

LET'S MEASURE UP!

A Set of Criteria for Evaluating a Volunteer Program

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I. FOREWORD

The Center for Continuing Education, Northeastern University, has long been interested in the need for developing a comprehensive set of standards for determining the effectiveness of a volunteer program. Such an evaluative criteria would be most helpful to agencies.

The suggested checklist offered in this pamphlet is designed to serve as a guide for any agency interested in taking stock of its volunteer program. The intent has been to keep it universal enough to apply to any volunteer program of any size at any stage of development and still serve as a worthwhile measuring stick.

We are grateful to Elizabeth W. Cady of the Detroit Central Volunteer Bureau for providing the notes of the Reverend Robert N. Hinks, S. J., Assistant Professor of Social Work, University of Detroit, which served as principal resource material for The Whys And Wherefores of Evaluation.

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II. THE WHYS AND WHEREFORES OF EVALUATION

The dictionary definition of evaluation as "a sense of value" is, in itself, not sufficient reason for using the word indiscriminately. Involved in the concept of evaluation are the unanswered questions of what a "value" is and why one evaluates at all. People who are too general in their use of terms are unable to evaluate properly because they cannot give a clear picture of what they are talking about.

To determine the basic concept of evaluation it has to be related to what is good. "Good" is a value - a degree of worth which varies with the frame of reference, be this ethical or practical. Evaluation disassociated from the "good" of a thing only ends in going around in circles.

The overtones acquired in everyday life condition us to losing sight of the original meaning of things. It is not enough to have a nice agency, an elaborate volunteer program, a detailed system of forms unless we understand how they are to be used. Disregard for the fundamental value of the good and the useful leads to the abuse of the agency, its funds and its volunteers.

Thus it is absolutely necessary to know what a thing is for before we can use it properly. In attempting to evaluate, we must not fool ourselves. We must listen to the truth; we must want to listen and we must want to change.

Evaluation, then, includes listening to our critics, to the people around us, to experts, to scientists, to volunteers - so that we may get the whole truth. We must know what is good in order to make the best of ourselves and of others. We must continually evaluate what we are doing in order to achieve the highest value in our work.

III. IMPORTANT POINTS IN A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

(for which evaluation criteria have been developed)

ACCEPTANCE BY STAFF

- ...Does the volunteer program in your agency have the complete support and approval of the administration?
- ...Does the entire staff understand why volunteers are being used in the agency?
- ...Are all staff members familiar with the ways in which volunteers are being used and in what areas they will be working?
- ...Is staff prepared as to what to expect of volunteers?
- ...Do staff members realize what volunteers expect of them?
- ...Are staff responsibilities in regard to the volunteer program clearly defined?
- ...Is the staff time necessary for maintaining a volunteer program taken into consideration?

RECRUITMENT

- ...Do you know how and where your agency is going to use volunteers before you start to recruit?
- ...Are you able to recruit the types of volunteers you need?
- ...Do you make known your agency's volunteer needs through:
 - brochures? radio & TV announcements?
 - come and see tours? newspaper articles?
 - talk groups?

...Do you use a variety of sources for obtaining volunteers:

your board members? neighborhood people?
friends of your volunteers? Volunteer
Bureau?

...Have you tried using new volunteer potential as this becomes available:

high school students? retirees?
club groups? college students?
employed men and women?

...Would you consider any adjustment of your program to accommodate:

the hours that present day volunteers have available?
the particular services or skills that individuals or groups of volunteers may have to offer?

INTERVIEWING AND PLACEMENT

...Are prospective volunteers interviewed before they start work in your agency?

...Is the interviewer a specially designated and qualified member of the staff - or of the volunteer organization?

...Do you allow sufficient time and privacy for a thorough, unhurried interview?

...Are your registration cards designed to furnish useful information?

...Do you try to discover the volunteer's particular capabilities, interests and experience - and offer jobs that are commensurate with these?

