

The International Journal of Volunteer Administration
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“Volunteerism in Youth Development”

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Keywords: volunteering, parent, school, liability

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Volunteering for educational and youth organizations is a high priority with the American public. It is the second largest segment of the over 61 million adults who volunteered in the United States in 2006, double the number in 1989. Researchers have found that adults volunteer because they have a child enrolled in the program. With this premise in mind, this study explored reasons why parents were not actively volunteering with a youth program. A qualitative study was conducted by interviewing parents with a child in a youth program but who were not enrolled as volunteers. Findings indicate that parents look for a program which offers a safe, fun, learning environment, and one which is organized and welcoming to family involvement. Once these elements are evident in a program, parents are more apt to volunteer their time in support of their child’s involvement. Implications of these findings for parent involvement are provided.

Key Words: volunteer, 4-H, youth development, recruitment, retention, incentive, enticement, family volunteering

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Keywords: teenagers, volunteers, inclusion, workgroups, supervisor, decision-making, satisfaction

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Keywords: volunteers, youth, motivations, receptivity, influences

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Key Words: youth, empowerment, youth development, volunteerism, engagement

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Book Review:

***The One Minute Answer to Volunteer Management Questions: A Practical Approach.*63**

Author: Mary Kay Hood. (2002). Danville, IN: Underwater Publishing. (87 pp.; Paperback, ISBN-0-9723448-0-2).

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Ann Michelle Daniels, Ph.D., & Daniel F. Perkins, Ph.D.

Shape Up: Family Style is a nutritional and physical activity program for at-risk families in South Dakota. The Children, Youth, and Families at Risk program's success depends upon youth volunteers or Youth Action Teams (YATs). By learning and applying life skills through youth engagement opportunities such as Shape Up: Family Style, the YATs were able to be active contributors to their own individual and community's development. Thus, an intentional environment for at-risk families also became an intentional environment for positive youth engagement and a sense of mattering for the youth volunteers.

Key Words: youth, volunteer, mattering, engagement, community development

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Chad Ripberger, M.S., Laura Bovitz, M.S., Deborah Cole, M.S., & Rachel Lyons, M.S.

Teenage volunteers are often underutilized in the delivery of youth development programs.

Organizations facing limited staffing and adult volunteers can expand their outreach to children and youth in after-school and summer programs by recruiting, training, and supporting teenage volunteers as cross-age teachers in these settings. The teens as volunteer teachers model of program delivery can provide a powerful service oriented, community-based learning experience for teenagers while benefiting those they teach. The authors discuss the New Jersey Teens Teaching Middle School Youth Workforce Preparation Skills Program in which 89 teenage volunteers and 95 collaborating after-school staff delivered an average of 20 hours of job readiness programming to 767 youth enrolled at 19 sites. Key elements of such programming are highlighted.

Keywords: after-school, cross-age teaching, teenagers, volunteers, workforce development

FROM THE JOVA ANNALS

Involving Teens as Volunteers80

Scott Kleon, Jeff King, Ph.D., & Betty Wingerter

The Independent Sector found 61 percent of youth (ages 12 to 17) volunteered an average of 3.2 hours per week. Teens volunteered most often through religious organizations, youth development organizations, and schools/educational groups. Few of these teens become volunteers on their own initiative. Instead they are asked by others. A critical factor to successful youth programs is the response of young people to the adults who work with them. It is believed that effective youth leadership programs involve youth in significant relationships with mentors, positive role models, and other nurturing adults. In order to carry out their missions, groups and organizations must properly prepare both the adult volunteers/staff and the teens before and during the volunteer experience.

[Editor-generated] Keywords: teens, volunteers, adult relationships, mentors, role models, youth-adult partnerships

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The author discusses conceptual and structural barriers that may prevent students from volunteering in community service, including: student apathy, students' perceptions of volunteerism/service, rationalizations and excuses, program structure and mechanics, and the need for student leadership development.

[Editor-generated] Keywords:

students, volunteers, community service, apathy, excuses, leadership development

Developing Effective Teen-Adult Partnerships Through Volunteerism:

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R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D.

America's youth, and especially those in their teens, need to be engaged in their communities through volunteerism and service that allow them to actively participate in decisions affecting themselves and their families, schools, workplaces, and communities. However, many volunteer administrators and program leaders often experience frustration and encounter unforeseen obstacles as they seek to design, implement, and manage community-based programs involving teens as partners. This article provides a conceptual background to adolescent development as applied to community based programs. The author addresses the "four E's" critical to forging successful partnerships with teens as volunteers: empathy, engagement, empowerment, and enjoyment.

[Editor-generated] Keywords: teens, volunteers, youth-adult partnerships, empathy, engagement, empowerment, enjoyment

"Just Do It!": High-Risk Teenagers Help Themselves While Helping Others102

Marilyn Smith & Michael J. Haverkamp

The authors describe a program wherein eight teenagers identified as being at high-risk (based upon eight established program criteria) were trained as cross-peer volunteer teachers of younger students. Program evaluations suggested that the program resulted in improved self-esteem and academic performance of the high-risk volunteer teachers. Younger students taught increased knowledge through the cross-peer sessions.

[Editor-generated] Keywords: teenagers, high-risk, self-esteem, cross-peer

In This Issue:

Volunteerism in Youth Development: A Means to an End, and the End Itself

I well remember my days as a Rowan County 4-H member. I joined 4-H when I was only nine, and Mrs. Briggs was my club's volunteer leader (she was in my Mom's Sunday School class). Together with Mr. Marlin and Miss Cordell, our county 4-H agents, Mrs. Briggs and 4-H opened a whole new world for me of new ideas, fun events, exciting places, and fascinating people. It all happened during President Johnson's "Great Society", when people in rural North Carolina all knew one another and (basically) lived, worked, shopped, and worshipped together. Today, more than 40 years later, I often reflect and reminisce about those formative years of my life, and how one passionate volunteer 4-H leader, working with two dedicated program professionals, helped my parents shape who I am and what I have become today.

In their insightful and innovative book, *Community Youth Development: Programs, Policies, and Practices* (2003, SAGE Publications), Daniel Perkins and Lynne Borden do an excellent job of identifying key elements of contemporary youth development programs, such as 4-H. "Throughout the country, the school bell signals the end to another day of formal education in the lives of youth (p. 327). . . . Whereas schools provide a formal structured learning environment, nonformal, community-based youth organizations offer important opportunities for [youth to experience] socialization and learning . . . to develop critical life skills and competencies" (p. 328). In addition to traditional/classical elements of such programs (e.g., connecting individual youth to peer groups, opportunities that are active and participatory, etc.) the authors also identify several key elements that have only come to be recognized during the past two decades. "High-quality programs also engage youth in organized service activities" (p. 334) . . . "provide multiple opportunities for youth to engage in activities with their families and communities" . . . "encourage parental involvement by offering a variety of possibilities for participation (e.g. . . . volunteer opportunities)" (p. 335). This first issue of Volume XXV of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* seeks to bridge contemporary youth development with the management of today's volunteer resources.

Five outstanding *Feature Articles* are included. Didi Fahey, Ph.D., of the Denver Area Council Boy Scouts opens the issue reporting on quantitative research investigating parent volunteers in high- and low-risk volunteer activities. She concludes, "Because volunteers select and sort themselves into varying industries for their volunteer work, schools must learn how to successfully compete for volunteer labor. . . . Parent volunteerism is an access point to the broader governance structures of the school and provides a means for communities to engage adults in the educational processes." Debra Jones, Linda Skogrand, Ph.D., Donna Carter, and Peggy Black also addresses the concept of parental volunteerism, with a qualitative study of Utah 4-H members and their parents. Their findings suggest that "parents look for a program which offers a safe, fun, learning environment [for their children], and one which is organized and welcoming to family involvement. Once these elements are evident in a program, parents are more apt to volunteer their time in support of their child's involvement." Denise Bortree, Ph.D. of Penn State University and her co-author, Richard Waters, Ph.D. of North Carolina State University contribute an excellent treatise exploring the need for non-profit organizations to not only engage teens as volunteers, but to also work tirelessly to make them feel included and welcomed in the organization. They conclude, "Inclusion is a strong predictor of satisfaction with the

organization. The level of inclusion of teen volunteers has implications for continued volunteerism and for the realization of developmental benefits.” Rosemary V. Barnett, Ph.D. and Mark A. Brennan, Ph.D. examine the effects of influences, motivations, and receptivity upon youth volunteerism. They argue that “As non-profits, volunteer groups, youth programs, and nongovernmental organizations take on larger roles in contributing to local wellbeing, active collaborations between youth and adults is vital to the long-term success of meaningful volunteer efforts.” Finally, Ed Risler, Ph.D. and Michael J. Holosko, Ph.D. of the University of Georgia propose a conceptual model for empowering youth through volunteerism that “presents a rationale for three core elements that should be considered by program administrators for a successful youth volunteer initiative: 1) the environmental context, 2) interactive processes, and 3) identified knowledge-based outcomes.”

In *Tools of the Trade*, reviewer Vicki J. Schwartz introduces our readers to Mary Kay Hood’s 2002 book, *The One Minute Answer to Volunteer Management Questions: A Practical Approach* (Danville, IN: Underwater Publishing; 87 pp.; Paperback, ISBN-0-9723448-0-2).

In *Ideas That Work*, Ann Michelle Daniels, Ph.D., and Daniel F. Perkins, Ph.D., focus upon the “Shape Up: Family Style” nutritional and physical activity program for at-risk families in South Dakota. They describe how an intentional environment for at-risk families also became an intentional environment for positive youth engagement and a sense of mattering for the youth volunteers involved. Additionally, Chad Ripberger, Laura Bovitz, Deborah Cole, and Rachel Lyons describe benefits they experienced as a result of engaging teenagers as volunteer cross-age teachers of middle school youth in an out-of-school job readiness program. The authors conclude, “The teens as volunteer teachers model of program delivery can provide a powerful service oriented, community-based learning experience for teenagers while benefiting those they teach”.

From The JOVA Annals features four articles focused upon youth volunteers, yet published previously in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*: “Involving Teens as Volunteers” by Scott Kleon, Jeff King, Ph.D., and Betty Wingerter (first published in 1996); “An End to the ‘Me’ Generation: Getting Students to Volunteer” by Wayne W. Meisel (published in 1988); “Developing Effective Teen-Adult Partnerships Through Volunteerism: Strengthening Empathy, Engagement, Empowerment, and Enrichment” by R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D. (published in 2002); and, “ ‘Just Do It!’: High-Risk Teenagers Help Themselves While Helping Others” by Marilyn Smith and Michael J. Havercamp (first published in 1991).

I join the entire Editorial Board and Reviewers of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* in challenging the reader to review, reflect, and experiment with both the practical and thought-provoking insights in this issue so that managers of volunteer resources may better mobilize and engage youth and adult volunteers in greater service to community youth development programs and their participants.

R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D.
Editor-In-Chief

(P.S. It may be long overdue, but thank you Mrs. Briggs, Mr. Marlin, and Miss Cordell for building a volunteer-professional partnership way back in the 1960's that ultimately shaped my life today.)

**Gender and Minority Status of United States Educational Parent Volunteers:
A Quantitative Examination of Parent Participation in
High-Risk and Low-Risk Activities**

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Abstract

Parent volunteerism is not a homogenous commodity within the United States school community. While diverse in particulars, generally, the jobs that parents do for schools can be classified as either high-risk or low-risk. High-risk volunteer jobs are those that place the volunteer in closer proximity to the children and could result in litigation against the volunteer, volunteer organization, or the school, while low-risk jobs are more visible and socially oriented. How parents volunteer is impacted by their minority status and gender. Women and men volunteer in very different ways, as do minority and non-minority parents. Contrary to current research, analyses of data from the Current Population Survey indicate that fathers volunteer for more high-risk jobs and mothers prefer to volunteer for more low-risk jobs.

Keywords:

volunteerism, liability, parent, school, risk

Introduction

Since the days of the one-room school house, parent volunteerism has been an integral part of the educational system. In addition to helping with clerical duties or attending field trips, parents have constructed buildings, paid salaries, established local school policies (Siddle Walker, 1993; Evans, 1989), assisted teachers, and raised money (Epstein, 2001; Brown, 1998; National Congress of Jewish Women, 1996) for the schools their children attended. Parent volunteerism is a type of parent involvement that most educators would acknowledge as being highly important to the success of their students and a demonstrated show of support for education from the community at large (Epstein, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Brown, 1998; NCJW, 1996). For the most part, research has focused on the effects of parent volunteerism. For instance, children of parent volunteers get better grades and have

fewer disciplinary problems (Nord, Brimhall & West, 1997). The perceived positive impacts of parent volunteerism are so strong, in fact, that they have been codified at the national level. *No Child Left Behind* has stipulations mandating that schools provide opportunities for parents to volunteer for such things as classroom work or sitting on decision-making panels (NCLB, 2001, §1118).

While its importance and impact on students and schools has been the focus of much research, as a construct unto itself, parent volunteerism has received very little attention. In fact, there is no clear agreement as to what constitutes parent volunteerism or even an understanding as to what types of jobs are generally considered to be parent volunteer activities. Are parents sitting on school boards considered parent volunteers? Is car-pooling high school athletes to a school match parent volunteerism or is it more an extension of

parenting? Without clear definitions, volunteer roles and expectations become ambiguous (Merrell, 2000), vouchsafing responsibility of the volunteer and the volunteer activity to whoever is currently in charge. This serendipitous approach leaves the possibility of litigation open to both internal and external parties. The situations of liability and responsibility are compounded even more when the concepts of parenting and parent volunteerism differ between the school and the home. Some consider monitoring homework a volunteer activity (Epstein, 2001), while others consider it an extension of parenting (Lareau, 2000; Naples, 1992).

Review of Related Literature

The problems of not knowing what constitutes school parent volunteerism in United States schools rest precariously on practice, while support for that volunteerism rests on the legal issues of compliance and liability, especially as it concerns safety and labor administration. Who is responsible for parent volunteers working within the building during a fire drill? Is there an emergency evacuation policy in effect for those who are neither student nor paid staff? Who sees that all parent volunteers understand and follow the evacuation plan? These types of issues raise serious legal concerns, subjecting both the school and the parent to potential lawsuits. A car accident while transporting students to a graded and mandatory school event, such as a music performance competition, could spell financial disaster for the school as well as the volunteer.

Because not all jobs are created equal, risk for some volunteer duties therefore is greater than others, not only for the parent volunteer, but also for the school. Parents who volunteer to supervise children or operate equipment, for instance, work at greater risk than those who sit on advisory

boards. The issue of risk and who should assume legal responsibility for that risk is a growing concern for the third sector in general and for schools in particular. Unlike school staff members who enjoy protection for their actions through negotiated contracts and other laws protecting public employees, volunteers in the United States are not as fortunate. Regardless of personal training, education, or level of expertise, many districts require volunteers to sign a form releasing the school from any liability due to the actions or inaction of the volunteer. Volunteer organizations recognize three elements of liability:

1. The organization's responsibility to any third party for the actions of a volunteer;
2. The responsibility to the volunteer for any injuries that may occur while on duty; and
3. The volunteer's personal responsibility for their actions while volunteering (Martinez, 2003).

High-risk activities would include any situation where a volunteer has access to children, sensitive information, or use of equipment. These types of jobs would include coaching, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and any type of office work that allows for contact with children's school records or personnel files. Other high-risk activities would include the preparation and serving of food, and general labor such as construction or moving furniture. Low-risk activities, on the other hand, are opportunities for volunteers to work as part of a larger group or committee. These activities would be ushering at a school event, participating or assisting in a musical performance, collecting and distributing clothing or uniforms, and offering professional services such as vision screening or grant writing. While there are others, these general categories represent a

large number of volunteer tasks and services (US Census Bureau, 2006).

The type of work a volunteer performs is impacted by the perception of who is a volunteer. In education, this dichotomy between how men and women volunteer is evident not only by educators' perceptions and interpretations, but also in the types of jobs available for the volunteer. Educators perceive a father's involvement as representing strong, general family support for education. Fathers' involvement is talked about and praised, whereas a mother's is viewed as being anticipated or nothing out of the ordinary (Lareau, 2000). "Teachers talked more about a father volunteering in the classroom than mothers coming to school. Mothers' volunteering was routine; fathers' visits were newsworthy" (Lareau, 2000; p. 94).

In two-parent households, it is the mother who is more likely to volunteer. This may be a reflection of the division of labor within the household (Nord, et al., 1997) and a broader expectation for women's roles within society. Despite their increased presence within the workforce in the past few decades, mothers have remained a staple in their children's schools (Lareau, 2000). Fathers are more likely to be involved with their child's education by making decisions (Lareau, 2000) and attending school events. These activities often occur outside of regular business or work hours, making it easier for men to attend (Nord, et al., 1997), while traditional concepts of a mother's involvement in schools can be considered as an extension of child-rearing (Lareau, 2000). Fathers' work with the schools may be considered to be volunteerism, while the same work performed by a mother may be perceived to be an extension of parenting (Lareau, 2000).

Just as there are differences between mothers' and fathers' versions of parent volunteerism, race is also a factor.

Volunteerism is very much culturally defined and practiced (Leistnya, 2002). Volunteer effort in one community may not even be recognized as helpful behavior by members of another community, or its value to the community could be substantially discounted (Musick, Wilson, & Bynum, 2000). Historically and culturally, the dominant culture of parent volunteerism present in U.S. schools is that of white individuals. Unlike minority parents, white parents are more inclined to work within the roles and boundaries outlined by the schools because there exists a cultural understanding between educators and white parents (Lareau, 2000).

This cultural understanding extends to the interpretations of what parent volunteerism accomplishes. For white parents, volunteerism is a means to forward the interests of their own child. For most minorities, however, it is work performed on behalf of the entire community (Abrahams, 1996). Minority patterns of parent volunteerism differ from whites in that minority parenting styles tend to be more authoritarian and less coercive, resulting in a clear division between social institutions and the family. As a group, they tend not to participate in school-initiated functions such as joining the parent volunteer organizations, attending conferences, or speaking with teachers (Pong, et al., 2005). For instance, Hispanic parents tend not to network with non-Hispanic parents, limiting the ability to build social capital in the larger community (Pong, et al., 2005). Instead, Hispanic American mothers prefer more whole and extended family opportunities benefiting immediate needs within a closed community (Powell, et al., 1990). Similarly, African-Americans tend to focus their energies on activities that have a direct benefit to their families and communities, while Whites take up volunteer activities

that support broader constructs (Diamond & Gomez, 2004; Powell, et al., 1990).

Methods

Because parents’ relationships to education differ by race and gender (Lamont & Lareau, 1988), and volunteerism is peculiar to cultural practices (Leistnya, 2002), a parent-centric examination of volunteer activities will enable policy-makers, educators, and parents to examine the construct of parent volunteerism as it exists for different individuals operating under different circumstances. One aspect of this parent-centric examination is the development of a profile of how parents choose to volunteer, asking the research question:

Does gender and minority status affect parents’ participation in high- or low-risk volunteer activities?

To answer this question, data on parent involvement and volunteerism were selected from the 2006 Special Volunteer Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS), available on-line via Data Ferrett [sic], an extraction program designed and maintained by the United States Census

Bureau (US Census Bureau, 2006). Variables were selected based on general demographic characteristics and the types of jobs they performed as volunteers for educational activities. The data were then sorted by parental status of having school-aged children, volunteer status, and whether or not parents volunteered for youth educational and recreational activities. Other types of youth activities such as religious, civic, medical, or recreational sports were not selected as they did not reflect activities that occurred in the schools.

Independent variables of “Gender” and those identified as describing Minority Status were selected from the data set. While Gender is a dichotomous variable taken directly from the survey results, Minority Status was created from the two survey variables as shown in Table 1. The CPS asks both questions, RACE and HISPANIC ORIGIN. Because this study is concerned with how minority parents volunteer, the two re-coded variables were combined into one dichotomous variable MINORITY, with the levels of Minority and Non-Minority.

Table 1
Study Variables.

Variable Name	Description	Type
Gender	FATHERS MOTHERS	Parent of at least one school-aged (5-18) child
Minority Status	MINORITY NON-MINORITY	Race + Hispanic Origin
High-Risk Volunteer Jobs	HRISK	Coaching, Tutoring, Mentoring, Food Preparation, Counseling, General Labor, and General Office
Low-Risk Volunteer Jobs	LRISK	Ushering, Distributing Clothing, Fundraising, Professional/Management Services, Music Performance

Independent Variables

Dependent Variables

Table 2
Study Hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Description
H _{1a0} : $\mu_{\text{minority}} = \mu_{\text{non-minority}}$	There is no significant effect of minority status on parents' participation in high-risk volunteer jobs.
H _{2a0} : $\mu_{\text{mothers}} = \mu_{\text{fathers}}$	There is no significant effect of gender on parents' participation in high-risk volunteer jobs.
H _{3a0} : $\Sigma\alpha\beta_{ij} = 0$; where α = gender and β = minority status	There is no significant effect of the interaction of gender and minority status on parents' participation in high-risk volunteer jobs.
H _{1b0} : $\mu_{\text{minority}} = \mu_{\text{non-minority}}$	There is no significant effect of minority status on parents' participation in low-risk volunteer jobs.
H _{2b0} : $\mu_{\text{mothers}} = \mu_{\text{fathers}}$	There is no significant effect of gender on parents' participation in low-risk volunteer jobs.
H _{3b0} : $\Sigma\alpha\beta_{ij} = 0$; where α = gender and β = minority status	There is no significant effect of the interaction of gender and minority status on parents' participation in low-risk volunteer jobs.

Thirteen types of jobs performed by volunteers served as the dependent variables and were also recoded into two main categories—High-Risk and Low-Risk, based upon standing US legal interpretations of working with children, equipment, sensitive information, or presence on school property. The variables Coaching, Tutoring, Mentoring, Food Preparation, Counseling, General Labor, and General Office were combined to reflect a High-Risk category, while Ushering, Distributing Clothing, Fundraising, Professional/Management Services, Music Performance and all Other, non-defined types of volunteer efforts were combined to form a new variable of Low-Risk jobs.

A two-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if a statistically significant difference exists between groups for both High-Risk and

Low-Risk jobs with the null hypotheses as listed in Table 2.

Findings

To determine if there are significant differences between groups for each type of volunteer job, it was necessary to test both main effects and interaction effects of Gender and Minority Status on parents' participation in High-Risk and Low-Risk activities.

Testing first for high-risk activities (H_{1a0}, H_{2a0} and H_{3a0}), the greatest difference between means as listed in Table 3, shows that non-minority fathers volunteer for more high-risk activities than minority mothers (1.51 to 1.19, respectively). Significant differences between mothers and fathers, ($F_{1, 4553} = 12.759$, $p < .05$) and their participation with high-risk volunteer activities are listed in Table 4. Therefore, we reject the first null hypothesis and

conclude that gender holds a significant effect upon parents' participation in high-risk volunteer activities. Likewise, there is a statistically significant difference between minority parents and non-minority parents. The means indicate that non-minority parents (1.43) participate in more high-risk volunteer activities than minority parents (1.28). Again, Table 4 shows this significant difference ($F_{1, 4553} = 4.342, p < .05$), allowing us to reject the second null hypothesis and conclude that minority status has a significant effect upon parents' participation in high-risk volunteer activities.

Testing for the interaction of gender and minority status for high-risk activity, the means in Table 3 show that non-minority parents volunteered for more high-risk

activities than did minority parents (1.51 for Non-minority Fathers and 1.39 for Non-minority Mothers), compared to minority parents (1.47 for Minority Fathers and 1.19 for Minority Mothers). Table 4 also shows that the interaction effect for Gender and Minority Status for High-Risk parent volunteer activity is not-significant ($F_{1, 4553} = 2.066, p > .05$). As such, we fail to reject the third null hypothesis and conclude that the interaction of gender and minority status does not have a significant effect on parents' participation in high-risk volunteer activities.

The hypotheses for low-risk activities (H_{1b0} , H_{2b0} and H_{3b0}) also tested the main effects of gender and minority status, as well as the interaction effect for both factors.

Table 3
High-Risk Descriptive Statistics.

Gender	Minority Status	N	Mean	SD	Variance	Skew	Kurtosis
Fathers	Non-Minority	1427	1.51	1.33	1.77	1.24	1.22
	Minority	236	1.47	1.32	1.74	1.52	2.40
Mothers	Non-Minority	2400	1.39	1.28	1.63	1.17	1.20
	Minority	494	1.19	1.16	1.33	1.43	2.47

Table 4
High-Risk Activity for Between-Subjects Effects.

