

# CHANGING THE PARADIGM

**Learn, Grow, and Change:  
Creating Openness to Change and  
Inclusive Community Involvement**  
The Paradigm Organizational Effectiveness Series #5



POINTS OF LIGHT  
FOUNDATION

The Paradigm  
Organizational Effectiveness Series #5

**Learn, Grow, and Change:  
Creating Openness to Change and  
Inclusive Community Involvement**

By  
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## Introduction

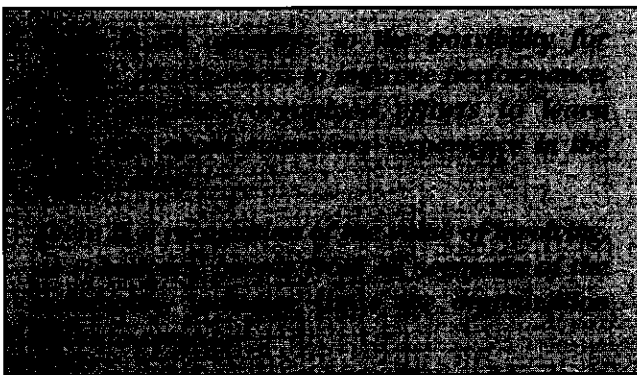
The Points of Light Foundation initiated research in 1991 to identify characteristics of organizations that most effectively engage volunteers. The result was the Eleven Characteristics of Effective Volunteer Involvement. (See inside back cover.) With these in mind, volunteer programs can be looked at within the context of an entire organization's development. In fact, these characteristics confirm that the most successful organizations are those that take a holistic approach toward volunteer involvement.

To more easily apply the research findings, these eleven characteristics are summarized into four Paradigm Action Principles. These are:

1. Lay the Foundation Through Mission and Vision
2. Combine Effective Management with Inspiring Leadership
3. Build Understanding and Collaboration
4. Learn, Grow, and Change

This booklet is the fifth in a series that elaborates on the Paradigm Action Principles. It focuses on the characteristics within the fourth action principle, the one that reflects what the Paradigm research and assessment process is all about. That is, how to continually identify and change paradigms (attitudes and perceptions) that may limit an organization's ability to engage volunteers and communities in the solving of serious social problems.

## Learn, Grow, and Change



Since 1991, pilot programs, assessments, and consultations have looked at how the Paradigm Action Principles can be applied to volunteer management practices. Evidence is strong that the qualities promoting continuous improvement and openness to change are tied directly to an organization's willingness to include volunteers who represent both the communities in which the organization resides and the client populations it serves.

To learn, grow, and change, leaders, staff, and volunteers must be willing to:

- ◆ Reflect on their individual and collective efforts
- ◆ Provide for ongoing feedback
- ◆ Take risks in making changes
- ◆ Reach out to individuals and organizations they may not have involved in the past

This publication will address the characteristics above and provide suggestions for promoting organizational change, as well as steps for becoming more inclusive through diverse volunteer involvement.

The Paradigm Project and The Points of Light Foundation are committed to improving upon the initial findings of the early Paradigm research. For this we rely upon feedback from the Paradigm Advisory Council and agencies involved in preliminary focus groups. Their spirit shines through this publication in the form of new perspectives and strategies. Many thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their guidance, perspectives, and openness to sharing resources and anecdotes:

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# The Learning Nonprofit Organization

## The Need to Grow

As the 21st century rapidly approaches, the emphasis on change is great. All organizations, public and private, are facing the realization of the need to change how they operate or risk not surviving the transition into another era. Organizations with the best chance of success are those already responding to today's trends. Nonprofit organizations face the following new realities:

- ◆ Increased demand and competition for resources
- ◆ Demographic changes in clients and volunteers
- ◆ Shifts in motivations, interests, and availability of volunteers
- ◆ Increased emphasis on collaboration, systems integration, and mergers

These new realities require adapting to a new framework for managing volunteer resources. They also require better cultivation and management of total organization resources.

How well an organization adapts to change is directly related to its openness to improving performance. The "Learning Nonprofit Organization" is one which learns from its experiences so as to keep improving its services. Effective nonprofits know that if they do not grow and improve, they will become increasingly irrelevant. In their quest for constant improvement, they learn from the experiences of volunteers as well as from paid staff. To improve, the organization's stakeholders should continuously measure how well the organization meets its mission. For the nonprofit organization, these primary stakeholders are the clients, volunteers, staff, and donors whose satisfaction is directly related to successfully meeting the mission.

How can paid staff and volunteers create learning organizations that make the most of feedback and participation by all stakeholders?

The key is that they must be willing to change. The following success factors required for change were identified in the pilot assessment and consultation phase of the Changing the Paradigm Project. These requirements were confirmed in the process of applying the Paradigm framework within a variety of local and national nonprofit human-service organizations.

## Requirements for Successful Change

There are five requirements for successful change:

### *A Climate of Readiness*

### *Leadership Commitment at All Levels*

### *Commitment to Process*

### *A Shared Board and Executive Director Vision*

### *A Willingness to Take Risks*

### **A Climate of Readiness**

A climate of readiness means that everyone in the organization understands that internal and external factors affect its ability to meet its mission effectively. Sometimes it takes a "wakeup call" for staff and volunteers to look beyond their immediate concerns and consider these factors. A loss of funding, a decrease in volunteers, or new leadership may trigger an openness to change. In any event, the challenge is to create ownership of the need for change among board, staff, and volunteers. Personal ownership fosters an eagerness to improve not only in the area of volunteer involvement but in management of all the organization's resources.

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (BB/BSA) has developed an environment to promote change nationally. Volunteers, board members, and staff observed that while the BB/BSA client pool of low-income, minority youth was increasing, its staff and volunteer pool had traditionally been and continued to be middle class and white. In an effort to better represent its clients, BB/BSA launched volunteer recruitment campaigns targeted to minorities, provided diversity and leadership development training, and began visioning with organizational stakeholders through Project 21st Century planning processes. With this in mind, the national organization engaged in the Changing the Paradigm Assessment and Consultation to identify long-held assumptions and practices among staff and board volunteers related to the BB/BSA mission. This allowed the organization to begin identifying the paradigms that limited the capacity for real change.

### Leadership Commitment at All Levels

A board must support, recognize the value of, and look for expanded roles for volunteers if any significant change is to occur within an organization. Board volunteers should also assess their own culture, mindset, and mode of operating to identify areas for improvement. In the process of change, a board should:

- ◆ Maintain the momentum as champions of the need for change
- ◆ Provide an objective perspective for balancing change with ongoing organizational priorities
- ◆ Support staff and volunteers through any transitions

### A Commitment to Process

Change takes time. If people are committed to constant improvement and feel they are involved in creating the necessary changes, they will lessen their resistance to change. Assurance must be made that looking at things in new ways does not diminish the value of contributions currently being made by volunteers and staff.

Change management is a process that involves integrating a variety of subprocesses and that affects a variety of other organizational development strategies. Strategic planning, board development, resource development, and communications will all be affected. An internal communication strategy, for example, must be developed to articulate mission, vision, and goals; to continuously learn; and to recognize staff and volunteer contributions. Change will not be intrinsic without this level of ongoing communication.

### A Shared Board and Executive Director Vision

Beyond commitment, successful change requires strategic leadership from senior volunteers and paid staff. Leaders must facilitate a vision that looks beyond immediate organizational needs. They must articulate a vision for how the organization contributes to and is perceived by the total community.

### A Willingness to Take Risks

A willingness to take risks requires the courage to challenge established norms, to make mistakes, and to accept criticism. It also requires the persistence to operate in temporary uncertainty as individuals begin to step out of their ordinary roles and think differently about how they can contribute to meeting the mission. Patience and faith are essential to providing assurance that enlightened solutions and strategies will emerge from chaos to take the organization further than it has ever gone.

Volunteer Centers throughout the country have been engaging in a visioning and planning process to develop their organizations and their systems into responsive, community involved entities. This movement, funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and referred to as VC2000, has challenged a number of paradigms for Volunteer Centers. In a recent survey, board leadership was cited as the number one factor necessary to guarantee real change. As a result, Volunteer Centers are repositioning themselves out of limited roles as referral clearinghouses and into the roles of conveners and mobilizers of people and resources to address serious social problems. This new focus has allowed them to engage volunteers in innovative approaches that respond to issues such as the federal government furlough, the need to better screen youth volunteers, and youth crime.