...Are the volunteer's wishes - and aversions - as to placement given consideration in so far as possible?

...If the particular service a volunteer wishes to perform cannot be used, do you offer a reasonable explanation and try to substitute other services that are needed and may prove equally interesting?

...Have you drawn up good clear job descriptions?

...When volunteers are assigned to a specific job, do they know:

what they are to do?	what additional training
when, where, to whom	is required?
to report?	what equipment to bring?
how many hours they	
work?	

...Is the importance of continuity of service in situations where the volunteer is working directly with clients or patients stressed?

...Do you discuss a termination date for a specific assignment?

...Do you leave a volunteer free to refuse an assignment in your agency?

...Are volunteers who cannot find the placement they want with you directed to another agency - or to the Volunteer Bureau?

...Have you the ability to turn down a volunteer who is patently unsuitable?

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

...Are time and personnel for the orientation of volunteers included in planning for your

volunteer program?

- ...Do all volunteers working in your agency understand why the job they are doing is necessary and how it fits into the total agency picture?
- ...Are they given a place to work and to keep their belongings?
- ...Are they introduced to staff members and volunteers with whom they will be working?
- ...Do your volunteers know what is expected of them as to:
 - performance? confidentiality?
 - appearance? attitude toward clients
 - behavior? or patients?
- ...Can they differentiate between the role of the volunteer and that of staff?
- ...Have you prepared manuals or other literature to help volunteers keep in mind the things they need to know?
- ...Do you acquaint volunteers with the agency's total facilities and with the names of its various department heads?
- ...Are your volunteers sufficiently informed as to the agency's purpose, program and philosophy to discuss these intelligently with their families and friends?
- ...Do you give the volunteer an opportunity to acquire the skills needed for a particular assignment through:
 - formal training programs?
 - consistent on the job training?
- ...Have you explored community resources for types

of training that your agency is unable to provide?

...Do you keep the orientation process from becoming static through:

periodic volunteer meetings?
invitations to pertinent workshops?
discussion sessions?
suggested reading material?

SUPERVISION

...Has your agency administration designated one person, staff member or volunteer, as the overall director of the volunteer program?

...Is the chain of command in your volunteer program clearly established?

...Do your volunteers know to whom they are immediately responsible?

to report to for work?
to turn to for help and advice?
to call when unable to be present?

...Do they know when and where they can find their supervisor?

...Is there always some experienced person available to work with new volunteers and show them what to do?

...Do you keep track of how volunteers are getting along in their jobs?

through an adequate system of records?
through personal conferences?

...Do you let the volunteer who is doing well know that this is so?

- ...Is an attempt made to help the volunteer who is not doing well by building up interest, increasing skills, instilling confidence?
- ...Are the channels of communication always open between you and your volunteers?

REASSIGNMENT

- ...Are your volunteers assigned to a specific job for a "trial period" at the end of which they may continue in the same job, be assigned to another or withdraw altogether?
- ...Do you recognize that misplacement may be the cause of unsatisfactory performance and try to give volunteers another opportunity to use their skills more productively?
- ...Are your volunteers given a chance to change from one type of service to another, to learn new skills, to assume positions of greater responsibility?
- ...Do volunteers feel free to terminate their service with the agency after a reasonable length of time?
- ...Are volunteers told that they may return to the Volunteer Bureau or seek experience in another agency?
- ...Do you make sure that all volunteers, whether they resign after long term service or are released because they have not worked out, leave with a pleasant feeling toward the agency?

ASSIMILATION

- ...Do you make it evident in all possible ways that your volunteers are needed and wanted?

- ...Are they regarded as members of a partnership without whom the agency's program would be the poorer?
- ...Are volunteers kept informed of agency news and any changes in agency program?
- ...Do you invite your volunteers to take part in:
 - general agency meetings?
 - occasional staff meetings?
 - anything the agency does as a whole?
- ...Are they encouraged to make suggestions and do their ideas receive courteous attention?
- ...Do your volunteers feel so much a part of the agency that nothing short of absolute necessity will keep them away from the job?