Source	SS (Type 3)	df	MS	F	Sig.	Partial η^2
Gender	20.998	1	20.998	12.759*	.000	.003
Minority	7.145	1	7.145	4.342*	.037	.001
Gender * Minority	3.400	1	3.400	2.066 ^{ns}	.151	.000
Error	7492.909	4553	1.646			

* $p < .05$ ns = non-significant

Table 6 indicates that gender has a significant effect on parents participation in low-risk volunteer activities, ($F_{1, 4553} = 37.591, p < .05$). Mothers averaged a combined total of 1.08 low-risk volunteer jobs compared to the .81 of fathers. Subsequently, we reject the first null hypothesis and conclude that gender has a significant effect on parents' participation in low-risk volunteer activities.

As indicated in Table 6, there is a significant effect of minority status ($F_{1, 4553} = 13.160, p < .05$) on low-risk volunteer activities. Overall, non-minority parents volunteer for an average of 1.01 low-risk jobs while minority parents volunteer for an average of .86 jobs (Table 5). Again, we

can reject the second null hypothesis and conclude that minority status has a significant effect on parent participation in low-risk volunteer activities.

For sub-groups, the differences are less clear. Table 5 shows that Non-Minority Fathers volunteer for an average of .83 Low-Risk jobs while Non-Minority Mothers volunteered for an average of 1.11 low-risk jobs. Similarly, Minority Fathers volunteer for fewer low-risk jobs (.68) than Minority Mothers (.94).

As with parents' participation in high-risk volunteer activities, there is no significant effect of the interaction of Gender and Minority status ($F_{1, 4553} = .050, p > .05$).

Table 5
Low-Risk Descriptive Statistics.

Gender	Minority Status	N	Mean	SD	Variance	Skew	Kurtosis
Fathers	Non-Minority	1427	.83	.99	.97	1.40	2.24
	Minority	236	.68	.99	.99	2.08	5.32
Mothers	Non-Minority	2400	1.11	1.07	1.14	1.07	.96
	Minority	494	.94	1.06	1.11	1.54	2.77

Table 6
Low-Risk Activity for Between-Subjects Effects.

Source	SS (Type 3)	df	MS	F	Sig.	Partial η^2
Gender	40.479	1	40.479	37.591*	.000	.008
Minority	14.171	1	14.171	13.160*	.000	.003
Gender * Minority	.054	1	.054	.050 ^{ns}	.824	.000
Error	4902.843	4553	1.077			

* $p < .05$ ns = non-significant

We fail to reject the third null hypotheses and conclude that the interaction of gender and minority status hold no significant effect on parents' participation in low-risk volunteer activities.

These results are confirmed by Figure 1, Estimated Marginal Means for High-Risk Activity and Figure 2, Estimated

Marginal Means for Low-Risk Activity. While fathers volunteer at nearly the same rate for high-risk activities, mothers' participation has a greater, but not significant difference. Furthermore, minority status affects parents' participation at Low-Risk activities at about the same rate for fathers as mothers.

FIGURE 1
Estimate Marginal Means for High-Risk Activity.

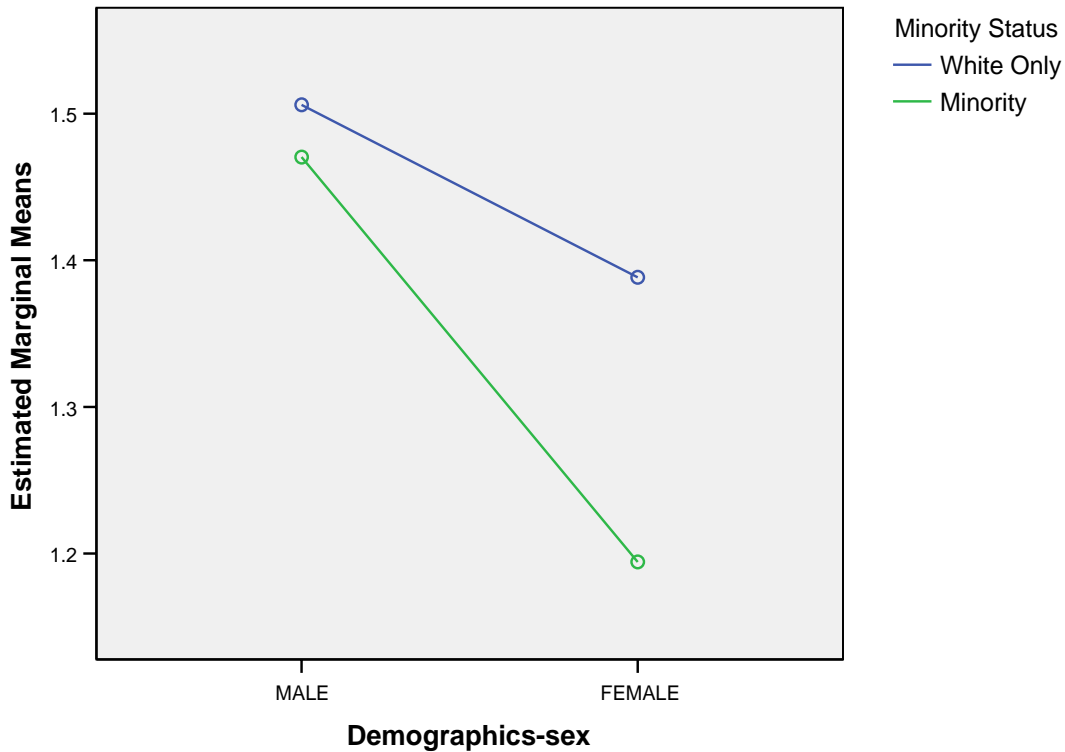
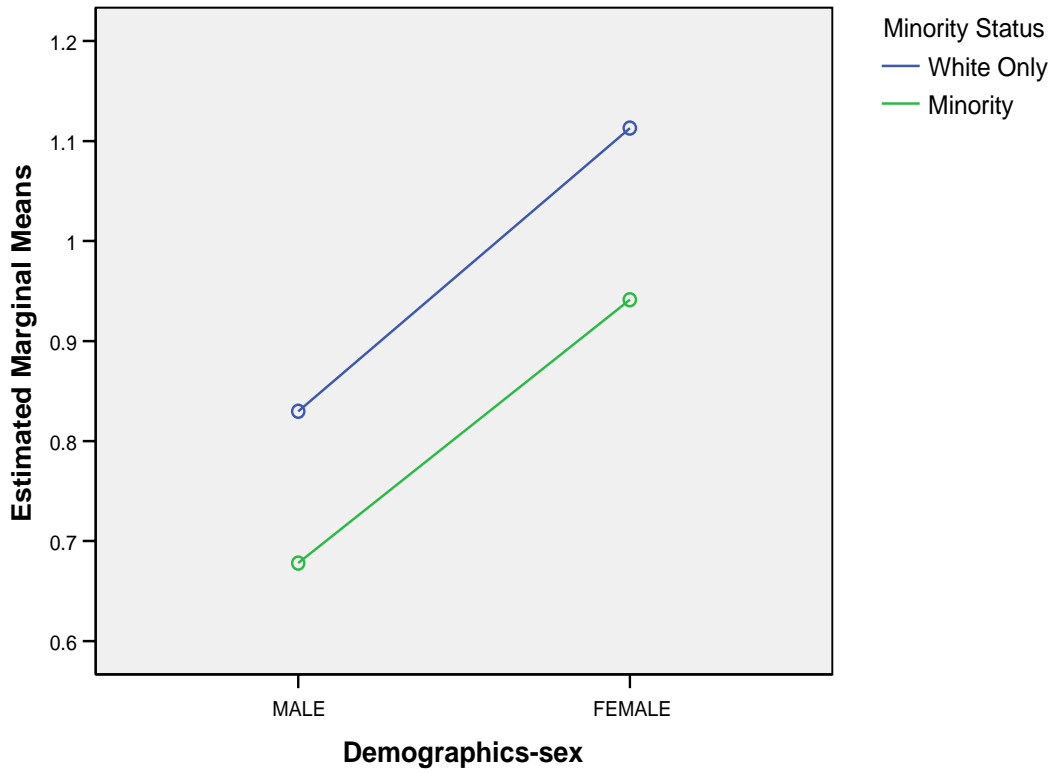


FIGURE 2
Estimate Marginal Means for Low-Risk Activity.



While the analyses indicate that significance exists, it is important to note that the error variance for both High-Risk (7492.90) and Low-Risk (4902.84) activities are very large (See Tables 4 and Table 6) and sample effect size for the interaction accounts for virtually none of the variance (High-Risk Partial $\eta^2 = .000$ and Low-Risk Partial $\eta^2 = .000$). Taken together, the very large error variance and low partial eta-square, or the correlation between the effect and the dependent variable (Keppel & Wickens, 2004), indicates that perhaps variables aside from gender and minority status are necessary to explain the differences in parents' participation.

Implications for the Profession

The differences in how minorities and non-minorities volunteer are marked.

At nearly a uniform rate, minority fathers and mothers volunteer for statistically fewer low-risk activities than non-minority parents. Similarly, there are statistical differences between the two groups of parents for high-risk activities. These data reflect statistics from NCES and other research stating that minorities do not participate as volunteers in their children's schools at the same rate as non-minority parents (Epstein, 2001; National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). The data may also reflect cultural practice for both minorities and non-minorities. Most parent volunteer organizations were started by non-minorities and have large non-minority memberships. Subsequently, these organizations have developed practices and networks that favor non-minority

participation (Toch, 2001; Lareau, 2000; Woyshner, 1998).

Additionally, minority parents view volunteerism in the schools differently than non-minorities. Instead of being an extension of parenting, volunteerism in the schools is a means of tying the community to the institutions within it (Pong, et al, 2005; Abrahams, 1996). As a result, there is a difference of approach toward parent involvement and how that involvement is structured and interpreted by communities. Minority participation in local institutions, therefore, translates into minorities volunteering in ways that educators may prefer, but for other, non-educational organizations. Minority parents are more likely to volunteer for child-centered activities in religious organizations than they are for educational groups (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007).

Just as there are differences between minorities and non-minorities, there are also statistical differences based on gender. Within the confines of education, fathers volunteer for high-risk activities at a much greater rate than mothers. This may be attributed to how men elect to volunteer. Men prefer to volunteer in ways that combine visible effort (Gerstel, 2000) with acknowledged groups (Putnam, 2000), and in activities that differ from their day to day work (Petrzelka & Mannon, 2006). High-risk jobs consist of highly visible tasks that differ from most middle class professional-wage workers. Favorite jobs for men include coaching and general labor (BLS, 2007). Of the 85 referees available to officiate girls' high school volleyball matches in Ohio, for example, 83 are men (Ohio High School Athletic Association, 2007).

Conversely, as a rule, mothers volunteer more for low-risk activities. Just as men prefer a more visible volunteer task, women prefer more social tasks (Putnam,

2000; Clary & Snyder, 1999). Low-risk jobs include more social tasks associated with committee work such as professional services and fundraising. Furthermore, since women volunteer in similar ways and for the same sort of institutions as their mothers (Putnam, 2000; Naples, 1992), volunteering for educational organizations may be a function of family tradition.

As gender is concerned, parent volunteers exhibit a pattern of volunteer behavior that is more closely aligned with other types of volunteerism as it regards preference of type of job. Current research of patterns of parent involvement and volunteerism in the schools indicate that women are more likely to participate in activities that directly involve their children (Epstein, 2001; Lareau, 2000). These data indicate otherwise. Men participate more in high-risk activities, which include teaching, coaching, tutoring, and mentoring. Women, on the other hand, participate in more low-risk activities such as fundraising, committee work, ushering, and performance.

While mothers and fathers volunteer in statistically different ways than minorities and non-minorities, an analysis of means does not yield statistically significant differences between the four subgroups of parents. For instance, Minority Mothers volunteer at higher rates for Low-Risk activities than Non-Minority Fathers. Likewise, Minority Fathers volunteer for High-Risk activities more than Non-Minority Mothers. The differences between the four subgroups of parents cannot be explained simply by demographics, as evidenced by the high error variances present. Instead, it becomes necessary to examine how parents from each of the subgroups elect to participate in the different types of volunteer activities.

Understanding if gender or ethnic groups differ in their total volunteer habits will enable schools to tailor parent volunteer

opportunities to more closely match that of the surrounding community. Because volunteers select and sort themselves into varying industries for their volunteer work (Segal & Weisbrod, 2002), schools must learn how to successfully compete for volunteer labor. If volunteerism is viewed as parenting, then educators must engage in a public parent-education campaign. If, on the other hand, volunteerism is the work and donation of effort for a particular cause, then schools need to learn how to apply for volunteer labor in a competitive market, and how to protect the students, volunteers, and districts from negligence or other potentially risky practices. Treating volunteerism as a homogenous commodity that can be gained through successful marketing techniques underscores the importance of networking between the organization and the community, as well as between the volunteers themselves (Putnam, 2000; Hirschman, 1970). It cannot be produced if the right situations are absent. Parent volunteerism is an access point to the broader governance structures of the school and provides a means for communities to engage adults in the educational processes.

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About the Author

The mother of four children and long-time parent volunteer for public schools, Didi Fahey applied her knowledge and understanding of how parents elect to volunteer to her academic studies. Recently completing her doctorate from the College of Education and Human Ecology at the Ohio State University in Quantitative Research Evaluation and Measurement in Education, she currently works for the Denver Area Boy Scout Council as the Director of Research and Collaborative Program Development.

Increasing Parent Volunteer Participation in 4-H

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Abstract

Volunteering for educational and youth organizations is a high priority with the American public. It is the second largest segment of the over 61 million adults who volunteered in the United States in 2006, double the number in 1989. Researchers have found that adults volunteer because they have a child enrolled in the program. With this premise in mind, this study explored reasons why parents were not actively volunteering with a youth program. A qualitative study was conducted by interviewing parents with a child in a youth program but who were not enrolled as volunteers. Findings indicate that parents look for a program which offers a safe, fun, learning environment, and one which is organized and welcoming to family involvement. Once these elements are evident in a program, parents are more apt to volunteer their time in support of their child's involvement. Implications of these findings for parent involvement are provided.

Keywords:

volunteer, 4-H, youth development, recruitment, retention, incentive, enticement, family volunteering

Introduction

Parent volunteers are an integral component of youth development organizations (McCurlley & Lynch, 1996). The demographic of a typical volunteer in America is a married, college educated, white female between the ages of 35 and 54 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). This demographic has changed little over the

years. Dunn (1989) reported similar findings in his study of over 500 volunteers with youth organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, and Jr. Achievement. Although volunteering for educational and youth service is a high priority with the American public, a common challenge in youth development programs is lack of adult leadership to mentor and work with youth

who would like the opportunity to be involved.

The most common reason adults volunteer with the 4-H youth development program is that they have a child enrolled in the program (Copernicus, Inc., 2001; Culp, 1995). With this premise in mind, the present study explored why more parents or guardians were not actively volunteering with the program. Participants were asked to share information about what entices them to volunteer and what makes them feel prepared to volunteer. Two main questions were posed regarding implications for practice: 1) how can youth development professionals effectively involve parents of youth members; and 2) how can a greater number of volunteers be retained beyond the first one or two years of their involvement.

Volunteering for educational and youth organizations is a high priority with the American public. It is the second largest segment of the over 61 million adults who volunteered in the United States in 2006, double the number in 1989 (Independent Sector, 2007). Volunteers want to align themselves with an organization they value and that is valued in the community. Those who commit their time and talents must be satisfied with the organization and their role within it (Dorsch, Riemer, Sluth, Paskevich, & Chelladurai, 2002). Essential elements identified in successful volunteer-led programs include: clear policies and procedures, orientations and trainings, a safe and supportive environment, and involving volunteers in setting goals and measures of outcomes so they can see how they have helped the organization succeed (Graff, 2005; Dorsch, et al.).

Volunteers also expect an organization to be structured, organized, and that there is open communication among its members and staff (Braker, Leno, Pratt, & Grobe, 2000; Grossman & Furano, 2002; Volunteer Centre of Ottawa, 1992). Some

volunteers have indicated a need for more support and communication specifically regarding opportunities and events (Braker, Leno, Pratt, & Grobe). Others have indicated the main reasons for discontinuing as a volunteer were feelings of being unappreciated, a lack of help, and not enough time (Culp & Pilat, 1998; McCurley & Lynch, 2006). Grossman and Furano (2002) discussed the importance of paid staff interaction with volunteers in the form of ongoing support and communication. The Volunteer Centre of Ottawa (1992) shared similar findings about the need for more feedback, support, and recognition for volunteer efforts.

White and Arnold (2003) found the top three reasons for individuals to volunteer with a youth program were: making a difference in the lives of youth, helping others, and because their children were involved in the program. Individuals indicated the main reason for not continuing to volunteer was that their children were no longer involved, with time constraints identified as the second most commonly cited reason. Over 60% of respondents in a study of volunteers in environmental education became volunteers because of their children. Although many of them shared a career or love of the outdoors, 70% indicated that an interest in youth was a more important indicator of their volunteer involvement (Smith & Finley, 2004).

Methods

The present study employed a qualitative methodology in conducting semi-structured interviews with 31 individuals who had children enrolled in the 4-H program but who were not currently enrolled as volunteers. Data collection was conducted by three members of the organization's state volunteer council in an active research approach to a topic affecting their program. Also enlisted was the help of a university

undergraduate student who had no prior involvement with the program. Each interview was conducted using the same semi-structured interview schedule, thus insuring all participants were given the opportunity to respond to a core set of questions. Interview questions were formulated and pilot tested with members of the target audience to further refine their effectiveness. Interviews were conducted in the participants' homes and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

In conducting qualitative research, Creswell (1998) suggests that a specific sample size cannot be predetermined at the outset of the study, but that saturation will be achieved by review during the analysis phase. He emphasizes the importance of the qualitative approach of phenomenology is to "describe the meaning of a small number of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (1998, p. 122) and suggests interviews with up to 10 individuals. Kvale (1996) suggests 15 ± 10 interviews, with a caveat that the importance lies in the crafting of questions and analysis of interview data rather than on the quantity of interviews.

Participants were purposively selected from a statewide 4-H enrollment database that contained the names of all members in the state. The database was then queried as to a selection of youth enrolled in the program who did not have a parent enrolled as a volunteer. Representative areas of the state were selected based upon the geographic location of members. All but one participant in this phase of the study were Caucasian, as is consistent with the population of the state. Ninety-three percent of participants were female; 3% were age 28 or younger, 23% between the ages of 29-39, 52% were ages 40-51, 10% ages 52-59, and 10% age 60 and over. Forty-nine percent resided in a rural area of less than 50,000; and 48% in suburban and metropolitan

areas. The high percentage of female respondents may be indicative of the mother enrolling the child in the program. Volunteer enrollment in the larger statewide population of the youth organization is 70% female.

Data were analyzed using a method described by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) which allows researchers to look for major themes in answer to the research questions. A team of five researchers, composed of two state specialists, two county-based program educators, and a volunteer, individually analyzed the data by reading transcripts and becoming immersed in the data. Themes were then shared with the group in order to clarify any questions or uncertainties. As Creswell (1998) and Moustakas (1990) caution, the first step in data analysis is for researchers to bracket their own biases or preconceptions. As Van Manen (1990) suggests, it is not possible to completely bracket out or ignore one's own conceptions or biases. What is important is to reflect upon these, consider how they may influence one's thoughts, and to put them aside so as not to allow them to color the truth as one reads it from the perspective of participants.

Findings

Four overarching themes of shared experiences emerged from the data. These themes illustrate elements that respondents said must be in place in order for them to volunteer their time. The four themes, in order of importance, were:

- a safe place in which youth learn while having fun
- relationships with and support from other adults who care about youth
- a youth group which has organization, structure, and communication and
- being able to do things together as a family.

In addition, an unanticipated finding regarding participants' concept of volunteering will also be described.

A Safe Place in Which Youth Learn While Having Fun

This was the most prevalent theme throughout the data. Parents said they wanted their children to be in an organization where children were safe, children were having fun, and they were learning. They indicated that the greatest enticement to learning was that it was something in which their children were interested. As one parent indicated, "If my kids are interested then I am more than happy to volunteer." Another parent stated, "Things where my children are going to learn educational things, and she actually wants to do it. If it is something she doesn't want to do, then it is not worth my time." As this was the most recurring theme expressed by participants, further review brought to light sub-themes within a larger thematic framework found to be significant in participant responses.

Their Own Kids are Involved

Parents indicated that it was important to choose a youth organization that was a good fit for their children and their families. They were then more inclined to volunteer or to help out in supportive roles which brought the family together. As one parent stated, "I like to be involved with my children's learning. I like to see my children grow. I like to know what they are learning and what goes on, so that's why I am involved."

A Chance for Youth to Excel

Parents also talked about finding an organization which allowed their children to excel. As one respondent shared, "I really appreciate another program that allows individuals to feel their worth." A key

element for youth to excel had to do with what one respondent termed a healthy *low key* competition that encouraged youth to excel for themselves and to feel good when others excel. These sentiments were summarized by one parent who said:

[It is important to have] . . . loyalty to friends. She cheers for them and if they do better than she does, then she's okay with that. It's given her a little competitive ability without making it that she has to be best. It's just that she can be good for herself and cheer on those around her.

Relationships with and Support from Other Adults who Care about Youth

Respondents indicated that the building of relationships with other adults who cared about youth was an important aspect in volunteering. One parent stated, "I think one of the biggest positives for me has been getting to know these other parents and them taking my daughter under their wing with their knowledge--and be willing to share that." For others, the building of relationships was more about sharing responsibilities of club leadership. As one participant said, "I learned immediately--ask the parents. What would you like to see? On a one-time basis, what [would] you like to help us out with. It got them interested."

Respondents were clear about the need to know that once they began to volunteer their time, they would have support of others rather than being expected to take on club leadership by themselves. As one respondent shared, "It is nice to be able to work with other folks. I don't have to do all of it and, yet, I can help and it ends up being a cooperative effort."

Organization, Structure, and Communication

Respondents spoke of the importance of clear expectations regarding the volunteer

role. In essence, they told us that the organization should be run in an organized manner so that volunteers knew what to expect of the organization and they were clear as to what was expected of them. One person said they needed, “good training, good communication, good homework packets where I can browse and read, and a list of people to call who have been volunteers previously.”

Organization, structure, and communication appear to be key factors in not only keeping families involved with an organization but, most importantly, in deciding whether to have their family involved in the program. As one respondent stated, “I look for structure; things where they have leadership, and that it is planned and they have contingency plans in case something goes wrong.” Parents who volunteer are looking for organizations which offer activities they feel are organized and meaningful. One parent said, “I look for things that are well organized, well planned out activities that are time efficient and not wasteful.”

Respondents spoke of a need to be informed, in a timely fashion, of upcoming events and activities, and they wanted to know how they can become involved. One person said, “I want to work with an organization that says this is what we are going to do. We have a plan of what we are going to do, and know why we are doing it.” The importance of a calendar of events, and the availability of the calendar was important to respondents. As one shared, “Early calendaring is a big deal for me.”

Being Able to Do Things as a Family

With time constraints of work, family, church, and other venues, it was important for respondents to be part of an organization that was of interest to their kids and allowed them to do things together as a family. As one person stated, “That’s what

is important, that we have family time.” Participants told us that volunteering should not be something that takes one away from the family, but should be something that adds to the family. As one parent stated, “It should be something that is family-oriented and something that you don’t have to get rid of your kids to go do.” Another participant stated, “When you are involved as a family it’s a lot more fun, you know more about what’s going on and you are better able to help your kids.”

The Meaning of Volunteering

An unanticipated finding was how respondents conceptualized and thought about volunteering. Although participants were identified as being a parent of a 4-H member and were not enrolled as a volunteer, many of the respondents did, indeed, volunteer time with the program. They may not have considered it a formal arrangement and submitted the required enrollment forms, but many participants shared stories of how they had provided some type of support for the club in which their child was involved. As one respondent indicated, “I have not been a volunteer but I have supported my friends who have chosen to volunteer by assisting with activities or helping to drive kids places they need to be.”

Implications for Practice

Participants stated that once they found certain essential components in an organization, they were more apt to volunteer their time in support of their children’s involvement. The following implications are provided based upon the findings of the study. It can be argued that these are important factors which need to be addressed in order to attract volunteers to the program, and to keep them involved.

Safe and Fun Learning Environment

This was a key component in not only selecting an organization for the growth and development of their children, but also the door to volunteering for parents. Respondents indicated that safety was a concern when selecting a program for their children, therefore, programs should include a screening process and appropriate risk management training. It needs to be conveyed in program literature that these procedures are included. It is important to find a balance of hands-on, fun, experiential activities. Respondents said it was important that their children find the program to be fun, one in which they are making friends, being involved, and learning skills in the process. The program must keep the interest of the youth in order for the parents to devote time in supporting their child's involvement.

Youth need to have a sense of ownership of the program. Respondents said they wanted a program in which their children could be with others and develop their independence. The club or group environment makes a difference. Youth need an opportunity to hold an office, to experience leadership and followership, and to learn to make group decisions. Parents need to know that youth have a voice in determining the program.

