

**The International Journal of Volunteer Administration**  
(ISSN 1942-728X)

**Volume XXV, No. 3 (November 2008)**  
**“Episodic Volunteering”**

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**Key Words:** volunteer, episodic, motivation, charity efforts

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**Key Words:** episodic volunteerism, Hurricane Katrina, Mississippi

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**Key Words:** episodic, volunteers, commitment, motivation, sporting events

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**Key Words:** volunteers, motivation, culture, professional golf

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**Key Words:** volunteering, episodic, net cost, motivation, satisfaction, rewards

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*accurately complete tax returns, but that are not so lengthy and burdensome as to discourage volunteer participation. The conclusions reached by the authors are designed to assist not only VITA coalitions, but any volunteer resource manager with training implementation that meets both episodic volunteers' needs and the organization's strategic goals.*

**Key Words:** income tax, episodic, volunteer, recruitment, training

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**Key Words:** episodic, volunteers, motivation, sports, golf

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*The episodic volunteer may be considered a "fleeting species," i.e., here today and gone tomorrow. This commentary suggests that more intentional management of episodic volunteers can pay benefits to the volunteer resource manager. The author explores three problem areas that hamper and impede the effective engagement of short-service episodic volunteers in some programs: 1. Resources; 2. Running parallel programs for episodic volunteers; and, 3. Applied research.*

**Key Words:** episodic volunteer, resource development, parallel programs, applied research

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**A Review of *Episodic Volunteering: Organizing and Managing the Short-Term Volunteer Program*** .....94

Author: Nancy Macduff. (2004). Walla Walla, WA, MBA Publishing, (93 pp., Soft cover and electronically as PDF; ISBN - 0945795-15-7, Available at [www.volunteertoday.com](http://www.volunteertoday.com) Bookstore)

Reviewed by Ryan J. Schmiesing, Ph.D.

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### **An Application and Screening Process for Episodic Volunteers that Works!** .....97

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*The author describes the statewide application and screening materials she developed for use with episodic volunteers in the North Carolina 4-H Youth Development program of the Cooperative Extension Service at North Carolina State University.*

**Key Words:** volunteer, episodic, written application, screening

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### **Making a Difference in a Day: An Assessment of "Join Hands Day"** .....102

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**Key Words:** episodic, volunteerism, community service, intergenerational

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Harriett C. Edwards, Ed.D.

*Managing contemporary volunteer programs requires administrators to be alert to trends and their implications for voluntary agencies. The reality of episodic volunteerism and practitioners' attitudes related to this phenomenon of modern volunteer management was the focus of this study. The Points of Light Foundation's Changing the Paradigm Report Action Principles (Allen, 1995) and Macduff's (1991) indicators of organizational readiness for episodic volunteers provided the bases for this exploratory, descriptive-correlational study assessing 4-H Youth Development agents' perceptions of organizational effectiveness in utilizing episodic volunteers. Study findings reveal valuable information for the profession in preparing administrators for the reality of episodic volunteer involvement.*

**Key Words:** episodic, volunteers, 4-H, organizational, paradigm

### In This Issue

*All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts...*

William Shakespeare, 1600

*(As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII)*

Even though the Bard wrote these classic words were more than 400 years ago, they immediately came to mind as I finalized this innovative and exciting issue of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration*. In this fast-paced 21<sup>st</sup> century world in which we live, we each seem to be “playing” more and increasingly diverse “parts” every day of our lives. Our time has become a type personal commodity that we are faced to monitor and barter within and between our respective personal, familial, professional, and social roles. And, too many times, we have not “exited” one role before we must make our “entrance” to another new role, fulfilling myriad roles simultaneously! This is the contemporary social phenomenon that is episodic volunteerism.

To my knowledge, no other academic or professional journal has devoted this amount of attention, resources, and energy to documenting and disseminating cutting-edge information and insights regarding episodic volunteerism. Not only is this issue of *The IJOVA* our most extensive to date regarding newly published ideas and research, it is also our most diverse with contributing authors representing 14 different academic institutions from the five nations of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Israel, and the United States.

I am very proud to say that seven excellent *Feature Articles* are included in this monumental issue, focusing upon the phenomenon of episodic volunteerism in philanthropic, disaster recovery, sporting, health services, and fiscal contexts. Joan Beder and Jonathan Fast focus upon episodic volunteerism in charity events and conclude that their “study can be seen as a snapshot of the episodic volunteer and initiates a beginning understanding of what motivates the volunteer to participate in a charity [event].” Three other *Features* address episodic volunteerism in sports (and more specifically, golfing) events. Separate articles by Shannon Hamm, Joanne MacLean, Ph.D., and Katie Misener, and Keunsu Han, Ph.D. and Sheila Nguyen, both explore the phenomenon within women’s professional golf, while a third article by Gina Pauline, Ed.D., Jeffrey Pauline, Ed.D., and Thalia Mulvihill, Ph.D. explores episodic volunteerism in both professional men’s and women’s golf events. Alyson Greiner, Ph.D. and Thomas Wikle, Ph.D. focus upon a real-life case study of episodic volunteerism within disaster recovery and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in Pass Christian, Mississippi. Leslie Hustinx, Ph.D., Debbie Haski-Leventhal, Ph.D., and Femida Handy, Ph.D. compare selected attributes of episodic and regular volunteers at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House. According to the authors, “Further research is needed to investigate of the challenges and opportunities of managing episodic and regular volunteers within an organization as it is not always easy to blend episodic and regular volunteers under one management style.” Our final *Feature Article* is by Thomas Madison, Ph.D., Stephanie Ward, Ph.D., and Kent Royalty and describes training episodic

volunteers delivering economic assistance to low-income working taxpayers in the national Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. The authors suggest that their findings, “while focused on the episodic volunteer patterns of VITA volunteers, provide valuable insight into the training preferences and time commitment expectations of episodic volunteers used by numerous organizations to achieve their goals.”

National volunteer development consultant and university faculty member Nancy Macduff first introduced the concept of episodic volunteerism back in the early 1990’s, and she offers an interesting *Commentary* in this issue regarding how “fleeting” this volunteer “species” is still today some 18 years later. We are pleased also to reprint an earlier review by Ryan Schmiesing, Ph.D. of Macduff’s seminal 2004 book, *Episodic Volunteering: Organizing and Managing the Short-term Volunteer* in this issue’s *Tools of the Trade* section.

In *Ideas That Work*, another contemporary scholar exploring the phenomenon of episodic volunteerism, Harriett C. Edwards, Ed.D., from North Carolina State University, describes a successful episodic volunteer application and screening process that she developed for the statewide 4-H Youth Development program. In *From the Annals*, we are also pleased to reprint one of her articles published previously in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*: “Organizational Effectiveness in Utilizing Episodic Volunteers Based on Perceptions of 4-H Youth Development Professionals” (first published in 2005). We are also pleased to reprint another case study involving episodic volunteerism in the *Annals* by Robert Christensen, James Perry, and Laura Littlepage, “Making a Difference Day: An Assessment of ‘Join Hands Day’” (also first published in 2005).

I join the entire Editorial Board and Reviewers of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* in sharing this first-of-its-kind tome so that managers of volunteer resources may better mobilize and engage episodic volunteers. After all, I could paraphrase the Bard to read:

*All the world's a stage,  
And all its volunteers, both regular and episodic, key players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one volunteer in his or her time plays many parts...*

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

## **Episodic Volunteering: Why People Walk/Run for Charity**

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### **Abstract**

*Yearly, millions of citizens give significant amounts of time and energy to volunteering. In the last few decades, a special form of volunteering has emerged – episodic volunteering – in which individuals volunteer for specific events on a sporadic basis and for limited duration. An example of episodic volunteering is the efforts volunteers make participating in charity walks or runs. The research focus in this article was initiated to help understand the motivations of the episodic volunteer who participates in such an activity by walking or running. Using the Volunteer Motivation Inventory, certain motivational factors (domains) and demographic trends were identified. Findings can prove helpful for those who organize such episodic volunteer efforts.*

### **Key words:**

volunteer, episodic, motivation, charity efforts

### **Introduction**

Yearly, millions of citizens will devote substantial amounts of their time and energy to volunteering (Clary, Snyder, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, & Milne, 1998). In the United States, about 65.4 million people (about 28.8 % of the population) performed some kind of volunteer work at least once during 2004 and 2005. They spent an average of 134 hours on volunteer activities, and at an estimated \$18.04 per hour, these efforts were valued at \$2,417 (Philips, 2006). Social scientists continue to strive to understand why individuals volunteer. Despite the lament by Fischer, Mueller, and Cooper (1991) in the early 1990's that "The truth of the matter is that there is little understanding of why people volunteer" (p. 186), evolving knowledge, through continued research, has begun to enlighten and inform understanding of the motives for volunteering.

Volunteering is any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause. Formal volunteering is defined as volunteer work in or for the community, for a particular organization (Wilson & Musick, 1997). Episodic volunteering, an example of formal volunteering, was defined by Macduff (1990) as volunteer service of short duration, performed on a one time only basis, or work on a specific project or assignment that reoccurs annually. This style of volunteering suggests that volunteers prefer to have short-term volunteering assignments or discrete task-specific volunteering projects rather than traditional, ongoing volunteer opportunities (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003).

### **Episodic Volunteers**

Episodic volunteering has become a recognized standard of volunteering over the

last decade. As a form of volunteer activity, it has been suggested that this type of service has become more prevalent as a result of societal shifts including work and family pressures that take people away from longer-term, repeated volunteer commitments and, more recently, because of the professionalism of the nonprofit workforce (Bryden & Madden, 2006). Macduff (2005) identified three main types of episodic volunteering based on time and duration of service: (1) temporary volunteering: the giving of a short period of time (a day or a few hours); (2) interim volunteering: the giving of time on a regular basis for less than six months; and (3) occasional volunteering: the giving of time at regular intervals for short periods of time. By no means is episodic volunteering replacing traditional volunteering, but it has become more prevalent as individuals make volunteering choices based upon their personal lives. Nevertheless, "...the notion of episodic volunteering as being distinct from traditional volunteering is gaining ground in the literature and in some ways is seen as characterizing the new breed of volunteer today" (Byrden & Madden, p. 15).

There is growing interest among scholars in episodic volunteering regarding motivations for this form of volunteer experience, yet the literature offers relatively few empirical studies of the phenomenon (Bryden & Madden). Harrison (1995) studied motivations of volunteers working in a homeless shelter and concluded that there were four main questions guiding the reasons they volunteered: (1) what do I get out of this effort?; (2) what is the response of others to this effort?; (3) is this the right thing for me to do?; and (4) how likely is it that I can do this effort? These questions emphasize the individualistic, self-oriented nature of episodic volunteering. Dietz (1999) studied an employee population who

participated in a community-based improvement effort, noting that most volunteered on the basis of values (e.g., helping others is the right thing to do), with religious affiliation, fun and employee team building as secondary motivations.

This research identifies motivations and characteristics of people who engage in fund-raising walk/runs, a specific type of episodic volunteering. The question of whether participation as a walker/runner in a charity walk constitutes "volunteering" was clarified by Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth (1996). In an extensive review and content analysis of definitions of volunteering, the authors found that there were four criteria for defining a volunteer, with a broad range of definitions within each criterion. The four criteria were: (1) free will, (2) remuneration, (3) structure, and (4) intended beneficiaries. Under free will, a volunteer is defined as someone who chooses to participate, and while not coerced yet feels an obligation to volunteer. Remuneration ranged from none at all to low pay. Structure of sponsoring organization ranged from informal to formal. And beneficiaries ranged from helping others, even strangers, to benefiting oneself. As such, we argue that individuals who elect to participate in raising funds by walking or running for a cause, qualify as volunteers. The walkers/runner choose to give of their time and physical effort, receive no remuneration, work within a formally organized structure/organization, and may or may not know the intended beneficiaries.

### **Measuring Volunteer Motivation**

The question of what actually motivates a volunteer became the focus of numerous studies beginning in the 1970's (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004). These early studies suffered from methodological flaws such as small sample sizes, reliance on volunteers from a single site, and measures



with unknown reliability and validity (Okun, Barr, & Herzog, 1998). Nevertheless, several models of understanding volunteer motivation have been described and supported in the literature.

The unidimensional model suggests that volunteers act from a combination of motives described as a meaningful whole rather than from a single motive or category of motives (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). In contrast, several researchers contend that individuals volunteer for two reasons: (1) concern for others (altruistic motives such as feeling good about helping others) and (2) concern for themselves (egotistic motives including tangible and intangible rewards). Another emerging motivation as identified by Warburton and Oppenheimer (2000) is that individuals volunteer to learn skills that can be applied in the workplace.

A multifactor model has been described by Clary and Snyder (1991) based on a functional analysis/approach to motivation. "The core propositions of a functional analysis of volunteerism are that acts of volunteerism that are similar on the surface may be supported by different underlying motivations, and that the functions served by volunteerism reveal themselves in the unfolding dynamics of the initiation and maintenance of voluntary helping behavior" (Snyder, Clary, & Stukas, 2000, p. 368). Functional theorists posit that there is a match between the reasons for performing an activity, such as volunteering, and the satisfaction derived from that activity (Clary et al., 1998). Stated another way, motives represent the functions served by actions. The same action can serve different functions that involve the conscious desire of individuals (Allison, Okum, & Dutridge, 2002). Clary and colleagues (1991, 1992) identified a set of six primary motivations which form the Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI). These motivations are:

1) Values: allows individuals to express values related to altruistic and humanitarian concern for others;

2) Understanding: functions to provide the individual with new learning experiences about different people, places, skills, or oneself, to satisfy an intellectual curiosity about the world in general, the self, and the social world;

3) Career: volunteering as a means to help to further one's career, an attempt to strategically move oneself along in life;

4) Social: provides the individual with opportunities to engage in activities valued by important others; to expand their social circles and join desirable groups;

5) Esteem: allow individuals to enhance their own self-esteem with a focus on personal growth and development;

6) Protective: helps the person reduce guilt about being more fortunate than others and/or to provide the opportunity to address one's personal problems.

The VFI is one of the few measures of volunteer motivation to undergo extensive testing and has become a research tool used in numerous studies (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004), largely because of its high reliability and validity. Concurrent work on further untangling the question of volunteer motivation has been done in Australia with some researchers utilizing a two-factor model (Blanchard, Rostant & Finn, 1995; Warburton, 1997) and others utilizing the multifactor VFI (Lucas & Williams, 2000).

In 2003, Esmond and Dunlop received a grant to undertake research into volunteer motivation. Through their efforts, the Volunteer Motivation Inventory (VMI) was developed, an expanded version of the VFI. Esmond and Dunlop (2004) involved over 2,400 volunteers from 15 different organizations in developing the VMI. As a result, the study "...is one of the most extensive studies undertaken in Western Australia to understand and assess the

underlying motivational drives of volunteers” (p. 48). The VMI builds directly on the work of Clary, Snyder and Ridge (1992). Through their research, Esmond and Dunlop found that there were additional categories of motivation beyond the six domains detailed in Clary et al. (1992). These additional domains are defined as follows:

- Reciprocity: What goes around comes around; by doing good the volunteer will bring about good things for him or herself;
- Recognition: the volunteer is gratified by recognition of his skills and contributions;
- Reactivity: the volunteering is done out of a need to heal and address his or her own past or current issues;
- Social Interaction: the volunteer builds social networks and enjoys the social aspect of interacting with others.

Like the VFI, the VMI asks subjects to rate their level of agreement with 42 statements using a five point Likert scale; when the scores of the 11 scales are totaled and averaged, an overall profile of the domains that motivate a volunteer can be discerned (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004). A higher score indicates that a particular domain is of greater importance to the individual and a lower score reflects that the domain is of less importance. Because of its expanded categories, the VMI is the scale used in the research reported in this article (Figure 1).

### **Study Goal and Objectives**

This study was initiated to refine and expand the understanding of motivations of volunteers who participate in walk/run efforts. It was anticipated that much could be learned by studying the motivation to walk or run for charity, information helpful

to those who plan and conduct these type events.