## Acknowledging Resistance to Change

*"The idea that nonprofits are entering a 'new era' resonates uncomfortably for many in the sector. Any vision of sweeping change raises the concern that the good will be swept away with the bad—our strengths with our weaknesses."*

**National Center for Nonprofit Boards,  
A Report on NCNB's 1995 Leadership  
Forum, January 1996**

Expecting volunteers and staff to feel reluctant, skeptical, and threatened by change is the key to helping them through it. Apprehension and concern about reasons behind the change are normal reactions. The most immediate concern is "how will this affect me and what does this say about my contributions?" People wonder if the good will be thrown out with the bad. Even more importantly, they wonder who will now distinguish between what's good and what's bad.

The more people feel **they have an instrumental role to play in creating the "new" paradigm, the more resistance can be minimized.** With this crucial point in mind, the following will assist in identifying where staff and volunteers may be having a difficult time and suggest options for drawing them into the process. Most individuals in the midst of transition experience some or all of the following in varying degrees.



### 1. Loss of Identity (people lose focus on how their individual roles contribute to meeting the mission)

#### *Signs:*

- ◆ Staff and volunteers display an extreme need for hierarchy and want to know who is in charge
- ◆ Staff and volunteers' frustration and concerns increase
- ◆ Staff and volunteers feel their contributions are not recognized, and that they have no place in the organization

#### *Options for Managers:*

- ◆ Formally recognize contributions of the past and present
- ◆ Create process for staff and volunteers to redefine their roles within the context of change (e.g., develop new job descriptions or suggest new teams or a revised organizational structure)
- ◆ Tie tasks and outcomes to mission
- ◆ Clarify the decision-making process
- ◆ Continually encourage staff and volunteers to share what they have learned

### 2. Withdrawal

#### *Signs:*

- ◆ Staff and volunteers tend to avoid opportunities for dialogue or discussion
- ◆ Staff and volunteers may fixate on routine or administrative tasks that pertain only to their role or program area (to stick with what they know)
- ◆ Volunteers fail to show up; staff call in sick more often

#### *Options for Managers:*

- ◆ Have non-threatening, one-on-one discussions with staff and volunteers
- ◆ Assure everyone that questioning the rationale for change and sharing concerns are part of the process
- ◆ Give individuals specific roles and responsibilities in the change process

### 3. Disorientation

#### *Signs:*

- ◆ Staff and volunteers may just "show up" to work, meetings, activities, and events, exhibiting little initiative

- ◆ Staff and volunteers do not act unless told to perform a specific function
- ◆ Staff and volunteers act distracted, sit in a stupor, or do not follow conversations
- ◆ Staff and volunteers increase the number of coffee and food breaks or other comfort-associated behaviors

#### *Options for Managers:*

- ◆ Outline how the organization expects staff and volunteers to participate in redefining roles
- ◆ Provide time and a structured process for reflecting on personal and career goals, affirming and acknowledging individuals' strengths and expertise

### 4. Negativity

#### *Signs:*

- ◆ Staff and volunteers may become protective of their "turf" or individual program's competitiveness
- ◆ Staff and volunteers may increase sarcastic comments during meetings
- ◆ Staff and volunteers may rally others behind the scenes to question the rationale for changes
- ◆ Staff and volunteers may look for a scapegoat upon whom to blame change

#### *Options for Managers:*

- ◆ Address and dispel rumors openly
- ◆ Acknowledge frustration as normal
- ◆ Revisit the rationale for changes
- ◆ Share examples of similar change in other organizations
- ◆ Give those most negative a role outside their program area or "turf"

In summary, resistance is related to the level or degree of loss an individual may experience with change. This varies for every individual and within every organizational culture. Staff and volunteers may ultimately react to one or a variety of perceived losses during a time of transition. Creating staff and volunteer ownership of the learning process increases openness to change and is the key to reducing extreme long-term resistance.

## Creating A Learning Organization

Peter Senge, an expert in change management, has developed a book with several of his change management colleagues. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* states, "Changing the way we interact means re-designing not just the formal structures of the organization, but the hard-to-see patterns of interaction between people and processes." These patterns are based on the perceptions of an individual's role, personal connection to the mission, expectations regarding performance, sense of organizational identity, and esteem with regard to the rest of the community.

The learning process thus must allow for:

- ◆ Clarification of roles
- ◆ Definition of expectations
- ◆ Evaluation of achievements in light of the individual paradigms that volunteer and paid staff bring to their work

***"In the end, the premise that organizations are the product of our thinking and interacting is powerful and liberating. It suggests that individuals and teams can affect even the most daunting organizational barriers. These barriers didn't appear on the landscape like natural formations, like mountains and rivers. They were created by people's wishes, expectations, beliefs and habits. They remained in place because they were reinforced and never challenged; eventually, they became invisible, because they were so taken for granted."***

***The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook, page 4***

A successful change-oriented organization must allow volunteers and staff to test their experiences. This can be done through forums that examine the traditions, norms, and processes associated with the organization over time.

This process of reflection and awareness-building is essential for substantive change. There are many options for beginning the process:

- ◆ A self-assessment survey (see the Paradigm Self-Assessment Kit)
- ◆ An assessment study by outside consultants
- ◆ Research by students or volunteer interns in the organization or in a similar one
- ◆ Informal brown bag debriefing sessions with volunteers and staff

## Elements of the Learning Nonprofit Organization

### Reflection Upon and Identification of Need for Change

Revisit the mission with all organization stakeholders (board, staff, volunteers, and clients.)

Facilitate a safe environment in which board, staff, and volunteers can articulate perceptions and expectations about one another's roles in light of the organizational mission.

Provide opportunities for individual reflection regarding self, work, relationships, and power or leadership.

Engage in an objective review of the organization's language and systems to identify barriers to effective volunteer and client involvement.

### Rewards for Participation

Develop a performance evaluation system that acknowledges innovation and integrated management of volunteers.

Encourage staff and volunteer efforts to work in partnership in meeting client needs.

Provide formal and informal recognition of staff and volunteers in organization publications, letters, and awards.

### Ongoing Dialogue

Provide a forum for new volunteers to challenge the "status quo" and offer alternative solutions.

Increase atmosphere of teamwork and group problem solving.

Set times during board and staff meetings to engage the volunteer perspective.

### Ownership of Action and Implementation of Change

Evaluate and revise organizational goals in light of learnings.

Communicate and leverage learnings to all staff and volunteers.

Institutionalize continuous-improvement processes within the organization for board, staff, and volunteers.

Have board, staff, and volunteers define their respective roles in the implementation of change.

Whatever forum you choose must provide an opportunity for people to express their feelings and thoughts freely, possibly even anonymously, to get a candid, accurate picture of perceptions regarding volunteer involvement. This is an excellent way to identify the paradigms of the organizational culture. The chart below is an example of varying perceptions of volunteer involvement in one learning organization, Women in Community Service, Inc.

Examining and testing is only the first step. Often the

information and feedback can be so overwhelming that organizations feel they have "learned enough" and the learning process stops there.

To maintain ongoing learning, rewards must be built into the learning process and even negative feedback encouraged. Once the feedback is shared, review it for relevance to your mission. Test its relevance through discussions among mixed constituencies of your organization, staff, board, volunteers, and service recipients.

### ***Changing the Paradigm Within Women In Community Service, Inc.***

(Results from a Learning Organization)

Women In Community Service, Inc. (WICS) was founded 30 years ago by a coalition of five leading women's organizations. Its 150 staff and 600-to-1,000 volunteers have a history of outreach and support to young women participating in Job Corps programs. (Clients have at times included young men.) New programs have been developed to provide individualized services to WICS clientele. The challenges facing WICS include changing demographics of clients and volunteers, diversification of programs and services, and movement away from traditional sources of income. WICS staff and volunteers are committed to change to meet client needs and to support volunteerism and inclusiveness as key management strategies for addressing the challenges above.