Relationships and Support

Participants said it was important to know that they would have the support of others in their volunteer role; that the responsibility for youth success was shared by families and club leadership. One respondent said she learned quickly the importance of getting parents involved right away. Training, support, and resources are needed for volunteers to recruit parents to become actively involved; to encourage parents to work alongside their children.

In order for more parents to see themselves in an integral volunteer role, it is important that events such as county and statewide volunteer leader trainings, leader luncheons, committee work, leaders' councils, training workshops and related events be revisited so that the name and focus of the group is welcoming to parent volunteer participation. Parents as well as club leaders need to be involved in these activities as they can foster relationships between those who are in club leadership roles and those in parent volunteer roles. There is a need to adapt language that recognizes the role of parents as volunteers even though they may not be enrolled or see themselves as volunteer leaders.

There is a need to be more cognizant of involving volunteers in visible roles within the program. Volunteers should be encouraged to participate in activities such as recognition events and sharing leadership as integral members of the program. More tasks can be delegated to volunteers with paid staff serving in a supportive role; a certificate signed by a key volunteer may be more meaningful than receiving a certificate signed by an administrator with whom the volunteer may have had little or no personal contact.

Organization, Structure, and Communication

Respondents indicated an expectation that information would be readily available in a timely fashion in order for them to effectively carry out their volunteer role. It is important that volunteers be involved in development of an annual calendar of events, and they need to know not only when and where events will take place, but who among them is involved in providing leadership and support to each event.

Respondents said that time was a precious commodity. They indicated that

they wanted to participate in activities that were fun, educational, and well organized. Training sessions need to be on target with volunteer needs. They want to know the plan of what they are doing and also *why* they are doing it. They want to see a connection between a fun activity and the learning or benefit which is behind it.

When prospective volunteers meet with staff for orientation they need to know what is expected of them and what they can expect from staff. A volunteer handbook and policy manual should be readily available resources so that individuals know where to go if they have a question. A mentoring model is a valuable tool in connecting new volunteers with more experienced volunteers. A Web site has become a must in today's society, providing an instant link to information, training, resources, and online discussion groups. It is imperative that information is current and reflects the involvement of parents as volunteers.

Customer service and how the office responds to phone calls and emails is a critical component of communication. The staff should be well versed in the program or know with whom the person should be speaking for further information. Event registration and information should be readily accessible to staff answering the phones as well as accessible to the public via Web site, newsletter, email, or other forms of communication.

Doing Things as a Family

Respondents indicated that it was important to choose a youth organization that was a good fit for their children and their family. A family-oriented, community club approach which encourages the family to learn together is helpful in addressing this need. Respondents indicated a need to be with youth as they learn in order for them to feel a part of what their children are learning and to determine the best ways to support

their children's involvement. Activities such as family night, family camp, or family community service activities can serve to enhance the connection between youth and parent.

Concept of Volunteering

Many respondents, although identified as having children in the program but not enrolled as volunteers, were actually volunteering their time to support their children. There may be a hesitancy to formalize the role of volunteer through the enrollment process. Formal enrollment as a volunteer may imply to parents that they are now expected to take on a larger role without help from others. No matter the level of involvement by each individual volunteer, it is important for all volunteers to know they can call upon others to share responsibilities. Program administrators may need to shift from assuming that if there is no regular contact with parents of members, they must not be actively volunteering with the program. The present study suggests that many parents not formally enrolled as volunteers are supporting their children's involvement in ways that may not be obvious. Key volunteers should be encouraged to ask parents to *help out* with the club or group in small ways and to enroll these parents as volunteers.

Inherent within the structure of most organizations is recognition of key volunteer efforts through annual recognition events, while overlooking the importance of the lesser seen parents as volunteers and supporters of their children's involvement. Key volunteers need to be equipped with resources for not only recruiting parents but recognizing parents for their involvement; to communicate that as supportive parents, they are integral volunteers.

Conclusions

While implications of this study may be applied cautiously due to the nature of the qualitative approach to a specific sample, the volunteerism concepts are applicable in other youth serving organizations. Having a child in the program is a strong motivation for parents to volunteer. Parents look for a program which offers a safe, fun, learning environment, and one which is organized and welcoming to family involvement. Once these elements are found, parents are more apt to volunteer their time in support of their child's involvement.

Prospective volunteers need to feel a sense of shared responsibility within the program setting. They need to feel their involvement is appreciated, and to know there is ongoing support and communication between fellow volunteers and staff. At all levels of involvement, it is important for volunteers to know they can call upon others in support of their volunteer roles. It is not feasible that findings from the present study will represent the diversity of parent volunteer roles in all youth organizations. The findings may provide additional basis for future studies to be conducted to see if common themes emerge across different unique populations.

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**The Value of Feeling Included:
The Impact of Inclusion on Teen Volunteers' Organizational Satisfaction**

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Abstract

Volunteerism has been linked to the development of teamwork, political-moral identities, and social capital among teens. The challenges volunteer managers face include retaining teen volunteers and creating an environment that encourages developmental benefits. The study presented here measures the perceived inclusion that teens feel in their volunteer experiences and tests the impact of inclusion on organizational satisfaction. Results indicated that males experienced more inclusion than females, and teens who worked with adults experienced more inclusion than teens who worked with other teens. Inclusion was a strong predictor of satisfaction with the organization. The level of inclusion of teen volunteers has implications for continued volunteerism and for the realization of developmental benefits.

Keywords:

Teenagers, volunteers, inclusion, workgroups, supervisor, decision-making, satisfaction

Introduction

In 2004, 15.5 million teens participated in community service in the United States (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2005) contributing to a dramatic increase in teen volunteers of over 200% from 1989 to 2004 (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2007). Volunteerism has been linked to important developmental benefits for

adolescents such as building teamwork skills and developing political-moral identities (Yates & Youniss, 1996; Larson, Hansen & Moneta, 2006). Additionally, the quality of teens' experiences with a volunteer organization has been linked to their long-term intentions to volunteer (Bortree, 2007). Encouraging teen involvement in volunteerism and community service is clearly an

important goal (Safrit, Scheer, & King, 2001; Safrit, 2002).

Given that one in three volunteers do not continue their service with an organization from year to year (Corporation, 2005), retaining teen volunteers and managing their experiences is critical for nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit organizations that create an atmosphere that promotes high quality volunteer experiences for teens stand to benefit through increased satisfaction and retention of teen volunteers (Safrit, Gliem, & Gliem, 2004). One approach to this continued involvement may involve the degree to which nonprofit organizations make teens feel included in the organization, i.e., creating an atmosphere of inclusion in the organization may lead to greater teen volunteer satisfaction.

In the course of volunteer activities, teens may work with adults and teens, as well as interact with a manager of volunteer resources and/or senior management. This study examines the degree to which inclusion by peers, management and the organization as a whole impacts teen volunteers' satisfaction with the nonprofit organization for which they work.

Teen Volunteerism

Community service work can lead to key benefits in interpersonal development among adolescents including the "development of teamwork, positive relationships, and social capital" (Larson, Hansen & Moneta, 2006, p.849). Volunteering impacts teens' perceptions of self and of others (Youniss, McLellan, & Mazer, 2001), and can be a formative source of information for young peoples' understanding of the work environment

(Johnson, Bebe, & Snyder, 1998). Adolescents who volunteer experience growth in the areas of social responsibility and personal competence as well:

...service can provoke youths to think about themselves in relation to others who are less fortunate than they ...it can stimulate them to think about the political and moral dimensions of society and their role in making that order change so that it comes closer to representing an ideology that those students believe is just and achievable. (Yates & Youniss, 1996, p. 282-283)

By working with community organizations, adolescents benefit from relationships the association brings. For example, adolescents who engage in community service build peer relationships with others who serve with them (Youniss et al, 2001) and benefit from the adult networks they build through associations with adult organizational employees and volunteers (Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006). It is possible that the benefits of these relationships are mediated by the degree to which teens feel included by these individuals and included by the organization itself.

Inclusion

Research has suggested that the feeling of inclusion is a critical factor in bridging individuals' differences in age, race and gender in the workplace (Mor-Barak & Cherin, 1998). Inclusion may lead to the feeling of acceptance in an organization which links to satisfaction with the organization and commitment to it (Lawler, 1994; Lawler, 1995; Deming, 1986). Subsequently, exclusion may result in segregation within an

organization and less productive outcomes of workgroups, departments and holistic organizations. Individuals who are excluded from the decision-making process of their organization are more likely to intend to leave the organization (Mor-Barak, Levin, Nissly, & Lane, 2006).

Nonprofit organizations are comprised of myriad workgroups and departments in which volunteers may serve. Some volunteers work exclusively with employees of an organization; some work primarily with other volunteers; and still others work directly with the organizations' clientele. In nonprofit organizations there may be a tendency to exclude volunteers from decision-making processes. When volunteers are only contributing time to fulfilling a requirement, they may be perceived as temporary and less valuable an asset. Young volunteers, and especially those who lack or are developing initial workplace skills, may also be perceived as having less to contribute to the decision-making process; they may be perceived as not as invested in the organization, and therefore, not as important to include in organizational events.

According to Mor-Barak and Cherin (1998), personal inclusion in an organization can be defined in three ways including: (1) being included in the decision-making process, (2) being included in an information network, and (3) having a high level of participation. Workers who perceive an organization as soliciting their opinions and asking for their advice on decisions are more likely to feel included in the decision-making process. If they feel the organization keeps them well informed about important organizational activities, announcements and events, then they

also feel included in the organization's information network. If they feel that they are invited to important meetings and events at the organization, then they have a higher level of participation inclusion. Organizational inclusion can be measured at five levels of the organization (Mor-Barak & Cherin, 1998) including: (1) department or workgroup level, (2) supervisor level, (3) higher level management level, (4) organizational level and (5) social group level.

This study explores the relationship between inclusion and satisfaction that volunteers feel for their volunteer organization. The literature suggests that males in the workplace tend to experience more inclusion than females (Mor-Barak, 2005). It is possible that the same is true for volunteers. Thus, the first research question proposed by the authors explores gender differences in inclusion: *RQ1: Is there a difference in the level of inclusion experienced by male and female teen volunteers?*

Young volunteers may experience a difference in the level of inclusion they feel along the lines of age as well, and more specifically, differences in inclusion from adults vs. other teens. Some teen volunteers work primarily with adults, including employees, other volunteers, or clientele; others work primarily with other teen volunteers. Though teens may benefit from the relationships they develop with adults (Larson, Hansen & Moneta, 2006) and with other teen volunteers (Youniss et al, 2001), as mentioned earlier, that benefit may be mediated by the degree to which they feel included by these individuals. Consequently, the second research question explores the

differences in inclusion based on the age of the individuals teens work with:

RQ2: Do teen volunteers experience a different level of inclusion when they spend more time working with adults, more time working with other teens, or an equal amount of time with both teens and adults?

Finally, prior research has suggested links between the level of inclusion one feels in the workplace and satisfaction with the organization (Lawler, 1994; Lawler, 1995). This link is tested here for teen volunteers:

RQ3: Does the level of inclusion that teen volunteers feel with an organization influence their satisfaction with the organization?

Methodology

This exploratory research utilized a quantitative survey methodology to collect data in spring 2007. A pen-and-paper questionnaire was administered to a convenience sample of teen volunteers from three library systems in the southeastern United States. Study participants under the age of 18 were required to secure a parental/guardian signature to participate. Survey packets were distributed and collected by volunteer coordinators at library branches. Of the 800 teen volunteers in the library systems, 317 completed usable surveys, achieving a 39% response rate. While the sample was a convenience sample which limits the generalizability of the results to only the study participants, the three library systems were chosen because of the cultural and socio-economic diversity of participating teenage volunteers. This sampling procedure ensured that a wide variety of teenage perspectives were collected. No attempt was made to follow-up with non-respondents.

The survey designed for this study used Mor-Barak and Cherin's (1998) 15 measures of inclusion that can be grouped in two ways. First, the measures give an indication of organizational inclusion on five levels (1) workgroup level, (2) social groups level, (3) supervisor level, (4) higher management level, and (5) organizational level. Each level is measured separately and contributes to the overall organizational inclusion. The second way in which the measures are grouped is by type of personal inclusion, including (1) decision-making process inclusion, (2) information networks inclusion, and (3) level of participation inclusion.

In addition to measuring inclusion, the survey measured the teen volunteers' satisfactions with the volunteer organization through a 9-point Likert-type scale question, "I am happy with the library where I volunteer." Satisfaction has been linked to inclusion in the workplace for adult employees. Participants also anonymously provided information about their demographics, including gender and age.

Results

The respondent group was 69% female and 31% male. The mean age of the participants was 16 years, ranging from a low of 13 years to a high of 19. Of the 317 teen volunteers, 28.4% (n = 90) reported that they worked primarily with adults, 33.8% (n = 107) reported that they worked primarily with other teens, and 36.9% (n = 117) reported to spend approximately an equal amount with both teen and adults.

All measures used in the study yielded moderate to high reliability with Cronbach alpha scores ranging from .70 to .82, except for social group inclusion

which earned an alpha score of .58. This may be the result of applying workplace measures to teen volunteers. The importance of social groups among teens may have caused teens to respond to the questions about social groups in a way inconsistent with their original intent. Because of its low reliability, this variable was not considered in subsequent statistical analyses.

To examine research question 1, which asked about the impact of gender on inclusion for teen volunteers, differential statistics were run for males and females. For organizational

inclusion, males rated their inclusion higher than females in all four inclusion categories, workgroup inclusion, supervisor inclusion, higher management inclusion and organizational inclusion. The three categories of personal inclusion were also calculated for differences along gender lines. Again, for all three categories, decision-making, information networks and level of participation, males scored higher than females. In general, it appears that male teen volunteers feel more inclusion in their volunteer organizations than do female teen volunteers (Table 1).

Table 1
Differences in Levels of Inclusion Based on Gender.

Type of inclusion	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Organizational Inclusion				
Workgroup*	female	218	6.23	1.02
	male	99	6.53	1.18
Supervisor	female	218	5.25	1.10
	male	99	5.52	1.20
Higher Management	female	218	3.81	1.02
	male	99	4.01	1.23
Organization	female	218	4.52	.91
	male	99	4.72	1.16
Personal inclusion				
Decision-making	female	218	6.61	.76
	male	99	6.78	.89
Information networks**	female	218	6.77	.66
	male	99	7.00	.78
Level of participation	female	218	6.91	.72
	male	99	7.08	.95

The second research question asked whether the age of individuals in teens' primary workgroup impacted the perception of inclusion among volunteers. Specifically, it asked whether working more with adults or more with teens impacted the degree to which teen volunteers felt included. Respondents indicated that they fell into one of three categories: (1) work primarily with teens, (2) work primarily with adults, or (3) work about the same amount with each. To explore this research question, a one-way ANOVA was run with category of primary workgroup acting as the independent variable and the

categories of organizational inclusion and personal inclusion acting as the dependent variables. Significant differences were found for two categories of organizational inclusion, workgroup ($F(2, 314) = 12.59, p < .01$) and supervisor ($F(2, 314) = 6.52, p < .01$). For personal inclusion, all three categories indicated a significant difference based on age of primary workgroup, decision-making ($F(2, 314) = 2.98, p = .05$), information networks ($F(2, 314) = 5.36, p < .01$), and level of participation ($F(2, 314) = 5.97, p < .01$) (see Table 2).

Table 2
One-Way ANOVA of Inclusion Based on Primary Work Group.

	Work with Teens Mean (SD)	Work with Adults Mean (SD)	Work with Both Mean (SD)	F (2, 314)	ss	p
Organizational inclusion						
Work Group**	6.01 (0.87)	6.75 (1.14)	6.29 (1.11)	12.59	27.25	<.01
Supervisor**	5.09 (1.02)	5.66 (1.24)	5.31 (1.10)	6.52	16.23	<.01
Higher Management	3.80 (1.03)	3.88 (1.24)	3.93 (1.02)	0.42	1.00	.66
Organization	4.42 (0.94)	4.64 (1.03)	4.70 (1.01)	2.36	4.66	.10
Personal inclusion						
Decision- Making process*	6.55 (0.76)	6.82 (0.84)	6.64 (0.81)	2.98	3.83	.05
Information networks**	6.68 (0.63)	7.00 (0.71)	6.88 (0.74)	5.36	5.20	<.01
Level of participation**	6.76 (0.72)	7.14 (0.82)	7.02 (0.83)	5.97	7.46	<.01

*Significant at the .05 level. **Significant at the .01 level.

Post hoc tests revealed significant differences in perceptions of inclusion between teen volunteers who worked primarily with adults and those who worked primarily with teens. In all cases, volunteers who worked with adults felt more included than those who worked with other teens. In workgroups, those who worked with about the same amount of adults and teens indicated a significant difference in inclusion as well. Those who worked with adults felt the most included; those who worked with about the same amount of teens and adults felt significantly less included than those who worked primarily with adults, but they felt significantly more included than those who worked primarily with other teens. For the other categories of inclusion, there were no significant differences between those who worked with equal numbers of adults and teens and other groups. Overall, results indicated that teen volunteers who worked with adults felt more included than teens who worked with other teens.

Research question three asked about the relationship between inclusion and satisfaction with the volunteer organization. What categories of inclusion predict the satisfaction a teen

volunteer feels with the volunteer organization? To address this question, two multiple regression analyses were run, one with organizational inclusion categories as predictors of satisfaction and one with personal inclusion categories as predictors of satisfaction. Results showed that two categories of organizational inclusion were significant predictors of satisfaction with the organization – organization level inclusion and supervisor level inclusion – with organization level inclusion acting as the strongest predictor, $F(2, 314) = 287.25, p < .001$ (see Table 3). Together the two categories of organizational inclusion explain 65% of the variance in overall rating of satisfaction.

For personal inclusion, one category was a significant predictor of satisfaction with the organization, decision-making process inclusion, $F(1, 315) = 839.52, p < .001$ (see Table 4). This single category explains 73% of the variance in the rating of satisfaction. These results indicate that inclusion in the decision-making process, especially at the organizational level and supervisor level, is a strong predictor of satisfaction with the volunteer organization.

Table 3
Stepwise Regression of Satisfaction Predicted by Organizational Inclusion.

	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	-.624		-2.716	<.01
Organization level inclusion	.71	.54	11.71	<.01
Supervisor level inclusion	.39	.34	7.35	<.01

$R = .80, R^2 = .65, F(2,314) = 445.54, p < .01, n = 316$

Table 4
Stepwise Regression of Satisfaction Predicted by Personal Inclusion.

	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standardized Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value
Constant	-4.61		-14.18	<.01
Decision-making process inclusion	1.40	.85	28.97	<.01

R = .85, R² = .73, F (1,315) = 839.52, p <.01, n = 316

Discussion

This study found differences in the level of perceived inclusion along the lines of gender, with males feeling more inclusion than females, and along the lines of peer age, with teens feeling more inclusion when working with adults than working with other teens. It also found that inclusion is a strong predictor of teen volunteers' satisfaction with their volunteer organization. In general, these findings suggest that nonprofit organizations should examine their practices of inclusion at all levels of the organization and make adjustments that will create an environment that fosters inclusion of teen volunteers.

Male teen volunteers in this study tended to feel more inclusion with their volunteer organization than their female counterparts. Males more than females indicated that the organization does a good job of communicating about upcoming events and providing work-related information to them. Results indicated higher levels of inclusion for males in decision-making and level of participation. This suggests that males are more likely than females to feel that they are included in the decision-making process at their volunteer organization and are more likely to feel that they are invited to participate in important events and activities at the organization.

It appears that on many levels and in many ways, male teen volunteers

feel more included in the organization than do female teen volunteers. This difference is found in the workplace as well and may be an indication that organizations, intentionally or not, seek the opinions of male more often than females and invite participation of males in meetings and events more often than their female counterparts. To make teenage volunteers, particularly females, feel more included in the organization, managers of volunteer resources need to make sure that teen volunteers are invited to relevant meetings about the volunteer program. Additionally, they need to actively listen to teenage volunteers when their ideas are expressed, and they should ask teen volunteers about their opinions when the volunteers remain quiet on timely issues affecting the volunteer program.

Teens in this study who worked with adults tended to feel more included than those who worked with teens. This was true at the workgroup level and the supervisor level. Teens who worked with adults more than those who worked with teens felt that they were more included in the decision-making process, the organization did a better job of communicating work-related information to them, and they were invited more often to participate in meetings and events sponsored by the organization. Differences in inclusion between the age groups could be the

result of teens having a higher expectation of inclusion from other teens, but likely it means that adults do a better job of making teen volunteers feel involved in the organization. Managers of volunteer resources should strive to make sure that teen volunteers should have interaction with other teenagers to maximize their social comfort, but also encourage interaction with other adult volunteers to boost their feelings of inclusion and involvement with the organization.

Differences detected at the supervisor level could be, in part, due to the way some organizations manage teen volunteers. Organizations that segregate teens rather than integrating them into groups with adults may be less likely to consider teen volunteers as valuable participants in the organization. It is clear from the results that teens who work primarily with other teens do not experience as much inclusion as those who work with adults. These results suggest that nonprofit organizations should actively seek ways to integrate teen volunteers into mixed-age departments or workgroups. By offering teen volunteers the opportunity to work with adults, the organization will enable teens to build their adult networks, which appear to result in greater feelings of inclusion in the organization. At the same time, nonprofit organizations should promote more inclusion among teen volunteers at the workgroup level. One way this could be accomplished is through encouraging teamwork among peers. This, too, will improve the experience of teen volunteers, which leads to greater satisfaction with the nonprofit organization.

Inclusion acted as a strong predictor of organizational satisfaction in this study; this was particularly true

when teens felt included in the decision-making process at the organization and supervisor levels. Considering that many volunteers are directly supervised by managers of volunteer resources, this has implications for the volunteer management department. Seeking the opinions of teen volunteers on issues that impact their assignments and responsibilities likely gives them a greater sense of inclusion in the organization at the supervisor level. Inclusion leads to satisfaction, which has been linked to commitment to the organization. In the case of the teen volunteers in this research, commitment means a greater likelihood of continuing to contribute time and energies to the organization. More research is needed in this area to test the link between satisfaction and intended behavior among teen volunteers.

Key developmental benefits of volunteerism for teens include learning teamwork, making gains in personal competence as well as learning about the workplace (Johnson et al, 1998; Larson, Hansen & Moneta, 2006). One may see how inclusion in the organization may influence the degree to which these benefits are realized. For example, the degree to which teens are included in their workgroups could impact learning about teamwork; inclusion in the decision-making process would likely influence gains in personal competence; and observing a difference in the level of inclusion among genders would influence expectations of treatment in future work environments. One thing is certain; inclusion creates satisfaction, which leads to commitment to the organization (Lawler, 1994). By creating an environment of inclusion, managers of volunteer resources are encouraging ongoing volunteerism among teens,

which allows teens to continue to realize developmental benefits.

Conclusion

This study offers managers of volunteer resources insights into the way teen volunteers evaluate their inclusion in the sponsoring volunteer organization. Male teen volunteers reported greater inclusion than females, and teens working with adult experienced more inclusion than those who worked primarily with other teens. The level of inclusion predicted the amount of satisfaction that teen volunteers felt with the organization.

In general, the authors encourage leaders and managers of nonprofit organizations to create an environment of inclusion toward their teen volunteers. This means ensuring that teens are included in decision-making processes, they are invited to important meetings and events, and they receive regular communication about the organization. These types of behaviors should be encouraged at all levels of the organization from workgroups and departments to the organizational level. Improving the inclusion of teen volunteers into the organization will result in more satisfied individual volunteers and a greater likelihood of teens continuing to volunteer.

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Appendix A
Measures of Organizational Inclusion.

Organizational Level	Question Items
Workgroup level	<p>1. I have influence in decisions made by the volunteer coordinator regarding our tasks.</p> <p>2. The volunteer coordinator openly shares work-related information with me.</p> <p>3. I am typically involved and invited to actively participate in work-related activities by the volunteer coordinator.</p>
Organizational level	<p>4. I am able to influence decisions that affect my organization.</p> <p>5. I am usually among the last to know about important changes in the organization. (Reverse coded)</p> <p>6. I am usually invited to important meetings in my organization.</p>
Supervisor level	<p>7. The volunteer coordinator often asks for my opinion before making important decisions.</p> <p>8. The volunteer coordinator does not share information with me. (Reverse coded)</p> <p>9. I am invited to actively participate in review and evaluation meetings with the volunteer coordinator.</p>
Higher management level	<p>10. I am often invited to contribute my opinion in meetings with management higher than the volunteer coordinator.</p> <p>11. I frequently receive communication from management higher than the volunteer coordinator (i.e., memos, emails).</p> <p>12. I am often invited to participate in meetings with management higher than the volunteer coordinator.</p>
Social group level	<p>13. I am often asked to contribute in planning social activities not directly related to my volunteer work.</p> <p>14. I am always informed about informal social activities and events.</p> <p>15. I am rarely invited to join other volunteers when they go out for lunch or to take a break. (Reverse coded)</p>

Note: The variable of decision-making process inclusion was constructed using measures 1, 4, 7, 10, and 13. Information networks inclusion was constructed using measures 2, 5, 8, 11, and 14. Level of participation inclusion was constructed using measures 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15.