By using the Volunteer Motivation Inventory (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004), it was hoped that specific areas of motivation would emerge which could guide recruitment and retention (i.e., walkers/runners repeating their efforts annually year after year) efforts by organizers of such events. This study was not directly hypothesis driven; it was designed to describe the motivations of the episodic volunteer. However, two specific areas of research were considered: as there were four groups under study, was there a difference in motivation for the first three groups (short distance efforts, less than one day duration) and/or would there be similarities in their motivation as compared to the fourth group which extracted greater physical demands (35 mile, two-day event). A second area of interest was the demographics for the entire sample of episodic volunteers and potential differences from those who do formal volunteering (based on a review of the literature).

Subjects were recruited from lists provided by a running club that sponsors numerous charity walk and run events yearly, as such the sample created was a convenience sample. Three mailing lists were selected which listed those who had signed-up for walks or runs of short distances in the last year: a 5k effort to benefit a police crisis fund (437 participants); a 5k effort to benefit an advocacy group committed to promoting awareness of ovarian cancer, an annual event only for women participants (109 participants); and a 10k effort to raise funds to rehabilitate young amputees, victims of bone cancer and traumatic injury (469 participants). All participants in the above events were asked to pay an entry fee that was donated to the sponsoring organization.

*Figure 1. Volunteer Motivation Inventory (VMI) domains.*

Values - the individual volunteers in order to express or act on firmly held beliefs of the importance for one to help others.

Reciprocity - the individual volunteers in the belief that 'what goes around comes around'. In the process of helping others and 'doing good' their volunteering work will also bring about good things for the volunteer themselves.

Recognition - the individual is motivated to volunteer by being recognized for their skills and contribution and enjoys the recognition volunteering gives them.

Understanding - the individual volunteers to learn more about the world through their volunteering experience or exercise skills that are often unused.

Self-Esteem - the individual volunteers to increase their own feelings of self-worth and self-esteem.

Reactivity - the individual volunteers out of a need to 'heal' and address his or her own past or current issues.

Social - the individual volunteers and seeks to conform to normative influences of significant others (e.g. friends or family).

Protective - the individual volunteers as a means to reduce negative feelings about themselves, e.g., guilt or to address personal problems.

Interaction - the individual volunteers to build social networks and enjoys the social aspects of interacting with others.

Career Development - the individual volunteers with the prospect of making connections with people and gaining experience and field skills that may eventually be beneficial in assisting them to find employment.

Physical - the individual volunteers for the physical challenge and endurance that the race/walk provides.

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In addition, a fourth group was recruited for the study; participants in a two day breast cancer walk of 35 miles with overnight camping in a local park and the expectation of fund raising a minimum of \$1000 per participant (633 participants). The total sample size was 1,971.

Members of all four groups were mailed a packet that consisted of the Volunteer Motivation Inventory with demographic information requested for purposes of the research effort. A stamped self-addressed envelope was included to be returned to the researcher. One thousand, six hundred forty-eight packets were mailed with 603 returned for a useable return rate of 33.5%. Confidentiality was assured as no names were on the return envelopes or the

surveys; to enable accurate coding for data analysis, each walk/run had its own colored paper. Because of the confidentiality of the respondents, it was not possible to follow-up with non-responders.

### **Findings**

Table 1 lists mean scores by participation domains. The participants in the two-day breast cancer walk scored higher on the values, interaction, and physical subscales. This may have occurred because the event required a greater commitment of time and energy. The group running for young amputees scored higher than the other groups for the self-esteem subscale. The four groups rated similarly on the remaining subscales.

Table 1  
*Domain Ranking for Entire Episodic Volunteer Sample (from Highest to Lowest)*

Domain	Mean	Std. Deviation
Values	19.295	4.325
Self-esteem	13.257	3.225
Understanding	12.028	3.215
Reactivity	11.404	3.221
Protective	11.212	3.927
Recognition	11.001	3.348
Social	10.840	3.766
Interaction	9.970	3.662
Reciprocity	6.971	2.139
Career	6.882	2.787
Physical	6.315	2.517

A little over 74% of volunteers were female (447) and a little less than 25% were male (156). In view of the fact that one walk/run was all women (n=109), the percentage of women to men in the remaining sample was females 68% and males 31.6%. This percentage breakdown is roughly consistent with findings in the literature. In North America, for example, females are more likely to volunteer than males (Wilson, 2000) and in 2005 in the United States, according to government statistics, one fourth of men and one third of women did volunteer work (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.).

When domain mean scores were compared by gender (Table 2), females rated higher on the following subscales: values, recognition, reciprocity, reactivity, self-esteem, and understanding. Males rated higher on interaction, and physical. In a further refinement of the data, for the males, the top five motivational domains were: values, self-esteem, protective, understanding and social. The top five

motivational domains for the females were: values, self-esteem, understanding, reactivity and protective.

Over 63% of the walk/runner volunteers were between the ages of 40 and 59. This breakdown is roughly consistent with the literature on volunteering: 67% of volunteers in 2005 in the United States were between the ages of 35-55 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.); 67% of those volunteering in a British study were between the ages of 40 and 60 years (Wardell, Lishman, & Whalley, 2000) and Wilson (2000) noted that "...volunteering rises to its peak in middle-age" (p. 226). All age groups rated values and self-esteem as most important as motivational factors. Understanding was rated third by all age groups up to 59 years. It is interesting to note that the mean scores for the values domain decreased over the age span from a mean score of 20.17 for ages 15-19 to a mean score of 15.68 for the 70+ age group.

Table 2  
*Gender Comparison – First Five Domains*

Entire Sample	Males	Females
Values	Values	Values
Self-esteem	Self-esteem	Self-esteem
Understanding	Protective	Understanding
Reactivity	Understanding	Reactivity
Protective	Social	Protective

Over 67% of the sample was married. These findings concur with current literature on volunteerism in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.) that found that married persons volunteer at a higher rate (34.1%) than non-married persons (23.1%). The entire sample – married and not married - identified values, self-esteem, and understanding as the first three motivations to volunteer to walk or run. Both groups identified the physical domain as the least determinant for volunteering.

The level of education of respondents was very high: 74% were college graduates, with 35% of the volunteers having Masters degrees or better. According to Wilson (2000), level of education is the most consistent predictor of volunteering; it boosts volunteering because it heightens awareness of problems, increases empathy, and builds self-confidence. At each level of education when comparing mean scores, the motivation domain of values had the highest mean scores, with self-esteem and understanding as the second and third highest scores. In

each grouping, the physical aspect of motivation ranked last except for those with a masters degree or higher who ranked career growth and development as their lowest motivation.

The literature on formal volunteerism is divided on the impact of income on volunteering. Freeman (1997), for example, found a negative correlation between wage income and volunteering, while Menchik and Weisbrod (1987) found volunteering positively related to income and Raskoff and Sundeen (1995) found income positively associated with only health and education related volunteer projects.

Due to the nature of the episodic volunteering under study – a walk or run for a specific effort – the question of cause was posed (i.e., “When you signed up for the walk/run, did you choose it on the basis of the cause?”) to determine whether the volunteers were enticed to volunteer because of the nature of the sponsoring organization. For respondents, 54.8% said yes, that they had volunteered because of the sponsoring organization, and 45.2% said no. The results by organization are shown in Table 3.

Table 3  
*Volunteer Percentage by Cause - Did You Choose the Effort on the Basis of the Cause?*

	Yes	No
Entire Sample	54.8%	45.2%
Police Crisis Fund	26%	74%
Young Amputees	34.5%	65.5%
Ovarian Cancer	55.2%	44.8%
Breast Cancer (2 days)	79.8%	20.2%

About 82 % answered “yes” to the question on exercise (i.e., “Do you exercise on a regular basis?”). When asked about whether the respondent describes him/herself as health conscious, 68.5% (n = 413) said “yes” and 25.4% (n = 156) responded no, with 6.1% indicating no response.

## Discussion

The study findings suggest that the episodic volunteer in this study, engaged in a walk/run for charity, is an individual who is highly motivated by wanting to help others (i.e., is altruistically motivated) and who wants to increase his/her feelings of self-worth while engaged in the effort. The findings also suggest that people who choose to volunteer episodically for the organizations in this study saw it as important that the value system of the organization be congruent with their own personal value system. As a key to recruitment, this finding moves a charity organization to highlight the connection between personal goals and holistic mission/goals of the organization, stressing that volunteering is contributing to helping others and makes a difference in the lives of many people (Esmond & Dunlop, 2004).

The motivational domain of self-esteem (i.e., the need to increase feelings of self-worth, to feel better about one’s self and feel needed by others) was second in importance to these episodic volunteers. The importance of this domain would suggest the need to stress the gratification derived from the charity walk/run effort and the good feelings derived from helping others.

The third and fourth domain choices, understanding and reactivity, are related and suggest that the episodic volunteers in this study were looking to broaden their base of self-knowledge while addressing their own personal situations, the altruistic and the

self-referential needs for personal growth. The final domain (protective) uses the volunteer effort to address personal feelings that may include guilt, especially survivor guilt when the effort highlights a health issue, and other related feelings. The five top chosen domains create an interesting blend addressing the need to give to others while gaining personal satisfaction and growth. In this case, the potential for personal growth through episodic participation is strongly connected to the overarching and most powerfully held feelings of the value of giving to others.

Consistent with literature on the formal volunteer, these findings suggest that the episodic volunteer who participates by walking/running in a charity effort is a person who is most often a married, educated female, affluent by societal standards, is in the middle years, who self-defines as being health conscious and a frequent exerciser and who chose the particular walk/run on the basis of the cause.

There were some interesting findings that might challenge assumptions by those involved in volunteer recruitment. For example, the domain of social interaction was not considered as one of the top five by the females in the study while it was the fifth for the males. Perhaps recruitment efforts for men should/could stress this as part of a benefit for volunteering. In making efforts toward having volunteer walkers or runners repeatedly return to the effort, it is important to note that recognition was rated in the top half of the domains. This suggests that organizers of episodic volunteer walk/run efforts be attentive to the recognition and appreciation needs of episodic volunteers. This could be accomplished in numerous ways, such as e-mail thank yous, give aways such as hats, badges or shirts, volunteer appreciation luncheons, etc.

## Limitations

The phenomenon of episodic volunteering, while identified in the last two decades, has received limited attention in the literature on volunteering. In part, this lack relates to factors described earlier as well as the inherent difficulty in tracking a volunteer who participates sporadically and in varied events. What enabled the research reported in this article was the ability to work with a running club that tracked participants in various charity events. As such, the ability to locate episodic volunteers must be seen as a limitation of this study; in addition, the sample was a convenience sample and the findings therefore, can only be inferred to the study participants and not larger groups. A further limitation is that these volunteers were from one geographic area. The format of the questionnaire involved self-reportage and relies on the willingness of the volunteer to participate.

However, even with these limitations, this study can be seen as a snapshot of the episodic volunteer and initiates a beginning understanding of what motivates the volunteer to participate in a charity walk/run. Esmond and Dunlop (2004), the developers of the VMI, described the instrument as "...a profile [that] can only serve to provide a descriptive account of a volunteer's motivation" (p. 57). Clearly, further studies are called for to further refine understanding of this form of volunteer activity.

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**Episodic Volunteerism after Hurricane Katrina:  
Insights from Pass Christian, Mississippi**

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**Abstract**

*Volunteers and volunteer resource managers play critical roles in the response following a natural disaster. Episodic volunteerism, a key aspect of volunteerism today, has become increasingly important in the disaster recovery process. This article examines episodic volunteerism in the context of the recovery from Hurricane Katrina with a focus on events in the small Mississippi Gulf Coast town of Pass Christian. Drawing on a case study approach using field work, interviews, and secondary resources to collect data, the authors examine the roles of volunteer resource managers in coordinating the volunteer response. Along with a discussion of the nature of episodic volunteerism in Pass Christian, the authors suggest new strategies for volunteer resource managers in engaging episodic volunteers.*

**Keywords:**

episodic, volunteers, Hurricane Katrina, Mississippi

**Authors' Note:** The authors wish to acknowledge their appreciation for support of this initiative provided by Millersville State University, and the Center for the Study of Disasters and Extreme Events at Oklahoma State University.

**Introduction**

Episodic volunteerism refers to intermittent, short-term, or task-specific volunteering. These kinds of volunteers have long existed, a fact clearly recognized by Macduff (1991a, p. 19) who coined the actual term "episodic volunteering" in 1990 and published her first book on the topic the following year. Macduff expressed surprise at the fact that episodic volunteering was being received by those in the volunteering

community as such an innovative concept. By drawing attention to the short-term volunteer, however, she hoped to improve the strategies for volunteer management, many of which had focused primarily on the "traditional" or long-term volunteer (Macduff 1991b).

Volunteer resource managers know far too well the enormity of the task of organizing and managing volunteer labor and most would agree

that episodic volunteerism presents a series of additional challenges. Weighing the costs and benefits of episodic volunteers, for example, is not always a straightforward exercise. On the one hand, the irregular availability of some episodic volunteers can present a planning nightmare. On the other hand, episodic volunteers may play a crucial role in enhancing social capital and, more broadly, civil society (Handy & Brudney, 2007).

The focus in this study involved the intersection of episodic volunteerism and disaster recovery with an emphasis on the role of the volunteer resource manager (VRM). The study considers some of the ways that episodic volunteerism factored in the disaster recovery process as it unfolded in Pass Christian following Hurricane Katrina. In the process it serves to initiate a dialogue on ways of improving the coordination of episodic volunteers after a massive natural disaster.

### **Methods**

The authors developed a qualitative methodology involving a single-case study approach using interviews, field work, and both primary and secondary resources (including a thorough search of the literature) to collect data (McNabb, 2002). After establishing contacts with church officials in Pass Christian, the authors conducted intensive field work there in the spring of 2007. Additional contacts were made using a snowball or chain sampling method to generate referrals to other key individuals (Patton, 1990). In-depth personal interviews were conducted with VRMs and episodic volunteers.

An important part of the field work involved naturalistic and

participatory observation, including riding in the back of pick-up trucks with episodic volunteers as they were transported to different work sites and helping volunteers load and unload project materials at the different sites. Photograph albums recording the different groups of episodic volunteers as well as some of their personal memories and experiences proved to be an extremely valuable and unanticipated primary resource that shed additional light on volunteerism in Pass Christian. Concern about impeding or otherwise interfering with the work of the VRMs and episodic volunteers shaped the entire data collection phase of the research.

Data analysis and interpretation followed standardized procedures for qualitative case studies. Data were organized and extraneous information was separated. Additional study of the data was necessary to identify key themes and patterns, and to develop coding categories that would help assess the role of VRMs and the phenomenon of episodic volunteerism following a massive natural disaster. The findings reported here suggest some new strategies for improving the efficiency of volunteer management.

### **Previous Research on Volunteering and Disasters**

A diverse body of literature documents volunteers, volunteering, and volunteer resource management following disasters. For example, researchers have examined motivations of volunteers (Clary et al., 1998; Fitch, 1987; Knoke & Wright-Isak, 1982; Lammers, 1991; O'Connell, 1983; Ostwald & Runge, 2004) and factors that attract persons to specific types of volunteer organizations (Cook, 1984; Florin, Jones, & Wandersman, 1986).

Studies show that youth are more likely to volunteer if they believe they can positively affect others' lives (Karafantis & Levy, 2004) and that personal interests and self-realization can be more important factors in a decision to volunteer than a sense of obligation or a service ethic (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003). Volunteerism has been shown to be higher among persons with greater educational attainment (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1986; Menchik & Weisbrod, 1987) and income (Auslander & Litwin, 1988; Palisi & Korn, 1989).

A 2006 study by the Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) found that recent growth in volunteering has been driven by older teenagers (ages 16-19), mid-life adults (ages 45-64) and older adults (ages 65 and older). Research has identified different types of volunteers including episodic, long-term, virtual, and cross-national (Brudney, 2005; Handy & Brudney, 2007; Macduff 1990, 1991a, 1991b). The popularity of short-term volunteer experiences today is attributable to increasingly busy work schedules and social commitments (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2006; Handy, Brodeur, & Cnaan, 2006; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003).