The following chart summarizes the language reported in interviews with various volunteer age groups and illustrates the differences in attitudes and perceptions regarding volunteer roles:

#### **OLDER VOLUNTEERS (AGE 50 PLUS)**

#### **YOUNGER VOLUNTEERS (AGES 24-50)**

(career and non-career) working generation

#### **Motivations (language referenced in interviews)**

"Volunteerism as a value—  
volunteerism for the sake of volunteerism"  
"Specific, defined, volunteer activities"  
"Volunteerism was a career"  
"Help out vs. problem-solving"  
"We are here to help the girls"

"More issue and need-focused; social change oriented"  
"Overwhelmed by societal changes, may have personally been affected and want to give back"  
"We are here to help students and women help themselves"  
"High-impact problem solvers vs. help out, unless can see that helping out activities clearly make a difference or touch a life"

#### **Examples of Volunteer Activities**

Coalition member group activities  
Collecting "goodie bag" materials for girls  
Christmas cards and parties  
"Organizing" (coordinating committees)  
Support service

Mentoring  
Skillbuilding and issue-oriented workshops  
Jobs that take advantage of professional skills  
Want to have impact in using creative skills for developing new programs and policies  
Interested in big picture, strategic direction of organization, as well as personal/professional development, resume building

## Continuous Improvement in Volunteer Management

The learning organization grows through continuous improvement. Increasing an organization's ability to involve volunteers effectively requires a total quality management approach. In this management style, staff and volunteers examine how the organization's goals relate to each stakeholder's need and make changes as necessary.

The following chart outlines four steps essential to this approach. Roles and relationships are interrelated. Volunteers are a primary customer of staff, while clients are the primary customers of both staff and volunteers. (Use the Worksheet on page 21 to guide you through creating your own continuous improvement plan.)

<b>VOLUNTEERS AS CUSTOMERS</b>	<b>CLIENTS AS CUSTOMERS</b>
<b>Identifying Customers and Their Requirements (Needs)</b>	
Who are your volunteers? Who defines themselves as volunteers? How do they perceive their roles in light of the mission? What resources, materials, training, support, and direction do they require to be successful?	Who are your clients? What do they require from staff and volunteers? What materials and resources are necessary to meet their needs?
<b>Setting Continuous-Improvement Goals</b>	
Measurable goals derived from customer needs	Measurable goals derived from customer needs
<b>Checking How You Are Doing</b>	
Checkpoints and mechanisms for obtaining feedback from volunteers (see Red Cross example on page 9) The Paradigm Self-Assessment (see sample questions on page 9) Dialogue sessions with staff and volunteers	Checkpoints and mechanisms for obtaining feedback from clients Service recipient surveys Retreats
<b>Taking Action to Improve</b>	
Volunteers and staff propose and implement solutions based on suggested improvements	Volunteers and staff implement new approaches based on client suggestions for improvement

## Using the Paradigm Framework for Continuous Improvement

The four Paradigm Action Principles provide a comprehensive framework for continuously improving volunteer involvement within your organization.

The self-assessment survey designed by The Points of Light Foundation can help identify volunteer and staff requirements for effective volunteer involvement. It is also a tool to “check how the organization is doing” with regard to volunteer involvement.

The following are sample questions from the Changing the Paradigm Self-Assessment Survey.

### Lay Foundation Through Mission and Vision

Does everyone involved with the organization have a clear, positive idea of the roles volunteers should play in meeting the mission?

### Combine Effective Management With Inspiring Leadership

Do the board, executive director, and management actively encourage the involvement of volunteers in all aspects of the organization's work?

### Build Understanding and Collaboration

Are obstacles to volunteer involvement viewed as problems to be solved rather than excuses?

Do volunteers and paid staff work well as a team?

### Learn, Grow, and Change

Are volunteers regularly asked to evaluate their involvement in the organization?

Does the organization recruit volunteers who reflect the diversity of the community (i.e., age, race, income level, and gender)?

*There is an openness to the possibility for change, an eagerness to improve performance, and conscious, organized efforts to learn from and about volunteers' experience in the organization.*

Achieving the above characteristic for effective volunteer involvement requires an organized strategy. The Action Principles from the Changing the Paradigm Project serve as a framework for identifying key action areas to learn from and about volunteer experiences. They can also assist in assessing progress of overall organizational development.

## Continuous Improvement Case Study

AmeriCorps Rapid Response Team participants and American Red Cross staff and volunteers have been involved in a continuous improvement process in California. The following list of continuous improvement mechanisms was shared by the American Red Cross chapter in Los Angeles.

- ◆ Participant questionnaires
- ◆ Retreats involving staff, volunteers, and participants
- ◆ Development of a Volunteer Council
- ◆ Volunteer liaisons with various other departments throughout the Red Cross services and with other community agencies
- ◆ Ongoing staff and volunteer lunch visits
- ◆ Rotation of volunteer assignments and tasks
- ◆ Mentoring of younger volunteers by older ones
- ◆ Volunteer report cards (filled out by staff and other volunteers)
- ◆ Staff report cards (filled out by volunteers)
- ◆ Career development track for volunteer involvement
- ◆ Volunteers intern or shadow other volunteers at outside agencies
- ◆ “Solution box” is used, as opposed to a suggestion box

*“All of the above mechanisms provide for comprehensive learning and ongoing improvement of our program. Those that provide a synergy of interaction and dialogue are most rewarding and have deep impact for both volunteers and staff, i.e., retreats, lunch debriefings, and exploring volunteer career path opportunities.”*

Greg Chun, Program Director, AmeriCorps Rapid Response Team, Los Angeles, California

# Inclusive Community Involvement of Volunteers

**I**nclusiveness means having, attracting, and retaining a diverse community of supporters — staff, volunteers, financial contributors, and others. Diversity in this context is defined in the broadest possible way, as representative of the communities your organization resides in and the populations it serves. This includes, but is not limited to, racial, ethnic, professional, and socio-economic representation.

Why inclusiveness of diverse populations is important will become clear throughout this chapter. Certainly, satisfying the need for inclusiveness is one of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of your organization's continued growth and relevance.

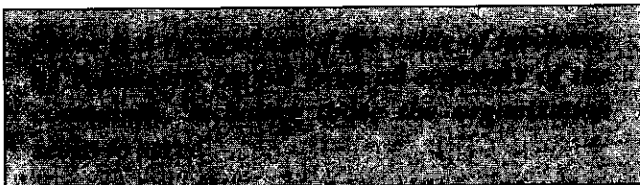
***"The caring impulse is triggered whenever people see themselves as part of community, whether it be family, tribe, the neighborhood, or the nation. As the notion of community expands, so does the scope of benevolence."***

**James A. Joseph, *Remaking America***

## Maintaining Mission Relevance within the Community

A nonprofit organization can gain access to all the resources in its community through its volunteer network. To do this, an organization must proactively engage volunteers who represent the community it resides in and the populations it serves. A diverse volunteer pool ensures an agency's relevance by involving individuals connected to the community's issues and needs. These individuals may bring a new awareness in responding to clients or suggesting alternative approaches to discovering resources.

The initial Paradigm research identified the following as the final characteristic of an organization that effectively involves volunteers in meeting its mission.



Organizations that have embraced this value and realized the benefits of responding to the increasing diversity of their communities are actively struggling with how to suc-

cessfully engage it. They honestly admit that they are not where they want to be but are making persistent attempts to learn from their journey. Most importantly, they acknowledge particular paradigms that may have excluded more broad-based volunteer involvement in the past. These learning organizations are striving to continuously improve their diverse engagement of volunteers.

Other factors prompting organizations to become more diverse in both their staff and volunteer resources include:

- ◆ Movement from a "professional-driven" model of human services to one that is "client/citizen driven," wherein service recipients become problem solvers and reshape the services that better meet their needs
- ◆ An increase in funders' requirements of agencies to be accountable for diversity by presenting requests for demographic data and documentation about the agencies, the communities in which they reside, and their representation of constituencies
- ◆ An emphasis on collaboration to reduce duplication of services and maximize resources

All of these trends require new approaches and skills in the areas of volunteer coordination and management.