Effects of Influences, Motivations, and Receptivity on Volunteerism

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Abstract

Administrators and managers of volunteer resources and policy planners exhibit a clear need to better understand the role and impact of youth volunteers. As non-profits, volunteer groups, youth programs, and nongovernmental organizations take on larger roles in contributing to local well-being, active collaborations between youth and adults is vital to the long-term success of meaningful volunteer efforts. The importance of youth volunteerism is particularly relevant in Florida, which is facing extensive population growth pressures, significant socio-demographic changes, and a growing youth population. This study of Florida youth explores the impact of motivations, influences, and receptivity on youth and their volunteerism.

Keywords:

volunteers, youth, motivations, receptivity, influences

Introduction

Historically, youth involvement in decision-making, problem solving and community action has received only limited attention, particularly in relation to the importance of youth motivation to volunteer (Safrit, Gliem, & Gliem, 2004) and the outcomes of youth volunteerism as a resiliency building factor (Kegler et al., 2005; Brennan, Barnett & Lesmeister, 2007; Brennan, 2008). However, recent trends suggest that youth have, and continue to play, increasingly important roles in the development of communities (Huber, Frommeyer, Weisenbach, & Sazama, 2003). It is therefore important for both youth and community development professionals to explore potential effects of

relevant youth demographics, motivational forces, and receptivity and barriers on youths' participation as community volunteers. As non-profits, volunteer groups, and nongovernmental organizations assume larger roles in contributing to local well being, active collaborations between youth and adult volunteers are vital to the long-term success of community development efforts. Equally important, the literature suggests that successful youth/adult partnerships encourage youth to develop the capacity to actively serve in organizations and transition into future community leaders (Nitzberg, 2005; Safrit, 2002; Safrit, Scheer, & King, 2001).

Similarly, as service learning activities become a more standardized component of high

school and college programs, (and in some cases serve as a requirement for scholarships) youth are increasingly encouraged to become lifelong volunteers. This volunteering is important in that both the community and youth benefit from their involvement by presenting opportunities for personal self-growth, skill enhancement, and leadership development that contribute to their overall educational experience (Scales & Leffert, 1999). Finally, volunteerism helps develop assets that enable youth to avoid problem behaviors (Connell & Kubisch, 2001; Leffert et al., 1998; Scales, 1990).

This study examines youth volunteerism, specifically for frequency and level of participation in activities, and the motivational forces that affect youth volunteerism. The research focuses upon the question: *What are the motivations, influences, and barriers that shape active youth volunteerism?*

Volunteerism and Youth Development: The Resiliency Connection

Volunteerism is an important facet of community-building and leads effective adult-youth interaction. Activities such as religious services, volunteerism, and neighborhood meetings, are associated with the degree of motivation for adults to engage with youth (Scales et al., 2001). Scales et al. examined adults' relationships with youth outside of their own families to find that while large majorities of American adults (i.e., 70% or more) rated engagement behaviors "most important", rarely did ways of engaging become norms in their social networks. This has led to a gap between the social value attributed to engagement behavior and the social expectation of adults engaging with youth in ways that may enhance the youths' resiliency and protect them against risk.

It is important to consider adult engagement with youth in the volunteer setting in order to bridge this gap between motivations

toward volunteerism, youth resiliency, and adult engagement behavior for organizations in ways that will help them increase volunteerism and have positive youth development outcomes. These volunteer activities will lead to multiple benefits for communities and citizens of all ages, and particularly for youth needing to increase resilience against risk. Motivational forces have been identified in resiliency studies as a means of enhancing assets or resilience. In particular, involvement bonds and attachment bonds are critical qualities that help youth offset risk (Catalano, Kosterman, Hawkins, Newcomb, & Abbott, 1996).

Community youth development professionals may liken youth volunteerism to other self-actualization efforts leading to enhancing resilience. Volunteerism and community-building activities provide not only tangible benefits, but are also sources of close relationships and meaning in life that are necessary for positive youth development (Myers, 2000; Brennan, 2008). Therefore, youth benefit from volunteerism in a number of ways that promote positive youth development. Engagement and interaction with caring adults (other than parents) play significant roles in providing several developmental supports for youth that increase and promote youth well being.

The current wave of resiliency research focuses on the experiences that foster active civic engagement and encourage youth to pursue self-actualization, altruism, and sources of individual level strength that increase personal resiliency (Richardson, 2002). The connection between motivational forces, resiliency and volunteerism, therefore, is important to consider. One may explore and identify motivational forces and obstacles identified by youth for volunteerism. These may help foster active participation in activities and determine whether certain motivational forces may have

significant impact on youth engagement and participation.

The Role of Youth in Community Development

Youth/adult partnerships and the active role of youth in community development are currently being explored by researchers in both of the fields of youth development and community development, since both youth and community benefit (Barnett & Brennan, 2006; Brennan, 2008). The merger of these two fields of inquiry is important for future understandings of what motivates youth to volunteer, as well as factors that inhibit them from becoming involved. Research on youth participation in communities has found that youth gain important protective factors and achieve mastery in social competence, problem solving, autonomy, and sense of purpose, as well as important links to community (Brennan, 2008; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995; Kegler et al., 2005; Safrit, Gliem, & Gliem, 2004; Scales, Benson, Leffert & Blyth, 2000). This can, in particular, set the stage for clearly identifying youth roles and their long-term participation in volunteerism. Equally important, young people involved as volunteers become empowered to become problem-solvers, decision-makers, and committed leaders in their community in the future (Safrit, 2002). Lastly, through the active interaction of youth and adults in the volunteer process, a more representative voice is provided that reflects the diverse needs and wants of the community and the organizations within it.

The Basis for Active Youth Volunteerism and Community Involvement

Prior research has explored the basis for active youth community involvement. There have been discussions related to youth as being self-consumed and uninformed and as being isolated from involvement in community development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Flanagan & Faison, 2001;

Sherrod, Flanagan, & Youniss, 2002). Consequently, research has explored whether youth are motivated to participate in community service and if so, potential motivational forces behind their participation (Borden, Perkins, Villarruel, & Stone, 2005). Youth have identified a number of motivations related to their volunteerism, such as needing to meet school requirements, hoping to earn higher grades in a class, improving their chances of college admissions, or as being hired in a desired job (Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter, & Zukin, 2002; Safrit et al., 2004). Other important reasons to volunteer have also emerged including feelings of efficacy (Clary, Snyder, & Ridge, 1992; Sherrod et al., 2002), responsibility/leadership (Kubisch, 2005), and needing to be taken seriously (Flanagan & Van Horn, 2001). Community attachment has been found to be a predictor of motivation for youth involvement (Brennan, 2008; Brennan et al., 2007).

Links between practices and processes are also seen as key ingredients of successful community-based youth programs, such as youth feeling that they matter, have a voice in determining programs (Eccles & Gootman, 2002), contribute to a set of shared values (Sherrod, et al., 2002), and influence others by setting an example (Brennan, Barnett & Baugh, 2007). Lastly, specific sociodemographic variables have been linked to volunteerism and social participation. These include age, gender, socio-economic status, length of residence, income, and rural location (Brennan, 2005; Brennan, Barnett & Lesmeister, 2007; Cox, 2000; Jacob, Bourke, & Luloff, 1997). Household size has also been reported as an important factor in encouraging volunteerism (Independent Sector, 2001). This reflects the role of interaction among family members and the outside world as fostering opportunities for, and awareness of, volunteer efforts.

Methods

The researchers used a mixed methods approach (i.e., quantitative survey data and qualitative key informant interviews). Initial data collection involved 12 key informant interviews with youth, adults actively involved in youth/adult partnerships, and 4-H program development agents during the summer of 2005. Key informants were identified based on their involvement in volunteerism and youth volunteer programming/management. Additional interviewees were contacted through "snowball sampling," a technique where each key informant was asked to identify other knowledgeable individuals to interview (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Snowball sampling is appropriate when a study is primarily explorative, qualitative and descriptive.

Interviews lasted no more than 90 minutes. Interviewees were assured that all responses would remain confidential and that no ideas or perspectives would be attributed to specific interviewee. Responses were recorded in writing by the interviewer as well as with a tape-recorder when permitted. Responses were assembled and analyzed. Steps in the analysis included compiling all responses to specific questions; identifying key phrases, words, and concepts; and summarizing emerging themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As themes emerged, the information or views obtained were not attributed to specific individuals or groups. Similarly, cross-case and within-case analyses were used to determine social networks, common issues/context, and time order events that shaped youth volunteerism (Miles & Huberman). Data gathered from key informants enlightened and helped design a 4-H participant survey. Finally, these interview data were useful in interpreting the findings of data drawn from the survey.

Following the key informant interviews, survey data was obtained from a convenience sample of Florida teen 4-H participants through a self-administered questionnaire which utilized the total design method (Dillman, 2000). The questionnaire was based upon the concepts and variables identified in the literature, but also utilized the key informant interviews to address conditions and context unique to youth volunteerism. To assess the face validity of the questionnaire, an expert panel was used to assess the concepts and variables measured. The questionnaire was then pilot tested on a group of 15 4-H participants of varying ages and backgrounds to establish its reliability. A Cronbach's Alpha score of .79 was reported. Feedback from these groups was then incorporated into the final questionnaire.

Data collection took place by randomly selecting four different major 4-H events between June and September 2005. Included were the Florida 4-H Legislature, State 4-H Congress, and two "Learning and Leading" workshops. These events contained a substantial number of diverse statewide participants for the convenience sample. A total of 679 youth ages 12-18 took part in these events. Completed and usable questionnaires were obtained from 418 respondents, representing a response rate of 62%. This response rate and the number of usable questionnaires returned were more than sufficient to statistically represent 4-H Youth in Florida (Isaac & Michael, 1997). Sample validation comparing survey respondents to statewide 4-H enrollment data was conducted. Overall the sample population did not differ substantially from the overall population. Finally, it should be noted that the convenience sample utilized presents a limitation in that the major 4-H events where data were collected may not have completely represented all 4-H youth. While these events were statewide and distributed at different regions of the state, it is

conceivable that select 4-H subpopulations may not have been represented. Included would be lower income, remote rural, and youth involved in specialized programs that may not have warranted their participation in the events from which the convenience sample was drawn.

Based on previous research and theory, several conceptual areas were focused on for multivariate analysis. Youth volunteerism was measured with a multidimensional index that measured frequency and level of participation in voluntary activities. This dependent variable was constructed by summing the following items: the number of clubs, groups, and/or organizations to which the respondent belonged (number of clubs/organizations); hours per month spent on voluntary organized activities (number of hours); a self-ranking description of the respondent's level of involvement in local activities, events, or organizations (1 – not at all active to 4 – very active); membership on a community board (0 - no/1- yes); membership on a community council (0 - no/1- yes); and membership on a community committee (0 - no/1- yes).

The data were factor analyzed using several models/rotations (principal axis factoring and least squares methods with a varimax, quartimax, and direct oblimin rotations). The criteria established in advance of the selection of factor items were: a factor loading of .35 or higher; at least a .10 difference between the item's loading with its factors and each of the other factors; and interpretability (Kim & Mueller, 1978). In all analyses, only one factor was identified which had an eigenvalue greater than 1.0. Additionally, review of the scree test plots indicated that a one factor solution was most appropriate.

Sociodemographic variables were included and represented items such as gender, age (in years), length of residences (years and months), number of residents in the household, rural/urban location (1 – farm to 6 – large

city), and household income level (1- lower income to 3 – higher income). Barriers to community involvement were also seen as being important and were measured individually by the following statements: How do the following affect your decision to become actively involved in your community? Not being taken seriously by adults, Not being asked to participate, No identified role for youth in organizations, Not being assigned to committees, Organizations not allowing youth to vote, Friends disapproving of my involvement, Not having skills to offer, Feeling intimidated by others, Not having transportation to meetings, Not having time to commit, Not being sure of the real benefit of involvement, and Not being recognized for my efforts. Response options ranged from 1 – not a problem to 5 – major problem.

The research literature also indicates a variety of motivations behind youth volunteerism. Variables included were statements such as: I believe that the community needs new ideas, I believe that the community needs better services, I am dissatisfied with the way things are, I enjoy local politics, I believe that others will eventually return the favor for my efforts, The community needs volunteers to reduce costs, I need community service for school/scholarships, and I feel it is my public duty as a citizen. Response options ranged from 1 – no influence to 5 – strong influence. Based upon factor analysis, these items were used as a summative score (Cronbach's Alpha = .68).

In addition to motivations and obstacles, the research literature also suggests that youth volunteerism is greatly shaped by the extent to which it is received positively and encouraged by adults. This receptivity was measured by items such as: I'm actively involved in decision making, I'm actively involved in policy making, My community values youth in working toward solutions, Youth play a useful role in the community, I

am not taken seriously when making decisions, I have a large say in how the organization grows, My input has value, and I influence the community by being in this organization. Response options ranged from 1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree. Based on factor analysis these items were used as a summative score (Cronbach's Alpha = .84).

Finally, various influencing variables were seen as shaping youth volunteerism. These influencing variables included: How does each of the following influence your decision to become involved in community activities? Monetary reward, Recognition, Opportunity to use my skills, Getting acquainted with people, Opportunity to develop new skills, Being asked by friends, Influencing the behavior of others, To set an example, Being asked by local leaders, and Having transportation provided. For all, response options ranged from 1 – no influence to 5 – strong influence.

Data Analysis

To determine the specific impacts of the above conceptual areas on youth volunteerism, a series of multiple regression models were used to assess the partial effects of each conceptual area as well as the cumulative effect of all independent variables together (Table 1). Focused alone, all conceptual areas played an important role in shaping youth volunteerism. Receptivity and volunteer influences were the strongest predictors of community involvement ($R^2=.23$ and $.16$ respectively). Motivations ($R^2=.14$) and obstacles ($R^2=.10$) played an important role as well. Among the sociodemographic variables that were positive and significantly related were age and household income. Rural/urban location was also significant, with rural youth being more involved. These items accounted for 11% of the variation in the model ($R^2=.11$).

While each conceptual area provided insight into youth volunteer behaviors, these were analyzed individually and did not account for the total effects and interactions of all variables together as would be found in real life. To determine this summative effect, all variables were entered into a full model (Model 6). In this analysis, four variables were statistically significant and the model accounted for 34% of the variance (Adjusted $R^2=.339$). A more parsimonious reduced stepwise model was then developed consisting of systematically eliminating non-significant variables and ultimately identifying only those items which were statistically significant (Reduced Model). This model identified six significant variables and accounted for 35% of the variance (Adjusted $R^2=.35$). Those found to be significant included age, the influence of involvement to set an example to others, the motivations index, the obstacle of youth not being allowed voting privileges (negatively related), the obstacle of a lack of recognition, and the receptivity index.

Findings and Implications

The findings of this study provide insights into the factors most directly shaping youth attitudes and their choice to become involved in volunteer activities, as well as presenting direct implications for applied use. These findings are generally consistent with previous research (Agnew, 1989; Hummon, 1990; Luloff & Swanson, 1995; Safrit et al., 2004; Theodori, 2000).

Each of the significant variables identified present specific implications for administrators and managers of volunteer resources. Taken together they present a detailed picture of efforts that can foster effective youth-adult partnerships and better include youth in the community volunteerism process. The significance of the

Table 1
Comparison of Seven Multivariate Models on Youth Volunteerism .

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Reduced Overall
-- Standardized Regression Coefficients --							
Demographic Variables							
Gender (males=1)	-.070					-.001	
Age	.248***					.167**	.217***
Length of residence	.085					.055	
Household size	.054					.035	
Urban/Rural location	-.101*					-.064	
Household income	.134**					.094*	
Barriers							
Not being taken seriously		.093				-.003	
Not being asked to participate		-.014				-.017	
No identified role for youth		-.120				-.074	
No assignment to committees		-.030				.025	
Youth not allowed to vote		-.192**				-.081	-.102*
Friends disapproving		.054				.031	
Not having skills to offer		.064				.018	
Feeling intimidated		.158**				.066	
Not having transportation		.035				-.017	
Not having time to commit		-.100				-.028	
Not being sure of the benefit		.080				.019	
Not being recognized		-.098				-.058	-.125**
Motivations Index							
			.375***			.154***	.171***
Receptivity Index							
				.487***		.304***	.329***
Influences							
Receiving a money reward					-.057	.004	
Receiving recognition					-.093	-.076	
Opportunity to use my skills					.119	.084	
To get acquainted					-.006	-.060	
Opportunity for new skills					.074	.047	
Being asked by friends					.043	.038	
To influencing others					.074	.044	
To set an example for others					.227***	.067	.126**
Being asked by local leaders					-.035	-.043	
<hr/>							
R ² Adjusted	.106	.097	.139	.235	.156	.339	.353
F value	7.870***	4.366***	65.822***	122.685***	9.043***	7.094***	32.301***
Cases	349	376	403	396	391	344	344
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* significant at the .05 level	** significant at the .01 level		*** significant at the .001 level				

sociodemographic variables can serve as an indicator of which youth are involved in volunteerism and which are not. Investigations into who are active, and why they are, can provide alternate strategies for volunteer administration and a means for encouraging participation from excluded segments of the youth population. The significance of age is important in explaining involvement, with older youth being more likely to volunteer. These would be a target audience for encouraging volunteerism. On the other hand, youth at earlier ages could be approached to volunteer and age appropriate volunteer activities developed if not already existing. By including younger citizens in such activities, they are more likely to make volunteering a lifelong behavior.

Variables reflecting the receptivity of youth volunteerism were included in an index and found to have the largest impact overall on youth volunteerism. Not surprisingly, when adults and community organizations were open to, and supportive of, youth volunteerism, youth were more likely to choose to become active. From a program and policy perspective, administrators and managers of volunteer resources would do well to make it clearly understood to the public that they are receptive to youth becoming part of the volunteer process. This could be accomplished by formal announcements, calls for volunteers, collaborations with youth organizations, and other activities that would showcase how receptive local groups are to youth involvement.

Influences on youth were also found to have a substantial impact. More specifically, regression analysis indicated that being able to set an example for others was a strong predictor of youth volunteerism. To encourage youth volunteerism, administrators and managers of volunteer resources should provide examples of success stories where youth have led by example. They should also create specialized programs

where youth can be the driving force behind organizing and implementing volunteer campaigns.

Motivations to volunteer were also found to be another predictor of volunteerism. Analysis showed a positive relationship between the motivations index and youth volunteerism, indicating that motivations behind youth actions need to be closely considered and incorporated into volunteer administration plans. Building on these findings, administrators and managers of volunteer resources could focus on the motivations that made up the index. For example, steps taken to actively involve youth in decision and policy making, show that youth are taken seriously when making decisions, provide youth with a say in how the organization grows, and valuing participant input would go a long way in encouraging volunteerism. Furthermore, administrators and managers of volunteer resources could more closely link youth contributions to the wider community and stress that they influence the community by being in the organization, that the community values youth in working toward solutions, and that youth play an overall useful role in the community.

Conversely, some barriers were found, which present direct implications for volunteerism. Specifically, two barriers were significant and provide direct opportunities for applied efforts. Youth not being able to vote was negatively related to volunteerism, as was a lack of recognition for youth contributions. Volunteer organizations and administrators may address these two barriers by providing active youth with voting privileges so that they have greater ownership and influence over volunteer activities. If youth are to become long-term players in the volunteer sector, it is important that they feel welcome and their input valued in the decision-making process. Equally important is the need to formally and

informally recognize and acknowledge the contributions of volunteering youth. These recognitions could take a variety of forms from certificates, awards functions, or announcements highlighting the contributions of individuals or groups of youth.

Conclusion

Youth have the potential to serve communities as volunteers, and to be shaped in a positive way through their volunteer involvement. The analysis of variables and conceptual groupings show that youth volunteerism is affected by a variety of conditions. By determining that motivations, influences and receptivity have a significant impact on youth volunteerism, these variables may be promoted to increase youth empowerment and volunteerism.

Conversely, those items identified as barriers that hinder youth volunteerism may be further understood and overcome. Administrators and managers of volunteer resources and youth development professionals can focus more on building volunteer opportunities that allow youth to set an example for others, particularly other youth. This may result in increased youth involvement, leading to positive effects on other domains of youth development (Scales & Leffert, 1999).

From an applied perspective, the information provided by this study can be used to better assess the motivational forces of youth toward volunteering in their communities. By understanding the process of attaining these assets, these characteristics may emerge in relation to the applied behaviors. Finally, this research has added to our body of knowledge regarding the process of recruiting and retaining youth volunteers. Additional information will, however, be needed to more adequately evaluate the factors which explain how and why youth take on these active roles. This

understanding and advancement of theory is critical to the empowerment of youth and the active involvement of future generations of community leaders.

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A Conceptual Model for Empowering Youth through Volunteerism

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Abstract

This article presents a rationale for three core elements that should be considered by program administrators for a successful youth volunteer initiative: 1) the environmental context, 2) interactive processes, and 3) identified knowledge-based outcomes. A conceptual framework describing their interrelationship is described for administrators to consider when planning programs to successfully promote the empowerment of youth through volunteerism. When youth are engaged to do for others and their communities, self-efficacy, self-awareness, and eventually empowerment occur as natural by-products of this actualizing process.

Key Words:

youth, empowerment, youth development, volunteerism, engagement

All societies and cultures have processes that educate and enable young people to develop into socially responsible adults. While such methods are facilitated through formal social structures, they are often embedded in long-standing cultural beliefs and traditions. One such activity designed to increase a youth's understanding of what it means to be a contributing member of a larger community is through volunteerism.

Conceptually, volunteerism and empowerment hold a symbiotic relationship that serves as a cornerstone in the social and

psychological growth of youth. As youth mature and become empowered, they embrace the ideal of community participation through volunteerism. Correspondingly, the experience of volunteerism enhances a youth's sense of empowerment. Empowerment, reinforced through volunteerism, enhances further empowerment and in turn, leads to an increase in volunteerism. This article focuses on the core elements in this relationship and offers a model for youth empowerment through volunteerism.

Youth Empowerment

Empowerment has been defined broadly as a theory, a framework, or a process (Gutierrez, 1995; McWhirter, 1991; Rose, 2000). Empowerment is also conceptualized at various micro/mezzo/macro levels including personal, organizational and societal (Gragoudas & Wehmeyer, 2004). Regardless of its characterization, empowerment essentially refers to the belief of an individual, group or community, to exercise self-determination for the mutual benefit of all.

Developmentally, however, empowerment serves a unique purpose for youth. The principle assumptions underpinning youth empowerment have been well documented in the literature (Gutierrez; Moody, Childs & Sepples, 2003; Rose). Conceptually, empowerment is deemed psychologically as the actualization of significant knowledge or skills that contribute to youth developing a sense of maturity, which leads to them becoming contributing members of a society (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004; Gragoudas, & Wehmeyer, 2004; Risler, Sutphen, & Shields, 2000). Moreover, empowerment serves to enhance a youth's sense of personal confidence in the development of decision-making competencies necessary in adult life (Au, Holosko, & Wing Lo, in press).

Gutierrez (1995) suggested that youth empowerment is founded upon a young person developing a socially critical consciousness, which involves three sequential psychological processes (Freire, 1973). The first process is related to the development of feelings of shared fate, where membership becomes a central component of an individual's attachment to groups that share common values. The second process is raising group consciousness, which involves a youth

understanding the relationship between personal and social problems impacting a group. This includes the increasing awareness of the differential status and relationships among groups and the identification of shared feelings of the members. Self and collective efficacy is the final process that involves youth recognizing that they are participants in a dynamic group interaction capable of effecting change in their life (Gutierrez).

The congruency between power and the formulation of a youth's critical consciousness is noteworthy in understanding the elements of empowerment. McWhirter (1991) discussed four requirements which highlight the development of empowerment. The first pertains to a youth's awareness of the relational power dynamics in their life context. The second concerns a youth's ability to develop the capacity for establishing reasonable control over their life. While the first and second seem easily understood; the third and fourth conditions significantly influence the development of a youth's critical consciousness (Gutierrez). Cumulatively, the latter requirements involve a youth's ability to exercise control in their life and the ability to advocate the empowerment of others in their community. For the actualization and development of empowerment in youth, these requirements represent an expression of integrity and the integration of community values and beliefs.

To comprehend youth empowerment as a means to personal efficacy, it is important to recognize the contextual frame that enables this to happen. As such, a number of characteristics have been identified as being associated with empowering environments including: group settings, shared belief systems, knowledge development, and leadership (Garst & Johnson, 2005; Gutierrez, 1995). Two examples illustrate this actualization, one a

clinical intervention, and the other, a community-based initiative.