Volunteer work following a disaster or extreme event can attract significant interest within the public at large. In January of 2003, more than 25,000 volunteers turned out to assist with the recovery effort following Space Shuttle Columbia's tragic breakup (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2003). The importance of volunteers and volunteer groups in the wake of human and natural disasters has driven research to document the effectiveness and impacts of volunteer

assistance activities (Brennan, Flint, & Barnett, 2005; Drabek & McEntire, 2002; Jackson, Baker, Ridgely, Bartis, & Linn, 2003; Quarantelli & Dynes, 1970; Wolensky, 1979; Zakour, Gillespie, Sherraden, & Streeter, 1991). A number of studies have examined problems associated with spontaneous volunteers, defined as untrained persons who rush to disaster sites in large numbers. For example, Fernandez, Barbera and van Dorp (2006) observed that the absence of strong volunteer management can create life-threatening hazards such as the improper preparation of food or the distribution of contaminated food. Others noted that spontaneous volunteers can distract or interfere with the work of emergency personnel (Barsky, Trainor, Torres, & Aguirre, 2007; Florida Commission on Community Service, 2000; Tierney, 1994). In many cases spontaneous volunteers have been shown to lack skills and logistical support needed to contribute to relief efforts in meaningful ways (Lowe & Fothergill, 2003, Points of Light Foundation, 2008; Tan, 2006).

Faith-based groups have emerged as an important source of volunteer labor and support following disasters (Sutton, 2002; Carafano, Marshall, & Hammond, 2007; Holcombe, 2007; Koenig, 2006; Lacie, 2007). Spring and Grimm (2004) pointed out that about half of religious congregations offering social service programs focus on emergency services. Volunteer support from faith-based groups along the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina was considerable, and has been estimated to have exceeded \$600 billion in equivalent labor cost (Townsend 2007). Rodríguez, Trainor and Quarantelli (2006) explained that in the aftermath of Katrina, religious organizations that were already

accustomed to providing help in distributing food and services became “expanded groups” taking on the role of training volunteers. Despite the importance of volunteers following disasters and other extreme events, relatively little research has focused on organizational strategies that work best in facilitating episodic volunteer opportunities (Tierney, Lindell, & Perry, 2001).

**The Case Study: Pass Christian, Mississippi**

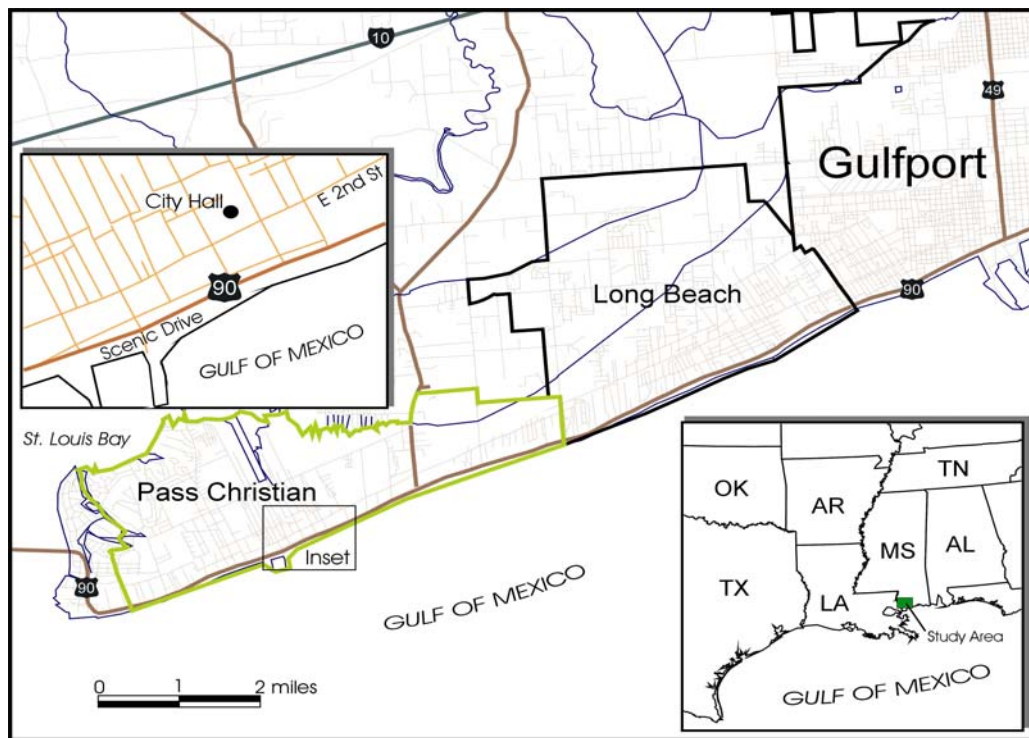
Pass Christian, or "the Pass" as locals call it, is situated about 10 miles west of Gulfport, the state's largest city (Figure 1). Before Katrina, the Pass had a population of approximately 7,000, about one-tenth the size of nearby Gulfport. The city limits of the Pass

include six miles of beachfront property adjacent to Highway 90, Mississippi's southernmost east-to-west transect. This stretch of Highway 90 is known as "Scenic Drive," a reference to the stately homes overlooking the Gulf.

On August 29, 2005, Katrina's eye wall swept just west of the Pass, battering the city with 125 mph winds and inundating it with an estimated 30-foot storm surge. The entire business district of the Pass was destroyed and with it civic anchors such as City Hall, the library, and police station.

Approximately 1,600 homes, or 80% of the residential dwellings in the Pass, were completely destroyed. Today the population of the Pass stands at about 2,000 people, a decline of 73% since Katrina.

Figure 1. Location of Pass Christian, Mississippi



### **Coordinating Episodic Volunteers in the Pass**

One of the first citizen volunteers to arrive in the Pass was a man by the name of Randy who drove from Texas and established a point of distribution (POD) on the beach for disbursing food and clothing. As relief transitioned to reconstruction he found himself coordinating increasingly larger numbers of volunteers involved in small projects that included making repairs to damaged homes and buildings. Among disaster experts the consensus is that the responsibility of volunteer coordination should fall to a local group rather than consume the resources of the agencies managing the disaster recovery. The fact that Randy was willing to assume this leadership role was an important factor in the overall recovery of the Pass.

"Randy's Rangers" was the name subsequently given to the ad-hoc volunteer management program initiated by Randy. For nearly a year and a half he worked from a minimal tent-based camp. By January 2007, with help from some of the volunteers, a more substantial camp had been created with room for about 60 people. The camp included six large, elevated tents with heavy canvas walls, tarp-covered roofs, and showers.

Randy became a recognized coordinator of volunteers and a local contact for maintaining lists of job tasks and priorities, supervising and managing volunteers, and accommodating groups. Volunteer groups interested in coming to the Pass are put in touch with Randy so that the timing of their visit, length of stay, kinds of jobs needing assistance, and other details can be arranged. By our estimate, approximately 80% or more of the volunteers who have stayed at Randy's camp have come as members of

mission groups and faith-based high schools and colleges.

What is perhaps most fascinating about Randy's Rangers is that they demonstrate every aspect of episodic volunteering: short-term, one-time, recurrent, and task-specific. The bulk of the groups and their members who served as volunteers came to the Pass only once and stayed on average about a week. For example, a number of college and university organizations offered "alternative spring breaks" in which student volunteers could spend their time off assisting with the post-Katrina recovery.

Interestingly, there existed a kind of "double recurrence" of episodic volunteers, i.e. there were several examples of volunteer groups that came on a recurrent basis and occasionally two to four specific individuals within those groups came for a second, or rarely, a third or fourth visit. These trends can largely be attributed to the decision of officials within the American Baptist Church to "adopt" the city of Pass Christian. More specifically, the American Baptist Church East (associated with the states of Indiana and Kentucky) made a tremendous long-term commitment to the recovery of the Pass. It launched "Project Reclaim" which focuses on rebuilding the city and has a stated goal of providing a minimum of 10 volunteers a week for a period of two years (Goodyear, 2006). In addition, Randy has served as a local contact for the American Baptist Church East and helps coordinate the volunteers from its many different congregations. News of this base camp for volunteers in the Pass spread contagiously via regional newsletters of the American Baptist Church to other congregations in the Midwest, creating an identifiable source

Table 1  
*Five Leading States Sending Specific Volunteer Numbers to Randy's Rangers in Pass Christian*

<b>State</b>	<b>Number of Volunteers</b>
Indiana	190
West Virginia	82
North Carolina	41
Kentucky	39
Wisconsin	37

area for the episodic volunteers to the Pass (Table 1).

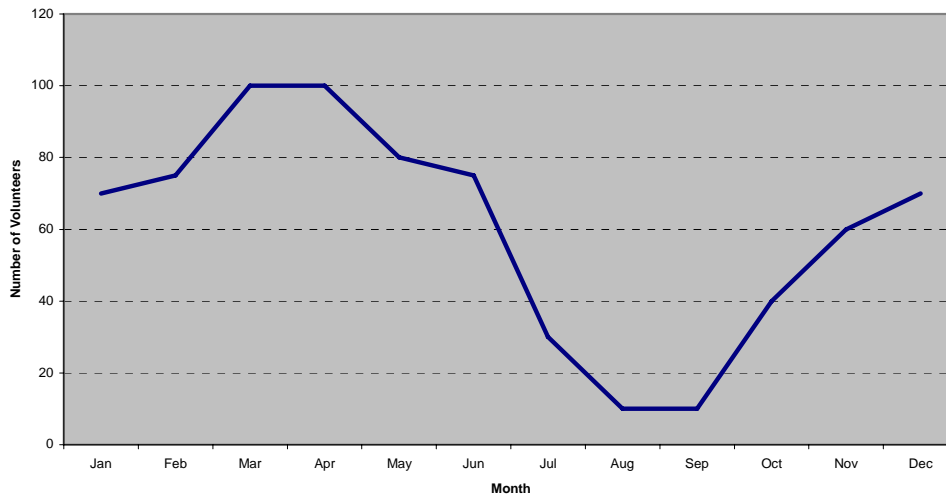
As is typical of episodic volunteers, a few of them could provide specialized expertise such as electrical wiring, hanging dry wall, or roofing. By contrast, most of the episodic volunteers who served as Randy's Rangers performed a variety of highly specific tasks like spraying bleach, patching holes, or moving debris. For nearly a year and a half after the storm, recovery efforts were, with one major exception, largely focused on clean-up and debris removal rather than on rebuilding. The Mennonite Disaster Service constituted the exception to this trend. The Mennonites also assisted with clean-up, but because they are able to draw on a pool of skilled laborers as episodic volunteers, they could commence rebuilding sooner and with significant efficiency. As one informant explained, the Mennonites are the "Cadillac of volunteers." In some ways, however, the fact that there was such great need for volunteers to perform basic tasks like clean-up and debris removal made the job of assigning the episodic volunteers task-specific duties somewhat easier. The issue of the availability of skilled versus unskilled volunteer labor still presents an enduring obstacle to the long-term recovery of the Pass.

### **Modeling the Volunteer Response**

The coordination of volunteers by Randy's Rangers was exemplary though not entirely problem-free. In terms of managing volunteers, coordinators faced two basic problems. The first was the issue of skilled volunteers versus unskilled volunteers, long considered an obstacle to the efficient use of volunteer labor. The second issue concerned the seasonality of the arrival of volunteers. To date, there does not appear to be any treatment of these issues within either the volunteer management or disaster literature. Therefore, the model presented here is a work in progress but attempts to integrate these two issues.

By dividing the post-disaster period into three stages, it is possible to visualize the changing needs of the community and, in turn, the kinds of volunteers that are most desirable. During the first stage, the focus is on preservation of life, and professionals trained in emergency response are essential. Unskilled volunteers, though their intentions are good, can actually impede the initial response. Stage 2 involves recovery, and rebuilding occurs in stage 3. Projects coordinated by Randy fall into stages 2 and 3, where volunteer coordination is fundamental to a rapid recovery but is necessarily difficult to organize.

Figure 2. Seasonality of volunteers based on a hypothetical maximum of 100



Because of the extent of the devastation caused by Katrina, the stage 2 phase lasted for about one year. While this extended the need for unskilled volunteers, it also introduced a new set of problems. Randy found that he was overwhelmed with volunteers over collegiate spring breaks and in the early part of the summer. Then, later in the summer, the volunteers dropped off (Figure 2). The fact of the matter is that the heat and humidity of southern Mississippi summers were deterrents to volunteers. Depending on the magnitude and location of the disaster, the seasonality issue will not always be a problem. The first step in solving it, however, requires that VRMs be aware that this is a potential problem and take measures to identify episodic volunteers who are more flexible with their time.

A related problem that emerged involved the concept of "efficient days." This is a term that Randy used to explain the cycle of an episodic volunteer arriving on site, gaining familiarity with the place, understanding the requirements of a specific job task, and

then departing. He expressed frustration at the fact that if a volunteer came for a single week, he was only able to get about two "efficient days of work" out of her/him. The problem of "efficient days" was compounded by the lack of geographic awareness that any person experiences when s/he arrives in a new place for the first time.

Approximately 8,000 volunteers have now stayed at Randy's camp (Orr, 2008), the majority of whom had never been to that part of the Gulf Coast before. Moreover, the loss of street signs and visible landmarks as a result of Katrina's devastation further complicated the ability of volunteers to orient themselves. For these reasons it is essential that at least one person in the disaster-affected area function as a "geographic liaison." The role of this person would be to introduce volunteers to the geographic context of the disaster area. This would involve reviewing the layout of the volunteer campsite as well as the relationship of the volunteer camp to key intersections or points of significance. This information could be



communicated before the volunteers travel to the disaster-affected area via a conference call, or, ideally, via a Web site with a map and photos. Alternatively, it could be presented in the format of an orientation session once they arrive at the volunteer campsite. Establishing a geographic liaison should not simply be seen as extending the bureaucracy of disaster recovery and volunteer coordination; rather, it is essential to the smooth operation of the long-term recovery process. Indeed, Pass Christian would have benefited from having a local geographic liaison.

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## Understanding the Commitment and Motivation of Episodic Volunteers for a Large Sporting Event

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### Abstract

*Research indicates that volunteers are a critical part of staging a successful short-term and/or annual sporting event. Thus, understanding factors impacting volunteers' commitment and motivation is essential. The purpose of this paper was to uncover the importance of the factors that contribute to volunteer commitment and motivation of episodic volunteers at a large sporting event. The researchers used a convenience sample of 255 volunteers at a large professional women's golf event. The results revealed a four-factor structure of both volunteer commitment and motivation. The authors suggest that context-specific factors related to volunteer commitment and motivation exist and should be considered by event managers of volunteer resources.*

### Key Words:

episodic, volunteers, commitment, motivation, sporting events

### Introduction

Recruiting and retaining volunteers, as well as managing their contribution to events and programs, are of paramount concern to administrators in many diverse contexts. Large-scale sporting events are one such context, since volunteers are critical to the staging of annual, short-term sporting events. Such volunteers are termed episodic since they involve volunteer opportunities for short durations of service, usually three

to four months or less (Edwards, 2005; Macduff, 1991). The Olympic Games, world championships, and professional events utilize thousands of episodic volunteers in order to deliver competitions and stage events (Ralston, Downward, & Lumsdon, 2004). Similarly, smaller communities running local events also rely heavily on episodic volunteers to plan, organize, and host activities (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006). Thus, volunteer-supported sporting

events are an effective context for analyzing why individuals contribute time and expertise as volunteers. Research in this area would help administrators and managers of volunteer resources maximize volunteer contributions (Green & Chalip, 2004).

Building on definitions from the volunteer management literature (Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996; Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006; Ramirez-Valles, 2006), for this study the authors considered “volunteer” as work undertaken by an individual who is unpaid, of his/her own free will within a designated voluntary position, in an effort to assist with the delivery of a sporting event. Understanding sources of volunteer commitment and motivation is critical for managers of volunteers within organizations and episodic special events. Further, understanding such dimensions of volunteer behavior can assist administrators and managers of volunteer resources in recruiting, retaining, and managing volunteers. These factors are perhaps even more important for large episodic events requiring sport-specific knowledge and large numbers of volunteers (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007).