Using more service recipients or clients as volunteers challenges organizations to consider new volunteer roles. These roles should enable people to give something meaningful back to the organizations and community systems that have supported them. Volunteer opportunities need to involve clients in roles that go beyond one-time events or bake sales to those that have an impact on service delivery.

Funding requirements that volunteers and staff represent their communities will also necessitate internal systems and supports for maintaining and tracking the involvement of diverse populations.

Finally, an increase in collaborations is changing the traditional notion of volunteering for a single agency. As resources are shared, volunteers may be drawn to specific issues that affect the greater community and align with several agencies that address these issues. They may, for example, be drawn to early childhood education, mentoring, literacy, or homelessness coalitions. Volunteer managers, staff, and leaders are taking on a more proactive



role as conveners, resource developers, and community organizers of networks and groups.

Successfully involving volunteers of diverse ages, races, cultures, religions, abilities, genders, educational levels, and socioeconomic backgrounds requires managers who can:

- ◆ Mobilize individuals and community networks
- ◆ Cultivate buy-in to the mission
- ◆ Provide an environment that encourages innovation and ownership of organizational goals

## **Steps to Inclusive Volunteer Involvement**

Enhancing inclusiveness is not a mystical process. The following steps will lead your organization through a successful and satisfying process that will result in more diversity among staff, volunteers, and supporters.

### **Step 1: Demonstrate Organizational Commitment**

### **Step 2: Identify Barriers to Inclusiveness Within Your Organization**

### **Step 3: Know Your Community and Get Your Community to Know You**

### **Step 4: Retain Volunteers Through Meaningful Experience**

## **Step 1: Demonstrate Organizational Commitment**

Demonstrating a serious commitment to diversity may be the most essential element in retaining a diverse volunteer base. Without this commitment, volunteers become disillusioned and withdraw.

Commitment should be demonstrated in these areas:

- ◆ Recognize that leadership determines the organization's culture. As such, both the executive director and the board must openly commit to seeing that the organization becomes more inclusive. That commitment must exhibit their willingness to "do the right thing," whatever it takes.
- ◆ Begin by increasing diversity among the board and staff. Seeing themselves reflected in these roles is the greatest source of inspiration for volunteers. This includes a commitment to ensuring equal opportunity and affirmative action hiring practices, setting diversity

goals in board development, and cultivating interns with diverse backgrounds.

- ◆ Be inclusive in language and publications. This includes eliminating acronyms, stereotypes, gender pronouns, and agency lingo.
- ◆ Demonstrate the value of all volunteers. Commit resources and time to developing an infrastructure that supports quality volunteer engagement.

***"Commitment to hiring individuals who are active in the communities they are naturally a part of is what allows our organization to make the linkages necessary for social change,"*** said Camara Jordan, Manager of the Philadelphia Office, The Volunteer Center of Southeastern Pennsylvania, ***"We have a diverse staff that is reflective of the African American, Asian, and Hispanic communities of our city. That representation, combined with each of our own specific styles for keeping our finger on the pulse of our communities, allowed us to tap into the tremendous energy generated by the Million Man March."***

The Center's staff relationships with individuals on the March's local organizing committee enabled it to serve as a clearinghouse of information for people who wanted to get involved after the event.

The outcome: more grassroots organizations were highlighted and mainstream organizations were put in contact with increased numbers of African American male volunteers.

The following is a summary supplied by Marilyn Bread, member of the Kiowa Nation of Oklahoma, who is Executive Director of American Humanities (a W.K. Kellogg Foundation-funded program to teach nonprofit agency administration to undergraduate students) at Haskell Indian Nations University, Lawrence, Kansas:

Organizations have to recognize that they may not be representative of the total community. They must engage in a truth quest. This involves:

- ◆ Reviewing volunteer/staff resources in light of mission, in a sense of fairness and completion. Be objective, factual, scientific, and idealistic in defining your approach.
- ◆ Recruiting grassroots leadership, not only the elite.

- ◆ Asking hard questions, such as, "Am I only paying lip-service to inclusiveness or am I really involving volunteers to create ownership of mission and community on the part of all individuals?"
- ◆ Implementing policies that support my active hiring of minorities and the underprivileged. We need to break paradigms of the past.
- ◆ Determining the composition of the board, staff, and volunteer pool based on race, education, gender, etc.
- ◆ Cultivating communities as you would cultivate the wealthiest donor in town. Spend time and invest effort in the same way.

Demonstrating commitment at all levels requires becoming a learning organization. The same elements referred to in the previous chapter apply to any effort to become more inclusive. In this context it requires:

- ◆ Reflection (on motivations for inclusiveness)
- ◆ Rewards (recognizing the contributions of staff and volunteers in their efforts to increase inclusiveness)
- ◆ Ongoing dialogue (regarding motivations, perceptions, and learning)
- ◆ Ownership (providing opportunities for diverse volunteers to buy into the organizations's mission)

### **Tie Mission to Vision for Volunteer Diversity**

The Paradigm research identified a key characteristic of effective volunteer involvement as a positive vision for such involvement. This must be articulated and discussed at all levels of the organization. This vision is directly related to the organization's mission and to the community problems it is addressing. It also:

- ◆ Explores all options for involving volunteers
- ◆ Looks at all the needs and resources necessary to achieve the mission
- ◆ Develops volunteer roles and inclusive recruitment goals in light of the total community

As referenced in *Creating a Strategic Volunteer Program*, The Paradigm Organizational Effectiveness Series #2, a good vision statement answers these questions:

- ◆ Who do we need to influence in order to accomplish our mission?

- ◆ What do we want these "centers of influence" to do?

To ensure broad-based community representation, consider the following additional critical question:

- ◆ Whose influence do we need to provide programs and services that are relevant to the community our mission serves?

On page 23 is a checklist that suggests a process encompassing the questions above. This process can be conducted in a planning session, with representation of the board, staff, volunteers, and clients.

An organization can reinforce and enhance its vision by providing all staff and volunteers the opportunity to add to or revise the vision. Once personal ownership is established in this way, staff and volunteers will be able to translate the goals into individual program goals and work plans.

## **Step 2: Identify Barriers to Inclusiveness Within Your Organization**

Having goals is not enough. Success is directly related to an organization's ability to continuously improve, as described in the previous chapter. Part of doing this effectively means becoming aware of the obstacles to involving new and diverse volunteers.

While there are many barriers to inclusiveness, the following are common themes shared by staff and volunteers in interviews conducted during the pilot assessments of the Changing the Paradigm Project. These barriers were also echoed in subsequent interviews regarding volunteer diversity. Many of the examples that illustrate each barrier focus on racial and ethnic diversity, which is only one aspect of inclusiveness. It was the one most commonly referenced by those interviewed, who also acknowledged that these barriers can result in other forms of limited community representation within your volunteer pool.

### **Barrier 1: Fear and Uncertainty**

Fear often acts as a barrier to inclusive engagement of volunteers and staff on a variety of levels, according to those interviewed. These fears include concern about making mistakes, offending others inadvertently, or leaving someone out. Some people also fear they won't be "politically correct" in their communications, conversations, and recruitment materials. Many express the need to learn to be truly inclusive without appearing to promote "tokenism."

Apprehension was expressed regarding efforts to become more proactive in identifying barriers to inclusiveness. This reluctance was the result of the following:

- ◆ Fear of implying that others or the organization is racist or sexist
- ◆ Fear of finding out that one's own conscious or unconscious actions to maintain a "comfort zone" of peers, ideas, behaviors, images, and resources actually promote racism, sexism, ageism or any other "ism"
- ◆ Uncertainty in knowing how to manage the dynamics of conflict that divergent opinions may bring
- ◆ Discomfort in discussing issues that can be emotionally charged (leading to feelings of defensiveness)

As a result, many issues which can contribute to racism — fear of differences, discrimination, the privileges associated with being the majority group, and prejudice — are not openly addressed.

Some staff and volunteers also indicate concern for their safety when trying to be inclusive of clients in high crime areas (e.g., serving as a mentor to an inner city youth or involving gang members as volunteers).

#### Barrier Breakdowns:

Studies have shown that self-esteem and a clarity of one's own contributions are key factors for diminishing fear, prejudice, and racism.

