

**In This Issue: “Volunteerism and the Other Sectors”**

In his groundbreaking book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000, Simon & Schuster), Harvard professor Robert Putnam argued that late 20<sup>th</sup> century Americans were increasingly disconnected from family, friends, neighbors, and social structures. This disconnectedness resulted in shrinking access to what he calls “social capital”, or the reward of communal activity and community sharing that contribute to civic and personal health and well-being. Putnam concluded that it is a society’s social bonds that most powerfully predict life satisfaction as individuals, and an overall culture’s viability. Volunteers, volunteerism, and managers of volunteers may each serve as foundational building blocks of thriving social capital. Consequently, the third issue (Number 3) of Volume XXIV of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration (IJOVA)* explores critical roles and connections between contemporary volunteerism and the other sectors of society.

Once again I wish to thank our readers for the overwhelmingly positive response to the new publication. Since *The IJOVA*’s on-line premier in July of 2006, *The Journal*’s web site has had 46,348 "hits" (i.e., someone accessed *The IJOVA* home page) and 2,161 extended "visits" (i.e., someone linked from the home page to at least one additional page in *The Journal*). Thank you for accessing *The IJOVA*, and please continue to share this resource with organizational colleagues, professional peers, students and clients.

In fact, in order to help us better understand you as a reader of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration*, we invite you to visit The IJOVA home page to be linked to a short confidential Reader Questionnaire. Of course, at no time do we ask that you identify yourself as an individual, your specific location, or your specific organization. The Questionnaire is designed to collect basic opinion data regarding *The IJOVA*’s content, layout, and usability, as well as anonymous personalogical information. As an elective part of the Questionnaire, you may elect to provide your e-mail address so as to be added to our list serve (so as to be notified when future issues are posted to *The IJOVA* Web site) and/or request subscription information (paid subscriptions will begin July 1, 2007). On behalf of the entire editorial board and staff, we thank you for providing this information!

The issue opens with two *Feature Articles* addressing unique roles that volunteerism plays in focused societal sectors. Kapucu, Augustin, and Krause discuss how volunteerism strengthens the capacities of community-based nonprofit minority health agencies to fulfill their organizational missions. The manuscript examines necessary conditions and strategies for success in engaging these organizations in broader voluntary collaboration with other similar organizations. Waters addresses the unique roles of volunteer board members in serving as visible and viable public relations ambassadors for nonprofit organizations. According to the author, “Board members also enact public relations roles to plan for the future of the organization, ensure financial accountability, and provide general support to the organization.” Such volunteer leadership roles are critical to connect volunteer organizations to their larger societies.

*Research Into Action* highlights a study by Starnes that applies the concept of psychological contracts between private sector employers and employees to the parallel relationship between

volunteer organizations and volunteers. According to the author, “The findings indicate that the volunteers do develop psychological contracts with their not-for-profit organizations and that volunteers perceiving breaches of the contract decrease the number of hours they work, increase (or perceive an increase in) the quality of their work, and do not reduce their intentions to remain with the organization.”

In *Ideas That Work*, Jolley describes Total Resource Campaigns (TRCs), a successful model of volunteer-driven fundraising that may be used by other not-for-profits.

Three authors each contribute an insightful *Commentary* to this issue. De Levy discusses contemporary relationships between voluntarism, volunteerism, and philanthropy in Mexico. Meijs reviews the historical development of the Dutch nonprofit/volunteer sector as it relates to more recent interactions with the government sector. Katz discusses needed changes in how American nonprofit organizations partner with public, private, corporate, and community organizations.

*From The JOVA Annals* features seven excellent articles focused upon the volume’s theme, yet published previously in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration (The JOVA)*: “Why Do they Do It? A Study of Volunteer Commitment in the Parish Setting,” by Marilyn C. Nelson (originally published in 1999); “An Analysis of the Voluntary Activities of Military Spouses,” by Sherry Fontaine, Ph.D. and Mark A. Brennan, Ph.D. (published in 2000); “A Look Inside Corporate Volunteer Programs,” by Dr. Ellen J. Benjamin (published in 2001); “Investing in Volunteerism: Recommendations Emerging from the Study of the Impact of Volunteers in Texas State Agencies,” by Sarah Jane Rehnborg, Ph.D. and Meredith DeSpain (published in 2003); “Volunteering in Cultural Institutions: A Comparison Between the United States and Germany,” by Gesa Birnkraut and “Utilizing Employees as Volunteers,” by Connie Pirtle (both published originally in 2004); and, “Corporate Employee Volunteer Programs: Considering the Interests of Multiple Stakeholders,” by William A. Brown, Ph.D. and Robert F. Ashcraft, Ph.D. (published in 2005).

We hope this issue of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* will provide each reader with information, inspiration, and insights as volunteers and those who manage them work together to strengthen the positive yet ever-more-complex connections between individuals and institutions in today’s global society.

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