There are numerous outdoor experiential programs established for troubled youth in North America. Typically, youth assigned to these programs have experienced significant failures in life, and/or have limited coping skills. Therapeutically, these programs foster the development of a youth's critical consciousness and empowerment. Surviving in a wilderness setting as a member of a community, youth develop interpersonal skills to make responsible decisions for the benefit of the group (Loughmiller, 1965). Coerced by the challenges of wilderness survival they become aware and understand the power of group dynamics which promote a commitment to the community's belief system.

There is also a range of community-based programs designed to foster skills and enhance capacities for self-efficacy, that then enhances empowerment in youth. Consider a local community-based collaborative involved youth in community affairs. The collaborative empowered a youth subcommittee to focus on a specific problem in the local community. A service project developed by the subcommittee involved implementing strategies to address problems associated with youth dropping out of high school. This subcommittee conducted a problem assessment, designed, and coordinated activities to improve the high school completion rate in the community.

From these examples, program models for the development of empowerment may be seen as falling on a continuum. Some programs are designed as an intervention targeting a youth's particular problem, while others are community-initiated programs that promote empowerment in youth. Regardless, each program incorporates similar activities to

engage youth and facilitate their development as contributing members of a community.

Youth Volunteerism

If empowerment is seen as a belief in an individual's self-determination, then volunteerism may be viewed as an altruistic expression of that value. Each year, individuals of all ages commit significant amounts of personal energy to assist others through volunteerism (Curtis, Grabb & Baer, 1992). In the United States, approximately 45% of the adults and youth volunteer in some capacity, and the value for their services exceeds \$239 billion (Independent Sector, 2006).

Factors associated with youth volunteer involvement have been widely researched (Johnson, Beebe, Mortimer, & Snyder, 1998; Oesterle, Johnson, Mortimer, 2004). Studies suggest that youth who are personally connected to a community are more likely to participate in volunteer activities (Johnson et al.). Other researchers have found that youth who had high educational aspirations (Johnson et al.) or parents who volunteered were more likely to engage in volunteerism (Keith, Nelson, Schlabach, & Thompson, 1990).

Likewise, research suggests common factors that nurture youth motivation youth to participate in volunteer activities. One factor suggests that participation in volunteer activities is driven by some incentive, such as improving a youth's future employment or acceptance into a college. Another view holds that volunteerism emerges out of the psychological benefits a youth gains from the altruistic nature of the activity (Holosko, Leslie & Miller, 2001). From either perspective, the literature supports the notion that participating in volunteer activities facilitates a youth's integration of

community values, which contributes to the development of empowerment (Au et al.).

The engagement of youth in volunteer activities is noted throughout the literature (Safrit & Auck, 2003). Researchers have reported on youth involved in volunteer activities both as recipients of program services and as participants in community-based initiatives (Johnson et al.). For example, youth who have been involved with the U.S. juvenile justice system and required to complete volunteer community service to instill social responsibility. Conversely, other youth participate in traditional volunteer service programs sponsored by community organizations, schools, and churches. Youth participating in these activities not only engage in community service, but also are exposed to meaningful education about civic responsibility.

The literature also cites factors underscoring the development of youth empowerment through volunteerism

(Johnson et al.; Safrit & Auck). Among others, these include youth participating in the decision-making process; engaging in activities that impact and a community need; fostering significant relationships with adults; and, the opportunity to integrate learning experiences into their identity (Amoto & Snyder, in press; Safrit & Auck).

Empowering Youth through Volunteerism: A Conceptual Model

The convergence of empowerment through volunteerism reflects a reciprocal and interactive relationship that enhances the overall development of youth. Moreover, the processes associated with youth empowerment and volunteerism lend credence to conceptual models (Amoto & Snyder). The relationship between empowerment and youth volunteerism, as described in Figure 1, allows one to identify elements of a framework to inform programs that promote these areas.

Figure 1
The Inter-relationship of Empowerment and Youth Volunteerism.

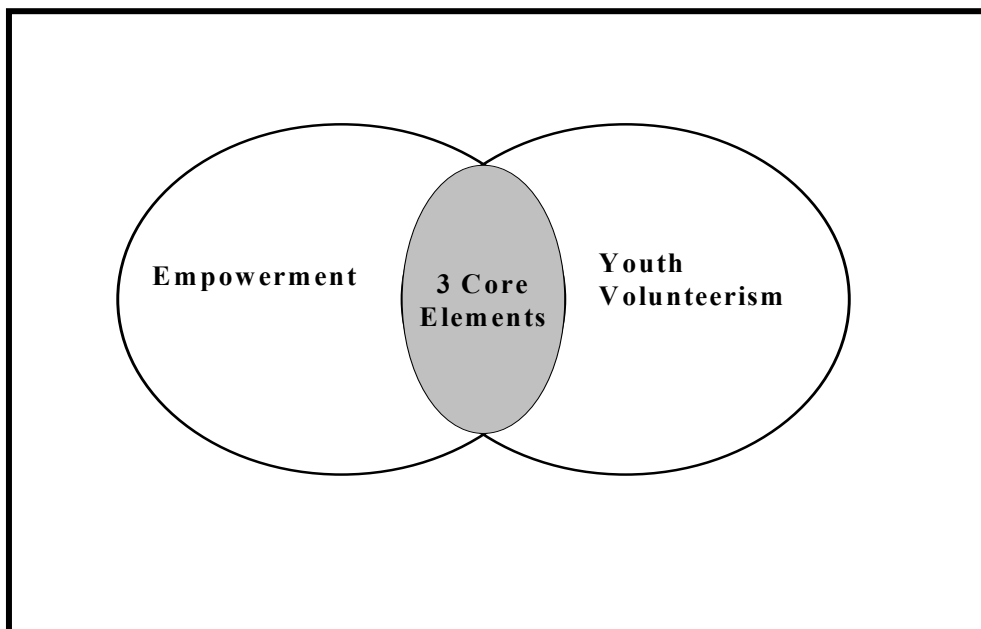
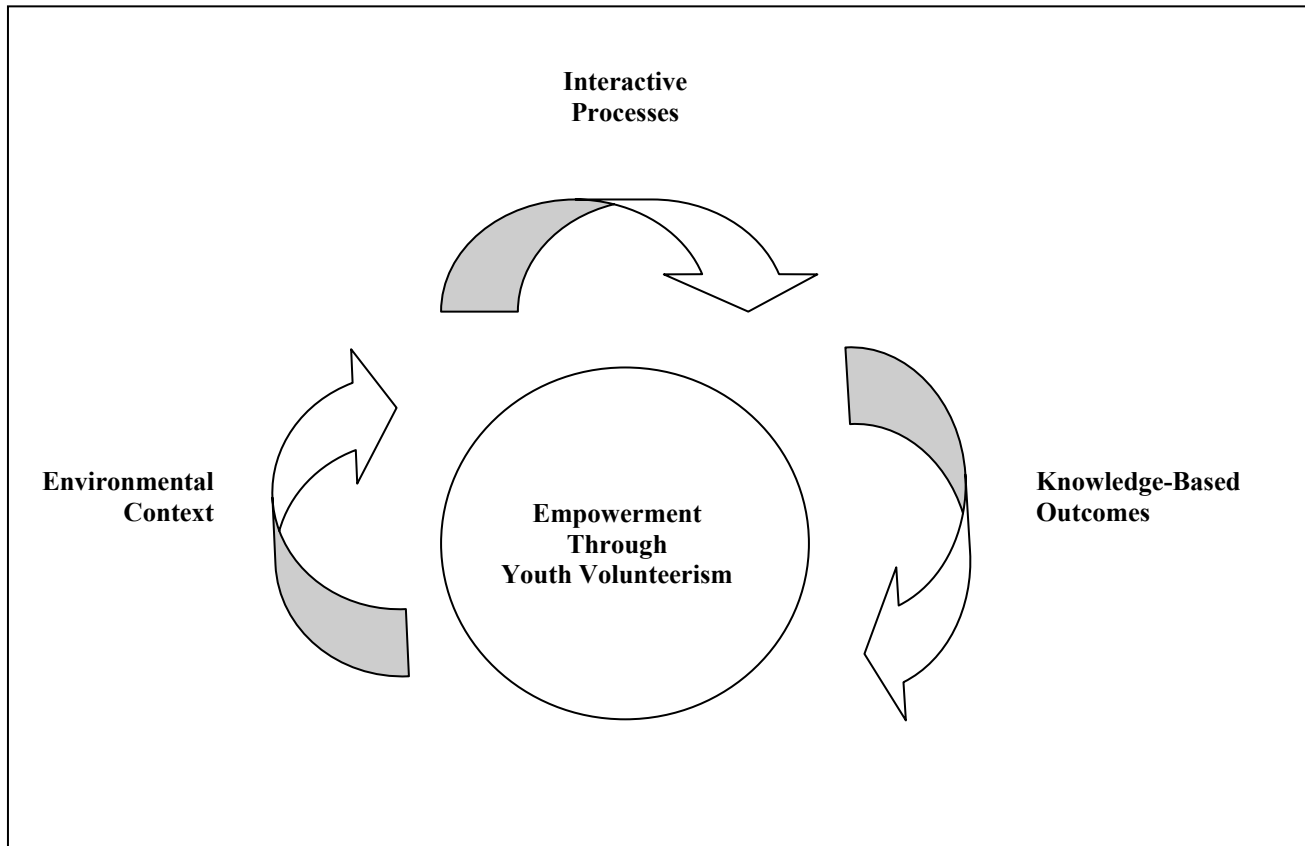


Figure 2
A Conceptual Framework of the Three Core Elements.



A conceptual framework for a youth empowerment model that can serve to promote the desired program goals and engage youth in volunteer activities should consider: a) the environmental context, b) identified interactive processes, and c) knowledge-based outcomes for stakeholders. Figure 2 provides an illustration of the three core elements of a framework for youth empowerment.

The Environmental Context

The environmental context considers mechanisms that facilitate various processes of youth empowerment. These include cultural norms and attitudes toward youth; the youth's status in the community social structure; and resources and desired needs of the community which promote volunteer

service. For instance, youth should have a voice and be seen as a valued resource for their community, and there should be established institutions that provide opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful activities.

More importantly, the environmental context serves to define the structure and relationships that create the interactive circumstances for youth to become engaged in the empowerment process. The components within this conceptualization primarily include a group's climate for embracing youth and the relational involvement of committed adults. For example, programs that create effective models for volunteerism are defined by a climate that provides opportunities and incentives for youth to become empowered

and engage in decision-making processes. Youth are motivated when they believe they can influence a process, which impacts a genuine concern for their community. In turn, the climate in which this process occurs promotes member affiliation and contributes to group cohesion. This is particularly true for the integration of a youth's mutual shared belief in the collective efficacy of the group. Ultimately, youth value the group's purpose when they see themselves as important members through this reciprocal process (Au et al.).

Involved adults are the focal point for the group setting and climate in this process, and effective programs attract those adults who are committed and invested in the empowerment of youth. These adults set the tone for the empowerment of youth by coordinating programmatic support with local community institutions. Furthermore, these adult mentors and leaders facilitate the integration of learning experiences in the developmental processes of youth empowerment (Holosko, Leslie & Miller, 2001).

The environmental context designed to engage youth in volunteerism may be articulated in several ways. The climate may be observed in groups that project a particular image or identity. Examples include physical structures, articles of clothing that identify group affiliation (e.g., caps, T-shirts, etc.), established group norms of member inclusion, and newsletters or web pages that communicate volunteer events. The volunteer activities achieve legitimacy when adults are significantly involved, openly committed, and provide supportive leadership for participating youth. Endorsements from institutional and agency organizations may provide similar legitimacy to the group.

Interactive Processes

In the framework suggested in Figure 2, consideration is given to interactive processes that occur at various levels between the youth, the group members, and participating adults while engaging in volunteer activities. Interactive processes refer to ongoing transactions and collaborations between individuals and groups toward a collective goal. Intrinsicly, these factors facilitate change and promote the development of a youth empowerment process.

Primarily, this refers to the sophistication of the group's level of investment in volunteer activities. Some programs have a specific purpose and long history of engaging youth in volunteer activities. For example, the previously mentioned youth committee and the volunteer project targeting school dropouts took more than a year to plan and implement. Other volunteer initiatives may be brief and focused on an activity to address a specific issue, such as a school organizing youth to provide refreshments to donors during a blood drive. Effective interactive processes that facilitate the development of youth empowerment emerge in a variety of contexts; however, the synergy between empowerment and volunteerism is inherent in this model.

Interactive processes focus on actualizing the potential of individual youth. This includes a mechanism for engaging youth in a purposeful manner and for the integration of their learning and development. Programs with effective interactive processes provide a welcoming climate that inspires youth participation. Such programs promote community values and provide opportunities for youth to participate in activities that they consider meaningful.

However, youth who are involved in empowerment programs are rarely socially,

emotionally, and/or psychologically equal. For example, there are experienced youth that have fostered higher levels of personal empowerment, and are viewed as leaders among their peers who have a history of participating in organized volunteer activities. They exude confidence and have social skills that make them able to effectively contribute to the group process and successfully involve themselves in community activities.

In contrast, some less empowered youth are involved in programs designed to address their therapeutic needs. Typically, these youth have had difficulty developing healthy social relationships with peers and adults. Characteristically, they have low self-esteem, lack competence, and seldom feel a part of a community. While these youth are not unwilling to contribute, they simply may not have acquired the opportunity, social skills, or more specifically interpersonal empowerment. As such, many have failed socially, and/or academically, or have been involved in anti-social activities.

Volunteer programs that facilitate an interactive process of empowerment for youth are driven by the actualization of individual potential achieved through two dynamic dimensions. First, there are specific processes that establish a level of acceptance for youth engagement and commitment to the group (i.e., a welcoming environment). For example, rituals and symbols can encourage a sense of belonging that reinforces the organizations' mission, values and purpose with which youth can identify. These include a mission statement, code of ethics, or pledge, all of which serve to empower and enhance the awareness of youth. Notable community programs with recognizable symbols and rituals are the Boy Scouts of America, 4-H, and the Red Cross.

Second, effective volunteer programs that empower youth contain interactive

processes that enhance interpersonal growth. These processes focus on enhancing one's self-esteem, confidence and competence. Within this dynamic interaction, youth experience respect, encouragement, and a sense of personal values, which they internalize.

Programmatically, there are structured processes for youth to have ownership in voicing opinions, as well as taking responsibility for decisions and confronting issues challenging the group. For example, effective groups establish norms of behavior where youth assume roles facilitating the program's system of shared beliefs, which creates group cohesion and promotes a sense of collective efficacy that empowers individuals.

Adults play a critical role in supporting youth in this process by modeling and integrating learning experiences for youth. Effective programs are lead by committed adults who recognize the global context of the growth of youth who participate in volunteer activities. These adults create transactional partnerships with youth and, more importantly, cultivate a cycle of constructive development in youth through each successful volunteer experience (Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005).

With each experience, adults facilitate learning that enhances youth empowerment, which further motivates the youth. One example of this would be an adult leader conducting group discussions wherein youth had an opportunity to reflect on how the volunteer experience impacted them individually. This could be achieved through the use of written journals, posters, murals, or other forms of art expression.

Consider a youth group concerned about graffiti in their neighborhood. The adult mentor facilitates a discussion about how these youth and community was affected by the problem, and helps the youth

to develop a plan to address the issue. Afterwards, the youth decide to voluntarily paint over the offensive graffiti with drawings and poetry expressing their feelings. Once completed, the adults and the youth participate together in a discussion on what the experience has meant to each person individually.

Knowledge-Based Outcomes

The final element of the empowerment volunteerism model is knowledge-based outcomes. These are deemed to be lessons learned by individuals that hold personal meaning for them. These outcomes highlight the seminal results associated with the interactive processes of empowerment and represent contextual changes in the group, its members, and the community.

For individual youth, this may be readily apparent. Over time, and often in a dramatic fashion, these youth appear to be more self-actualized and socially empowered. Their individual actions reflect an integrated perception and value of community membership. They often demonstrate an intention to remain committed to the group and assume leadership roles within the process. As youth become empowered and their personal maturity increases, they are more likely to continue being agents of social change in the community.

Evidence of collective group empowerment can be seen more pragmatically. Such empowered groups have a high degree of satisfaction among their members and are effective at mobilizing resources and achieving the desired outcomes of their activities. Cumulatively, success at having achieved group project goals results in a greater degree of satisfaction overall and often expands the membership of the group (Holosko et al., 2001). Functionally, groups

that are highly empowered create their own identity and history, and are able to sustain themselves with minimal adult supervision.

Community empowerment can be seen in a broader context that is influenced by both individual and group outcomes. For example, the specific number of youth activities achieved provides concrete evidence of the evolution of youth empowerment in the community. Conceptual indicators would pertain to changes in the perception of youth empowerment by the larger community (e.g., youth being formally recognized by civic leaders as viable and important members of the community) (Holosko et al., 2001).

Concluding Remarks

Youth volunteer involvement in communities has been shown to impact them in various positive ways. These include enhancing responsibility and community commitment (Brendtro & Bacon, 1995); strengthening ties to the community (Swinehart, 1992); strengthening opportunities for meaningful civic engagement (Safrit, Scheer, & King, 2001); and strengthening empathy, engagement, empowerment, and personal enrichment (Safrit, 2002). Conspicuously absent in the literature are models or frameworks which involve youth as true partners in community-based volunteer programs.

As indicated by Safrit (2002), “many not-for-profit administrators and program leaders often experience frustration as they seek to design, implement, and manage community-based programs involving teens” (p.21). This article seeks to contribute literature to offset this concern. A guiding principle for volunteer program administrators is that activities are grounded on the process of engaging individuals, which serve as a catalyst for community change. The efficacy of any model of empowerment within an applied context is

dependent on maximizing the process of engagement (Safrit). Summarily, effective models for youth empowerment through volunteerism should consider three core elements: 1) the environmental context, 2) the level of interactive, and 3) identified knowledge-based outcomes for individual youth as well as the program group and the community. If such elements are meaningfully incorporated into volunteer programs, the likelihood of the youth's empowerment and future community service will be greatly enhanced.

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The One Minute Answer to Volunteer Management Questions: A Practical Approach

Mary Kay Hood. (2002). Danville, IN: Underwater Publishing. (87 pp.; Paperback, ISBN-0-9723448-0-2)

At the time of this book's publication, author Mary Kay Hood had been in the business of volunteer program management for 13 years. In addition to her professional duties, she admittedly strives to stay on the cutting edge of issues of the profession, as well as to share her skills, expertise, and experiential wisdom by teaching other volunteer program managers. *The One Minute Answer to Volunteer Management Questions: A Practical Approach*, is one such result. After receiving numerous suggestions from participants in her seminars to write, she accepted the challenge in 2002. This to-the-point manual reads quickly, in an almost conversational manner. It is composed of 10 brief chapters that each include practical information and helpful tips.

The book begins with a bit of Ms. Hood's philosophy about community involvement and what motivates persons to become volunteers. The basis for this information is stated to be Maslow's "Hierarchy of Human Needs", but focuses more directly on McClelland's (1985) three basic sources of human motivation: achievement, affiliation, and power. The author is refreshingly concise, sharing sound examples of where differently motivated individuals might best be used as volunteers.

Chapter 3's focus upon volunteer recruitment begins with a more thoughtful challenge presented by the author: before volunteer program managers recruit volunteers, they need to know why their agency needs volunteers and what roles they will fulfill within the agency. If the reader is with a not-for-profit organization that can only exist with volunteers (e.g., Girl/Boy Scouts, Big Brothers/Sisters, 4-H, etc.) then this chapter may pose a foreign concept of

an agency determining "why they want volunteers in the first place" (p. 10). However, for many volunteer-based agencies and organizations, the reality of decreasing resources and/or increasing potential clientele may be that reason. For example, as public dollars for libraries decrease, summer reading programs designed to instill in young people the passion for reading, could be maintained by recruiting and training volunteers to conduct the summer events. Regardless of where the reader is professionally involved, or in what type of agency, the question of why one engages volunteers is worthy of thorough consideration. The author emphasizes that volunteer positions must be meaningful, linking "volunteer assignments directly to the agency mission, . . . to assisting staff, . . . and/or to wishes and dreams of the agency" (p. 13).

Following a segment on developing volunteer position descriptions, the author moves the discussion to targeted and non-targeted approaches to recruitment, and designing an effective recruitment message. She comments on contemporary issues in the profession (such as long-term, short-term, and required-term volunteers) and blends an operational understanding of McClelland's work of what could motivate each category of volunteers, and how they might be best used for various volunteer roles. This chapter includes a gentle encouragement to consider a wider array of potential volunteers, specifically inviting the reader to consider engaging volunteers with disabilities and from limited resources, and college students.

The chapter on interviewing is the longest chapter of the book, a direct reflection of the author's philosophy on

volunteer selection. For Ms. Hood, the purpose of interviewing is not to meet the volunteer prior to placing them in a position. Rather, this is the opportunity to implement a standardized process to reduce potential risks to the agency, volunteers, and clientele. "Interviewing is one of the ways to create opportunities for them (volunteer applicants) to say 'no' to your organization and for you (the volunteer program manager) to say 'no to them (the applicants)' " (p. 24). She shares methods of preparing for interviews as well as examples of effective open-ended questions that assist the interviewer and interviewee to get to "no". The chapter concludes with critical considerations (based upon her years of experience) to help the volunteer program manager determine the propriety of a volunteer applicant for a specific position.

Once the volunteer is selected and placed, the efforts of the volunteer program manager may then be directed to keeping the volunteer meaningfully (and happily) engaged in the service to the agency. This involves Supervision and Recognition, Chapters 5 and 6. Ms. Hood addresses supervision not just as treating volunteers appropriately, but also by discussing challenges that may arise in organizations in which paid staff and volunteers work in close proximity, perhaps with similar or complimentary responsibilities. In the chapter on recognition, she again includes the motivations of volunteers (McClelland) with the encouragement to customize recognition as much as possible, while considering formal and informal forms of recognition, and funding for recognition.

Between Interviewing and Supervision, I perceived a lack of emphasis on orienting and/or training the individual once they are selected for a volunteer position. However, the need for providing the volunteer with necessary information is briefly included in Chapter 7, "Forms,

Forms, Forms". Ms. Hood recommends standardizing the process as much as possible (e.g., application forms before the volunteer is selected; evaluation forms once the volunteer is involved; departmental forms such as policies, procedures, volunteer handbooks; orientation and job-specific forms; etc.)

Using her procedures to this point will at least reduce the risks that may be encountered, the focus of Chapter 8. Standardized processes will hopefully allow only the best applicants to be selected as volunteers. Efforts to reduce the liability of volunteers are reduced if her step-by-step methods are followed. Additionally, the purchase of supplemental insurance might be considered to provide some security for your organization and the volunteers.

The theme of the Chapter 9, *The Value of Networking*, is devoted to the professional development and betterment of the volunteer program manager. It includes helpful information on local networking opportunities that might be available as well as national resources. Leadership, Chapter 10, provides her final commentary in this book that if you are in this profession, then you are a leader, and she shares a variety of leadership points and action tips to enhance that leadership. The book concludes with several samples and templates that the reader can use once written permission has been granted. The forms provide solid information and are worth reviewing to enhance your current methods.

Colleagues new to the volunteer resource management/administration profession will find the information in *The One Minute Answer...* quite helpful. The book's format quickly guides the reader through a bit of philosophy, refers to the works of many renowned leaders in the profession, highlights contemporary issues, and provides useful tools. Similarly, those of us who have been in the profession for a

while can also benefit from the refreshing
review of Mary Kay Hood's personal

methods and philosophies for volunteer
management.

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Volunteering: Intentionally Developing a Sense of Mattering in Youth

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Abstract

Shape Up: Family Style is a nutritional and physical activity program for at-risk families in South Dakota. The Children, Youth, and Families at Risk program's success depends upon youth volunteers or Youth Action Teams (YATs). By learning and applying life skills through youth engagement opportunities such as Shape Up: Family Style, the YATs were able to be active contributors to their own individual and community's development. Thus, an intentional environment for at-risk families also became an intentional environment for positive youth engagement and a sense of mattering for the youth volunteers.

Key Words:

youth, volunteer, mattering, engagement, community development

Review of Related Literature/Conceptual Basis

Within communities across the country a growing movement exists to involve young people beyond participation in youth programs. Young people, generally teenagers, are being asked to help plan, implement, and evaluate youth programs so that they are more than just participants. Moreover, youth are being asked to serve on decision-making boards and community collaborative teams. This involvement of young people beyond participation is known as youth engagement (Scheve, Perkins, & Mincemoyer, 2006). By learning and applying life skills through youth engagement opportunities as well as the development of their communities and by

participating in solutions that address local issues, youth are able to be active contributors to their own development as well as their communities' (Curnan & Hughes, 2002; Irby, Ferber, Pittman, Tolman, & Yohalem, 2001; Perkins, Borden, Keith, Hoop-Rooney, & Villarruel, 2003, Scheve, et al., 2006).