Thus, defining staff and volunteer roles and recognizing individual contributions are crucial. This can develop a safe and open environment for confronting difficult issues, and reduce feelings of defensiveness. Acknowledging that racism and other "isms" do exist in society, and making a significant commitment to examining organizational and personal attitudes, is essential. It is important to begin with a sincere desire to be inclusive and provide ongoing, multicultural, sensitivity and conflict resolution training.

#### Possible Resources:

Many resources exist for addressing these issues. The following sample organizations with local affiliates have materials and training regarding prejudice reduction, race relations, and community building: The National Coalition Building Institute, The National Conference (formerly the National Conference of Christians and Jews), and The Urban League. (See Community Resource Organizations list on page 28 for other possibilities.)

## Barrier 2: Relationship to Resources and the Client

Nonprofit organizations deal with an ongoing need for resources. A standard practice is to rely primarily on the mainstream, traditional power base of the community for resources. Such reliance can limit the appreciation of all resources in the community. However, it can also lead to valuing the volunteer role as only that of fundraiser, eliminating options for high-impact expertise from other types of volunteers. Such reliance can also diminish the value of the clients' contribution.

Lines-of-power differentiation can be defined in various ways among nonprofit organizations. Sometimes overt, at times covert, such lines exist on a variety of levels. They can be drawn around socioeconomic backgrounds, education levels, tenured-versus-untentured personnel, professional-versus-volunteer, and caregiver-versus-cared for. Whatever the perceived power source, territory can be marked off that is not welcoming to all.

The traditional expert approach to human services can lead to defining individuals by their problems. This decreases the opportunity to engage resources of self-help, self-determination, and problem-solving. It is "need" based as opposed to "asset" based.

#### Barrier Breakdown:

Identify the sources of power valued in your organization and examine how others may be excluded based on the current definition of a "resource."

This involves testing your own and your organization's beliefs toward "serving others" in ways that may prevent clients from being a part of the solution. Look for options to engage in professional/client partnerships and organizational partnerships with citizen groups.

#### Possible Resource:

"Testing Your Own Beliefs," Questionnaire from *The Quickening of America*, pp. 142-143, by Frances Moore Lappe and Paul Martin DuBois.

## Barrier 3: Concerns Regarding Time and Resource Investment

Though most nonprofit organizations see the value of diversifying their human resource pool through both staff and volunteer recruitment, they also see it as a cost in terms of both time and money. Organizations struggling to survive often perceive it as an effort they cannot aggressively pursue. Even organizations with a strong

commitment to diversity still find it necessary to justify time and resources spent on inclusive recruitment and multicultural training.

#### Barrier Breakdowns:

Demonstrate how benefits outweigh cost by making the case that your organization is likely to remain viable if it adapts to the changing demographics of its community. Responsive programs depend upon managers, staff, and volunteers who are diverse and representative of the clientele and potential donor markets.

Acknowledge the time investment. Becoming more inclusive involves change, and change is a process. Set interim goals and measure progress over time. Mary Williams-Stover, Director of Diversity for United Way of America, illustrates this by describing the process her organization went through.

***"Our board recently approved a statement of principles of diversity. The process took almost a year because they needed to answer, 'What would the statement really mean to the way the board operates, how would it be beneficial to our members, etc.?' It took a lot of work by the National Diversity Committee to craft a statement that the board would accept. The board wanted us to be clear on what we are saying we are going to do and to define implications of the principles. Once we presented a clear picture of the importance of the statement for UWA, the board overwhelmingly endorsed the principles, and a new Championing Diversity Award to recognize local United Ways for leadership, process and results in managing diversity."***

#### Possible Resources:

*Blueprint for Volunteer and Board Diversity Series*, United Way of America. (See References on page 30.)

#### Barrier 4: Organizational Culture and Norms

Familiarity can breed exclusiveness. People tend to be comfortable with what they know and who they know. In some organizations, volunteers' familiarity with one another and their shared culture may lead to new members not feeling a part of, or needed, by the organization. This may be interpreted as racism by some minority volunteers. These feelings can be particularly intensified if new volunteers are not provided with a thorough orientation of an organization's history, norms, style of decision-making and commitment to various segments of the community.

Familiarity and habit may also cause reliance on the same networks for recruitment and create a limited perspective in the cultivation of new volunteers.

Many times, mainstream organizations expect clients and grassroots leaders "to come to the organization" and meet it on its own terms. This expectation does not take into consideration the lack of choice, resources, and time restrictions that may challenge volunteers.

Another important norm to consider is decision-making. How decisions are made is unique to each organization's culture and may be internalized over time by the existing staff and volunteers. Criteria for leadership, styles of communication, and approved mechanisms for expressing dissent may all have unwritten rules. A newcomer may violate these norms without knowing it and may be made to feel like an outsider. New volunteers may also feel that their opinions are not being considered in the decision-making process.

#### Barrier Breakdown:

Examine internal norms and organizational culture. Conduct an organizational-diversity audit.

#### Possible Resources:

"Organizational Audit Questionnaire" *Building Board Diversity*, pp. 25-27, by Jennifer Rutledge and the National Center for Nonprofit Boards.

#### Barrier 5: A Disparity Among Perceptions, Motivations and Reality

Many individuals and organizations perceive diversity in only one of the following ways:

- ◆ Presence of a variety of ethnic groups
- ◆ Presence of black and white individuals
- ◆ Individuals representing various geographic locations
- ◆ Presence of varying years of experience or tenure
- ◆ Assumption that one individual can represent all values, perspectives, and experiences of the community they are perceived to represent

***"Even though most individuals indicated that the majority of existing volunteers were white, over 50, and middle- or upper-class individuals, many of those same staff and volunteers expressed the perception that their organization was a diverse organization. Diversity was based on the presence of the various member***

***organizations representing African American, Caucasian, Jewish, and other diverse groups. Some defined diversity as simply having both white and black individuals involved in the organization. Some volunteers had a hard time talking about the diversity of the volunteer pool, as their service activities were one-on-one and they were not often exposed to large numbers of other volunteers."***

Some see diversity as reflected in a board whose members may be racially diverse, but who all come from financial or corporate backgrounds. Yet inclusiveness is limited, since clients and community issues are not represented. A collaboration of only human service directors also limits community perspectives and resources.

Thus, many organizations perceive diversity in a narrow sense. As well, many also lack clarity in motivations for inclusiveness. Organizations are challenged to take a hard look at their motivation for increasing the diversity of their human resources. Again, what is important here is not necessarily what you believe your motivation to be, but how it is perceived.

***"I got upset and tired of being relied on as the only minority voice. I got resentful and suggested others. I had the perception that they needed me to justify funding requirements, for appearance sake, etc."***

The hard questions concerning motivations are:

- ◆ Why does your organization want to recruit diverse volunteers?
- ◆ Is it just to give the appearance of diversity?
- ◆ Is it only to meet funders' requirements?
- ◆ Or is it because board, staff, and volunteers value the contributions of a wide variety of perspectives?

Barrier Breakdown:

First ask, "Do we value diversity in the broadest sense?" Allow your perceptions, definitions, and motivations to be challenged. Then ask, "How do we create a system that embodies and values diversity?"

A first step is to assess organizational commitment through a diversity audit with all stakeholders. Then develop an organizational vision for inclusiveness supported by all.

Possible Resources:

See checklist under "Tie Mission to Vision for

Inclusiveness." See previous resource reference to an "Organizational Audit Questionnaire" by National Center for Nonprofit Boards. The Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc. recently developed a comprehensive resource, *Building Blocks for Multicultural Development*. This guide is particularly helpful to volunteer-based membership groups in taking a hard look at definitions, perceptions, and motivations regarding race relations and diversifying membership.

