

In This Issue:
“When Ability and Will Combine: Volunteer Motivations and Incentives”

One of the first things we must be aware of is the necessity to distinguish between a person’s ability to do something and his will to do it. A volunteer might be perfectly able to perform a task, . . . but they simply do not want to do it.

(Marlene Wilson, 1976, p. 42)

These few simple, straightforward words from *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs* (Boulder, CO: Volunteer Management Associates) summarize so well the ongoing challenge faced daily by managers of volunteers: how to effectively match a volunteer’s interests, needs and wants with those of the holistic volunteer program and sponsoring organization. Indeed, the ability to create a climate wherein individuals consciously seek to contribute time, energies and talents to an individual, cause or group (for which they will not be paid) is a requisite skill, talent and capacity for any successful manager of volunteers. Notice that I did not say “the ability to motivate individuals”. Although numerous volunteer management models focus extensively on “motivating volunteers” as a core component, I am definitely from the school of thought that purports that one may not motivate anyone to do something they do not wish to do. Rather, one may excite an interest, establish a need, or create conditions wherein individuals motivate themselves. I argue that it is only through such self-motivation by volunteers that sustained personal and organizational leadership, programmatic success, and volunteer retention are achieved.

This issue of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* focuses upon volunteer motivations and incentives. Four excellent *Feature Articles* highlight the focus topic from four diverse perspectives. Marcia A. Finkelstein explored possible relationships between the satisfaction expressed by older volunteers, and the volunteers’ motive strength, motive fulfillment, time spent volunteering, and length of volunteer service. She concludes that, “The more the [volunteer] experience fulfills them, the more satisfied the individual and the greater the commitment to continue volunteering.” Laura Littlepage, James Perry, Jeffrey Brudney and Phillip Goff investigated the motivations and voluntary activities of exemplary volunteers through a lens of religiosity. Their work emphasizes the affects of faith, spirituality, and life-altering events upon individuals’ decisions whether, when, and how to volunteer. Becky Starnes continues her investigations into the concept of “psychological contracts” between individual volunteers and nonprofit organizations, especially as focused upon trust and job satisfaction. And finally, Carlton Yoshioka, William Brown, and Robert Ashcraft examined motivations of active senior adults who volunteer and those who did not volunteer. They conclude that “. . . managers of volunteers who understand the social psychological motives sought by seniors will be better equipped to provide experiences that satisfy the altruistic and egotistical functions of current volunteers and those that have the potential to volunteer. This will result in recruitment and retention strategies that are effective in meeting the needs of the organization and the seniors who are willing to volunteer to support and benefit future generations.”

Mary Kay Hood contributes a *Book Review* of Peggy M. Jackson's 2006 text, *Nonprofit Risk Management & Contingency Planning - Done In A Day Strategies* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.).

From The JOVA Annals features four articles focused upon volunteer motivations and incentives, yet published previously in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*: "Volunteering: A Comparison of the Motivations of Collegiate Students Attending Different Types of Institutions," by David J. Burns, Ph.D., Mark Toncar, Ph.D., Jane Reid, Ph.D., Cynthia Anderson, Ph.D., Cassandra Wells, Ph.D., Jeffrey Fawcett, Ph.D., and Kathleen Gruben, Ph.D. (originally published in 2005); "Maximizing Elder Volunteerism and Service: Access, Incentives, and Facilitation," by Madhura Nagchoudhuri, Amanda Moore McBride, Ph.D., Prema Thirupathy, Nancy Morrow-Howell, and Fengyan Tang (first published in 2005); "Volunteer Attrition: Lessons Learned From Oregon's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program," by H. Wayne Nelson, Jr., Ph.D., F. Ellen Netting, Ph.D., Kevin W. Borders, Ph.D., and Ruth Huiber, Ph.D. (first published in 2004); and, "Reasons for and Barriers to Participating in Volunteerism and Service: A Comparison of Ohio Youth in Grades 5-8 and 9-12," by R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D., Rosemary R. Gliem, Ph.D., and Joseph A. Gliem, Ph.D. (published originally in 2004).

We hope this issue of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* will provide the reader with insights, ideas, and opportunities so as to better foster organizational and programmatic climates that help individuals become motivated to serve through volunteerism.

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