## **Review of Related Literature**

### *Commitment*

Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982) addressed the issue of organizational commitment by developing an understanding of “what” an individual was committed to: the organization, the cause, or the community supporting the cause. Catano, Pond, and Kelloway (2001) compared volunteers in different organizations to determine the importance of context in understanding volunteer commitment. Their findings suggested that psychological involvement (i.e., the volunteer’s belief in the importance of the activity) impacted volunteer commitment in different ways across divergent contexts,

such as medical and management fields. In a study exploring volunteers of a large sporting event, MacLean and Hamm (2007) found that volunteer commitment was related to sport-specific factors of the particular event (e.g., sense of pride associated with being involved with the sport, love for the sport, etc.) emphasizing the importance of context in recruiting and retaining volunteers for particular events.

### **Motivation**

While significant attention has been devoted to understanding volunteer motivation, there appears to be little consensus regarding volunteer motives both within and outside the sport event context (Cuskelly et al., 2006). More often, researchers have concluded that volunteers are attracted to different organizations for diverse reasons (Cuskelly & Harrington, 1997; Hager & Brudney, 2004; Harrison, 1995) and that motivation is both complex and multifaceted (Winniford, Carpenter, & Grider, 1997). Factors such as social recognition or contact, group needs, empowerment, helping others, and expectations of personal benefit have been consistently identified in the literature as volunteer motives (Doherty, 2003; Fisher & Ackerman, 1998; Harrison, 1995; Hibbert, Piacentini, & Dajani, 2003; Unger, 1991). In the context of a large sporting event, MacLean and Hamm (2007) found that volunteer motivation was primarily associated with a desire to be part of the community and to enhance community profile. Similarly, in Doherty’s (2003) research examining volunteers at the 2001 Alliance London *Jeux du Canada* Games, the most significant reason for volunteering was contributing to the community; however Doherty also found that the second most important reason for volunteering was personal enrichment.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to explore the commitment and motivation of volunteers at a large episodic sport event. The population for the study was more than 1,000 volunteers at the 2006 CN Canadian Women's Open, a large, annual professional women's golf event governed by a not-for-profit sport organization and hosted annually at different locations across Canada. A convenience sampling approach (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006) was used in which 400 surveys were distributed in person; a response rate of 64% was achieved ( $n = 255$ ) with no follow-up with non-respondents.

## *Measures*

The revised MacLean and Hamm (2007) survey of commitment and motivation for volunteers at large sporting events was distributed at the orientation meetings prior to the commencement of the championship. Each volunteer was provided a print copy of the survey which collected information regarding his/her: (a) commitment, (b) motivation, and (c) demographics. In order to measure commitment, a slightly modified version of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday et al., 1982) was used, where each survey item was tailored to represent the Canadian Women's Open Golf Championship. The questionnaire employed 45 items and measured responses on a 7-point Likert-type scale from "least important (1)" to "most important (7)." Examples of items included: I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the sport of golf be successful and my community really inspires the very best in me in the way of volunteer performance. Acceptable levels of both reliability and validity for the OCQ have been established in the literature (Aryee, Wyatt, & Min, 1990; Leong, Huang,

& Hsu, 2003) and were established to be  $\alpha = 0.82$  and  $.70$ , respectively, by Mowday et al. (1982).

Accompanying the commitment items, a form of the Strigas and Jackson (2003) motivation survey was used comprising 40 items, each measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale from "not important at all (1)" to "extremely important (5)." Examples of items included: I wanted to help make the event a success and volunteering makes me feel better about myself. The scale has been shown to be internally valid and reports reliability scores of  $\alpha = .93$  in studies involving sporting event volunteers (i.e. Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998). Demographic information was also collected, which included gender, age, marital status, employment status, and income.

The reliability of the quantitative survey instrument was examined by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Acceptable reliability coefficients ranging from  $.81$  to  $.92$  in the commitment scale and  $.61$  to  $.89$  in the motivation scale were revealed. The findings of internal consistency demonstrate the reliability of the implemented survey instrument (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 1993).

## *Analysis*

Descriptive statistics were compiled to provide a profile of the volunteers at this specific sporting event. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was calculated to extract survey items that most concisely described commitment and motivation factors pertaining to the volunteer activities of the sample group (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006). Once these factors were determined, descriptive statistics for each factor were analyzed to uncover the hierarchy of item ratings.



Table 1  
*Demographic Profile of Participants*

Demographic	N	%
<b>Age</b>		
19-25 years	7	2.9
26-35 years	6	2.6
36-45 years	26	10.1
46-55 years	87	34.0
56-65 years	84	32.9
>66 years	38	14.7
Missing	7	2.9
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	113	44.3
Female	130	50.9
Missing	12	4.8
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed Part Time	26	10.3
Employed Full Time	177	69.3
Unemployed	22	8.6
Retired	8	3.3
Self-Employed	14	5.0
Consultant	1	0.4
Missing	7	3.1
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	36	12.5
Married	104	40.8
Divorced	3	1.1
Common Law	99	39.0
Widow	8	3.3
Missing	8	3.3
<b>Income</b>		
<\$35,000	12	4.6
\$35,000 - \$50,000	26	10.3
\$51,000 - \$75,000	58	22.8
\$76,000 - \$100,000	36	14.0
>\$100,000	88	34.4
Missing	35	13.8

## Results

### *Demographics and Descriptive Statistics*

The demographic profile of the volunteers at the 2006 CN Canadian Women's Open is presented in Table 1. In general, volunteers were female (50.9%), aged 46 to 65 years (66.9%),

married/common law (79.8%), full time employed (69.3%), making an average of \$76,000 plus per year (48.4%).

Each participant was asked to rate the importance of the items within the survey in relation to their commitment and motivation for volunteering at the 2006 CN

Canadian Women's Open. The mean values and standard deviations for those findings are shown in Table 2. Specifically, the highest rated commitment items were: *commitment to exerting effort as a volunteer to help the sport of golf be successful* (M = 5.74; S.D. = 1.36) and *commitment to achieving a sense of community pride through the volunteer role* (M = 5.63; S.D. = 1.38). Conversely, the lowest rated commitment items were: *caring for the fate of sports in general* (M = 4.84; S.D. = 1.69) and *caring for the fate of the community* (M = 4.71; S.D. = 1.77). Similarly, the highest rated motivation items were: *volunteering to help make the event a success* (M = 4.54; S.D. = 0.81) and *volunteering in order to interact with others* (M = 3.88; S.D. = 1.05). The lowest rated motivation items were: *volunteering to feel less lonely* (M = 1.61; S.D. = 1.08) and *volunteering to slow down the pace of the volunteer's life* (M = 1.59; 1.02).

#### *Exploratory Factor Analysis*

The results of the factor analyses revealed four factors associated with large event sport volunteers for each of the commitment and motivation models. The number of factors identified was deemed appropriate by: a) identifying the number of factors from previous literature; and b) including factors with the appropriate level of statistical significance as determined by Tabachnick and Fidell (2006). For volunteer commitment, four distinct factors accounted for 63.9% of the variance in the item responses and were identified as commitment to: "enhancing the sport and/or community," "sport of golf," "volunteerism," and "community pride." Item factor loadings are noted in Table 3. Of particular interest is the factor "enhancing the sport and/or community", which

included several of the top rated commitment items (see Tables 2 and 3).

The "enhancement of sport and/or the community" factor included any item that referred to a commitment to improving sport in the community. The "sport of golf" factor provided a number of items that demonstrated the importance of the sport of golf (specifically) to the participants. "Volunteerism" emphasized the commitment of these volunteers to the act of volunteerism itself, which includes a desire to provide service as a volunteer in any capacity. Finally, the "community pride" factor was categorized by the desire of the volunteers to promote their community through their volunteer efforts.

Four factors were also noted for volunteer motivation, which together explained 61.4% of the variance in the item responses. These were labeled as "leisure," "purposive," "egoistic," and "external influences." Item factor loadings for the motivation items are shown in Table 4. Specifically, the motivation factor "purposive" contained a number of the items that were rated as the most important motivators by the sample of volunteers (see Tables 2 and 4).

Labeled by the definitions provided by Strigas and Jackson (2003), "leisure" represents motives related to the individual's need for various leisure choices; "purposive", involves motives related to the desire of the volunteers to benefit the end state of the sport event through their volunteer actions; "egoistic" represents motivations that include an individual's need for self esteem, self enhancement, and self development; and "external influences" assesses the extent to which the volunteers are engaged in volunteer activities that are influenced by motives related to factors outside of the volunteer's immediate control (e.g., significant other's involvement).

Table 2  
*Commitment and Motivation Items*

Items	Mean	S.D.
<b>Commitment</b>		
I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the sport of golf be successful	5.74	1.36
My community really inspires the very best in me in the way of volunteer performance	5.63	1.38
I am extremely glad that I chose my community to volunteer for over others I was considering at the time I joined	5.63	1.36
I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help sports, in general, be successful	5.63	1.38
I find that my values and the values of golf are very similar	5.61	1.44
Sports really inspire the very best in me in the way of volunteer performance	5.59	1.36
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this Women's Open	5.58	1.49
I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help my community be successful"	5.52	1.35
For me this is the best of all possible communities for which to volunteer	5.52	1.32
I find that my values and the values of sport are very similar	5.45	1.44
I am extremely glad that I chose sports to volunteer for over other activities I was considering at the time I joined	5.37	1.45
I would accept almost any type of volunteer assignment in order to keep volunteering	5.32	1.49
I would accept almost any type of volunteer assignment in order to keep volunteering for golf championships	5.27	1.60
I am proud to tell others that I am part of my community	5.27	1.48
I speak of my community to my friends as a great one to volunteer for	5.23	1.49
For me sports are the best of all possible activities for which to volunteer	5.21	1.49
I would accept almost any type of volunteer assignment in order to keep volunteering for this Women's Open	5.17	1.56
I would accept almost any type of volunteer assignment in order to keep volunteering for my community	4.96	1.61
I really care about the fate of sports in general	4.84	1.69
I really care about the fate of my community	4.71	1.77
<b>Motivation</b>		
I wanted to help make the event a success	4.54	0.81
I wanted to interact with others	3.88	1.05
I wanted to put something back into the community	3.87	1.17
Volunteering activities energize me	3.83	1.10

Table 2 (*continued*)

Factor	Mean	S.D.
Volunteering makes me feel better about myself	3.56	1.19
Volunteering for this golf championship enables the organizational committee to provide more services for less money	3.55	1.40
I wanted to work with people from different age groups and/or backgrounds	3.24	1.37
Golf championships mirror our national heritage, image, and values	3.01	1.30
I wanted to challenge my abilities	2.99	1.42
I wanted to discover new interests	2.96	1.45
I wanted to improve my skills and abilities	2.66	1.43
I wanted to gain a feeling of belonging	2.07	1.27
I wanted to get away from the responsibilities of my everyday life	1.96	1.29
I want to continue a family tradition of volunteering in sporting events	1.88	1.34
I wanted to relieve the stress and the tension of everyday life	1.74	1.17
Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles	1.67	1.15
By volunteering, I feel less lonely	1.61	1.08
I wanted to slow down the pace of my life	1.59	1.02

### Discussion and Implications for Volunteer Administrators

The results suggest that a four factor model of commitment (see Table 3) and a four factor model of motivation (see Table 4) regarding large sport event episodic volunteers are both reliable and valid for the study convenience sample within this setting. The focus of this paper will now shift to a discussion of the results in comparison to previous research and will subsequently suggest future implications for both scholars and practitioners.

Fairley et al. (2007) acknowledged that the commitment and motivation factors of large event volunteers yield an interesting and different lens for examination compared with other contexts of volunteerism. Similarly, work by MacLean and Hamm (2007) suggested that large sporting events, such as golf's Canadian Women's Open, which is hosted in a different city each year, require context-specific models of volunteer motivation and commitment. As suggested

by Fairley et al. and supported by the current study, large event volunteers have specific needs and desires, and must be understood and examined as a unique sub-group.

The results indicated that the lowest commitment items were "caring for the fate of sports in general" and "caring for the fate of the community" compared to the highest rated items "helping golf be successful" and "community pride". Perhaps these latter two commitment factors are considered more immediate and observable by volunteers, as opposed to being committed to the "fate of something", which could be perceived to be long-term and unobservable. As such, practitioners are encouraged to make activities and experiences immediately relevant to volunteers, positively impacting the volunteers' commitment and, in turn, retention. Specifically, it is suggested that administrators and managers of volunteer resources and large sport event coordinators should develop strategies that highlight volunteers' direct contributions to the event

and the community, and implement these strategies prior to, during, and after the volunteers' involvement. For example, during the volunteer orientation period, a volunteer newsletter could be circulated which outlines the specific impact that each general volunteer role has on ensuring the success of the event. If these newsletters were updated with pictures and stories about the impact of the volunteers and circulated again towards the end of the event, each volunteer would be able to explicitly see how their actions have contributed to the success of the sport event.

In addition, in order to address these volunteers' commitment to their community, sport event managers could enlist the aid of "community champions" to promote the benefits of volunteering and how it enhances community pride. These "champions" could encourage those who are passionate about sport and involved in sport as participants to extend their involvement and take on roles as volunteers.

The results also suggest that episodic volunteers at sport events are motivated by "making the event a success and interacting with others", rather than linking solely to motivators related to personal needs. Thus, practitioners should focus on motivating volunteers by identifying how their efforts directly benefit others and exploiting items of motivation reflected in the "purposive" factor results of this study. For example, volunteer administrators can link specific volunteer roles to the fulfillment of the goals and objectives of the event. During volunteer orientation, rather than simply giving each volunteer a description of their volunteer duties, administrators could use role description materials to ensure that volunteers are aware of how their role fits into the larger event goals. Volunteer committee chairs could then be required to ensure that these goals were promoted,

monitored, and evaluated throughout the event. This would provide volunteers with a purpose, which, as the current results suggest, is an important motivator for large event volunteers. Further, administrators should ensure that all role descriptions include sufficient opportunity for volunteers to interact with others.

Sport practitioners can also use the results of this research to effectively target and recruit potential episodic volunteers. For example, both "purposive" and "leisure" factor items were significant motivators for this sample. The purposive factor suggests that volunteering activity enables people to be involved in giving back to their communities while having meaningful interaction with others. Organizers of other large sport events should promote the positive, interactive environment of the event and attempt to provide a volunteer experience that connects peoples' desire to serve their communities with their desires to use their volunteer experience to achieve self-fulfillment. For example, organizers can promote the social benefits of volunteering by having activities that focus on recognition and social interaction such as volunteer appreciation receptions or dinners. Ensuring that the resources are available to properly encourage, support, and communicate with volunteers will reinforce their motivation and commitment to continue volunteering. To serve the "leisure" motivation, sport event organizers such as those organizing golf tournaments, should also emphasize the volunteer experience as a leisure pursuit by allowing people to select tasks that are appealing in terms of type (e.g., how closely the role is connected to the game of golf) and amount of time required, as well as ensuring that tasks which allow for partnering with friends are included.