### **Barrier 6: Intensive Recruitment with Minimal Follow-up and Management**

***"Our organization has spent a lot of money on a very nice, slick ad campaign with politically correct PSAs, bilingual brochures, and recruitment materials. We have gotten some new volunteers, but they don't stay very long."***

This organization did make a commitment to becoming more inclusive; they even developed recruitment goals to engage volunteers who have a variety of backgrounds and skills. They did not, however, spend any resources on volunteer management and had minimal orientation for their volunteers. Program staff were not bilingual. They were also not trained in multicultural sensitivity and had not developed meaningful ways for volunteers to contribute. A committee of volunteers was formed to make recommendations for inclusive recruitment, but the recommendations were not implemented. It was perceived externally that the organization was committed to diverse volunteer recruitment, but internally there was no commitment made to valuing volunteers in general.

Barrier Breakdown:

Start with a comprehensive volunteer management infrastructure.

Possible Resources:

See section on "Retaining Volunteers Through Meaningful Involvement" and refer to the previous four publications in the Paradigm Volunteer Effectiveness Series by The Points of Light Foundation.

### **Step 3: Know Your Community and Get Your Community to Know You**

To be representative of the community, define the community. Often we assume this to be the geographic community in which we live and work. In today's society, most individuals and organizations belong to several communities.

Attempting to entice the potential volunteer with the rationale of serving the general community may not be specific enough to be effective. Agencies must become aware of the communities the volunteer identifies with.

Communities Potential Volunteers May Value:

- ◆ Family
- ◆ Faith or religious community
- ◆ School
- ◆ Neighborhood (street, apartment building, town, city, metro area, county, state)
- ◆ Tribe
- ◆ Ethnic or cultural affiliation
- ◆ Ability-related
- ◆ Recreation/hobby-affiliated
- ◆ Profession/trade/work-related
- ◆ Age-related
- ◆ Gender-related
- ◆ Economic level
- ◆ Sexual orientation
- ◆ Alumni groups
- ◆ Issue-related/political affiliation

Every organization is perceived as belonging to some group of people, to some community. How is your organization perceived? Is there a sense of ownership among the people you serve?

There are two main types of communities in which the agency may participate: internal and external. The internal community is board, volunteers, staff, and clients. Consider if your agency has an internal community that balances the ownership of board, volunteer, staff, and clients. Or, is one group perceived to "own" your agency? The age, ethnicity, gender, experience, accessibility, education, skills, attitudes, and work styles of each of the internal groups also affiliates your organization with various communities. They are key areas of representation necessary for community inclusiveness.

The following defines your primary external community. Do you have representation from all who affect your mission?

- ◆ Geographic (neighborhood, city, county, state)
- ◆ Client/issue-related (e.g., homeless people, disabled people, youth, seniors, families, the terminally ill)

- ◆ Professional networks (human services community, health care, welfare, school system, volunteerism, social work, disaster/crisis response)
- ◆ Resource-related (business, government, philanthropic, foundations, civic organizations)

#### **How volunteers have defined community:**

"An extended family, community larger than immediate family."

"We all live in many communities depending on our need of the moment: drawn to those that fit our cultural need, cultural self-expression and need for protection. They are not separate communities."

"The Indian community is a part of a larger town community. My activity is more selective in the larger community as that was originally more foreign to me than that of the intimate Indian community I was raised in."

"That which nurtures and sustains the individual and allows the individual to give back for the greater good."

"Where you live, work, spend your time."

#### **How agency staff have defined community:**

"It includes all sectors, various economic backgrounds, all issues."

"A diverse group of people in one place working towards a common goal."

"We measure actual demographics of individuals within schools, business, etc."

Engaging volunteers who represent your geographic community's demographics is an essential first step, but being truly representative takes the extra effort necessary to consider all the categories above. It also requires linking your mission to the community affiliations that individuals value.

Being representative of the communities you serve is to engage substantively the "perspectives, experiences, beliefs, and values of those individuals who are essential to maintaining the relevance of programs and services."

#### **Recruit Through Proactive Outreach Strategies**

Attracting new volunteers and staff who reflect the diversity



you seek takes a concerted effort. To do this effectively, try the following techniques:

***Build new relationships and networks.***

***Focus on the needs and interests of prospective volunteers.***

***Target recruitment messages through a variety of networks and media.***

**Build new relationships and networks**

- ◆ Encourage staff to volunteer as advisors or board members with a variety of other community agencies.
- ◆ Develop collaborations for volunteer recruitment. (See approach taken by the Rochester Grantmakers Forum in the example that follows.)
- ◆ Redefine the power base to target a variety of "centers of influence," such as:
  - Community development banks/Neighborhood credit unions
  - Minority-owned businesses and vendors
  - Churches
  - Ethnic cultural institutions
  - Diverse professional/trade associations
  - Fraternities/Sororities
  - Diverse community-based organizations (page 28)

**Focus on the needs and interests of prospective volunteers**

People want to know what impact their contribution to your organization will have on their community, and that community is not necessarily defined geographically. Prior to recruitment, staff and volunteers should educate themselves about the values, attitudes, and cultural identities of the communities they are trying to serve and engage.

Recruitment literature and speeches should articulate the following:

- ◆ How your mission and services affect women, minorities, the disabled, new immigrants, and specific neighborhoods
- ◆ How your organization benefits the potential volunteers personally
- ◆ How the organization benefits their families and the communities they identify with
- ◆ Options for flexible volunteer opportunities in regard to time and task

The Rochester Grantmakers Forum in Rochester, New York, convened the Philanthropic Diversity Consortium to develop a Diversity Resource Directory. The second edition of this directory is due out in October 1996 and will describe:

- ◆ 150 or more culturally diverse resource people who are interested in volunteering for nonprofits, businesses, governments, and schools in the six-county Rochester region
- ◆ 80 or more organizations that bring together people from diverse backgrounds
- ◆ 25 culturally diverse organizations that offer services for a fee

The directory includes people from the following backgrounds: African American, Latinos/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American/Alaska Native, senior citizens, people with disabilities, people with differing religious affiliations and people with differing sexual orientations.

Volunteers serve as subject-matter experts, board and committee members, volunteer consultants, and guest speakers.

As a result of compiling its 1993 Directory and staging other activities, the Forum became aware of another initiative, the Honoring Diversity Collaborative. This group focuses on resources for nonprofits serving clients with mental illnesses or developmental or other disabilities. The two organizations are looking at opportunities to merge their efforts and expand their impact.

**Target recruitment messages through a variety of networks and media**

- ◆ Target ethnic/cultural media, as well as trade, technical-related and community newsletters.
- ◆ Highlight specific roles for volunteers within the recruitment message.
- ◆ Use bilingual language to convey responsiveness to various needs of non-English speaking communities.
- ◆ Include quotes from a diverse cross-section of board members and community leaders that demonstrate a desire to be responsive to the total community and that

describe substantive involvement of volunteers from all backgrounds.

- ◆ Avoid stereotyping. (The National Conference of the National Capital Region, Washington, D.C., has developed a booklet targeted to writers, reporters, and editors. *Building Bridges with Reliable Information: A Guide to Our Community's Races, Religions and Cultures* can be helpful when tailoring information to various groups.)

## **Step 4: Retain Volunteers Through Meaningful Experience**

Recruitment efforts will be fruitless unless volunteers are asked to engage in ways that directly connect their efforts to the organization's mission. Guaranteeing meaningful experience involves:

- ◆ Setting an atmosphere that values and recognizes the contributions of all volunteers
- ◆ Offering "high-impact" volunteer opportunities in which volunteers contribute in significant ways based on their interests, technical expertise, or ability to offer innovative solutions
- ◆ Continuously improving the organization with the help of volunteers (as described in the previous chapter)
- ◆ Integrating commitment to diversity at all levels of the organization

Using the Paradigm Worksheet for Inclusive Continuous Improvement starting on page 24 will foster a meaningful experience for volunteers, regardless of background, race, or culture, and substantially contribute to your organization.

## **Summary**

Clearly, inclusiveness is a complex topic with many perspectives and solutions. This booklet is a brief overview of some key concepts and approaches for helping your organization.

Please refer to the bibliography and resource list in the back of the booklet as a guide to more in-depth perspectives and tools for promoting change and increasing organizational diversity.

Inclusiveness and meaningful volunteer involvement requires a balance of change management and targeted inclusive practices. Both processes require courageous

leadership that examine motivations, risks, and new approaches, and encourage staff, volunteers, clients, and the greater community to develop ownership of the mission. These courageous leaders, their staff and volunteers, will be in the forefront of leading the nonprofit sector into the 21st century.

