Ball Toss Game

Teams must be diversified by gender.

This is a timed contest. Each participant will be given two ribbons on a belt. Begin by putting on the belt. The ribbons should hang from each side: one on the left, the other on the right. Upon popping the ball up in the air – one person at a time (participants must not hold or 'carry' the ball; it must be popped), participants are to pull their ribbons off their belts one at a time (that is 1 pop = 1 ribbon pull). Once all ribbons are thrown to the ground, the game is over. This is a timed contest. Participants may hit the ball up in the air as many times as they want, but each participant must hit the ball up in the air two times in order to get rid of both ribbons. Multiple participants cannot get together and say that they all

hit the ball simultaneously. Should this happen, just as in basketball, the educator will call for a "jump ball" and the game shall start over. If the ball drops to the ground, the game begins again and participants must replace all ribbons on their belts. The administrator will begin the game as a "jump ball." Ready, get set, start jumping and popping!

Advanced Version of the Ball Toss Exercise

The administrator may decide whether or not to play the advanced or basic (recommended) version of the game. If participants appear overweight, uncoordinated and/or out of shape, the basic version is recommended. If participants seem agile, they should be able to successfully pop the ball from one person to another and tear off their teammates' ribbons after one or two tries. The directions for the advanced version are similar to the ones above with the following qualification:

"In this version participants are to pull their teammates' ribbons off their belts one at a time after popping the ball up in the air."

Debriefing

How were groups formed? Did participants feel that they were a cohesive group or did group cohesion develop over time? Cohesion is defined as, "the strength of the members' desire to remain part of their group" as a result of the fact that "members are attracted to each other, accept the group's goals, and help each other work toward meeting them" (Greenberg & Baron, 2000). Did participants learn as the game progressed? Were they able to communicate and network with one another? Over time did they become more effective in being able to pop the ball as well as in keeping the ball in play? Can the professional volunteer administrator explicate how the employees and volunteers can apply this experience in an effort to help the not-for-profit organization achieve its mission? Who helped pull off the most ribbons? How was he or she able to do this effectively? Which group won the contest?

How and why was that group effective? On the basis of what they learned in *The Ball Toss Exercise,* what can participants take back to the organization to improve their group productivity and job performance?

Through the completion of the ball toss exercise, participants come to understand how to build up and run a smoothly functioning team that works effectively to produce results. The idea is that after experiencing *The Ball Toss Exercise,* the volunteer will feel free to more directly communicate with the salaried staff who in turn will be more directly managed by the administrator. After all, the group effectively and efficiently tossed the ball on the basis of the administrator's directions. Why can't they take those same skills and achieve the organizational mission as specified by the volunteer administrator? The author has found that specific outcomes that participants take away from *The Ball Toss Exercise* include:

- **An enhanced ability to communicate.** Workers, volunteers and the volunteer administrator get out from behind their work spaces and are forced to interact with one another, thereby increasing communicative effectiveness.
- **An increased commitment to planning and task completion.** The ball toss exercise is a timed event requiring completion in an expeditious manner just like other tasks faced by the organization.
- **Improved flexibility.** Just as participants must "flex" to toss the ball, they learn that "flexibility" may be the key to achieving the vision of the volunteer administrator.
- **Renewed leadership.** Participants see that by following the administrator's lead, the task is accomplished, thereby enabling the manager to demonstrate leadership skills and, perhaps even more importantly, enabling participants to hone their *"followership"* skills.
- **Networking and delegating is increased.** The completion of the ball toss exercise is a challenge. Participants "pop" the ball to each other and then drop out of the

group. Other participants exhort, direct and cajole the active ball throwers. In so doing, they learn networking and delegation skills.
- **A process is established for charting progress.** Someone has to time the ball toss activity just as someone has to evaluate and control the organization's activities. Participants come to understand the value and importance of feedback and control.

In summary, *The Ball Toss Exercise* is useful for improving intragroup communication, task planning and completion skills, flexibility, leadership and delegation abilities resulting in increasing worker efficiency and effectiveness. As an added bonus, the exercise is a good stress release. For many this will be a fun activity that provides more member interactions. Employees and volunteers often are apprehensive about intruding into another colleague's work space. However, the ball toss activity can be an easy to use device that gets employees and volunteers interacting together in a very natural context. It may even be a "first step" for taking volunteers out of an often self-imposed form of isolation in the organization and into the ranks of a cohesive, motivated and productive volunteer work force.

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APPENDIX

The Beach Ball Toss (Pop) Exercise:
Participant Handout

Directions:
Teams must be diversified by gender.

This is a timed contest. Each participant will be given a belt with two ribbons. Begin by putting on the belt. The ribbons should hang from each side: one on the left, the other on the right. Upon popping the ball up in the air (participants must not hold or "carry" the ball; it must be popped), participants are to either pull a teammate's ribbon off from his or her belt (one at a time—this is the advanced version of the game and depends on the administrator's directions) or the "Popper" is to pull a ribbon off his or her own belt, again one at a time (this is the basic [easier] version of the game—see your administrator for directions). Once all ribbons are thrown to the ground, the game is over. This is a timed contest. Participants may hit the ball up in the air as many times as they want, but each participant must hit the ball up in the air two times. If the ball drops to the ground, the game begins again and participants must replace all ribbons on their belts. Ready, get set, **Go POPPING!**

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