Table 3  
*Exploratory Factor Analysis – Commitment*

Factor	Factor Loadings
<b>Factor 1: <u>Enhancing the sport and/or community</u></b>	
I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help my community be successful.	.77
I speak of my community to my friends as a great one to volunteer for.	.81
I am extremely glad that I chose sports to volunteer for over other activities I was considering at the time I joined.	.77
For me sports are the best of all possible activities for which to volunteer.	.76
I am proud to tell others that I am part of my community.	.72
I would accept almost any type of volunteer assignment in order to keep volunteering for my community.	.72
Sports really inspire the very best in me in the way of volunteer performance.	.73
I really care about the fate of sports in general.	.55
<b>Factor 2: <u>Sport of golf</u></b>	
I find that my values and the values of golf are very similar.	.72
I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the sport of golf be successful.	.65
I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help sports, in general, be successful.	.73
I find that my values and the values of sport are very similar.	.72
<b>Factor 3: <u>Volunteerism</u></b>	
I would accept almost any type of volunteer assignment in order to keep volunteering.	.73
I would accept almost any type of volunteer assignment in order to keep volunteering for this Women's Open.	.87
I would accept almost any type of volunteer assignment in order to keep volunteering for golf championships.	.70
I am proud to tell others that I am part of this Women's Open.	.64
<b>Factor 4: <u>Community Pride</u></b>	
I am extremely glad that I chose my community to volunteer for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	.82
I really care about the fate of my community.	.60
For me this is the best of all possible communities for which to volunteer.	.85
My community really inspires the very best in me in the way of volunteer performance.	.81

Table 4  
*Exploratory Factor Analysis – Motivation*

Factor	Factor Loadings
<b>Factor 1: <u>Leisure</u></b>	
I wanted to slow down the pace of my life.	.83
Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles.	.83
I wanted to relieve the stress and the tension of everyday life.	.87
I wanted to get away from the responsibilities of my everyday life.	.78
I wanted to gain a feeling of belonging.	.65
By volunteering, I feel less lonely.	.65
<b>Factor 2: <u>Purposive</u></b>	
Volunteering activities energize me.	.71
I wanted to interact with others.	.75
I wanted to put something back into the community.	.63
I wanted to work with people from different age groups and/or backgrounds.	.68
Volunteering for this golf championship enables the organizational committee to provide more services for less money.	.53
I wanted to help make the event a success.	.56
Volunteering makes me feel better about myself.	.59
<b>Factor 3: <u>Egoistic</u></b>	
I wanted to improve my skills and abilities.	.78
I wanted to challenge my abilities.	.77
I wanted to discover new interests.	.69
<b>Factor 4: <u>External Influences</u></b>	
Golf championships mirror our national heritage, image, and values.	.69
I am genuinely concerned about the particular championship I am serving.	.85
I wanted to continue a family tradition of volunteering in sporting events.	.46

The results suggest that volunteer commitment at the 2006 CN Canadian Women's Open is represented by the following factors: "enhancement of sport and/or community, sport of golf, volunteerism, and community pride". In addition, it was found that motivation is represented by "leisure, purposive, egoistic, and external influences". The eight factor

structure of volunteer commitment and motivation fills a gap in the literature by providing specific factors related to large event episodic volunteering for future examination in similar sport, and potentially non-sport, settings. The survey results should now be replicated in other non-sport contexts that require large numbers of episodic volunteers, such as community

festivals and events such as World Youth Day. Meanwhile, practitioners are further encouraged to use these research results to develop meaningful strategies for management and retention of volunteers at large events.

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## **A Comparison of Motivations of American and Japanese Volunteers in Ladies Professional Golf Association Tournaments**

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### **Abstract**

*This exploratory study examined and compared primary motives influencing American and Japanese volunteers of the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA). Data were collected from 281 volunteers who participated in LPGA tournament events in America and Japan. Japanese volunteers were found to be more involved in volunteer service due to "Social/Leisure" and "Material" reasons, while American volunteers were found to be associated with "Egoistic" and "Purposive" motivations. There was no significant difference in the "External Influences" factor. The study contributes to personnel and administration research and provides insight on the ways in which the LPGA event volunteers are managed in America and Japan.*

### **Key Words:**

volunteers, motivation, culture, professional golf

### **Introduction**

Within the last 20 years, the sport industry has seen a great movement towards globalization. This has affected every aspect of the sport industry, including volunteer resource management. The effort of volunteers is key to the success of various sport events, especially in this new and ever-changing sport business environment (Green & Chalip, 2004; Tsigilis, Koustelios, Grammatikopoulos, & Theodorakis, 2006). The Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) is no exception, particularly with its audience and event participants representing international constituents as evidence of this

changing environment and business scope. For these reasons, it is vital that the LPGA consider diversity in not only its audience and athletes, but also within its business core (e.g., knowledge and service workers) and embrace ways to improve its management of their most valuable resources for sport service delivery, volunteers.

Volunteers and volunteer resource management have been recognized as serving important roles in sports (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007; Strigas & Jackson, 2003). In fact, volunteers have emerged as a critical component of sport service delivery (Green & Chalip, 1998) and are recognized

as playing important roles in the overall success of various major sporting events (Riemer, Thomas, & Visio, 2007; Williams, Dossa, & Tompkins, 1995). According to Chelladurai (2006), the economic value of sport volunteers' contributions exceeds \$50 billion (USD), which is reflected in the ever-increasing demand of many sport organizations for volunteers. Without volunteers, many sport organizations would have difficulty surviving as they play such an integral role in the delivery of their events (Kim, Chelladurai, & Trail, 2007). Thus, it is critical to understand the motivations of sport volunteers due to this growing need of sport organizations, the obvious importance of volunteers, and the evidently diverse volunteer demographics due to globalization of the sport business (Hardin, Koo, King, & Zdroik, 2007).

More specifically, it is critical for administrators and marketers of sport events to better understand volunteer motivation so as to develop better strategies to attract them to participate and ultimately return to volunteer at future events (Han, 2008; Jackson & Strigas, 2004). In American sports, volunteers have been commonly utilized as a source for economic advantage as well as to promote civic duty and responsibility. In contrast, sport events in Japan have less commonly depended on volunteers, but are seeking to adopt the American model because of the many benefits anecdotally found in volunteer participation. As seen, there are opportunities for volunteer motivation research to be practically implemented.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was: 1) to explore international LPGA volunteer demographics, and 2) to compare primary motives that influence American and Japanese LPGA volunteers' decision to participate. The study will contribute to sport personnel and management research

and provide insight on improving management of LPGA tournament events in America and Japan.

### **Review of Literature**

The present study seeks to understand who is volunteering for Japanese and American LPGA tournament events and why they are involved in this capacity. It is imperative that considerations of cultural differences and motives are addressed, as a response to the advent of internationalization in sport. Therefore, the following will discuss cultural differences and motivations as the framework of the present study.

#### *Cultural Differences*

Hofstede (2001) contended that American and Japanese cultural attitudes are comparatively different. In studies of volunteerism, these cultural differences relate specifically to the country's attitude and management of volunteers (Pi, 2001). Japanese culture emphasizes volunteering as a reflection of social welfare priorities, a means of solidifying the ideals of community, and of civic duty and obligation (Cusick, 2005; Fukutake, 1989). This is somewhat contrasted with American volunteer culture, which is based on individualism manifested from its pride in a diverse society that consists of many nationalities, races, religions, and creeds (Markus & Kitiyama, 1991).

Japanese culture is heavily influenced by group-oriented and hierarchical characteristics, based on mutual obligation and personal relations, while American culture emphasizes individualism and respecting its diverse peoples. The following will discuss how motives have been conceptualized, as this will relate to further discussion on how culture can influence volunteer motivation.

### *Volunteer Motivation*

Due to the complexity and diversity of volunteer related fields of study, there is no single conceptual model that has received universal support (Winniford, Carpenter, & Grider, 1997). In fact, Serrow (1991) suggested that motivations for volunteering are “complex and variable, potentially encompassing a mixture of self-regarding and other-regarding forces” (p. 546). Previous studies of volunteer motivation have explored the multifaceted aspects of motives, including both intrinsic and extrinsic sources (Cnann & Goldberg-Glen, 1991; Schondel, Shields, & Orel, 1992). For example, Miller (1985) explored volunteers in three social service agencies and found intrinsic value for those who were engaged in volunteering. Specifically, volunteers rated the desirability of potential outcomes of their behavior as well as the likelihood that those outcomes would occur, and it was found that those whose regular employment failed to satisfy their needs for psychological growth tended to be involved in volunteering. They expected volunteer work to fulfill those needs and were satisfied with volunteering to the extent that they felt personally in control of their lives. While some volunteer research discussed intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, this study is based on the motivation factors found in Strigas (2001), as his scale was modified for the use of assessing volunteers in the sport setting. The following will discuss studies related to these five factors (i.e., Social/Leisure, Material, Egoistic, Purposive and External Influences) and will readdress the specifics of Strigas’ conceptualization of volunteer motivation factors.

### *Volunteer Motivation Factors*

Egoism *and* altruism are two major constructs that have been explored in many studies about volunteer motivation (Batson,

1991; Fitch, 1987; Martin, 1994). Martin suggested that theories highlighting egoism focused on self-seeking as the primary motivation for volunteering, whereas theories emphasizing altruism asserted that a significant motivation for volunteering is helping others. Similarly, Fitch supported the idea that Altruism and Self-Serving motives are two major factors that explain volunteerism while Batson focused upon the ultimate goal for volunteering to distinguish between egoistically and altruistically motivated actions.

Caldwell and Andereck (1994) were among the first to conceptualize motivation to volunteer as being composed of various components. Specifically, they proposed three categories of motivations for volunteering: Purposive, Solidary, and Material factors. It was noted that Purposive motives are the desire of the volunteer to make a useful and valuable contribution to society, while Solidary motives address the desire for social interaction, group identification, and networking. Moreover, Material motives are satisfied by substantial profits, such as monetary rewards and memorabilia. It has been noted that Purposive incentives are the strongest motives, followed by Solidary and Material.

Farrell, Johnston, and Twynam (1998) examined and extrapolated the concept of volunteer motivation at the elite sport level. In their study, volunteer motives were thought to include four factors: Purposive, Solidary, External Traditions, and Commitments. The Purposive factor was listed as the most important reason to volunteer. The Purposive and Solidary factors paralleled those described by Caldwell and Andereck (1994). Two new categories that emerged from the analysis by Farrell, Johnston, and Twyman were the External Traditions dimension, which emphasized extrinsic motivations, and the

Commitments dimension, which emphasized expectations from others for volunteering. These new categories appeared to be the lowest ranking reasons in terms of importance.

The present study is based on Strigas' (2001) volunteer motivation scale that emerged as a redeveloped scale to measure volunteer motivation in sport events. Specifically, Strigas investigated primary motives to volunteer in sport and developed a reliable and valid scale to measure volunteer motivation in this setting. A set of exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses revealed the emergence of a five-factor model to explain motivation of volunteers which included: Social/Leisure, Material, Egoistic, Purposive and External Influences. The Social/Leisure factor includes motives related to the individual's needs for social interaction and interpersonal relationships, as well as motives related to the individual's need to relax, "chill out," or to pursue various leisure choices. The Material factor relates to incentives that permit sport volunteers "to carry out a rational calculus of expected utility gain" in exchange for their services; these rewards can be material goods or services (with some of them having a monetary value), or even social status that can easily be translated into a "reward" that carries a material value, while the Egoistic factor involves motives related to the individual's needs for self actualization, self-esteem, and achievement. It expresses the volunteer's need "to look after and/or take care of her/his own interest" (Schondel, Shields, & Orel, 1992, p. 65). Strigas' Purposive factor is similar to that suggested by Clark and Wilson (1961), as well as to the Value factor proposed by Clary, Snyder, Ridge, Copeland, Stukas, Haugen, and Milne (1998). This factor involves motives related to the desire of the volunteers to contribute

to the sport event and the community. Lastly, the External Influences factor assesses the extent to which volunteers are engaged in volunteering activities influenced by factors outside of their immediate control, such as family traditions and the participation of significant others.

Based on the above factors and ultimately on Strigas' conceptualization of volunteer motivation, the present study explored volunteer motivation of Japanese and American LPGA tournament volunteers. The following will discuss the methodology for collecting and analyzing the data.

## **Methods**

### *Sample*

The purpose of this exploratory research was to investigate the demographic as well as differences of motivations between American and Japanese volunteers of LPGA tournament events. Therefore, American and Japanese volunteers of LPGA tournament events (two events in America and two events in Japan) were used as the convenience sample. Questionnaires were distributed to volunteers who participated in LPGA events in America and Japan. The total sample size was 281 participants (59.1% male and 40.6% female; mean age of 52.5 years old).

### *Procedure*

An LPGA executive was contacted via e-mail by the researchers and was asked for contact information of American LPGA tournament event volunteer coordinators. Similarly, an international executive (of the LPGA) was contacted via phone for information regarding Japanese LPGA tournament event volunteer coordinators. Contact information (e-mail and phone numbers) for the respective volunteer coordinators of four tournament events was

given to the researchers by the LPGA executives.

After acquiring their information, the volunteer coordinators of the respective events were contacted via e-mail, which included information and a proposal of the study. When the volunteer coordinators agreed to participate, packets of 50 (one American and two Japanese events) and 100 surveys (one American event), along with research instructions, were sent to each of them via postal mail (i.e., total 250 surveys). The packet included the proposal, directions on how to administer the surveys, the consent forms, surveys, an information sheet for volunteer coordinators, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for the return of surveys. By her own volition, one of the coordinators copied and distributed more surveys. The surveys were distributed throughout the tournament to be completed by the volunteers. A brief description of the study and the study instructions were verbally stated by a volunteer coordinator to the volunteers before the volunteers began completing the surveys. Additionally, the administrators informed the participants of the anonymity of participation and assured them that their status as volunteers would not change if they decided not to participate. Upon completion, the surveys were collected and returned to the researchers. At the completion of data collection and analysis, the volunteer coordinators were sent updated e-mails regarding the study results and were sent golf head covers and golf balls as a token of appreciation for their time and involvement.

#### *Instrumentation*

The Volunteer Motivation Survey (Strigas, 2001) was modified to reference the LPGA Tournament event. The original instrument developed by Strigas (2001) was

based on an item inventory for volunteers gathered by Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991). Although Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen had developed a reliable and valid inventory of motives, it was noted by Strigas (2001) that there was a need to create an instrument that took into account the unique social and psychological motives of sport event volunteers. For this reason, Strigas developed an instrument that was composed of 7 demographic questions and 30 motivational statements, which used 5-point Likert-type scale response options.

The original instrument was created by adapting items to reflect the 5 motivation constructs: 1. Social/Leisure, 2. Material, 3. Egoistic, 4. Purposive, and 5. External Influences. As previously noted, the present instrument is a modified version of the Strigas (2001) Volunteer Motivation Survey.

Since the study involved both American and Japanese participants, the survey was translated into Japanese. Specifically, the process of back translation was implemented, using two different language experts (a professor in the Japanese language department and a Japanese language major student). The survey was translated into Japanese and translated back into English by the same individuals to uncover any meanings lost in translation. No discrepancies were found.

#### *Data Analysis*

Initial descriptive statistics were calculated in order to examine the demographic and participation patterns of the sample. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was utilized to compare volunteer motivation of American and Japanese volunteers of LPGA tournament events on the five volunteer motivation factors.

Table 1  
*Calculated Cronbach's Alphas for the Questionnaire Constructs*

Factors	Number of Items	Alpha Coefficient
1. Social / Leisure	9	.86
2. Material	7	.85
3. Egoistic	6	.82
4. Purposive	5	.73
5. External Influences	3	.71

Cronbach's Alphas were computed for the modified 30-item instrument and each extracted factor as measures of internal consistency, and indicators of reliability. The reliability coefficient of the 30-item instrument was .91. The reliability calculated for each extracted factor ranged from .71 to .86 (Table 1). Social/Leisure and Material factors had high reliability coefficients of .86 and .85. Reliability coefficients of Egoistic and Purposive factor were .82 and .73. External Influence factor had the lowest reliability coefficient of .71. All factors had acceptable reliability coefficients greater than or equal to .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

### Results

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the authors suggest that the findings may be inferred to no groups other than the study's convenience samples.

#### *Demographic Characteristics*

A majority of the volunteer participants in American and Japanese LPGA tournament events were married (71.1%, 89.0%, respectively), while the rest were a mix of marital status (single 18.5%, 9.7%; divorced 4.4%, .7%; widowed 4.4%, 0.7%; other 1.5%, 0.7, respectively). Similarly, 90.4% of the American sample was listed as the major ethnic group

(Caucasian/White), while the rest were composed of individuals from other ethnic groups (African American 6.7%, Hispanic .7%, Asian-American .7%, Native American .7%, and Other .7%). In the Japanese events, 98.6% of the participants were Japanese and the rest were listed as other ethnic groups (1.4%). Forty-four percent and 32% percent of American and Japanese participants, respectively, were listed at the highest income bracket (over 75,000 dollars), while it was also noted that 36% and 53% of American and Japanese participants, respectively, indicated that they were employed full-time. Moreover, it is interesting to note that retirees made up the highest percentage of American participants (51.5%) and the second highest percentage of Japanese participants.