***"The key is to create an environment where diversity flourishes and individuals do not have to worry about assimilating; rather, they can focus on uniquely contributing to the mission as a whole."***

**Mary Williams-Stover, Director of Diversity,  
United Way of America**

## **CASE STUDY: AN APPROACH TO INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT**

Wing Luke Asian Museum, International District, Seattle, Washington

(1995 Winner - National Award for Museum Service)

Executive Director: Ron Chew

### **BACKGROUND**

**Mission:** To promote and preserve the history and traditions of Asian American communities and to bridge the cultures among Asians, Asian Americans and non-Asians. Volunteer base: 150-plus volunteers.

**Philosophy:** Asian-Pacific Americans have been a part of the northwest Washington region for over a century and a half and have been critical to building all major industries, railroads, farming, mining, lumber, and fishing. The museum is here to preserve this history and carry on traditions of this community and Asia. It is located in a neighborhood built by Asians. It is clear that it is "their" community museum. It is about this community and the people here; it is not a general Asian cultural museum.

**Challenges:** To balance community representation of a variety of Asian cultures, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Pacific Islander, South Asian, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and other Southeast Asians, each of whom has a distinct culture and many of whom have had historical rivalries. To involve the next generation of Asian Americans who don't necessarily have identity to a community. To become technologically interactive as a museum.

### **Community Representation in Board Development**

Five years ago, our board comprised a variety of Asian and non-Asian leadership. Being a nonprofit that is always in need of resources, we talked about assertively recruiting "big names" with access to major resource institutions in the Seattle area. That is the norm of what most nonprofits do.

In reflecting on our mission and the community we ultimately served, it became evident that we needed to create a strong power base from within the Asian community of the International District. Our leadership had to be recognizable to the community we serve. The key was to recruit individuals who would provide real representation and substantively invest in the mission on a variety of levels.

### **High-Impact Volunteer Investment**

We believe we have all the resources we need to accomplish our mission right here in the community, so our approach to volunteer management is that of "community organizers."

Artifacts and photos are often donated by the local community. Volunteers research the historical significance of an object or a recorded event in a photo. A copy of a photo may pass through the hands of a dozen community residents prior to determining the appropriate exhibit placement. Other non-museum professionals develop professional-quality exhibits, oral-history projects, and video documentaries.

As new exhibits are developed, word spreads throughout the community. Individuals with carpentry skills talk to each other, find materials we need, and help build the exhibits.

Thousands of dollars are saved annually in reception food as local businesses prepare various types of Asian food for individual events.

Critical Success Factors for Inclusive Volunteer Management:

- ◆ Empower individuals - If you engage people, you can't impose a framework without giving them the power to make decisions or take action. (Do not engage them if you think you only need limited advice or involvement.)
- ◆ Hire staff who reflect the community and have the skills you require. Your values are identified with where you invest your dollars.
- ◆ Provide meaningful experiences by educating volunteers on how the tasks they perform move the organization forward.

## VOLUNTEERS AS CUSTOMERS

## CLIENTS AS CUSTOMERS

Who are your volunteers?

Who defines themselves as volunteers?

How do they perceive their roles in light of the mission?

What resources, materials, training, support, and direction do they require to be successful?

Who are your clients?

What do they require from staff and volunteers?

What materials and resources are necessary to meet their needs?

## Set Continuous-Improvement Goals

What will be the measurable goals for continuous improvement?

What will be the measurable goals for continuous improvement?

### Check How You Are Doing

What type of feedback will we get from volunteers?

How will we get this feedback (mechanisms)?

How often?

How will we get this feedback (mechanisms)?

How often?

What type of feedback will we get from clients?

How will we get this feedback (mechanisms)?

How often?

How will we get this feedback (mechanisms)?

How often?

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Who will be responsible for coordinating volunteers and staff to propose solutions?

What will be the process for implementing those solutions?

What will be the process for implementing those solutions?

Who will be responsible for coordinating volunteers and staff to propose solutions?

How will client suggestions be gathered and incorporated in the organization?

What will be the process for implementing those solutions?

How will client suggestions be gathered and incorporated in the organization?

What will be the process for implementing those solutions?

## Checklist for Developing an Inclusive Vision of Volunteer Involvement

1. Define the problem or issue your mission addresses within your community.
2. Who in the community does this issue affect?  
Clients: Describe individuals, backgrounds, ethnicity, and special needs.  
  
Systems/partners: Describe collaborating groups and community groups.
3. What is necessary to accomplish the mission and to meet client needs? Describe specific programs and services your organization provides. Describe necessary resources, skills, perspectives, knowledge bases, sensitivities, and "centers of influence" necessary for success.
4. Revisit your view of the community objectively. Review the most recent demographic data, needs assessments, new and evolving leadership pools, various resources (not just financial), and all sectors.
5. Review your existing volunteer pool, including board members, advisors, volunteers administrators, and direct-service volunteers. Describe their expertise, perspective, skills, ethnicity, gender, and background.
6. Compare the lists above. Where are the gaps? Does your current volunteer pool include individuals who represent the needs required by your program? Does your current volunteer pool include individuals who represent the community's demographics, resources, and leadership?
7. Develop your vision and goals for inclusive volunteer engagement based on the outcomes identified above.



# Paradigm Worksheet for Inclusive Continuous Improvement

## LAYING FOUNDATION THROUGH MISSION/VISION

Does your mission or organizational values statement refer to a commitment to inclusiveness?

Is this statement inclusive of race, gender, culture, ability, age, expertise, and socio-economic class? Does it answer the question, "Who do we need to influence and how do we define centers of influence?"

Do you have an organization-wide vision for involving your client population?

How broad is your perspective on volunteer roles? Are you limiting the type and background of your volunteers by using them primarily as fundraisers or as service providers?

What role do volunteers and clients play in defining or clarifying your organizational mission?

## **COMBINING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

Is there a board and senior management commitment to diversity as demonstrated through recruitment and hiring practices?

Are there board development diversity goals?

Is there a well-integrated, diverse, volunteer recruitment plan? Is a commitment to inclusive recruitment a part of all job expectations, and not just that of the volunteer manager?

Are barriers identified and dealt with forthrightly? Have you completed an organizational diversity audit or discussion process?

## **BUILDING COLLABORATION**

How diverse is your staff? How diverse is your volunteer pool?

Have you reduced boundaries by providing multicultural sensitivity and conflict-resolution training for staff and volunteers?

Do you share success stories of professional/client partnerships, minority volunteer contributions, and collaborative efforts through your organizational publications and those of other community groups?

Are you engaging in relationship-building, partnerships, and collaboration with diverse community groups?

## **LEARNING, GROWING, AND CHANGING**

How has your community changed in the last 10 years? How does your agency reflect those changes in its staff and volunteers?

How do you anticipate trends in your industry, client needs, and community? How do you adapt your organization to be responsive in light of your mission?

What are the demographics of your community? Do you represent these demographics in your staff and volunteer pool?

How are staff and volunteers recognized or rewarded for being inclusive and promoting change?

# Community Resource Organizations

The following is a sample list of organizations that may reside in your community. (This list is not comprehensive.)