RECOGNITION

- ...Do you feel it is important to most human beings to be told that their efforts are appreciated?
- ...Does your agency make a point of saying "thank you" to its volunteers:
 - informally and personally - on a day to day basis?
 - formally and publicly - in the presence of fellow workers, staff, board members, clients or patients, family and friends?
- ...Are the volunteers in your agency identified in any way while on the job by:
 - badges? uniforms?
 - so that clients or patients, as well as staff, may know who they are and why they are there?

...Are you familiar with the Certificates of Appreciations that are available through your local Volunteer Bureau?

...Have you developed your own system of awards?

certificates?

stripes?

pins?

plaques?

...Is any of your agency's publicity devoted to telling the story of your volunteers' achievements?

IV. APPENDIX A

VOLUNTEERS -- HOW DO YOU USE THEM?

Today's volunteers come in a wide assortment of ages, capabilities and times available. Finding worthwhile outlets for their offers of service often requires a good deal of thought and effort on the part of an agency staff. A few examples of the more imaginative ways in which this challenge has been met in Boston and elsewhere may suggest how volunteers of various types can enrich and extend your agency's program.

HOUSEWIVES

Women with an hour or two to spare make weekly or bi-weekly shopping trips for the blind, for senior citizens in homes, for mental patients.

Selected volunteers assist with Special Education classes in public schools.

Trained speech therapist works with a pre-school group of severely retarded children.

Amateur gardeners help emotionally disturbed children with garden therapy in a state mental hospital.

Volunteer tutors teach bed-ridden patients of foreign birth to read English.

Occupational Therapy Volunteer Assistants, after 40 hours of training, assist registered therapists in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, home care.

Untrained volunteers learn to help with physical therapy in the geriatrics department of a hospital for the chronically ill.

Volunteers made a permanent contribution to the state archives by documenting and photographing all buildings of historical interest in their city.

Women without specialized background were trained by a family welfare agency to interview applicants for Christmas relief.

BUSINESS WOMEN

Office worker writes up all case histories for a speech clinic - a process which brings the volunteer in touch with actual speech cases.

Free lance commercial artist assists an agency's publicity director with layouts, illustration of pamphlets, promotional posters.

Business women act as evening receptionists in a case work agency, at a Boys' Club.

Secretaries spend one evening a week as "big sisters" in cottage at boys' home.

Clerical workers from industry help on Saturdays with recreation in Children's Hospital.

MEN

Men help as volunteer hospital aides in emergency rooms of city hospitals.

Printer by trade instructs teenage boys in a community living project how to operate a printing press and publish their own newspaper.

Male volunteers take boys from a children's

home on weekend outings.

Attorney volunteers as a feature writer for the Volunteer Bureau.

RETIREES

Former civil engineer, in his 80's, maintains the technical library in a Boy's Club.

Senior citizen, a woman, fills in at local Civil Defense Office when paid secretary is out - answers all usual inquiries, interviews new CD volunteers.

Retired gardener has won national recognition for his work as a Friendly Visitor.

Women of retirement age man the reception desk in a hospital outpatient department.

Capitalizing on his hobby, a retired industrial worker made therapeutic toys from donated lumber for handicapped children in orthopedic clinic.

Both men and women senior citizens serve as volunteer drivers for ill and handicapped outpatients who have no other means of transportation.

An accountant is now a Hospital Library Aide. He gives out books and does accounts for the Gift Shop.

An English Professor is a Braille Transcriber. He taught school for 30 years.

A High School Principal is now a Clinic Aide, he works in infant welfare clinics and keeps records.