#### *Motivation Item Significance*

Volunteers in both American and Japanese LPGA tournament events were asked to indicate to what extent each motivational factor contributed to their decision to volunteer. Both American and Japanese volunteers rated the item, "I wanted to help make the LPGA Tournament event a success," as the highest rated motivation item (Means = 4.18, 3.95). Table 2 displays an analytic list with the five highest ranking reasons (means, standard deviation).



Table 2  
*List of Five Highest Ranking Reasons to Volunteer*

American Volunteers	N	M	SD
1. I wanted to help make the LPGA Tournament event a success	130	4.18	1.000
2. It is fun and exciting to volunteer for a sport event like this LPGA Tournament event	130	4.03	1.041
3. Volunteering for this LPGA golf tournament enables the organizational committee to provide more services for less money	130	3.95	1.077
4. Volunteering in the LPGA Tournament event is worthy of my efforts and attention	130	3.94	1.010
5. I wanted to put something back in my community	130	3.92	.940
Japanese Volunteers			
1. I wanted to help make the LPGA Tournament event a success	144	3.95	.963
2. It is fun and exciting to volunteer for a sport event like this LPGA Tournament event	144	3.78	.964
2. I wanted to experience the feeling of being absorbed by what I do	144	3.78	.838
4. Volunteering for this LPGA golf tournament enables the organizational committee to provide more services for less money	144	3.67	1.170
5. I wanted to improve my skills and abilities through my volunteer assignments	144	3.64	.913

*Motivations of American and Japanese Volunteers*

In comparing motivations of American and Japanese LPGA volunteers (Table 3), the Japanese volunteers in this study were more involved with volunteer service due to Social/Leisure (F= 42.90) and Material (F= 24.37) reasons. However, American volunteers were found to be associated with Egoistic (F=18.44) and Purposive (F= 8.71) motivations. There was no difference in the External Influences factor (F= 2.92).

**Discussion and Implications**

The present exploratory study was conducted to assess demographic differences and/or similarities and to compare motivation to volunteer at LPGA tournament events among Japanese and American volunteers. As it is widely known, volunteers are critical assets for economic and non-economic aspects of tournament management. With internationalization of the sport, understanding the broad and diverse spectrum of volunteers and what will motivate them to be involved will be critical to ensure financial stability in event management.

Table 3  
*MANOVA Results of Volunteer Motivation*

Factors	American (n=130)	Japanese (n=144)	F
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
1. Social/Leisure	2.86 (.81)	3.46 (.71)	42.90
2. Material	2.06 (.80)	2.54 (.82)	24.37
3. Egoistic	3.93 (.75)	3.57 (.69)	18.44
4. Purposive	3.37 (.80)	3.10 (.80)	8.71
5. External Influences	2.68 (.96)	2.49 (.93)	2.92

The demographic findings are more meaningful when related to the differences in motives. It was indicated that Japanese and American volunteers were motivated by different sets of factors (Social/Leisure and Material; Egoistic and Purposive, respectively).

Keeping in mind that while these differences exist, they may be due in part to national/cultural differences and/or other demographic differences (e.g., generational cultures, etc.). For this reason, sport administrators, especially volunteer resource coordinators, should develop marketing strategies based on the composition (e.g., age, culture, etc.) of the target volunteer base and also highlight those motivation factors that resonate best with them.

For Japanese volunteers, management should consider providing opportunities that might help their future business or career aspirations, as this might address the need for Material motivation. For example, opportunities should be provided for the volunteer to gain practical experiences and to encourage the development of a network. While these are non-monetary examples, they may still motivate young Japanese volunteers to see volunteering as a valuable experience.

Moreover, as were found to be related to the Social/Leisure motivation factor, their experience should include more opportunities for social interaction and interpersonal relations (e.g., work teams, social events, etc.). To attract and retain volunteers, volunteer administrators or managers may develop marketing strategies emphasizing Social/Leisure and Material motives as a means of attracting volunteers, and of highlighting those particular aspects while internally marketing to retain such volunteers.

For American volunteers, Egoistic and Purposive volunteer motivation factors were found most salient. Thus, it is recommended that these volunteers are attracted to messages that embody community pride and self-development opportunities. American volunteers seek to better their communities and are engaged in volunteering to gain and improve a skill set. Therefore, management should consider these in their reward and development systems (e.g., public recognition, advanced training system).

From this research, it is suggested that volunteer program administrators and/or volunteer resource managers practice care in how they develop and implement

recruitment, retention, and, particularly, training programs. Consideration of the diverse types of volunteer motivations can assist in managing the ever-changing face of volunteers, as this study demonstrated in its exploration of American and Japanese LPGA tournament event volunteers. Practically speaking, this is especially important to Japanese LPGA tournaments (among other sports in Japan), as volunteerism has not yet reached the numbers seen in American LPGA tournament events. Based on knowledge of the motives of Japanese volunteers, opportunities for teamwork and tangible awards may address their needs. For American volunteers, communication should emphasize the positive effects of volunteering in the name of national pride and self-improvement (e.g., skills training).

While the present study examined diverse volunteer demographics and volunteer motivation factors, future research should address the specific impact and uses of the knowledge of volunteer motivation for recruitment and retention. This would include assessing non-volunteers to investigate ways to recruit those not yet interested in volunteering. Further, research on the influence of certain managerial and marketing efforts (e.g., teamwork, reward systems, training, etc.) on specific outcomes would better enhance our understanding of the real implications of putting volunteer motivation in action. Moreover, greater exploration of the motivation construct over time may provide insight on possible stages and life cycles of the construct. To support the notion that it is imperative to develop target specific management and marketing plans for tournament volunteers, the study needs to be replicated using various events, in different geographic regions of America and Japan. Further, larger and more representative populations of LPGA event

volunteers need to be examined. With this information, the LPGA can create more effective management and marketing efforts to attract and retain volunteers for future domestic and international tournament events.

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**One of a Kind? Comparing Episodic and Regular Volunteers at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House**

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**Abstract**

*Studies find evidence of a growing trend in episodic volunteering and suggest that it attracts individuals with a different volunteering ethos than long-term and regular volunteers. The authors examine volunteers at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House (PRMH), an organization that successfully recruits and manages episodic volunteers and regular volunteers who are engaged in different tasks. Responding to the changing trends of volunteer labor supply, PRMH created different roles for episodic and regular volunteers. This study explored if PRMH episodic volunteers were different from regular volunteers in their motivation, satisfaction, and rewards. Certain interesting differences revealed (albeit not always in support of the authors' original hypotheses) are important both at the theoretical level and at the practical level for recruitment and management of volunteers.*

**Key Words:**

volunteering, episodic, net cost, motivation, satisfaction, rewards

**Introduction**

Recently, scholars of volunteering have argued that the nature of volunteering has changed as an unintended consequence of modernity (Dekker & Halman, 2003; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Wuthnow, 1998). Individuals are switching from long-term habitual to shorter-term episodic volunteering. Several factors influence

this change, including women joining the labor force, rapid change of jobs, changes in employer-employee relations, and globalization with the rapid access of global information through the Internet. These factors influence more and more people to seek out and engage in short-term experiences that will fulfill their immediate and timely needs, and then to move on to other fulfilling

experiences (Handy, Brodeur, & Cnaan, 2006).

The literature is replete with examples of the growing trend in episodic volunteering. A survey done by U.S. Department of Labor (2004) found that 28.8% of the civilian population age 16 and over volunteered through or for organizations at least once from September 2003 to September 2004. These 64.5 million individuals spent a median of 52 hours on volunteer activities; however, it found that 21.3% of the volunteers reported to provide only between one and 14 hours in the 12-month period of reference. While the study did not discuss episodic volunteering, more than one in five respondents may represent episodic volunteers.

Research by the Independent Sector in the United States further showed that over the last decade, the total number of adults volunteering increased, but the average number of hours of volunteering per week decreased, as did the total number of hours given to volunteering. In addition, the 1998 survey revealed that 41.9% of respondents indicated that they had volunteered sporadically and considered it a one-time activity whereas 39% volunteered on a regular basis. The remaining respondents (19.1%) reported that they only volunteered at a specific time of year, such as during a religious holiday or on a summer vacation (Cnaan & Handy, 2005).

A survey done by the AARP (2000) found that nearly half (47%) of volunteers age 50-59 volunteered mostly for episodic special projects. Only about a fourth (23%) volunteered for about the same amount of time each month, with about another fifth (22%) volunteering in both contexts. Brudney (2005)

attempted to assess the scope of episodic volunteering in the United States and found that 31% of all volunteers could be defined as episodic volunteers, based on data from the Independent Sector. A recent British study found one-third of current volunteers to have volunteered on an occasional basis (i.e., less frequently than once a month) in the past 12 months, and 7% of this category had only taken part in a one-time activity (Low, Butt, Ellis Paine, & Davis Smith, 2007).

As a result, we find volunteering to be an increasingly heterogeneous activity, with traditional long-term and regular volunteering being supplemented (and potentially interchanged) with volunteer activities that are undertaken on an ad hoc basis and even as a one-time event. The increasing trend toward episodic volunteering, however, is often described in problematic terms (Putnam, 1995). Episodic volunteers, it is argued, would be “of a different kind” than regular volunteers. Their involvement would be of a more individual, short-lived, and noncommittal nature, and less driven by altruistic and social motivations (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Wollebæk & Selle, 2003). Moreover, because long-term and dedicated volunteering has traditionally been the norm, some organizations see this evolution as a threat for their established volunteer programs, and many struggle with the associated costs in developing new management practices targeting episodic volunteers (Handy & Srinivasan, 2004). However, there is little research that has examined empirically whether such differences in the ethos of episodic and regular volunteers actually exist.

### **Comparing Regular and Episodic Volunteers: A Net-cost Approach**

In the emerging literature on episodic volunteering, a basic criterion used to distinguish between regular and episodic volunteering is the regularity or frequency of involvement. Regular volunteers are those who carry out activities at least once a month in a 12-month period of reference. Episodic volunteers are involved on a less frequent basis, ranging from activities undertaken every couple of months to one-time events (Handy, Cnaan, & Brodeur, 2006; Low, Butt, Ellis Paine, & Davis Smith, 2007). To understand better the different types of episodic volunteering, more differentiated volunteer classifications were also developed, taking into account the duration of involvement and the number of hours donated. Macduff (2004) identified three distinct types of episodic volunteering: temporary episodic volunteers who give a one-time service; occasional episodic volunteers who volunteer for one activity, event, or project for the organization, but at regular intervals; and interim volunteers who serve on a regular basis but only for a short period of less than six months. In their study of volunteers at summer festivals in Canada, Handy, Brodeur, and Cnaan (2006) distinguished between habitual episodic volunteers who volunteer for multiple episodic opportunities on a continual basis, and genuine episodic volunteers who volunteer for two or fewer volunteer episodes in a year. The latter group is compatible with Weber's (2002) concept of episodic volunteers as those who contribute their time sporadically, only during special times of the year, or consider volunteering as a one-off event. Weber further

suggested that these volunteers give time without an ongoing commitment, often in the form of self-contained and time-specific projects.

It is important to emphasize that episodic volunteerism is not a single and uniform category, but instead broadens the spectrum of styles of volunteering (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003) and adds to the complexity of the nature of volunteering (Cnaan & Amroffell 1994; Cnaan, Handy & Wadsworth, 1996; Hustinx 2005). In addition, the boundaries between regular and episodic volunteering are fuzzy at best; Cnaan and Handy (2005) observed a strong association between ongoing and episodic volunteering, which implied that regular volunteers are more likely to simultaneously participate in episodic volunteer activities.

In spite of these nuances and classification efforts, this study aimed at a comparison of regular and episodic volunteers, and therefore accepted the common distinction between volunteers who come on a regular basis and carry out activities at least once a month, and those volunteers who are involved on a less frequent basis. For the purposes of this study, the authors defined the former as regular and the latter as episodic volunteers.

The authors take as a main point of departure the widely held conviction that modernity has affected the nature of volunteering, with a basic trend toward more episodic and noncommittal volunteer efforts (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Macduff, 2005; Wollebæk & Selle, 2003; Wuthnow, 1998). Are episodic volunteers' motives different as their effort is weaker, at least as measured in terms of frequency and intensity of



volunteering? Alternatively, are the motivations of regular and episodic volunteers similar, just that volunteers face different constraints in which to exercise their volunteering spirit? Do episodic and regular volunteers differ on the benefits they seek from volunteering?

To explore these questions, we applied the framework of the net cost theory developed in defining who is a volunteer (Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996; Handy, Cnaan, Brudney, Ascoli, Meijs, & Ranade, 2000). Since volunteer activity is unpaid, the net-cost to any volunteer is positive; however, the net-cost will vary over different activities as a function of the intensity of involvement and benefits reaped to the volunteer. Based on this theory, the authors argue that regular volunteers incur greater costs than episodic volunteers due to their ongoing commitment over the same period of time. Furthermore, as the tasks required of episodic and regular volunteers are different, the authors would expect different people to be attracted to them for different motives and hence have different dispositions towards the rewards they receive.

For example, regular volunteers are given tasks that require training and a long term commitment from the volunteer, whereas episodic volunteers are given no training and need to offer no commitment to the organization after they have completed the task. Thus, the two groups would be expected to differ in their (1) net costs of volunteering to the organization and in their motivations to volunteer, (2) perceived benefits of volunteering (the latter being understood in terms of their levels of satisfaction with

volunteering), and (3) interest in rewards offered by the organization.

First, as all volunteers willingly undertake positive net costs of volunteer activity, those incurring higher net costs (regular volunteers) are perceived as being more altruistic with a greater concern for others than those with relatively lower net costs (episodic volunteers). Consequently, the authors posit that regular volunteers are more likely to offer altruistic motives for volunteering than episodic volunteers (Handy, Cnaan, & Brodeur, 2006). Episodic volunteers are usually recruited for one or two tasks and contribute only a few hours for one activity; accordingly, they have lower net costs and are less likely to be motivated by altruistic concerns than regular volunteers.

Second, regular volunteers' higher net costs may lead them to declare higher levels of satisfaction with their involvement with the organization than will the volunteers who come episodically. This may also be a rationalizing of the higher net-costs they incur given that they undertake these costs voluntarily. It may be further exacerbated if they are motivated to make an impact; they are more likely to observe the fruits of their efforts over time because their engagement with the organization is ongoing.

Third, as regular volunteers incur greater costs over a longer period of time, they will be more interested in tangible rewards or forms of recognition offered by the organization than episodic volunteers to reduce their net costs. Episodic volunteers who are less likely to be engaged with the organization (and hence incur fewer costs) can more readily absorb these

costs than if they were to incur on a regular basis. For example, a volunteer who comes once a year to the organization may be willing to absorb the transportation or parking costs than somebody who incurs these costs on a regular basis. Similarly, being recognized and appreciated for ongoing efforts and commitment are more meaningful to a regular volunteer who comes may need continual reinforcement to keep coming.

In summary, we formulated three hypotheses to guide this study based on the net cost theory:

- H1: Regular volunteers and episodic volunteers will have different motivations to volunteer; regular volunteers will report being more motivated by altruistic motives as compared to episodic volunteers.
- H2: Regular volunteers will report higher satisfaction with their volunteering experiences than episodic volunteers.
- H3: Regular volunteers and episodic volunteers will have different expectations of benefits of their volunteering; we expect regular volunteers to be more interested in the rewards and recognition offered by the organization as compared with episodic volunteers.