## Ability Specific

Action Center for the Disabled  
 Advocacy for the Disabled  
 Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
 Association for the Hearing Impaired  
 Association for the Learning Disabled  
 Association for Retarded Citizens  
 Center for Independent Living  
 Community Mobility Program  
 Epilepsy Association  
 Development Disabilities Services  
 United Cerebral Palsy Association

## Age Specific

American Association of Retired Persons  
 Area Agencies on Aging  
 County Office for Aging  
 County Youth Bureau  
 Puerto Rican Youth Development Resource Center  
 Regional Council on Aging  
 RSVP

## African-American

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority  
 Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.  
 Association of Black Communicators  
 Association of Black Journalists  
 Black Business Association  
 Black History Museum  
 Black War Veterans of the United States  
 Center for African American Culture  
 Concerned Black Men  
 Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.  
 Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity  
 LINKS, Inc.  
 NAACP  
 National Association of Black MBAs  
 National Council of Negro Women  
 One Hundred Black Men  
 Omega Psi Phi Fraternity

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity  
 Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity  
 Urban League

## Asian American

Asian American Association  
 Asian American Council  
 India Association  
 Association of Physicians from India  
 Chinese Association  
 East Indian Association  
 Association of Indians in America  
 Japanese American Citizens League  
 Korean Leadership Association  
 Organization of Chinese Americans  
 Vietnamese Association

## General

Minority Business Development  
 Minority Leadership Development Association. United Way  
 Minority Veterans Association  
 Minority Chambers of Commerce  
 National Coalition Building Institute  
 The National Conference

## Gender Orientation

Gay Alliance  
 Lesbian and Gay Taskforce

## Hispanic

American G.I. Forum  
 ASPIRA  
 Hispanic Association for Professional Advancement (within corporate networks, e.g., Xerox, Kodak, etc.)  
 Hispanic Business Association  
 Latin America Society  
 Mexican American Women's Association  
 National Council of La Raza  
 Society of Hispanic-American Professional Engineers (within corporate networks)  
 Spanish Action Coalition

## Native American

American Indians of All Nations, Inc.  
 Local tribal councils  
 Native American Cultural or Resource Center  
 State offices on Indian Affairs

## Christian

Anglican Church  
 Baptist Church  
 Catholic Church  
 Church Women United  
 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
 Community of Churches  
 Council of Churches  
 Ecumenical Council  
 Episcopal Church  
 Interfaith Council  
 Knights of Columbus  
 Lutheran Church  
 Mennonite Church  
 Methodist Church  
 National Council of Catholic Women  
 National Council of Churches  
 Presbyterian Church

## Jewish

B'Nai B'Rith  
 Bureau of Jewish Education  
 Jewish Community Councils  
 Jewish Community Centers  
 National Council of Jewish Women  
 Rabbinical Council  
 Union of American Hebrew Congregations

## Muslim

American Muslim Council  
 Islamic Center  
 Local mosques and masjids

## Additional Resources

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# Changing the Paradigm Products and Services

**Changing the Paradigm Self-Assessment Kit** – An organizational change management tool that leads staff, leadership, board and other volunteers through a comprehensive volunteer program assessment. Each Kit contains:

- ◆ Paradigm Self-Assessment Surveys
- ◆ A Team Leader's Resource Book and seven Team Members' Workbooks
- ◆ Color transparencies to use in training and presentations
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- ◆ Paradigm Reports #1 & #2 (Paradigm research design and findings)

**Paradigm Video Kit** – This informational kit contains the first and second Paradigm reports, a 12-minute Changing the Paradigm video and a user's guide of steps for beginning the Paradigm shift in volunteer involvement.

**The Paradigm Organizational Effectiveness Series** – These booklets address organizational development topics that relate to high-impact volunteer engagement:

- ◆ ***Creating More Effective Volunteer Involvement*** by Kenn Allen. This monograph explores the organizational development issues within each of the nationally researched Paradigm characteristics.
- ◆ ***Laying the Foundation with Mission and Vision: Creating a Strategic Volunteer Program*** by Richard Lynch. Translate vision to strategy and equally important, learn how to consider the role volunteers play in accomplishing mission-critical work. This booklet contains worksheets and other concrete tools to help in the strategic planning process as your organization moves from vision to action.
- ◆ ***Combining Inspiring Leadership and Effective Management: The Underpinnings of a Strategic Volunteer Program*** by Mary Merrill. This action-oriented booklet shows how to set up structures necessary to ensure that the volunteer-management function is well-integrated at all levels and in all parts of the organization. The booklet also addresses how organizations can identify and deal with potential barriers to volunteer involvement.
- ◆ ***Building Understanding and Collaboration: Creating Synergistic Relationships Between Staff and Volunteers*** by Steve McCurley. An effective volunteer program requires cooperation between staff and volunteers and a commitment from both parties to respect the contributions of the other. This booklet identifies ways to reduce the sense of separation and to create an organizational fabric that makes staff and volunteers feel equally welcome.
- ◆ ***Learn, Grow and Change: Creating Openness to Change and Inclusive Community Involvement*** by Mary Phillips. This publication provides suggestions for promoting organizational change and steps for becoming more inclusive through diverse volunteer involvement. A comprehensive list of both national and local resources regarding diversity is also contained in the booklet.

**Training** – Individually tailored training including:

- ◆ Changing the Paradigm: Best Practices in Effective Volunteer Engagement
- ◆ Program Assessment: Conducting Paradigm Self-Assessments Within Multiple Program Sites
- ◆ Creating a Paradigm Consulting Practice

**Organization Development Consulting** – Individually tailored organizational development assessment and consultation around organizational needs related to effective volunteer engagement.

For more information contact:  
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## About the Author

**M**ary D. Phillips is a Washington, D.C., based management consultant working in the area of nonprofit organizational development. She has worked with national and local human service agencies, public television stations, chambers of commerce, religious and civic membership groups, universities, the military, and AmeriCorps programs.

In 1992, Ms. Phillips started MDP Consulting, which helps nonprofits develop strategies for the effective stewardship of public and private resources required to meet their mission. These strategies include:

- \* Organizational assessment and capacity building
- \* Strategic planning
- \* Volunteer program management
- \* Community collaboration
- \* Change management and continuous improvement

Much of Ms. Phillips' experience over the last decade has focused on facilitating community partnerships between civic, corporate, and human service leadership groups. These projects have involved a high degree of group facilitation in visioning, mission development, goal setting, and problem solving. Creating individual and community ownership is an integral part of each facilitation engagement.

She is also the author of several articles and client publications, including *The Future is Now: A Leadership Strategy to Promote Youth Involvement in the American Red Cross* (1995) and *Partnerships for Success: A Mentoring Program Manual* for United Way of America and The Enterprise Foundation (1990).

Prior to starting MDP Consulting, Ms. Phillips served as Director of Youth and Mentoring Initiatives for United Way of America. She has received certification in nonprofit management through the national American Humanics program and a Bachelors degree in Interpersonal and Organizational Communication from Arizona State University.



## About The Points of Light Foundation

**T**he Points of Light Foundation, established in May 1990, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization governed by a diverse board from the corporate, nonprofit and educational sectors. The Foundation's mission is to engage more people more effectively in volunteer community service to help solve serious social problems. The Foundation is achieving this mission in three ways.

First, the Foundation develops and promotes strategies and methods to recruit and engage more volunteers in direct and consequential community service. Second, the Foundation is working with the nationwide network of over 500 Volunteer Centers to help them become the key community resource in applying volunteering to community needs. Third, the Foundation seeks to increase public awareness of how community service helps to build healthier communities.

# **The Paradigm Action Principles**

## ***Lay the Foundation through Mission and Vision***

The mission and priorities of the organization are framed in terms of the problem or issue the organization is addressing, not its short-range institutional concerns.

There is a positive vision – clearly articulated, widely-shared and openly discussed throughout the organization – of the role of volunteers.

Volunteers are seen as valuable human resources than can directly contribute to achievement of the organization's mission, not primarily as a means to obtaining financial or other material resources.

## ***Combine Inspiring Leadership with Effective Management***

Leaders at all levels – policy-making, executive and middle management – work in concert to encourage and facilitate high impact volunteer involvement.

There is a clear focal point of leadership for volunteering but the volunteer management function is well-integrated at all levels and in all parts of the organization.

Potential barriers to volunteer involvement – liability, confidentiality, location of the organization, hours of operation, etc. – are identified and are dealt with forthrightly.

## ***Build Understanding and Collaboration***

Paid staff are respected and are empowered to fully participate in planning, decision-making and management related to volunteer involvement.

There is a conscious, active effort to reduce the boundaries and increase the teamwork between paid and volunteer staff.

Success breeds success as stories of the contributions of volunteers – both historically and currently – are shared among both paid and volunteer staff.

## ***Learn, Grow and Change***

There is an openness to the possibility for change, an eagerness to improve performance and conscious, organized efforts to learn from and about volunteers' experience in the organization.

There is a recognition of the value of involving, as volunteers, people from all segments of the community, including those the organization seeks to serve.





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