Within the youth development field, the community youth development (CYD) framework promotes youth engagement opportunities as a viable avenue for healthy youth and community development. CYD incorporates the developmental assets of positive youth development (Benson, 1997; Lerner, 2004), while also emphasizing the use of youth-adult partnerships to create social change (Camino & Zeldin, 2002;

Jones & Perkins, 2006). Perkins and colleagues (2003) define community youth development as:

...purposely creating environments that provide constructive, affirmative, and encouraging relationships that are sustained over time with adults and peers, while concurrently providing an array of opportunities that enable youth to build their competencies and become engaged as partners in their own development as well as the development of their communities (Perkins et al., 2003, p.6).

Because youth volunteers have opportunities to problem-solve, make decisions, and work with others, participation in these engagement experiences enable youth to be involved in a discovery process about their skills, talents, and interests. Indeed, both resiliency research and youth development research have found that opportunities to contribute or to “matter” within one’s context are linked with successful outcomes in adolescents (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Villarruel, et al., 2003). A sense of mattering is created when a youth is efficacious, that is, a youth has an opportunity and feels competent to do things that make a real difference in his or her social world (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). By engaging in acts to help others, youth gain a sense of generosity and self worth, as well as an opportunity to overcome the egocentric thinking so prevalent in adolescence. Youth involved in making contributions are reframing their self perceptions as well as other adult perceptions of them from being a problem to be solved and a receiver of services to being a resource and provider of services (Bernard, 2004; Perkins & Borden, 2003).

Implications to the Profession

A case in point, the South Dakota’s

New Communities Project: *Shape Up: Family Style*. (SUFS) is a collaborative effort between the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service, McLaughlin School District, Standing Rock Indian Reservation, and the Brookings’ Community. This five-year project is supported by a grant from United States Department of Agriculture’s Children, Youth, and Families at Risk Initiative. The project’s purpose is to create an intentional environment with the help of community agencies and youth volunteers that supports families in the areas of nutrition and health. Families within the selected communities receive education about physical activity, nutrition, obesity, and diabetes within a formalized framework and the youth volunteers receive a sense of belonging and competence. SUFS addresses the physical and emotional needs of both early childhood and school-age children and their parents by educating the whole family in the areas of nutrition and physical activity. The targeted audience for the SUFS program is families with children between the ages of 4 and 14, who have potential health risks associated with obesity and diabetes, or whose family meets the income requirements set forth by the 2004 United States Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines.

As indicated in goal three, (see Table 1), youth volunteers or Youth Action Teams (YATs) are a mainstay of the program. YATs are composed of youth volunteers between the ages of 14-18. Teens were recruited through the school guidance counselors, who recommended students with the potential for leadership but youth who required some guidance. The success of the Youth Action Teams was dependent on three very important steps. First, the project site director met with the youth and his/her parent(s) about the youth being a potential YAT member. Having parent buy-in was

integral to the success of the YATs because parents were responsible for transportation to and from the program as well as encouraging their child to follow through with the commitment they agreed to complete. Furthermore, at these family meetings, goals for the YAT members were explained and agreed upon; the goals were threefold (see Table 1). The second step in the success of the YAT team was having each goal be modeled for the young volunteers. The goals included that YAT member would be responsible for promoting and modeling healthy lifestyles to younger members of the community. Each YAT member received hands-on training and mentoring by the SUFS staff and young college students majoring in the areas of health promotion and/or elementary education. Because of their relative closeness in age, these college-student mentors were able to connect with the YATS in a way that the adults were not able to. In addition, by relying on continuous mentoring relationship rather than relying upon a one-time training, SUFS increased the likelihood of sustained quality engagement of the youth given that one-time trainings generally do not have lasting effects. Consequently, by having role models, the YATs were able to become role models to the SUFS families; the teens were able to influence healthy lifestyle behaviors for the younger children, while reinforcing these same healthy lifestyle behaviors in themselves. Moreover, the YATs with the help of their mentors were able to help design and participated in physical activities during Family Fun Nights. These activities helped create a safe atmosphere for parents and children alike to explore different ways to meet their exercise needs. The activities also enabled the youth to feel as though they were important to the program and respected for their ideas, hence these activities represent the third step in the success of the

YAT teams. The YATs were not only asked to participate in the program but they were given opportunities that created a sense of mattering.

Figure 1
Goals of the Shape Up: Family Style program.

1. Nutrition education will be provided to both parents and children by having Family Nutrition Seminars, sending out newsletters to participants, and putting together a nutrition website for participants to access.
2. Opportunities for children and families to participate in regular physical activity will be available during Family Rec Days.
3. Youth Action Teams (youth volunteers) will be recruited and trained to participate in the program and give the program continuity. YAT members will work with families to help model and promote proper nutrition and physical activities.

Each YAT member was expected to provide leadership at each SUFS Nutritional Nights. For example, the YAT members helped the at-risk families by preparing healthy meals and modeling food safety. Although the focus of the events was for families to learn about nutrition, Family Nutrition nights also afforded YATs the opportunity to gain a sense of mastery (in terms of cooking) and have a sense of mattering within their own community. This point was especially important to the YAT members of the McLaughlin School District (majority Native American youth) and the Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Being a YAT member not only gave Native American

youth the ability to become leaders within their culture, but to also be able to extend that leadership with youth who were not part of the reservation. Thus, the Native American YAT members were able to feel competent on and off the reservation, something that is often a challenge. Moreover, each YAT member was to be an integral part of a national conference by helping host and present at workshops at the national Children, Youth, and Family at Risk conference.

As part of their role, teens provide approximately 100 hours to the project each year. The project has had YAT members who have volunteered consistently for over four years. The long-term engagement of youth in this project is a strong indication of its relevance to youth as longevity in youth development programs has been linked to better outcomes (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). In order to learn why the YATs were willing to volunteer over a long period of time, the principle investigators of the program requested the YATs to write a focus paper on why they volunteered (and continued over a period of years) and discuss independently with an investigator on the importance of volunteering. While YAT members receive incentives (e.g., MP3 players, digital cameras, and gift cards) for actively participating, the YAT members have indicated that the creating and defining of personal convictions about the importance of health and nutrition has been an ongoing benefit of volunteering in the program. Moreover, the teens report that the new relationships they formed with the participants has benefited them outside of the project by helping them to interact appropriately with younger children, and to work with diverse populations. They saw improving their social-emotional intelligence as a critical competency for their future endeavors. The opportunity to travel and present at national conferences

have also been important reasons for them to consistently volunteer. The YAT members reported enjoying the opportunity to form positive relationships with adults within the South Dakota State University system. Finally, the YATs indicated that their parents encouraged them to participate in the project to help with the development of leadership abilities and self-confidence.

In conclusion, the community youth development (CYD) framework views youth as active participants that can and should contribute to families, schools, organizations, and communities. Youth should not be thought of as future leaders, but rather as leaders of today who deserve a voice in the decisions that affect their lives and their communities (Perkins, et al., 2003). Such opportunities to make a difference in one's social environment are a critical feature of a positive developmental setting according to Eccles and Gootman (2002). In their book sponsored by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, Eccles and Gootman provide strong evidence of the importance of experiences that provide youth with a sense of "mattering" (p. 103). For example, a youth's participation in family activities, school extracurricular activities, youth programs, and in other group activities provides a thread of connectedness that addresses a youth's need for belonging and recognition. Indeed, *Shape Up: Family Style* was originally created to help struggling families within the community. In reality, by incorporating parental buy-in, having on-going mentoring throughout the program by young college students, and creating an atmosphere of leadership for the YATs, it also became an intentional environment for youth to become change agents for their community and society.

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**Teenagers as Volunteer Cross-Age Teachers in Out-of-School Programs:
Introducing Job Readiness Skills to Middle School Youth**

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Abstract

Teenage volunteers are often underutilized in the delivery of youth development programs. Organizations facing limited staffing and adult volunteers can expand their outreach to children and youth in after-school and summer programs by recruiting, training, and supporting teenage volunteers as cross-age teachers in these settings. The teens as volunteer teachers model of program delivery can provide a powerful service oriented, community-based learning experience for teenagers while benefiting those they teach. The authors discuss the New Jersey Teens Teaching Middle School Youth Workforce Preparation Skills Program in which 89 teenage volunteers and 95 collaborating after-school staff delivered an average of 20 hours of job readiness programming to 767 youth enrolled at 19 sites. Key elements of such programming are highlighted.

Keywords:

after-school, cross-age teaching, teenagers, volunteers

Introduction

Youth development organizations can increase their volunteer base and expand their program delivery capacity by engaging teenagers as cross-age teachers in after-school and summer programs. While peer education or peer tutoring are often defined to include cross-age teaching (Kalkowski, 1995), these authors follow the approach of Murdock, Lee, and Paterson (2003), in which cross-age teaching is considered a process where teenagers are thoroughly trained and empowered with significant responsibility to teach groups of younger children a particular curriculum for a duration long enough to support the development of the teens and have an effect on the program recipients.

Benard (1990) outlined several rationales for what she terms peer resource programming, which includes a wide variety of peer education or cross-age teaching. These rationales include the role of peer relationships in social development, the value of giving youth service opportunities, and for the peer teachers, the development of collaborative and conflict resolution skills, improved respect for diversity, increases in academic achievement, and a reduction in drug and alcohol abuse. Murdock, Lee, and Paterson acknowledged these possible outcomes of cross-age teaching, but chose to focus on the role that it can have in supporting the adolescent development of the teenage teachers. In particular, they discussed its potential in affecting five challenges of teenagers: 1) the development of abstract thinking, 2) identity formation, 3) autonomy, 4) achievement, and 5) transition to adulthood.

As noted by Ponzio and Peterson (1999), with the recent increase in the number of after-school providers serving the growing need for after-school and summer programming, there is greater opportunity to utilize cross-age teaching models outside of

the traditional classroom setting. This is especially true since there has been a trend for these providers to address the academic, social, and developmental needs of the children they serve, instead of merely providing supervised care.

Recently, several youth development practitioners (Braverman et al., 1994; Hammond-Diedrich & Walsh, 2006; Kims, 1999; Ponzio & Peterson, 1999; Smith, 2007; Walker, 2006) have reported success with out-of-school time teenagers as cross-age teachers. These programs represent a diversity of curricular areas including science, computer technology, drug and alcohol prevention, violence prevention, and leadership development. Most noted the benefits of having someone closer in age to the program recipients as teachers, and all reported some positive outcomes for the teenage teachers, including improvements in leadership, teaching, problem solving, conflict resolution, and public speaking skills. Some also noted an increase in self-esteem among the teenage teachers and the value of the cross-age teaching responsibilities in developing identify and autonomy. Several also noted the benefit to the younger children, including their relationship with positive teenage mentors and the positive outcomes of their program's particular curriculum.

For the New Jersey Teens Teaching Middle School Youth Workforce Preparation Skills Program highlighted in this article, the four authors (all 4-H youth development professionals) recruited and trained teenage volunteers to work with children and youth in collaborating after-school and summer day camp programs. The perceived benefits of this type of cross-age program delivery included: 1) leadership, citizenship, and life skill development for the teenage volunteers; 2) positive teenage role models for younger youth receiving the program; 3) greater

outreach than what is possible with just organizational staff or adult volunteers; 4) greater program sustainability; 5) strengthened community collaborations; and 6) more effective use of the unique resources and expertise of the youth development organization and the collaborating after-school provider. For this cross-age teaching program, 4-H professionals provided resource development, curriculum and training, and program coordination and evaluation. The collaborating after-school program staff provided resource development, youth and teenagers, facilities and transportation, and site-based staff to serve as mentors to the teenage volunteers.

Keys of Successfully Engaging Teenagers as Cross-Age Teachers

Lee and Murdock (2001) outlined ten essential elements to successful teenagers as cross-age teachers programs: 1) dedicated adults who support teens; 2) active teen recruitment; 3) strong curriculum; 4) initial training; 5) ongoing training and support; 6) attention to details; 7) recognition and rewards; 8) team building; 9) setting teens up for success; and 10) feedback and evaluation. Based on their experience, the directors of the New Jersey Teens Teaching Middle School Youth Workforce Preparation Skills Program determined the following as key to the success of their teens as volunteer teachers programs: a positive, productive relationship with collaborating after-school programs, teenager involvement in the design of the program, high quality training of teenagers and after-school or summer camp staff (initial and on-going – including a focus on team building and practice teaching), equipping each site with curriculum resource kits (setting teenagers up for success), and incentives for teenagers (a

stipend for each 20-hour program completed and certificates).

Program Objectives and Overview

As a program utilizing teenagers as volunteer teachers, the New Jersey Teens Teaching Middle School Youth Workforce Preparation Skills Program included the following objectives:

1. Teens will increase their leadership, citizenship, and life skills.
2. Middle school youth will increase their knowledge of workforce preparation skills.
3. Teens will increase their skills and knowledge of educational techniques for working with middle school youth.
4. Adult mentors (collaborating after-school and summer camp staff) will increase their skills and knowledge of educational techniques for working with teens and middle school youth.

The program's design was based on the principles outlined in the 4-H Afterschool Resource Guide, *Teens as Volunteer Leaders: Recruiting and Training Teens to Work with Younger Youth in After-School Programs* (Junge, 2005). A team of four 4-H youth development professionals collaborated to recruit and train 89 teenage volunteers and 95 collaborating after-school and summer camp professional staff in a job readiness curriculum. As a result, teams of teenagers and staff at four separate sites (two urban centers, Trenton and Atlantic City; a suburban high school, Sayreville; and the Picatinny Arsenal Teen Center) provided an average of 20 hours of programming to 767 middle school-aged youth enrolled at 19 after-school sites and summer day camps during the spring and summer of 2006. Of the teen teachers and middle school youth, approximately 70%

were African American, 14% Latino, 10% multi-racial, 5% white non-Hispanic, and 1% Asian.

Program Curriculum and Training

A core group of teenagers helped design the 20-hour job readiness curriculum after attending a national grantee training. The program included the following 10 lessons: Lesson #1: Learning More About Myself – Personal Awareness Activities (Lowry & Echols, 2000); Lessons 2 and 3: Learning How to Work with Others – Team Building Activities (Tavares, 2006); Lessons 4 and 5: Learning Important Life Skills – Communication and Goal Setting Activities (University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, 2000); Lessons 6 and 7: Job/Career Exploration – Personal Inventory, Types of Jobs/Careers (University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System); Lessons 8 and 9: Job/Career Attainment – Job Search, Application, and Mock Interview Activities (University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System); and, Lesson 10: Expectations on the Job – Character Education Activities (Nish, 1996).

The state training team recognized the importance of high quality initial and on-going training and support for the teenage volunteers and their adult mentors (Junge, 2005; Lee, Murdock & Paterson, 1996; Lee & Murdock, 2001; Murdock, Lee & Paterson, 2000). The training team (four teenagers, four 4-H youth development professionals, and a collaborating after-school site director) trained 25 teenage volunteers and nine collaborating after-school staff from the four participating counties at a two-day overnight training retreat. The 15-hour training included a program overview; two hours of team building activities; eight hours of activities from the identified curricula; four hours of instruction on teaching methods, lesson

preparation, and practice teaching by the teenage volunteers; and time to develop action plans for implementing the project in their home communities.

All participants believed the team building activities at the beginning of the training proved essential in introducing program directors, teenage volunteers, and adult mentors to one another and in “breaking the ice” or getting everyone comfortable working with one another and recognizing the skills and capabilities of each individual. The practice teaching session at the end of the training allowed the youth to further familiarize themselves with the curriculum’s activities and experience the challenges of organizing and presenting the lessons. As teams of teenagers presented their assigned activity in order of the curriculum outline, it also served as a review of the material that was presented the prior day.

After the initial kick-off training, teams of teenagers and adult mentors returned to their home counties where they recruited and trained additional teenagers and collaborating staff (a total of 33 hours of formal training). To help facilitate success, curricula and resource kits were provided to each of the 19 participating after-school and summer day camp sites.

Evaluation Process and Impact

A retrospective pre-post Teen Leadership Survey with 15 items using a four-point scale (0 = no ability, 1 = some ability, 2 = good ability, 3 = excellent ability) was used to measure changes in self-perceptions of the participating teen teachers’ leadership skills. Following the completion of their training and teaching commitment, teens self reported their organizational, time management, leadership, teamwork, speaking, writing, decision-making, planning, and teaching skills (objective #1). Twenty-nine of the 38

teenagers from the Sam Naples Community Center's summer teen camp who taught 153 youth at four day camps throughout Trenton during the summer of 2006 completed the Teen Leadership Survey. Their mean teen leadership score increased from 2.10 to 2.55. Six of the teenagers who completed 20 hours of teaching during the spring of 2006 session at the Hedgepeth-Williams Community Center also reported a increase in their teen leadership score, 1.68 to 2.82.

The middle school-aged youth participants receiving the job readiness programming from the teenagers completed a retrospective Workforce Skills Survey. The youth responded to 18 items using a three-point scale (1 = not at all, 2 = somewhat, 3 = to a great extent). Skills surveyed included decision-making, communication, responsibility, goal setting, teamwork, job exploration, and job attainment skills (objective #2). The Workforce Skills Survey was completed by a convenience sample of 530 of the 767 total youth at the 19 sites in attendance on the final day of the program. The overall workforce skills score significantly increased in each group (Table 1).

Because of their involvement in the program, three of the teenage volunteers who completed their teaching hours during

the spring session were hired by the City of Trenton as junior staff for their summer day camp. Two of the participating teenagers co-presented the program at the 2006 Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) Conference.

Summary and Implications

The authors wish to note that evaluation findings for this program may not be inferred to any larger group other than the convenience sample of participants involved in the actual program. However, the following discussion could be used as a point of exploration and dialogue regarding similar programs involving teenagers as cross-age teachers in out-of-school settings.

Teenagers are often underutilized in the delivery of youth development programs. Community-based youth serving organizations often struggle to recruit traditional adult volunteers and to keep teenagers engaged in their youth programs. Using teenagers as cross-age teachers presents opportunities for youth development professionals to expand their volunteer base and reach a greater number of children and youth while successfully engaging teenagers in authentic, community-based service activity.

Table 1

Total Workforce Skills Pre- and Post-test Mean scores for Program Participants Taught by Teen Teachers at Four Separate Sites.

Location/ Collaborator	Youth Reached	Youth Surveyed	Pre Mean	Post Mean
Trenton (spring): after-school sites	420	258	2.08	2.74
Trenton (summer): summer camps	153	127	2.09	2.53
Atlantic City: after-school sites	101	54	1.74	2.58
Picatinny Arsenal Teen Center	71	69	2.24	2.40
Sayreville Middle School	22	22	2.19	2.50

In the New Jersey Teens Teaching Middle School Youth Workforce Preparation Skills Program, teenagers significantly improved their organizational, time management, leadership, teamwork, speaking, writing, decision-making, planning, and teaching skills while effectively delivering 20-hour job readiness programs to 767 youth enrolled in 19 out-of-school programs. The lead author is currently using a similar cross-age teaching program delivery method to teach lessons on the importance of healthy eating habits and physical activity to children and youth at after-school and summer camp programs. Twenty teenage volunteers were recruited and trained as Food and Fitness Ambassadors using the Get Moving – Get Healthy with New Jersey 4-H curriculum in the spring of 2007. Since, they have planned and delivered Get Moving – Get Healthy events for over 300 youth at programs sponsored by Boys and Girls Club, a charter school, and the city’s parks and recreation department. As with the job readiness program, dedicated program directors and adult mentors; extensive initial and on-going training and support; a structured curriculum with clear lesson plans and engaging activities; and resource kits for the teenage volunteers and collaborating staff have proved essential to the success of the program.

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Involving Teens as Volunteers

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Abstract

The Independent Sector found 61 percent of youth (ages 12 to 17) volunteered an average of 3.2 hours per week. Teens volunteered most often through religious organizations, youth development organizations, and schools/educational groups. Few of these teens become volunteers on their own initiative. Instead they are asked by others. A critical factor to successful youth programs is the response of young people to the adults who work with them. It is believed that effective youth leadership programs involve youth in significant relationships with mentors, positive role models, and other nurturing adults. In order to carry out their missions, groups and organizations must properly prepare both the adult volunteers/staff and the teens before and during the volunteer experience.

[Editor-generated] Keywords:

teens, volunteers, adult relationships, mentors, role models, youth-adult partnerships

Relax for a moment. Close your eyes. Picture a recent (or potential) experience with a teenager. Now develop a slogan that advertises what you believe about teens. Your slogan could include a jingle or perhaps you would prefer to develop a thirty experiences. Would "volunteer" be among them?

The current and potential value of teens as volunteers in our community groups and organizations should be encouraged.

Many of us have yet to recognize the potential value of teens as volunteers.

Current Status of Teen Volunteering

The Independent Sector found 61 percent of youth (ages 12 to 17) volunteered an average of 3.2 hours per week (Knauff, 1992). Teens volunteered most often through religious organizations, youth development organizations, and schools/educational groups. Specific

volunteer activities in which teens participated included: babysitting; youth group leader or aide; clean-up or janitorial work; arts volunteer; assisting the elderly, handicapped or homebound; aide or assistant to paid employees; choir member or director; Sunday school or Bible teacher.

Few teens became volunteers on their own initiative. Often they were asked by others to give their time. Teens most commonly learned about volunteer opportunities through participation in an organization or group, recruitment by a family member or friend already involved in the activity, or if they directly benefited from the activity. Knauff concluded that most active teen volunteers have all of the following characteristics: (a) a positive early childhood experience related to volunteering; (b) an altruistic value system; and, (c) a high activity level.

Adult-Teen Relations

A factor critical to successful youth program is the response of young people to the adults who work with them (Carnegie Corporation, 1992). Cox and Woyach (1992) believe effective youth leadership programs involve youth in significant relationships with mentors, where they interact with positive role models and other nurturing adults. Involving youth in volunteer roles with adults creates unique situations and opportunities for both. Organizations must be sensitive to, and understanding of, the relationship between youth and adult volunteers, and be ready to prepare their organizations for the involvement of youth volunteers.

An Ohio study of 4-H teens (youth volunteers) and adult volunteers identified barriers and challenges that can interfere in effective relationships between youth and adults (King, Kleon, and Wingerter, 1993). The study also identified qualities and behaviors that adults and teens feel enhance effective adult-teen relationships.

Teens reported that the adults who were most effective possessed the following qualities and behaviors: good

communication skills, a willingness to listen, a sense of humor, flexibility, and an ability to keep an open mind.

Teens identified the following problems and challenges working with adult volunteers: not being allowed to do enough (for example, practice skills or do meaningful tasks or work), not being listened to, and not being understood (King, Kleon, and Wingerter, 1993).

Adults felt that the qualities and behaviors teens needed to be effective in working with them included: good communication skills, self-confidence, self motivation, maturity, personability, respectfulness, and energy.

These same adults identified the problems and challenges working with teens: teen volunteers lack a sense of responsibility and commitment, are too busy, and parental support and/or involvement is absent. Adults also felt they were sometimes too busy to commit enough time to teen volunteers. (King, Kleon, and Wingerter, 1993).

The situations, the tasks to be done, and the personalities of those involved affect the ways adults and teens work together. Cox and Woyach (1992) believe that most adult-teen relationships fall someplace along the following continuum: adult control, consultations with teens, adult-teen partnerships, delegation of power to teens, teen control.

Adult control is characterized by the adult retaining all control and power. All of the planning and structuring of the programs or experiences is done by the adults.

Consultation allows the teens to be consulted in planning and implementation, but the adults retain veto power and expect agreement.

Partnership allows the teens some degree of power and responsibility, yet the adults and teens mutually agree on specific functions.

Delegation involves negotiation between the teens and adults with the teens assuming authority over certain components of the program or experience.

Teen control allows for the teens to do the planning and implementation with the adults serving in an advisory capacity.

There is no preferred relationship for adults working with teens. Adults must consider the situation, the purposes of the program, and the strengths and weaknesses of the adults and teens before deciding where the relationship should be on the continuum (Cox and Woyach, 1992).

Teen Characteristics

Teenagers possess unique characteristics which develop from day-to-day and year-to-year. The transition from childhood to adulthood occurs gradually. Research has shown that adolescence can be divided into three developmental stages; early adolescence (age 11 to 13), middle adolescence (age 14 to 16), and late adolescence (age 17 to 19). Each of these stages is marked by distinct developmental characteristics. We will limit our discussion to middle and late adolescence since we most commonly research and work with these age groups.

Middle adolescents are self-oriented and searching for independence and personal identity. They take pride in responsibility and the respect they receive from others, but their goals are based on personal needs and priorities. They wish to be recognized as unique individuals, and have difficulty understanding compromise (Karns and Myers-Walls, no date).

Karns and Myers-Walls also identify unique characteristics for late adolescents who feel they have reached full maturity and expect to be treated as adults. Rituals, uniforms, and traditions have lost much of their appeal, and plans for the future influence the activities in which they participate.