### **Methods**

The authors conducted an empirical study of volunteers at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House (PRMH), an organization that successfully recruits and manages episodic volunteers alongside a group of regular volunteers. Regular and episodic volunteers are engaged in different tasks for the most part at the PRMH, and this represents the intentionality of PRMH in organizing different roles for episodic

and regular volunteers. Our research focus was on differences in the dispositions of both groups: motivations to volunteer, levels of satisfaction with volunteering, and the importance attached to different types of tangible rewards. We emphasize that our study is based on a nonrandom sample that is used for exploratory purposes. The focus is on comparing and contrasting regular volunteers and episodic volunteers, hence on the relative differences between both groups. Any generalizations should be made with great caution.

### *Setting*

This study is based on a survey of volunteers at the Philadelphia Ronald McDonald House (PRMH), located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Volunteers help at the PRMH in a number of ways that include: staffing the front desk, driving families to and from hospitals, fundraising and program development, event planning, serving families at a house, and serving on boards and committees. Most tasks are organized for volunteers who come in on a regular basis. Last year, volunteers contributed nearly three million hours of their time at RMH homes across the country (Ronald McDonald House Charities, 2008).

### *Instruments and Procedure*

Organizations typically have little contact with episodic volunteers, especially if they come to volunteer for one-time events, or if they come with a regular volunteer or another known contact with the organization, and require no training or commitment other than for the particular event they attend. For these reasons, organizations often do not

find it useful to maintain records of these volunteers. As such, episodic volunteers are a “moving target” and a category of volunteers that cannot be sampled with conventional methods. As organizations do not keep track of episodic volunteers, their actual population size is unknown, and information on population characteristics is impossible to retrieve.

In the case of PRMH, there were no records available for all current episodic volunteers from which to draw a probability sample. The Director of Volunteer Services could provide a list of 550 volunteers (i.e., a convenience sample) with e-mail addresses, among which were approximately 250 regular volunteers and 305 episodic volunteers. (Total numbers of volunteers were estimated to be around 310 regular volunteers and approximately 3000 episodic volunteers.) To reach out to as many PRMH volunteers as possible, we combined written and on-line surveying techniques. The on-line survey was sent out by the Director of Volunteer Services at PRMH to all volunteers with email addresses.

To include those volunteers for whom PRMH did not have e-mail contacts we used a written questionnaire that was made available when they arrived to their volunteer tasks. This method was aimed to include regular volunteers without e-mail addresses and episodic volunteers of whom PRMH did not have records. For the online survey, there were three reminders to ensure we got the maximum responses. Regular volunteers without e-mail contact and episodic volunteers were invited by the front desk staff to fill

out the survey when they came to the premises. Both written and on-line surveys were self-administered and took 10 to 12 minutes to complete.

We received a total of 258 responses during the six weeks we conducted the survey in 2007. Of the respondents, 67.7% volunteered on a regular basis (i.e., once a month or more frequent), and 32.3% volunteered a few times a year or only once a year. Based on the estimated population sizes, we obtained a response rate of 56% for regular volunteers and 27% for episodic volunteers. As explained earlier, this distribution does not reflect the actual distribution of regular volunteers to episodic volunteers in PRMH, nor can the sample be tested for statistical representation.

#### *Sample characteristics*

The 258 respondents ranged in age from 18 to 89 years, with a mean of 45.4 (SD=15.9). The largest category (50%) reported a household income above \$100,000, whereas only just over five percent reported being in the lowest annual category of below \$20,000. About half of respondents (52%) were married or lived in a common law arrangement and the majority of them (54.8%) reported having children, with a third (33.7%) having children living with them.

We analyzed the data to assess if regular and episodic volunteers were significantly different in terms of their key demographic characteristics. We found that for gender, education, marital status, employment status, and income, there was no significant association with volunteering type. However, episodic volunteers were younger on average than regular volunteers; the average age of episodic volunteers was 40.8 years, they

were younger by six and a half years than regular volunteers of 47.4 years ( $t=-2.956$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Furthermore, episodic volunteers were more likely to be employed full time than regular volunteers (Chi-Square = 26.01,  $df = 6$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Regarding years of volunteering, the regular volunteers in our sample had volunteered for significantly more years at PRMH than the episodic volunteers, on average 5.6 years versus 2.9 years ( $t=-5.93$ ,  $df=246$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Those episodic volunteers on average had been involved for about three years; this suggests that PRMH more likely relies on 'habitual' episodic volunteers than on 'genuine' episodic volunteers (see Handy et al., 2006).

Episodic volunteers were more likely to be involved in tasks that by nature lent themselves to volunteers coming in on an ad hoc basis, whereas regular volunteers were more likely to fill tasks that required specialized responsibilities, training and skills. Regular volunteers were significantly more likely to be involved as front-desk volunteers. Episodic volunteers, on the other hand, more likely participated in the guest chef program than in any other program. This was the only program that consistently used episodic volunteers, and was indeed organized to take advantage of volunteers who wanted only an ad hoc commitment to the PRMH. We find that 84% of episodic volunteers indicated that they participated in the guest chef program, as compared to 80% of regular volunteers who had participated as front desk volunteers and checked in families arriving to PRMH, assisted other volunteers, kept records, and helped with travel and other needs of the families. These differences in both years of

volunteering and types of activities done by over 80% of our sample lend validity to our distinction between regular and episodic volunteers at PRMH based on their frequency of involvement.

### *The Research Questions*

This study focuses on the differences in motivations, satisfaction, and rewards of volunteering between regular and episodic volunteers at PRMH. To measure volunteers' motivation to volunteer, as well as their level of satisfaction with their volunteering experience at the PRMH, and their interest in tangible rewards, we used three series of statements with a Likert-type response format. To determine the set of latent dimensions, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis. The results reported here are based on a generalized least squares extraction with orthogonal rotation (Varimax) and Kaiser normalization, which does not allow the extracted factors to be inter-correlated. We only retained items with factor loadings above .40 and the final solution reflected a simple structure. We treated all measures as additive scales.

First, the analysis revealed three motivational dimensions that refer to self-enhancement, career-enhancement, and value-driven motivations (compare Clary et al., 1998). The first factor (Cronbach's alpha .72) included 7 items that reflect the importance of self-enhancement motivations, understood in terms of a motivational process that revolves around the ego's growth and development, as well as new learning experiences and the chance to use one's knowledge and skills. These items are: being appreciated by staff/organization (.51); to use one's skills and experiences (.45); to spend one's free time in a

meaningful way (.45); because PRMH is well appreciated by society (.50); because it changes one's perspective on things (.49); because of the training received (.66); because one feels very close to other volunteers at PRMH (.61).

The second motivational dimension (Cronbach's alpha .74) incorporated 5 items that predominantly represent the value of volunteering for career enhancing motivations, that is, as an investment in one's human and social capital: to improve one's job skills (.85); because it is required for school or work (.49); to meet new people (increasing one's networks) (.51); to receive peer recognition (.45); because it looks good on one's résumé or application for a job or higher education (.61).

The third scale (Cronbach's alpha .63) reflected value-driven reasons for volunteering. Volunteers are motivated by the opportunities to express their altruistic values and humanitarian concerns for others. The scale is based on the following 4 items: a sense of civic duty (.40); to continue a family tradition (.72); to make Philadelphia a good place to live in (.66); because I am needed (.50).

Satisfaction with volunteering (Cronbach's alpha .71) is measured by means of a scale that consists of 6 items: satisfaction with the work one does (.58); the appreciation of the families (.53); appreciation of the staff (.42); the relationship with other volunteers (.60); training and experience (.68); the flexibility of when one can volunteer (.51).

The importance of tangible rewards (Cronbach's alpha .87) includes the following 6 items: receiving an award (.94); being recognized at an event publicly (.94); attending the Volunteer Appreciation Events (.56);

getting a thank you note (.61); getting a free meal at PRMH (.61), and a reference letter (.62).

### **Findings**

*Motivations:* Based on the net-cost theory, we firstly hypothesized that episodic volunteers would be less motivated by altruistic concerns in comparison with regular volunteers. We first looked at the separate statements, and for eight items, we noted statistically significant differences in the percentages of regular and episodic volunteers answering that they fully or somewhat agreed to these items being important as motivations to volunteer (Table 1).

The findings suggest that episodic volunteers more frequently emphasized social incentives to volunteer, e.g., someone asked them to volunteer, or they followed the example of friends or family. In addition, they were much more likely to be driven by a civic or religious sense of duty, and more likely understood their volunteering as a way to make Philadelphia a good place to live. Regular volunteers, on the other hand, were more likely to support motivations that included the opportunity to meet new people, and being close to other volunteers at PRMH. This seems to indicate that for episodic volunteers, it is more important that their volunteering is embedded in already established social relationships such as groups with whom they come to PRMH, whereas regular volunteers are more strongly oriented to the larger volunteer group at PRMH itself, and are able to develop stronger and more meaningful ties to other volunteers through their regular service.

Table 1  
*Motivations to Volunteer: Percentages Responding “Strongly Agree” and “Somewhat Agree”*

Motivation	Volunteer Type			Total
	Episodic	Regular	Difference	All
Because it feels good to volunteer	97.3%	98.0%	NS	97.8%
To help families in need	98.6%	96.5%	NS	97.2%
To spend free time in a meaningful way	91.2%	93.2%	NS	92.6%
Because it changes my perspective on things	87.9%	88.0%	NS	88.0%
Because I am needed	91.2%	82.6%	NS	85.4%
Because I feel a sense of civic duty	83.1%	67.6%	*	72.5%
Because PRMH is well appreciated by society	74.2%	68.1%	NS	70.1%
I am appreciated by staff/organization	61.3%	66.2%	NS	64.7%
To make Philadelphia a good place to live in	86.2%	50.0%	***	61.6%
To use skills and experiences	54.8%	62.1%	NS	59.9%
To meet new people	40.3%	58.2%	*	52.7%
Because I was asked to volunteer	67.6%	42.6%	***	50.7%
Because I feel close to other volunteers at PRMH	29.5%	58.6%	***	50.0%
To explore my strengths	39.7%	46.4%	NS	44.3%
Because my friends volunteer for PRMH	60.9%	35.0%	***	43.3%
To fulfil religious/spiritual obligations or beliefs	56.5%	21.7%	***	32.5%
To find satisfaction/appreciation I cannot find in paid work	32.8%	21.6%	NS	25.1%
To continue family tradition	41.3%	15.6%	***	23.7%
Because family/friends/I received services PRMH	23,7%	15,4%	NS	17.9%
To improve my job skills	15.3%	14.7%	NS	14.9%
Because of the skills and training I receive	8.2%	16.3%	NS	13.7%
Because it looks good on resume	5.0%	13.3%	NS	10.8%
To receive peer recognition	15.0%	7.4%	NS	9.7%
Because it is required for school or work	5.1%	3.0%	NS	3.6%

Levels of statistical significance \*\*\* p<.001, \*\*p<.001, \*p<.05

Next, an independent samples t-test (Table 2) compares episodic and regular volunteers on the three motivational factors, and revealed that both groups differ with regard to the importance attached to value-driven reasons for volunteering, but not with regard to self-enhancement and career-enhancement motivations. Interestingly, and contrary to our first hypothesis,

episodic volunteers think more idealistically of their volunteering activities than regular volunteers (mean score of 4.01 versus 3.35 on a 1-5 point scale).

*Satisfaction:* The second hypothesis focused on the difference in satisfaction levels with volunteering experiences between episodic and

regular volunteers. We found partial support for this hypothesis. We asked the respondents ‘How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your volunteer experience in PRMH’ and listed six different aspects of volunteering. It should be noted in Table 3 that overall high levels of satisfaction existed among volunteers of the PRMH. Respondents almost unanimously expressed strong satisfaction with the volunteer work, the appreciation from families, staff, and relationship with other volunteers. We found no significant differences between episodic and regular

volunteers for these items, which generally refer to volunteers’ interpersonal relationships. However, statistically significant differences existed regarding training and experience as well as flexibility of volunteering. While 94.4% of regular volunteers were satisfied with the training and experience received, only 59.3% of episodic volunteers expressed similar levels of satisfaction. As for flexibility of volunteering, 73.3% of episodic volunteers were somewhat to very satisfied, compared to 94.4% of regular volunteers.

Table 2  
*Independent Samples T-Test: Comparison of Mean Scores of Episodic and Regular Volunteers at PRMH for Motivations, Satisfaction, and Rewards*

Variable Type	Min-Max range	Mean	Std. Deviation	Independent samples T-Test
Values	1-5			***
Episodic (N=60)		4.01	.57	
Regular (N=131)		3.35	.78	
Total (N=193)		3.57	.78	
Self-Enhancement	1-5			NS
Episodic (N=60)		3.63	.59	
Regular (N=128)		3.72	.63	
Total (N=190)		3.69		
Career	1-5			NS
Episodic (N=58)		2.21	.79	
Regular (N=129)		2.24	.78	
Total (N=189)		2.24	.80	
Satisfaction	1-4			NS
Episodic (N=52)		3.56	.45	
Regular (N=136)		3.66	.38	
Total (N=190)		3.63	.40	
Rewards	1-5			**
Episodic (N=62)		1.44	.78	
Regular (N=117)		1.83	.85	
Total (N=181)		1.70	.85	

Note: \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 3

*Levels of Satisfaction Among Regular and Episodic Volunteers at PRMH: Percentages that “Somewhat” to “Fully Agree”*

Satisfaction Type	Volunteer Type			Total
	Episodic	Regular	Difference	
Satisfaction with work	92.8%	98.0%	NS	96.3%
Appreciation of the families	95.7%	99.3%	NS	98.2%
Appreciation of the staff	94.4%	94.6%	NS	94.5%
Relationship with other volunteers	88.2%	93.9%	NS	92.1%
Training and experience	59.3%	86.6%	***	79.1%
Flexibility of when I can volunteer	73.3%	94.4%	***	88.2%

Levels of statistical significance \*\*\* p<.001, \*\*p<.001, \*p<.05

On the basis of a factor analysis, the six aspects of satisfaction could be reduced to one latent factor. An independent samples t-test for the satisfaction scale resulted in no differences between episodic and regular volunteers (Table 2). On average and across all items, both groups appear to display similar levels of satisfaction. Our second hypothesis, consequently, is not supported.

*Rewards:* The third hypothesis focused on the tangible rewards from the volunteer work. We asked volunteers to indicate the subjective importance of eight tangible rewards offered by the PRMH. Regular volunteers placed significantly higher importance to appreciation by staff and families, attending the volunteer appreciation events, free meals, and free parking (Table 4). Appreciation by staff and families was the most important reward for both groups, and being publicly recognized at an event and receiving a certificate or an award were the least important to both groups.

The rewards scale included six of these eight items (as discussed above), and the independent samples t-test indicated that episodic and regular

volunteers differed in the overall importance of the rewards, as regular volunteers placed a higher importance to the different rewards than episodic volunteers (Table 2). Our third hypothesis is thus supported. However, it should be noted that on average, both regular and episodic volunteers attach little importance to receiving tangible rewards (a mean score of 1.83 and 1.44 respectively on a 1-5 point scale).

*Multivariate regression analysis:* In a final step, we perform a multivariate analysis in which we assess the impact of the type of volunteer (episodic versus regular) while controlling for the simultaneous influence of length of service and background characteristics on the volunteers' motivation, satisfaction, and interest in tangible rewards. The results of the independent samples t-tests in Table 2, which compared episodic and regular volunteers' mean scores on the factor scales and were discussed above, appear robust in the multivariate regressions as shown in Table 5. Episodic volunteers are significantly more likely to emphasize value-driven motivations, and attach substantially less importance to tangible rewards in comparison to



regular volunteers. There is no impact of volunteer type on the other three measures.

Interestingly, there is a net effect of years of volunteering on career enhancement motivations. The longer the volunteers have been involved, the less likely they stress this motive. Or in other words: the more one is interested in using volunteering for resume-building, the sooner one drops out of volunteering, and this irrespective of how frequent one is involved.

Also of note, finally, is the gender bias in self-enhancement motivations and levels of satisfaction. Female volunteers are more likely to volunteer for personal motivations, and to report higher levels of satisfaction with their volunteering experience. In addition, volunteers' income class influences their interest in tangible rewards. The higher the income, the weaker the importance attached to various types of rewards.