- A Labor Relations Expert is a weekly reader to a blind vocational counselor, helping him keep up his professional literature.
- A Mailroder Clerk - 43 years at Sears Roebuck - became a neighborhood visitor, visiting shut-ins.
- A Musician became a friendly visitor, visiting lonely people for Public Welfare.
- A Patent Lawyer became a Travel Aide in a Greyhound Bus Station, he helps one day a week with troubled passengers.
- A Plant Manager became a Train Aide to newly blinded persons preparing for return to industry.
- A volunteer in his late 80's, a former Social Worker. volunteers five days a week 8:30 - 4:30 to keep 4000 names up to date.
- A retired Police Stenographer is in charge of evening and week-end volunteers for Servicemen's Lounges.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

- Students majoring in Sociology from local University work as group leaders for delinquent youths.
- In one community college students undertook a house to house survey of possible blood donors in time of disaster.
- University students participate in a Big Brother - Big Sister project for boys and girls aged 5 to 8 in a children's home.
- Students volunteer as research assistants in medical laboratories.

On-campus Volunteer Bureau, operated entirely by university students, interviews, refers and follows up volunteers from the student body and faculty.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Boys and girls (14 years and over) assist public recreation summer programs in story telling, story play, puppetry, swimming, sand box activities.

Under guidance from their own school counselors, junior and senior high school students are trained for volunteer work with children in after school neighborhood recreation programs.

Girls (age 16 and up) weigh and measure well babies in a clinic during vacation.

Junior Hospital Aides and Candy Strippers (primarily girls, minimum age usually 15) work directly with patients in escort service, flower service, pharmacy rounds, tray service, pediatrics, recreational therapy, occupational therapy, gift cart, library cart - as well as in auxiliary jobs such as central supply, business office, medical records, diet office, information desk, reception desk, messenger service, X-ray filing (where some hospitals use volunteers of 14 or 15)

Boys are welcomed as volunteers in men's wards in hospitals.

Boys assist in hospital pharmacies counting out pills, in certain laboratory jobs, in caring for experimental animals.

Boys and girls (some at age 13) volunteer in

homes for the aging - visiting, writing letters, reading, escorting, pushing wheel chairs, combing hair, manicuring.

High School students serve at Children's Museums in the afternoons and on Saturdays as Director's Assistants and receptionists.

ADULT GROUPS

Insurance Women's Group, in a successful pilot project, adopted an aged couple - combining actual friendly visiting with some financial support for gifts and special services.

Branch of the National Secretaries' Association furnishes a shorthand teacher for a period of 3 months to a home for unwed mothers.

Personnel and Management Association conducts a Social Problems class twice a year for patients about to be discharged from a U.S. Public Service Hospital.

Women's Group conducts a playschool for pre-school children in a children's home.

Sorority takes children from a nursery for handicapped on regular monthly outings.

Men's Group stopped up a stream to make a swimming pool for an institution.

Jaycees Group provides volunteer games room supervisors for a boys' recreation program on a monthly basis.

Groups adopt visiting teacher and supply her with unbudgeted financial and material needs for the children under her care.

Groups adopt wards in general as well as in mental hospitals and sometimes take on an entire nursing home.

Church Circle took out enough material to sew 100 children's hospital gowns.

Ladies Auxiliary collects salvage materials to supply senior citizens on low income with a project making pillows and afghans for other oldsters in hospitals.

TEENAGE GROUPS

Girl Scout Troop takes over a "music evening" once a week in a home for the aging - put on request recordings, play piano for group singing.

Church affiliated group of high school seniors has taken on a "Books-to-Shut-Ins" program - working in teams of 2 they check each evening after school to see what books need to be delivered and picked up.

Teenage Group goes to a children's home each Sunday to play with the children and relieve the housemother; while a junior sorority group assists each Saturday with games and crafts in a residence school for deaf children.

Organized Teenage Groups under responsible adult leadership help on a regular basis with registration for Salk Vaccine Innoculation Programs.

Boys' Groups wax and polish floors in institutions or take care of the yard work for an agency during the summer months.

Y-Teen Group made holiday posters for the

patients' dining room at a state hospital.

High School Group hemmed diapers for layettes given out by the Welfare Department.