Teens as Volunteers

Mercer and Lynch (1992) state, "youth lack the experience of how to work or 'play the game' of fitting into the adult world." We must recognize that teens experience rapid physical, emotional, and

intellectual changes, and many will come to us as "unfinished" products. It is our opportunity and obligation to provide volunteer experiences that: (1) allow volunteer administrators or supervisory staff to take the time to help teens understand organizational policies and procedures, and the importance of the job to be completed; (2) match their skills, abilities, and interests; and, (3) are well planned and allow for additional responsibilities to be added.

Young people are willing and ready to share their time and talents through local community involvement. Steinbach (1992) suggested some guidelines to keep in mind when working with youth as volunteers. They include: (1) striving for ease of participation by reviewing the location of volunteer opportunity(ies), transportation required, and time of day; (2) working at the board level to give youth full status and board membership (other adults in your organizations and board members need to be prepared to treat youth as equals); and, (3) fostering teens' imagination by listening to them, and encouraging them to try (or try out) their ideas. In addition, both long- and short- term teen volunteer assignments/experiences should be encouraged and developed. Describing volunteer opportunities as job internships or training programs will help to recruit teens who are exploring future career paths.

Conclusion

Teens are potential resources available to many groups and organizations. They are willing to take leadership through volunteerism to improve the quality of life in their communities. However, we must recognize that we must allow teens to be "partners" in carrying out the mission of the group or organization. Specific efforts must be made to prepare adults for the teen volunteering experience as well as to prepare teens to volunteer in an adult volunteer environment.

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At the time of the original publication all three authors were assistant professors with the Ohio State University Extension working with volunteer programs in 4-H Youth Development. Between them they have over 35 years of experience working with adult and youth volunteers in non-formal educational settings. Betty Wingerter and Scott Kleon were Extension agents working directly with youth through local teen groups. They conduct educational programs, teen camping experiences, and community service projects. They also specialize in building positive relationships with teens. Jeff King was State Leader for Ohio 4-H, administering statewide educational programs. All three have conducted research on developing positive relationships between adults and youth.

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An End to the "Me" Generation: Getting Students to Volunteer

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[Editor-generated] Abstract

The author discusses conceptual and structural barriers that may prevent students from volunteering in community service, including: student apathy, students' perceptions of volunteerism/service, rationalizations and excuses, program structure and mechanics, and the need for student leadership development.

[Editor-generated] Keywords:

students, volunteers, community service, apathy, excuses, leadership development

Introduction

How can you get today's young people involved in community service? Aren't they all apathetic, too busy or too career-minded to think about things like service?

It is true that if you look at a student body as a whole it may seem uninvolved and uninterested in such issues as illiteracy, homelessness, hunger, or the environment. But get people alone or in small groups and you find that they are interested, concerned, worried and wondering what they can do to help, do something that will make a difference.

The following is a collection of thoughts on how to get students to volunteer, to get students working in after-school programs, meal programs, shelters, hospitals, nursing homes, day care centers, elementary schools, or to act as a tutor, a big brother or a big sister, a coach, or an instructor. Many of the observations presented in this article come from workshops and visits to campuses around the country.

If there is one essential thing to remember when recruiting, it is that you

care about the young people with whom you are working. Care enough to listen, to respect their fears, to understand their situations, and to place them in experiences where they can be both successful and challenged.

Too often we scold students for not getting involved. If you understand the economic, social and political pressures and fears students face, you will understand that to scold them will not result in participation but instead will make them run away even farther.

Recruiting is not just a matter of having a couple of gimmicks that draw attention to you and your volunteer program, nor does good recruiting rest in slick advertisements or fancy endorsements. It occurs when you have all the pieces together. It occurs

- when you understand why people do not get involved;
- when you support and encourage students rather than scold them and make them feel guilty;

- when you, the students, and the society as a whole stop reading student inactivity as apathy and begin to understand the need to establish and maintain effective community service programs that will effectively tap and channel student energy and idealism;
- when you present service as something that is exciting and challenging, not boring and dull;
- when you demonstrate to the individual student the importance and the impact of his or her service;
- when each school develops and maintains a comprehensive broad-based community outreach program which supports an effective and efficient structure, effective leadership, and a powerful and exciting challenge.

The bad news is that there are no short cuts. The good news is that if you do these things, you will be successful.

Why Don't Students Get Involved?

In order to figure out how to get students involved we have to ask ourselves why young people do not get involved. Is it that they consciously choose not to get involved, or are there barriers which keep them from being active in the community? If we understand that, then we can begin to develop a recruitment strategy. Students tell us that they are not involved because they

- are not asked.
- do not know about the needs of a community.
- do not know about service opportunities
- are not connected affiliated with the community.
- are afraid of failure when working with people different from themselves.

- lack confidence in their skills and talents—they ask, "What can I do?"
- are overwhelmed by the complexity and size of the issues—they wonder
"What difference can I make? What's the point?"
- have a difficult time with transportation.
- think they have no time.
- have a need to work for a salary.
- do not see it as a "cool" thing to do.
- report that there is no program at their school or "If there is, I don't know about it.
- do not like the projects that the service program offers.

The prevailing myth about students is that they are apathetic. Yet the above responses have little or nothing to do with apathy; they tend to indicate mechanical or structural problems. Rather than needing to develop a philosophy and value system, we need to develop a structure. We need to develop and support a leadership and present an effective and exciting challenge to bring the existing student idealism to the surface.

Apathy: Breaking the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

The most important thing to establish for yourself, for others with whom you are working, for the general public, and for students themselves is that young people are not apathetic. O.K., maybe there are a few people out there who do not care about anything but themselves and could care less about their communities or anyone else but themselves. But they are a small minority, and they should not set the tone for the vast majority of the people who are

concerned but often anxious, confused, and at a loss as to what to do.

If organizers or volunteer coordinators are allowed to subscribe to the notion that students are apathetic, then there will always be excuses for programs not being able to attract many young people, students are blamed for not being interested because "everyone knows that young people are not interested these days in community service."

Getting a majority of a student population to perform some kind of service during the school term takes work. It means getting the challenge out there, putting fear and shyness aside and approaching people. It may mean doing some outrageous things to attract attention. It also means having a solid program which is well-run and efficient, one that develops and depends on student leadership, and one which generates a supportive community for the young volunteers. Students respond to these things.

The following is some ammunition for you the next time you hear people talking about apathetic students.

Apathy is the wrong word.

Vegetables are apathetic, people aren't. When we say someone is apathetic it usually means that we have not taken the time to look at the issues that he or she is dealing with and to figure out what is actually going on.

Apathy is an easy word.

Apathy is a convenient word for people to use when talking about students. It takes the responsibility off the organizer, the program or the school and places blame on the students. Students will respond to a good community service program.

Apathy is a bad word.

The biggest problem with using the term "apathetic" is that it is a very disempowering word. If people are told they are apathetic, they will act that way and thus a self-fulfilling prophecy is born. Stereotypes are very damaging and have a multiplier effect; they are very difficult to change.

Idealism is a condition of youth, the nature of youth. If idealism among young people is not apparent these days, it is because we are not drawing it out, encouraging it, and supporting it. Too often we are failing to capture the imagination of young people and connect it with community service.

This is not a problem of a lack of values or idealism. A better description of what we are faced with is "structural apathy," a situation in which the weakness of the leadership, structure, and challenge in a program leans on student apathy as a scapegoat.

How Do We Perceive and Present Service?

In order to effectively recruit students to volunteer, we have to look at what type of image and presence service has at a school. Think about how schools and colleges present the challenge of service to students today.

Question: What are students' attitudes about service?

Students respond: Community service is ...

- boring.
- something you do when you can't do anything else.
- something you do when you feel guilty.
- what you do when you get in trouble.
- something for good students.
- something that is always in the back of your mind.
- nice but I have other interests.

Community Service is exciting and challenging

There is nothing boring about community service. There is nothing boring about feeding hungry people, comforting those who are sick, or teaching a young (or old) person to read his or her first book.

Community Service is for everyone

We often present service as if only certain people should do it and when a few get involved that means there is an adequate service program on campus. Sometimes this is due both to intentional and unintentional design. Some schools will not allow students to participate unless they are honor students. Others offer service for everyone but then create placement opportunities only for those who are interested in more academic type of activities.

Too often we say "Oh, those people would never help out." People often do not even bother asking the athletes, or the computer whizzes, or the artists. People have stereotypes about them and often think that they would never want to get involved. They need to be asked and asked in such a way that they feel welcome and needed.

Community Service offers special opportunities for everyone

There are those who say service is only for those who cannot do anything else. This is not true. You can, however, make a great meal out of leftovers. So, too, can you build a great community service program out of those who have tried for a team, a play or an organization and not made it. One recruiting tactic is to go to all the organizations at a school or a college that makes cuts and get the cut list. Contact the people who have heard the disappointing news. Console them and offer them an opportunity to do something with the interests, talents and time that they have. Ask a cut soccer player to coach, a cast-off director to direct a community

play, a rejected actor to give acting classes or to act in a children's theater production, or an abandoned journalist to help start a junior high newspaper.

Dealing with the Excuses

People are frequently programmed so that when you ask them to do something, they automatically respond with reasons why they cannot. This often is a defense mechanism, a way to protect oneself from all the people asking one to do this or give that. While some of the excuses are valid and should be respected, more often people use them without much thought.

Students always have excuses. Many feel they are too busy. While students do have busy schedules, few students have their weekly calendars completely filled.

It is important to hear students out and respond positively yet firmly. We often times give too much validity to an excuse.

Excuse #1: I have no talents.

Students seriously wonder what it is they can do to help address community issues. If they respond, "I can't do anything," ask them: "What do you put on a job or college application? Certainly, you don't insist that you have no talents."

The listening ear will quickly find out what the student has done or does well. You will find that people can play the guitar or the piano, or were soccer players or camp counselors, know origami or enjoy being around older people. All these talents can be effectively used in the community and will give students outlets to express their skills and talents. They will feel fulfilled and affirmed.

Response by the recruiter:

The job of the recruiter is to draw out the skills of a young person, show how he or she can be useful in a service context and then work with that person on de-

veloping a placement where the skill and the need can be matched.

Excuse #2: I have no time.

Students' favorite excuse is that they do not have any time. All they have to do is produce a long reading list or a tuition bill they must finance by working long hours to show you how much responsibility they have.

People are afraid that if they get involved in any kind of community work, it is going to take up all their time. Perhaps they get this notion from some of the super-volunteers who are always involved in community service and have little time for anything else. Just because these people may have chosen to completely commit to volunteerism doesn't mean that everyone who volunteers has to be that way.

Response by the recruiter:

When students tell you they have no time, ask them to tell you what their week was like. Inevitably there are gaps in a person's schedule. People often think they are busier than they really are. By encouraging them to go through their schedule, you can usually get them to see that they have some free time during the week.

Show students that one or two hours a week can be a meaningful contribution to an agency or a particular person. It is also important to show students that they can get involved in service and still be able to do their homework, have friends, and feel a part of activities that are going on at school. Service programs must provide opportunities for all kinds of students and all types of time commitment. While most everyone can serve, not everyone has the same amount of time.

Excuse #3: I am busy in the afternoons.

Often people think that the only time they can serve is in the afternoon after classes are out. That leaves students with the hours between 2:00 and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Students say that they cannot get involved because they are busy at those times.

Response by the recruiter:

What is wrong with mornings, evenings, or how about the weekend? Many students, particularly upperclass high school and college students, do not have classes on a particular morning during the week and some do not have any classes on a given day. Yet many do not see these occasions as times when students can volunteer. Part of the blame belongs to the programs that do not offer placements at all times throughout the week. There is a need for people to provide services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Create opportunities for students to get involved at any time. Do not let them get away with the excuse that they cannot help because it does not fit into their schedule.

If we want young people to serve, we must create space for them to get involved. While some students have free time, many are programmed every minute of the day. Therefore it is important to create opportunities where they can volunteer without having to stop doing their homework, taking the courses they want, or being involved in other school activities. This can be accomplished by having service tied in to course work; creating summer opportunities; getting the clubs, organizations or teams of which they are already a part (student government, chess club, baseball team, etc.) to do some kind of service program.

Athletes are particularly prone to this excuse or problem. Athletics is greatly valued at both the high school and college level. Because athletes are very visible

people and have a high leadership potential, it is all the more important to try to get them to volunteer. Their participation validates service, makes it "cool" to do, and encourages other students to get involved. Athletes should not have to make the choice between athletics and service

The Challenge of Service

There are those who would lead students to believe that service is something that is boring or something done because it is required. Some go so far as to suggest that it is not enjoyable. This is a grave misconception. There is a joy that comes with service. More often than not this joy is fun-filled. For example, some may consider it fun having a dozen kids hanging all over them, looking up to them, and looking forward to their return.

But service work is not always fun. Oftentimes students find themselves in desperate situations where there is violence, abuse, and little hope. It is important to note that there is a certain joy that comes even when serving in these situations. It is the joy that goes with helping out just a little, doing what one can and being there. In these cases one's service is not going to solve the situation but may bring temporary relief, support, encouragement, and hope.

Some people are afraid that students will volunteer for the wrong reasons. Actually we spend too much time worrying whether someone is doing something for the right reasons. Who are we to judge? People get interested for all kinds of reasons, some more altruistic than others. Young people initially get involved for any number of reasons including the desire:

- to learn about a particular issue,
- to do something worthwhile,
- to escape boredom,
- to make someone happy,
- to get a break from classes,

- to get their pictures in the paper,
- to make a difference,
- to put something on their college application resumes,
- to develop job skills.

They want to get involved:

- because of their religious faith,
- because of their family backgrounds,
- because they want to serve their country,
- to be a part of things,
- to meet people,
- to feel they are valuable,
- to be a part of a community.

What attracts people to volunteer initially is not always the reason they stay with it. Thus if someone signs up to volunteer in a soup kitchen because it will look good on an application, the chances are that person will enjoy him herself, get to meet some of the people, and begin to get interested and actively involved in the issue of homelessness.

Believe in the value of what we do and have faith that people who first got involved for a possibly questionable motive will remain involved for more valid reasons. Those who do it just for their resume will not last long.

In presenting the challenge of service, people are often too afraid of taking the high ground. They think it will be a turnoff for students to hear that service is something important or that there is value in service both to themselves and to others. It is O.K. to underscore the fact that there are many benefits to and rewards for doing service, including job experience, or resume building.

But there is a more powerful message in all this—that young people can

make a difference, that they are a vital part of our society, and that their skills are needed now not only to address human needs but to provide an example and leadership for the rest of society. That is the most powerful message we can present and share, and it is one that everyone can understand regardless of race, religion, or culture.

Some people feel badly if there is self-interest involved when one is in a serving capacity. Certainly there is self-interest in service. Joy, fun, doing something worthwhile, feeling important, giving of yourself, finishing a task, meeting good people, feeling a part of something other than your school work, learning a skill, learning about different individuals (and finding out they are not all that different), learning about an issue and what can be done about it, making friends—all these are in one's best self-interest. Do not worry so much about self-interest. If there were no self-interest, nothing personally at stake, then not many people would stay involved.

Complementary needs: creating a win-win situation

There is very much a sense of complementary needs when you are talking about students and the local community. Students have a need to go beyond the isolation and alienation they often feel while they are in school. The community has needs involving time, creativity, and human energy. These are resources and skills that young people have to offer. The match can be solid for both.

Meeting students' needs

When you're recruiting, you have to know your audience, you have to know what students want. It is not enough to know that community service is a good

thing and it is something that we all should do.

People have a limited amount of time and have many ways to spend it (not necessarily good ones). If we want to get students excited and commit themselves to service, then we have to meet some of their needs in turn.

An organizer of a community service program has a responsibility to make certain that the community is well served by volunteer efforts. An organizer also has the responsibility to meet the needs of the volunteer. When both needs are met, you will have a strong and healthy program.

Any community service program worth its salt should be able to fill both needs. Too often we find our community service programs are based on internships whereby students go off one by one to different community agencies. In most cases the students never get together. They may never know who else is involved. They may not share, get a chance to work together, or meet the needs listed above. So what will happen? They will continue to do their internships but then they may get involved in something other than service to fulfill their needs as young people. A successful, comprehensive service program which establishes and maintains a community of students could fulfill those needs.

Even though community service usually means that students must go off campus, it can be thought of as a school or campus activity. It should be seen as something done by a member of a student body, not as something done out-side school experience. Make it so re-warding that if students are not involved, they are missing out on something in their school experience.

Mechanics/Structure and How it Affects Recruiting

Throughout education we place a high value on excellence. We demand it on the football field. We demand it in the English department. But when it comes to community service and student volunteer programs, we have an attitude of "come what may," "some years it's up, other years it's down," and "we can't push it, it has to come from the students."

We can and must demand excellence in our community service programs. Community service does not just happen. Imagine the level of play of a football team if it did not have any coaches, any recruiting, or an athletic department to back it up. Imagine if the players had to fundraise so that they could arrange their own transportation. We need to present and push such analogies.

Community service often suffers from the "Something is better than the nothing" complex. Schools with a population of 1,500 students will have 30 students volunteering and think they have all the program they need. What about the other 1,470 students? What kind of opportunities and challenge are they being given?

The 75% Solution

There is a need to set a standard, a standard whereby everyone is challenged to get involved. An ambitious yet realistic challenge is to have over half the student body involved on a regular basis and another quarter involved occasionally throughout the term—thus the 75% solution.

It is not enough to set up shop in an office somewhere on campus, put a sign on the door, run a couple of ads, put up a couple of posters, fill up a file cabinet, and sit and wait for the people to come. If you are interested in recruiting you need to think not only about posters and ads but how your program is organized. There is a need to run

a complete, comprehensive program that is appealing, attractive, that taps into students interests, that aggressively seeks students much the same way a development office will go after alumni. Again and again and again, first with a letter, then with a phone call, then a visit and then a function to attend.

Poor organization impedes recruiting efforts

Community service suffers from an inferiority complex. How many times have you heard the phrase. "I am just a volunteer"? Volunteer organizations often suffer from this same sense of inferiority.

Often the problem in recruiting lies in how the program is organized. Some of the problems that arise because of poor management and organization include:

- students who sign up but are never contacted,
- information that never gets out,
- students' names are lost,
- the long time lag between when a student expresses interest and when a student gets placed,
- not being organized at the beginning of school, thus launching a recruitment campaign several weeks after school has started; by that time, students have already signed up for other activities when the pitch to get involved in service is made.

Community service programs should be well run. Every student should be contacted and every student who signs up should certainly be called and placed. Too often people get excited about doing community work but then, because the group is poorly organized and no calls come, they lose interest or figure they were not needed and go off to do some-thing else.

At one school in Hartford, CT, 200 students signed up at registration to get involved in the new community service

program. The organizers were all very hopeful. At the first meeting 125 people showed up, at the second 50, and by the third only 30. Only 25 students ended up volunteering that term. The leaders of the organization were discouraged and convinced that the students at their school really did not care about community service.

That was not the case at all. In reality the students were interested but often did not hear about the subsequent meetings or did not care for the meetings they attended. They were poorly run and placements were not made quickly enough to maintain the initial level of interest and excitement.

The fact is that the organizers did not know how to run a meeting. Not only that, but they relied too much on the meeting itself. If people do not show up for a meeting, it does not necessarily mean that they are not interested. They may need only a personal visit or a phone call. Reasons students did not show up were because of conflicts, they didn't hear about it, or they got tired of coming to meetings where nothing happened.

The need for a daily challenge

Too often the challenge of service is issued only once or twice a year. This is usually done in the form of an announcement, ads in the newspaper, the calling of an organizational meeting, or a fair where community people come and talk to students about getting involved. All these efforts are effective and necessary.

Recruiting, however, does not stop at the end of recruitment week or the end of an event such as a volunteer fair. There is a need to present a constant challenge to students to get involved.

- Every week in the school paper list new volunteer opportunities for students,

- highlight specific volunteers and service programs. Get clubs, dorms and other organizations to take on specific projects and have the coordinator from each group make recruitment pitches weekly.

- Develop a newsletter that can be posted in homerooms or in dorms listing volunteer opportunities.

- Get classroom or dorm reps to make a weekly pitch or specific request at regular meetings of the class or dorm.

- Ask teachers and professors to recruit students from their classes.

- Have community leaders participate in classroom discussions and school forums.

One college linked each dorm with a neighborhood in the surrounding city. Because most of the students lived in the dorms, it followed that every student was involved in one way or another. Students would not only see volunteer advertisements in the school paper, but they would hear stories at dinner about the kids with whom members of the dorm were working. By bringing community service so close to home it became visible, available, and personal. When a specific request came up, people could make a special appeal to their dorm at breakfast, lunch or dinner and usually there was someone or a group of people willing to help.

Student Leadership and Recruiting

Recruiting places a constant demand on every service organization. Many assume that if they had only a few more posters, a couple more ads in the right places, they would capture the imagination of students and more would come and serve. While such efforts can help, they are not the answer to effective recruiting.

What may look like a recruiting issue is better described as a leadership issue.

People are your best recruiters; in this area the students excel. They are walking, talking billboards.

We often fail to get students actively involved in the recruiting process. It is not enough to get students to post signs or make presentations in class. Involving students in recruiting helps give them ownership in the program and an opportunity to provide leadership both to the program and to other students.

For many it is enough to do their service work and to let it go at that. We need to tap their potential as recruiters.

The most effective way to recruit is to have students who are involved in a program recruit other students to get involved in that same program. Effective community service programs have student project heads who are in charge of running a specific program. For example, one or two students will head up a literacy project. Their responsibilities include initiating and maintaining contacts with the community, organizing orientation and training sessions, and keeping track of volunteer placements. Another responsibility is to recruit other students.

Student recruiters know what's good and what's not. They can break down the excuses and empathize with the fears. Because so much of recruiting is just "being there," students can be in more places than one full-time staff person.

It is important for people to be walking billboards. The message, the smile, and the joy that a person can convey is the most powerful recruiting device. Recruit with a grin. People will want to know the reason for the smile.

Creating strong leadership positions for students not only gets them involved in recruiting but allows them to be identified as community service leaders by their peers. When other students have a question or want to get involved, they do not have to

wait until the next community service fair or for some serendipitous event to occur. They can approach the student directly.

As a junior in college, Maria Garcia decided she wanted to start a tutoring program. She needed the tutors. She set a goal for herself that each day over the course of a month she would recruit at least one person in order to reach the goal of 40. She would sit with different groups of people at meals, make a conscious effort to go to different kinds of events so that she would meet new people whom she could tell about her program. At the end of the month she had her 40 and more.

All this is to suggest that when we think of recruiting, we should not just think of a few gimmicks. The gimmicks are essential, but it is important that behind your recruiting efforts you have a solid program. In the end, that will be your most effective recruiting tool. To put it in equation form:

“solid program = good experience for those involved = returning students = returning students with friends.”

Conclusion

A closing precaution: all revved up and no place to go

Do not make your recruiting better than your program. Some organizers, in their excitement, realize that there is a great deal of student interest, dash off with a handful of new recruiting ideas and begin a massive recruiting Blitz. Beware.

Get your house in order before you recruit, otherwise you may well get an onslaught of volunteers and not be ready to place them. Do your homework and take the proper steps. Establish your leadership, make your contact with the community, know how to get your student volunteers placed. For help on this refer to *Building a Movement* and *On Your Mark, Go, Get Set*, both published by COOL (Campus Outreach Opportunity League).

A Reminder

There is a need to establish a strong presence on campus that validates service, makes it attractive and easy for students to get involved, and insures that there is quality associated with the service opportunities provided. Students often live with a herd mentality. For many there is a great fear of stepping out of line, being different and missing out. Therefore many people just go along with the crowd. Understand this about students and use it. Get the herd involved in service. In order to accomplish this, you must present a clear, united, and powerful message to all students, every day in a creative and effective way.

Apathy is not something you chip away at. With apathy come negative stereotypes, the indifferent chic that some students think is cool. Challenge those

stereotypes and create more positive and empowering ones.

Four points to remember

If you do not remember anything else from this article, remember these four things:

- 1) Students are not apathetic.
- 2) Community service is not boring, but instead it is exciting, joyous and for everyone.
- 3) You have colleagues across the country. Call on each other for ideas, support and joint programming. You are the best resource for each other.

And finally:

- 4) be outrageous, it is contagious . . it is the key to recruiting . . . especially when working with students.

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Developing Effective Teen — Adult Partnerships Through Volunteerism: Strengthening Empathy, Engagement, Empowerment, and Enrichment

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Abstract

America's youth, and especially those in their teens, need to be engaged in their communities through volunteerism and service that allow them to actively participate in decisions affecting themselves and their families, schools, workplaces, and communities. However, many volunteer administrators and program leaders often experience frustration and encounter unforeseen obstacles as they seek to design, implement, and manage community-based programs involving teens as partners. This article provides a conceptual background to adolescent development as applied to community based programs. The author addresses the "four E's" critical to forging successful partnerships with teens as volunteers: empathy, engagement, empowerment, and enjoyment.

[Editor-generated] Keywords:

teens, volunteers, youth-adult partnerships, empathy, engagement, empowerment, enjoyment

Introduction

America's youth, and especially those in their teens, need to be engaged in their communities through volunteerism and service that allows them to actively participate in decisions affecting themselves and their families, schools, workplaces, and communities. Brendtro and Bacon (1995) suggested that such active involvement in decision making assists teens in developing both responsibility and commitment. Swinehart (1992) defined youth engagement as having four components: (1) including youth in significant decision making; (2) youth participating in activities that satisfy a genuine need in their community; (3) youth

developing collegial relationships with adult partners and mentors; and (4) youth reflecting on their work and learning skills related to it.

Engaging teens in meaningful leadership roles has become a major focus of many contemporary not-for-profit organizations. Today's cultural and political climates demand that community-based organizations approach youth not as mere recipients of programs, nor even as mere resources in program development, but rather as valued and equal partners in the holistic program development, implementation, and evaluation process. As Long et al. (n.d.) noted:

[There is ample] evidence that weaving the work of youth development, civic development, and community development makes sense for three important reasons: First, young people, who make up 26 percent of the population, possess vision, creativity and energy that is largely untapped. They have much to contribute to organizations and communities. Second, young people, when called to action, contribute to their own development, as well as to the development of the common good. And third, constructive action and involvement are always and everywhere the best defense against school failure, drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, crime, and violence – pathologies society cannot afford to remediate, even if it knew how to. (p. 3)

However, many not-for-profit administrators and program leaders often experience frustration and encounter unforeseen obstacles as they seek to design, implement and manage community-based programs involving teens as partners. First, as adults, it is often challenging for us to even approach teens; we have developed a societal stereotype that teens are, by definition, rebellious and nonconforming and have little sincere interest in anything but themselves and their immediate needs. Secondly, even if the initial invitation is extended and accepted, we often subconsciously expect teens to fail in following-through on their responsibilities and commitments, again assuming that they will redirect their energies and attentions to anything that is more immediate and more exciting for them personally. Finally, even if we have successfully invited teens to join our programs and they have followed through on their commitments, we subconsciously resist delegating to them true power and authority to perform, instead constantly shadowing their efforts and

suggesting alternative methods and options based upon the cliched, "our experience as adults."

Teens seek active, meaningful engagement in their communities. Numerous studies have highlighted teens' desires and initiatives to work together with peers and adults as leaders in addressing the serious issues facing us as a society (Auck, 1999; Independent Sector, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001; Safrit & King, 1999; Youth Service America, 1994). In return, they both experience intrinsic satisfaction and expect extrinsic rewards that enable them to be successful both today and into the future. Safrit, Scheer, and King (2001) provided an excellent discussion of how to develop meaningful service opportunities for engaging teens in their communities, taking into account teens' unique developmental characteristics. According to the authors, "teens are more willing to actively engage in mixed gender groups and seek greater responsibility/decision making in what volunteer projects to conduct" (p. 19) as active partners in community-based programs.

Community-based organizations (including volunteer and service based programs) are excellent learning laboratories for teen citizens of our state to become engaged in volunteerism and service. Chambers and Phelps (1994) argued that community-based organizations have contributed a great deal to the development of youth actively engaged in their communities. The authors stated that the organizations provided opportunities for youth to "test their judgment under pressure in the face of opposition" and "to exercise responsibilities and perhaps to try out one or another of the skills required for leadership" (p. 53). Youth engaged in social activism through volunteerism and service also increase cultural and social awareness and personal and social skills.

A Conceptual Foundation

There is an abundance of literature that, both pragmatically and conceptually, addresses the topics of positive teen development and leadership within community-based organizations and not-for-profit settings. Lofquist (1989) first brought our attention to the fact that teens should be approached as valuable resources (and not mere recipients of programmatic action) in addressing issues facing them and their communities. Bronfenbrenner (1989) approached adolescent development within the context of the individual teen's larger real-world settings and environments. His bioecological theory identified four distinct systems encompassing the individual teen's critical interactions with others and the environment: the microsystem (the setting in which the teen lives and where most direct interaction occurs, such as the family, peer groups, school groups, etc.); the mesosystem (entailing the teen's direct interactions as a member of respective interacting microsystems); the exosystem (the overall social setting and culture in which the individual teen lives; while the teen may not have an active role in this system, it still affects the individual teen); and the chronosystem (the sociohistorical patterns of environmental events and transitions over the life of the teen that may affect her/him, such as divorce, working mothers, etc.)

The Iowa Life Skills Model (Hendricks, 1998) allows individuals developing programs addressing or involving teens to incorporate the development of targeted life skills into the program, skills that will prove beneficial to teen participants. A life skill is defined as any ability "individuals can learn that will help them to be successful in living a productive and satisfying life (p. 4). The model identifies four categories of critical life skills: thinking/managing (including ten individual skills); relating/caring

(encompassing nine skills); working/giving (including seven life skills); and, being/living (addressing nine separate life skills).

Finally, the Search Institute's (2001) assets-based approach to teen development provides a strength-based approach to developing programs that effectively engage teens, rather than focusing on adolescent problems, deficits, and dysfunctions. The model identifies 40 critical factors for a young person's positive growth and development, organized into 20 external assets (that teens receive from people and institutions in their lives) and 20 internal assets (internal qualities to teens that guide the choices they make and create a sense of centeredness, purpose, and focus). The external assets include the four categories of support, empowerment, boundaries, and expectations; the internal assets include commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

Unfortunately, space does not allow for a more in-depth or detailed discussion of these three theoretical approaches to adolescent development. However, I encourage any volunteer or not-for-profit administrator or program manager seeking to engage teens as partners in community-based programs to seek out the original, complete references and become well versed in each approach. While neither approach is "better" than the other, they each offer critical insights and considerations regarding adolescent development within the context of program development and implementation. Further, they each provide a valid conceptual framework around which one may plan for the effective engagement of teens in community-based programs.

**The "Four - E's": Empathy,
Engagement, Empowerment, and
Enrichment**

Involvement in community-based programs, the Iowa Life Skills Model (1998) allows a program developer to deliver information and skill practice at an appropriate developmental level for teen participants, thus assisting teens in reaching their full potential as young adults.

Teens have dreams, goals, and plans for the future. Their involvement in not-for-profit programs and organizations should provide meaningful, enriching experiences that contribute to that future. While altruistic motivations are just as fundamentally important to teens as volunteers as they are adults as volunteers, other motivations focused upon self-esteem and personal development may be even more critical to teens than adults. Teens are at a critical stage in their lives, developing the knowledge and skills base that will serve them in their future roles as partner, parent, worker, and citizen. Their participation in not-for-profit programs and organizations should serve to enrich and expand their knowledge and skills. Safrit, Scheer, and King (2001) concluded, "volunteer opportunities can enhance teens' career exploration, provide an opportunity to learn about themselves, and be included as a part of building a strong college application or job resume" (p. 19).

Finally, in order to effectively engage teens, we must empower them: we must challenge ourselves to delegate not only responsibility to our teen partners, but real power and authority as well. Of course as with any human being, teens will make some mistakes and poor decisions along the way. But this is when the aspect of empathy again comes into play, for who among us has not also made a mistake or rendered poor judgment in our organizational endeavors. Even when a teen fails in her/his responsibilities, the failure itself offers a valuable teachable moment for teen and adult partners alike. We must talk and work

through and beyond any failures, again building new bridges of dialogue and understanding between teen and adult partners.

Focusing Upon the Big Picture

Teen empowerment is a challenging concept to many adults. Yet, contemporary research suggests strongly that actively engaging youth in decision-making roles can provide positive outcomes for not only the youth themselves, but also the sponsoring organizations and encompassing communities as well. In fact, "The Power of Youth" is one of five major programmatic initiatives recently developed by 4-H Youth Development as an outcome of its three-year national strategic planning process (National 4-H Council, 2002). Zeldin et al. (2000) stated that "Effective decision-making in organizations, the research discovered, requires the complementary skills, experiences, and contributions of both youth and adults" (p. 3). However, In addressing the challenges to meaningful teen involvement highlighted earlier, and by carefully gleaming insights and confidence from theories of adolescent development, I suggest an approach to engaging teens as community leaders with and through community-based not-for-profit organizations that involves what I call "the four E's" of working successfully with teens as community volunteers: empathy, engagement, enrichment, and empowerment.

As adults, we must challenge ourselves to empathize with both the real and perceived challenges a young person faces during her/his adolescent years. We have all experienced the rapid physiological, psychological, and societal changes that occur during the teen years. Such changes result in real and perceived concerns and issues which an individual teen must successfully address and overcome. Bronfenbrenner (1989) encouraged (and

reminded!) us to consider the individual teen not merely in the context of their focused, episodic and (often) isolated role in a specific not-for-profit context, but rather as a young yet developing adult who must interact with numerous individuals representing differing (and sometimes conflicting) social units. He also forced us to consider the effects that larger social and world events may have upon teens in our organizations; the aftermaths of September 11, 2001 are poignant testimony to this reality.

Empathy is a critical quality for any adult who works with teens as parent, teacher, mentor, adviser, and (yes) colleague and partner in a not-for-profit setting. We must remind ourselves to actively listen to and truly value the ideas and concerns of teens, even if the ideas do not immediately resonate within our own adult realisms. Teens seek openness and understanding in a safe, positive environment; it is our responsibility as not-for-profit leaders to nurture such an environment in our organizations, our programs, and our day-to-day operations.

Teens also seek active, meaningful engagement in their communities. Numerous studies have highlighted teens' desires and initiatives to work together with peers and adults as leaders in addressing the serious issues facing us as a society (Auck, 1999; Independent Sector, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001; Safrit & King, 1999; Youth Service America, 1994). In return, they both experience intrinsic satisfaction and expect extrinsic rewards that enable them to be successful both today and into the future. The Search Institute's (2001) assets approach provides a conceptual framework that links these two outcomes of positive teen involvement by focusing on the positive assets that teens need in order to be successful, and the role of

community-based programs in providing them.

I believe that positive engagement is the most fundamental aspect of effectively working with teens as partners and volunteers in not-for-profit organizations. Safrit, Scheer, and King (2001) provided an excellent discussion of how to develop meaningful service opportunities for engaging teens in their communities, taking into account teens' unique developmental characteristics. According to the authors, "teens are more willing to actively engage in mixed gender groups and seek greater responsibility/decision making in what volunteer projects to conduct" (p. 19) as active partners in community-based programs.

Enrichment challenges us to focus not only on what teens may contribute to not-for-profit programs and organizations, but also what the programs and organizations can contribute to teen partners in return. Through its focus upon teens developing critical life skills through their active effectively empowering teens requires a not-for-profit organizational culture that values the contributions of teens, and our own personal commitment to bringing that culture to life.

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**"Just Do It!": High-Risk Teenagers
Help Themselves While Helping Others**

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[Editor-generated] Abstract

The authors describe a program wherein eight teenagers identified as being at high-risk (based upon eight established program criteria) were trained as cross-peer volunteer teachers of younger students. Program evaluations suggested that the program resulted in improved self-esteem and academic performance of the high-risk volunteer teachers. Younger students taught increased knowledge through the cross-peer sessions.

[Editor-generated] Keywords:

teenagers, high-risk, self-esteem, cross-peer

“We don’t want those bad kids teaching at our school,” said a group of elementary teachers. This and other derogatory statements associated with youth at risk are unfortunately too common. This article presents the results of a pilot study that showed that high-risk youth can be effective volunteer teachers, and through this experience they can improve their attitudes toward school.

Why should we be concerned about youth at risk issues? We are increasingly aware of the costs to society if large numbers of youth fail in school and are unable to become productive adults. Getting or keeping a job and the high crime rate

among high school dropouts are two reasons to be concerned.

High school graduation rates are declining while the workplace is demanding better education. Graduation rates have declined from 76% in 1980 to 73% in 1989 (Hodgkinson, 1989). Studies show that dropouts are less likely to be employed than high school graduates and are more likely to have low paying semiskilled manual jobs. For example, in terms of employment compare the 68% of high school dropouts to the 87% of high school graduates between the ages of 16 and 24 in the work force in 1989 (Orr, 1989).

School dropouts impact our society in other ways. The relationship between

education and crime is particularly interesting. States with the highest high school graduation rate have the lowest prisoner rates (Hodgkinson, 1989). Eighty-two percent of America's prisoners are high school dropouts (Hodgkinson, 1989). The average cost of incarceration per inmate was \$20,000 per year nationally in 1989. The current cost of educating a child in the aforementioned pilot study was \$1,800 per year.

Programs That Work

Orr (1989), in a grant funded by Carnegie Corporation of New York, studied fourteen programs to keep students in school and found four core components directly related to successful high school dropout prevention programs. These components include:

1. Basic skills remediation—reading, writing, and computation.
2. Support services—referrals to service agencies for housing, welfare and medical needs.
3. World of work exposure—work experience and training.
4. Personal development—increased self-esteem and responsible behavior (e.g., peer educator approaches).

Peer educator approaches are seen as effective teaching strategies to increase self-esteem and positive attitude toward school. According to Dryfoos (1990), "Students selected to act as peer mentors gain the most, probably because of the individual attention and enrichment they receive in the training and supervision."

Most studies agree that students at risk of dropping out of school are not experiencing success in school (Alpert & Dunham, 1986). These students often get poor grades, have discipline problems, do not get along with teachers, and generally do

not like school. It is argued that the earlier the at-risk child is identified, the more likely an intervention program is to succeed (Peck, 1988).

"Just Do It!" Program

A local coalition of agencies in northeast Nevada dealt with the school dropout issue. The program "Just Do It!" was organized using the peer educator approach to influence potential dropouts' attitude toward school and themselves.

Eight high-risk teenagers participated in this pilot study. These youth served as volunteer teachers by presenting latchkey-skills lessons to third-grade students.

"Just Do It!" was adapted from an earlier study which used 4-H volunteers as peer educators (Smith, Havercamp, and Waters, 1990) and is based on other research directed at teaching high-risk youth (National Collaboration for Youth, 1989). Nevada Cooperative Extension, a federal, state, and locally-funded work program, and a county school district came together in a preventive effort to increase the number of youth completing high school. The local high school principal and elementary school principal had worked with Cooperative Extension on the first volunteer teacher program (Smith, Havercamp, and Waters, 1990) and supported working with high-risk youth. The JOIN program coordinator recognized the need to help high-risk youth and agreed to collaborate on this project.

Selecting High-Risk Volunteer Teachers

Eight freshman and sophomore high school students were chosen for "Just Do It!" Selection criteria were based on JOIN's standards for participation in its other programs:

1. S/he is a member of a family living at or below the poverty level.
2. S/he has poor attendance record (e.g., frequent absences or tardiness).

3. S/he has a poor academic record (e.g., failure to advance to the next grade).
4. S/he has significant deficiencies in computing, reading or writing.
5. S/he has insufficient credits for high school graduation in the senior year.
6. S/he has documented emotional or behavioral problems which may lead to suspension.
7. S/he is a teenage parent or a pregnant teenager.
8. S/he has dropped out and returned to school.

Students had to satisfy two of these criteria to be eligible for "Just Do It!" As an incentive to participate in the program, they were offered \$100 by JOIN.

Program Support and Training

Volunteer teachers worked in small groups getting intensive adult and peer support. The number of total participants was kept small so that each person not only would receive individual attention but also would be able to work in teams.

A volunteer teenager and a Nevada Cooperative Extension staff member were given primary responsibility for coaching and guiding the volunteer teachers. The volunteer teenager served as a mentor and coach to high-risk participants and was given the title of "Coach" by the volunteer teachers. The Cooperative Extension Specialist, who had 15 years experience working with youth, served as program coordinator.

The "Coach" was selected for her enthusiasm, leadership abilities, and excellent communication skills. She had been one of the 4-H volunteer teachers in the first project (see Smith, et al.) which gave her elementary classroom experience.

Training of participants was held at the JOIN office, a two block walk from the

high school. This location was chosen to give the volunteer teachers a chance to get acquainted with JOIN office staff.

Weekly two-hour training and coaching sessions were provided to volunteer teachers over a seven-week period. The training program included self-esteem, self-responsibility, decision-making, communication, peer relationships, career awareness, career goals and expectations, and lesson planning. Following a lesson planning session, the participants were given a specific lesson to practice. These practice presentations were videotaped so that changes in presentation styles, dress, or mannerisms could be made.

Teaching Curriculum

The high-risk teenagers chose the curriculum "Stayin' Alive, A Teaching Guide for Latchkey Programs" (Norris, R., Martin, S., 1987) to teach elementary students. The program provided information on staying home alone, rules for outside and indoor safety, handling hazards and emergencies, and feeling OK when alone.

While the latchkey curriculum includes some lecture, the primary emphasis consists of hands—on experiences and role playing. For example, students role play how to answer the phone or door when home alone and what to do if attacked. This curriculum is especially useful in the targeted elementary school because a large number of latchkey children attend the school.

Teaching Experience

After completing fourteen hours of training, the volunteer teachers gave presentations to 90 students in three different third-grade classes. They taught in teams of two, presenting a total of two hours of latchkey skills information to each class.

Four lesson plans were presented by the teams. Each team member taught a

portion of a lesson. The amount of time individuals taught was based on their ability and enthusiasm for teaching.

Following the school presentations, the volunteer teachers presented program evaluation results to high school and elementary school principals. Several of them were invited to present these results to the local school board as well.

Evaluation

A primary emphasis of this program was placed on initiating a change in the high-risk volunteer teachers' attitude toward school. School attitudes were measured in several ways with data taken from the Coopersmith Inventory (Coopersmith, S., 1989), self-evaluation, teacher and parent evaluations, and school grades and attendance. Teaching effectiveness data were collected using a pre- and post-test of elementary students' knowledge of latchkey safety skills and a "parent" (includes guardians) survey to see if the latchkey information would be used at home.

The Coopersmith Inventory (Coopersmith, S., 1989) was administered as a pre-test to the eight volunteer teachers at the beginning of the training program, and a post-test was given six months following the teaching of elementary students. The volunteer teachers' pre- and post-test school self-esteem scores were also compared.

The Coopersmith Inventory is a standardized test of self-esteem. It consists of four sub-scales which measure for aspects of self-esteem. This study used the school scale which consists of eight statements related to school attitude. (Example: I find it very hard to talk in front of the class.) Respondents indicate whether each statement is "like me" or "unlike me."

The self-evaluation, teacher and parent evaluations were given at the end of the program. Teachers and parents were asked ten questions about attitude and

behavioral change and were requested to "best describe your observations of the student before the program began and now after completion of the program." This "post- then pre-approach" was used because, by the end of the program, observers would be more likely to see change. If a pretest was used at the beginning of the program, observers had no way to change an answer at the end of the program if they made an inaccurate assessment in their first response (Rockwell and Kohn, 1989).

Data on the participants' teaching effectiveness were collected based on a pre—test given before the latchkey skills program began and a post—test following the completion of the teaching sessions. At the completion of the latchkey teaching program, third-grade students were also asked to take home a questionnaire for their parents to complete and return to school the next day. The questionnaire asked parents and guardians if their children had discussed the latchkey program and if families would be implementing any of the ideas from the programs at home.

Results

Seven high-risk students were able to increase their school self-esteem scores while only one student did not show an increase Table 1. This particular individual (HR #8) was having difficulty in social situations, such as not getting along with peers and fearing attending large group assemblies. Following the program, this student reported that he was able to overcome this particular fear.

A comparison of grade point averages and attendance records, before and after the program, also showed positive improvements. Especially interesting was the absentee record of HR #8 who showed a decrease in absences, from 24 days to 8 days (Table II).

TABLE I
School Self-Esteem Scores of High-Risk (HR) Volunteer Teachers.

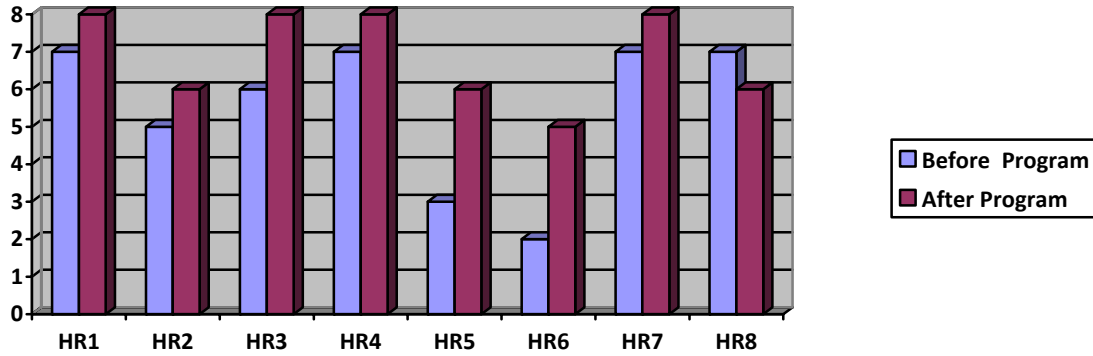


TABLE II
Comparisons of High-Risk Volunteer Teachers' Absences Before and After Teaching.

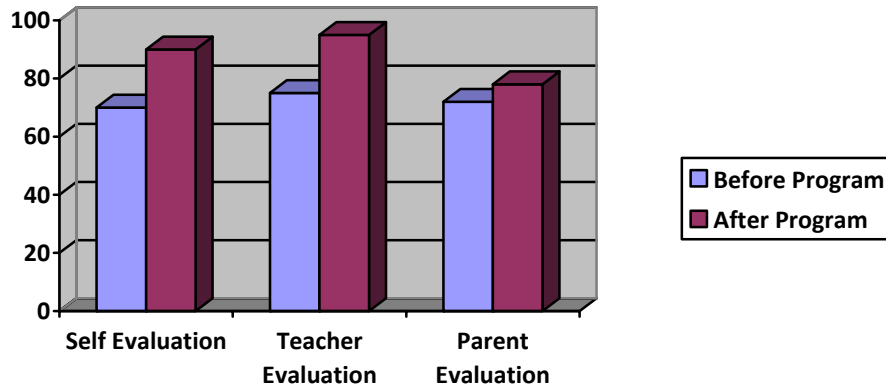
High-Risk (HR) Students	# of Absences	
	1st Semester	2nd Semester
HR #1.	4	0
HR #2	1	0
HR #3	4	4
HR #4	7	2
HR #5	5	5
HR #6	11	7
HR #7	14	13
HR #8	24	8
	70 days	39 days

The academic records of the participants did not change appreciably. However, these students will continue to be observed over time to see if there are any changes in their grades.

The results of teacher and parent assessments, and self-evaluations indicate positive changes in the participants' attitude toward school as well (Table III).

Table III
Attitude and Behavior Changes of High-Risk Volunteers Before and After the Program.

Average Score



Impact on Elementary Students

In comparing pre- and posttest survey results of elementary students' latchkey knowledge, we found that elementary students in the study showed a 45% increase in knowledge gain. Results of the parent survey also indicated that 80% plan to implement ideas from the latchkey safety program.

Special Observations

Observations by school principals and the JOIN coordinator tell a special story. "What I have seen after this marvelous program is better attendance this year versus last year, and improved self-esteem as shown in personal appearance and posturing," said a high school principal. Furthermore, "There's no question this program will result in students getting better grades and staying in school. This is a win-win situation for all concerned." He hopes

this program will be offered to other elementary schools in the community.

The local JOIN coordinator, who supervised the volunteer teachers in a summer job program, said that employers were thrilled by the job performance of the high-risk youth from "Just Do It!" She indicated that the self-confidence, responsibility, and self-esteem gained in the peer teaching program made a difference with the high-risk youth. One employer said that the high-risk students were the best JOIN employees he ever had.

An elementary school principal was impressed to see the bonding between high-risk volunteer teachers and elementary students. Subsequently, she set up a high-risk student committee to discuss future program ideas. The committee is currently planning a training program for high-risk elementary students to teach younger children.

Summary

The opportunity to be a volunteer “teacher” proved an effective method of motivating a group of high-risk youth. In elementary classrooms, volunteer teachers were the center of attention, often receiving the admiration and respect of younger students. This learning experience was successful in building teachers’ self-esteem and self-confidence.

“Bad kids” were seen as effective teachers. This success, in part, could be due to the fact that volunteer teachers in the pilot study had been latchkey children themselves. Volunteer teachers were able to help elementary children learn important latchkey skills. Most importantly, the teaching experience helped these high-risk volunteer teachers change their own attitudes about school.

The authors believe that community-based educational organizations, such as Cooperative Extension, should help facilitate empowerment processes where youth at risk are provided volunteer teacher experiences. Dryfoos (1990) reports that effective high-risk youth programs should be connected, in some degree, to the school setting. She recommends that school-based programs do not have to be controlled by school systems and that schools should seek collaborative efforts with other agencies when developing programs for high-risk youth.

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