**Table 4**  
*Importance of Tangible Rewards: Percentages Responding "Very Important" or "Somewhat Important"*

Type of Reward	Volunteer Type			Total
	Episodic	Regular	Difference	
Receiving a certificate or an award	1.5%	2.8%	NS	2.4%
Being recognized at an event publicly	4.5%	2.8%	NS	3.4%
Attending the volunteer appreciation events	4.6%	31.3%	***	23.0%
Getting a thank you note	17.9%	17.7%	NS	17.8%
A free meal at PRMH	3.0%	13.4%	*	10.1%
Free Parking	22.7%	43.7%	**	36.8%
Reference letter	6.1%	13.8%	NS	11.1%
Appreciation by staff and families	45.7%	65.3%	**	59.0%

Levels of statistical significance \*\*\* p<.001, \*\*p<.001, \*p<.05

**Table 5**  
*Multivariate Linear Regressions: Motivations, Satisfaction, and Rewards*

Volunteer Characteristics	Values	Self-Enhancement	Career	Satisfaction	Rewards
Volunteer Type (ref=Regular)	.41***	-.09	-.10	-.02	-.21*
Years volunteered at PRMH	-.01	-.14	-.23*	.04	.04
Background variables					
Age	.13	.07	-.15	-.04	-.03
Gender (ref=Male)	.09	.21**	.02	.21*	-.10
Years of education	-.05	-.001	.02	-.08	-.06
Income	.11	-.12	-.16	-.05	-.27**
Adj. R-Square	.17	.04	.16	.02	.10

Note: \* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

This study found significant differences between episodic and regular volunteers, but not always in the ways predicted. First, it is important to note that at PRMH, episodic and regular volunteers were involved in almost completely separated circuits of programs, tailored to the different intensity of involvement of both groups. Episodic volunteers more frequently performed ad hoc and noncommittal activities, whereas regular volunteers were more likely to engage in tasks that required specialized responsibilities, training and skills. Regular volunteers were involved over a longer-term basis than episodic volunteers. Nevertheless, at the PRMH, episodic volunteering likely seems to represent a habitual than a genuinely one-off activity.

Second, we found notable differences in motivation to volunteer between the two groups. However, contrary to our expectations, episodic volunteers were more likely to see themselves motivated by values than regular volunteers, yet both groups were equally likely to emphasize more self-oriented motivations. Interestingly, episodic volunteers to some extent seemed more idealistic about their involvement, stressing their religious and civic sense of duty, and their ability to make Philadelphia a better place to live in through their volunteering activities. We explain this finding by the fact that given that their volunteering experience is of a short-term nature, it is less likely to become mundane or repetitive and more likely to retain its novelty and remain a positive and fulfilling one.

This finding is intriguing. The net-cost theory upon which we based our hypothesis relies explicitly on the public

perception of the benefits and costs of a volunteering activity and our extrapolation to motivations or what 'goes on inside the head' of a volunteer may not be a valid. Thus our findings suggest that the net-cost theory must be applied judiciously in assessing on the benefits and costs that are extrinsic and not intrinsic to the volunteer.

Motivational differences further suggested that for episodic volunteers, the volunteer activity was more likely to be embedded in social relationships and group memberships that exist outside the PRMH; whereas regular volunteers were significantly more strongly oriented towards the group of PRMH volunteers. While episodic volunteers thus seemed to rely primarily on their established social networks, regular volunteers more likely reached out to other volunteers at PRMH they did not know before.

With regard to levels of satisfaction, we expected regular volunteers to be more satisfied than episodic volunteers because of their higher net costs. Both groups however appeared to be equally satisfied concerning the volunteer work, appreciation from families, staff, and relationship with other volunteers. One reason why episodic volunteers were equally satisfied with their volunteering as regular volunteers may be that the short-term nature of their volunteering and the immediate results of their work made it much easier to have a satisfying experience. Another reason may be, as explained earlier, the intrinsic nature of satisfaction may not lend itself to the public perception of extrinsic benefits on which the net cost theory is formulated.

Our finding on generally high satisfaction levels may not warrant the explanations we provide, if we expect that volunteers vote with their feet, that

is, that they are not likely to continue volunteering, at a cost to themselves, if they are not satisfied. However, this mechanism may equally likely appear in both groups, and responses biased by social desirability may equally affect both groups. Moreover, we believe that since satisfaction was not measured by a dichotomous choice (i.e., are you satisfied or not), but on a scale of 1-5, we are more likely to get the nuances of satisfaction that we are interested in for the differences between the two groups.

Interestingly, episodic volunteers were less satisfied with the training they had received. Given that PRMH provides hardly any training for episodic volunteers, this finding seems to indicate that notwithstanding that episodic volunteers participate on a more ad hoc basis and perform tasks that involve little responsibility and complexity, they nevertheless are expecting to receive some form of training. This also suggests that episodic volunteers are not that noncommittal as commonly perceived. They desire to act in a professional way, to deliver high-quality work, and are in need of adequate training to reach that goal.

In addition, episodic volunteers appeared also less satisfied with the flexibility of when they could volunteer. This is remarkable given the nature of episodic volunteering and contradicts common observations regarding episodic volunteers. The usual perception is that episodic volunteering offers the volunteer more flexibility and freedom of choice. In other words, episodic volunteering offers individualized volunteers an *a la carte* menu regarding the amount of time they want to give and in what way they want to contribute (Wollebæk & Selle, 2003). However, the success of the PRMH episodic volunteer

program seems to result from the highly standardized and structured form of volunteering. Volunteers get clear instructions on at what time they should come in, by what time they should be ready to serve a meal, and by what time they should be leaving, as well as general instructions on what should be served. The program leaves no freedom regarding when and for how long one volunteers on a chosen day. Although the program proves to be highly successful, our findings nonetheless show that such strict arrangements are not always to the benefit of episodic volunteers' levels of satisfaction. Organizations involving episodic volunteers are thus confronted with a tension between, on the one hand, the 'ready made' nature of activities that involve little training and cost to the organization, and, on the other, episodic volunteers' apparent similarity to regular volunteers regarding their need for training and flexibility.

Our findings regarding tangible rewards from the volunteer work suggest that regular volunteers placed an overall higher importance on rewards attached to their volunteering work than episodic volunteers. These benefits, extrinsic in nature, reduce their net cost of volunteering and may result in sustaining their efforts over a longer term. It was also found in previous research that the longer people volunteered the more aware they were of the range of rewards attached to volunteering (Chinman & Wandersman, 1999). Of the rewards available, regular volunteers placed significantly higher importance on free meals and free parking, both of which reduced their costs of volunteering. This is not surprising if one considers that they came to volunteer more frequently and

for longer periods of time.

Consequently, their costs of volunteering were generally higher than those of episodic volunteers.

In conclusion, our findings suggest that some important differences exist between regular and episodic volunteers and that existing research on volunteering, which is mostly based on regular volunteers does not necessarily apply to episodic volunteers without certain caveats. Even though our volunteers experienced the same environment, furthered the same cause, and served the same clientele, albeit in different ways, their motivations for and benefits from volunteering differed on several important dimensions. For example, we need to account for the differences in the costs and benefits facing regular and episodic volunteers and further differentiate them as extrinsic and intrinsic.

Further research is needed to investigate of the challenges and opportunities of managing episodic and regular volunteers within an organization as it is not always easy to blend episodic and regular volunteers under one management style. For this we need more information on the benefits, costs, and barriers facing volunteers, and the relations of episodic volunteers with regular volunteers and staff.

Some implications for volunteer resource managers from this study relate to understanding the use of episodic volunteers. By responding to the changing volunteer labor supply to their advantage, and recognize the differences between what drives regular and episodic volunteers, organizations can increase their use of volunteer labor. The PRMH staff successfully created roles that are suitable for episodic volunteers, in addition to holding on to their regular

volunteers in the organization. Thus, they increased the number of organizational volunteers without negatively affecting regular volunteering. Our findings also indicated that episodic volunteers might have different motivations and expectations that need to be met. For example, managers of volunteers should note that although episodic volunteers are less rewarded than regular ones, they also need recognition, and a simple thank-you note may suffice. Interestingly, a thank you note, a rather inexpensive gesture on part of the organization, is equally valued by episodic and regular volunteers, and is a good way to appreciate all volunteers. Although the nature of episodic volunteering is short-term, episodic volunteers expect some training that will help them fulfill their temporary roles. They also wish for flexibility, but due to organizational needs, this is not always possible.

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**Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Episodic Volunteers:  
Training and Retraining**

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**Abstract**

*The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is an outgrowth of congressional efforts to deliver economic assistance to low-income working taxpayers without additional funding for a bureaucratic delivery system. VITA, like many nonprofit and charitable programs, is heavily dependent on episodic volunteers. The authors discuss a study of volunteer opinions about the training required of VITA volunteer tax preparers. VITA coalitions must successfully balance the implementation of training programs that provide episodic volunteers with the necessary skills to accurately complete tax returns, but that are not so lengthy and burdensome as to discourage volunteer participation. The conclusions reached by the authors are designed to assist not only VITA coalitions, but any volunteer resource manager with training implementation that meets both episodic volunteers' needs and the organization's strategic goals.*

**Keywords:**

income tax, episodic, volunteer, recruitment, training

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is an outgrowth of congressional efforts to deliver economic assistance to low-income working taxpayers. Initially an

outreach program of the Internal Revenue service, the VITA program currently operates with substantial reliance on volunteer tax preparers through coalitions of charitable and non-

profit organizations. These volunteer preparers assist low-income taxpayers in completing their federal income tax returns to insure that those eligible for aid do, in fact, receive that aid. Aid comes primarily from the earned income credit which provides assistance for low-income persons who are working to raise their standard of living. The program has created substantial, positive economic impact in many urban areas having large numbers of working poor, recent immigrants, or elderly taxpayers.

The original VITA volunteers were IRS employees participating because Congress mandated a program for taxpayers who could not afford a paid preparer. Today, the typical volunteer is no longer a professional tax expert but rather a community volunteer who may or may not have prior knowledge of federal income tax regulations. The ultimate success of VITA is dependent on the numbers of volunteers willing to complete the training and successfully pass the certification exam required by the IRS as a condition for participating as a volunteer tax preparer in the VITA program. The yearly occurrence of federal income tax filing and the constant changes in tax law necessitates that VITA volunteers be recruited, trained, and then induced to actually volunteer during the two and one-half months the program operates each year.

Recent studies indicate that time is an increasingly precious commodity among potential volunteers (Merrill, 2006) and finding volunteers willing to invest substantial amounts of time is becoming ever more difficult (Franz, 2008). VITA coalitions face the rather daunting task of structuring training that ensures a high degree of accuracy for completed returns, but not requiring

training to the extent that volunteers are discouraged from participating in the program. With extremely limited resources available, reliance on episodic volunteers provides the primary means for VITA's vital mission to be accomplished.

Fortunately, for VITA coalitions, as ever pressing work and family pressures have precluded many volunteers from choosing to engage in long-term voluntary endeavors, episodic volunteering is on the rise and has emerged as a major growth trend in volunteerism (Reingold & Nesbit, 2006). VITA coalitions have thus joined the growing ranks of organizations that rely almost entirely on episodic volunteers (Handy, Brodeur, & Cnaan, 2005). While episodic volunteers serve as an invaluable resource for meeting organizational needs, by their very nature they necessitate continual recruitment, training, retraining, and retention efforts.

This study was designed to provide insight into the critical VITA success factors of volunteer recruitment, training, and retention. Analysis of volunteer feedback by VITA programs and other episodic volunteer dependent organizations can be extremely instructive not only as to the effectiveness of volunteer engagement but also in the effective performance of an organization's core work (Allen, 2006). Seeking and using volunteer feedback not only shows volunteers that their views are respected and valued, but also provides valuable firsthand impressions from those in the best position to evaluate organizational recruiting, training and retention efforts. Specifically, this study sought to explore: 1) the types of training methods experienced by VITA episodic



volunteers and the training methods they most preferred, 2) how well VITA volunteers understood tax compliance issues, and 3) how VITA training methods and training time commitments affected episodic volunteer participation.

## Research Methods

*Sample.* The convenience sample used for the study included 2,321 volunteers who completed the 2007 VITA training program in the San Antonio, Houston, Austin (Texas), and Chicago VITA coalitions. The authors achieved a 15% response rate (357 volunteers responding.)

*Instrumentation.* The 26-item survey was developed with input from long-time VITA volunteers, IRS agents responsible for VITA training and oversight, organizational representatives that participate in the VITA coalitions, and a thorough literature review of current VITA volunteerism. Responses were collected via identical paper and web-based survey questionnaires.

The survey explored volunteer demographics, status and experience, training preferences, methods, effectiveness, and tax content understanding. Demographics explored included gender, age, ethnicity, education level, employment status, volunteer experience, and level of volunteer activity. Training preferences were measured on a 7-point Likert type scale (ranging from 1 = "least preferred" to 7 = "most preferred") for five different training methods. Training methods were investigated using a single item asking respondents to indicate the primary method used in their VITA training. Response choices were "primarily on the web," "primarily in the

classroom," and "about equally on the web and in the classroom." Respondents were asked their understanding of 15 different tax content areas using a 7-point Likert type scale where 1 = "did not understand well" to 7 = "understood completely." Finally, respondents were asked for their opinions about training time requirements.

*Analysis.* The majority of data were ordinal in nature, and sub-samples of the respondents were unequal in number. Thus, non-parametric tests were used since tests of medians and rankings do not rely on assumptions about the distribution of data (Conover, 1980).

## Research Findings

Respondents (n=357) ranged in age from 18 to 80 years with the mean age of 39 years (s.d. = 15.8 years). Of the 343 respondents who identified their gender, 33% were men and 67% were female. The racial diversity of respondents was: 11.8% African-American, 8.6% Asian-American, 49.9% Anglo/Caucasian, 29.5% Hispanic/Latino, and 0.3% Other. Seventy-nine percent of respondents indicated that they had attained at least an undergraduate college degree.

Of the respondents who indicated their occupational status (n = 302), 49% were employed full-time, 19% were primarily students, 15% were part-time employed and attending school, and 13% were retired. When asked about prior volunteering experience, 58% of respondents (n = 310) stated that they were first-time VITA volunteers. Approximately 80% of those who indicated they were primarily students or worked and went to school also indicated that they were first-time volunteers.

*Volunteer Training Preferences.*  
The first research question focused on the types of training methods used to certify VITA volunteers and whether those methods were the most preferred by volunteers. The survey questions regarding preferred training methods

were based on methods that seem to be most prevalent among VITA coalitions (Table 1). Respondents preferred to either “practice returns and then take a test” or “attend a class and then take a test in class” more than the other three methods.

Table 1  
*Training Preference Mean Scores of Selected VITA Volunteers in Four Urban Areas*

Training Method	Practice returns and then take a test	Attend a class and then take a test in class	Attend a class and then take a web-based test	Study web-based material and then take a test on the web	Study printed material on my own and then take a test
Overall	5.65	5.54	4.80	3.80	3.44
Primarily Web	5.90	4.45	4.30	5.45	5.00
Primarily Classroom	5.63	5.70	4.77	3.61	3.26
About Equally Web and Classroom	5.68	4.73	5.10	4.73	4.38

Table 2  
*Training Preference Mean Scores of Selected First-time and Returning VITA Volunteers in Four Urban Areas*

Volunteer Experience	Practice returns and then take a test	Attend a class and then take a test in class	Attend a class and then take a web-based test	Study web-based material and then take a test on the web	Study printed material on my own and then take a test
First-time Volunteers	6.02***	5.63***	5.04***	3.69***	3.21***
Returning Volunteers	5.17 (1)	5.41(1)	4.5**	3.98(2)	3.74(2)

\*\*\* Asymptotic significance for Wilcoxon Z scores all < .01.

(1) Wilcoxon Z scores indicate no difference in rankings.

(2) Wilcoxon Z scores indicate no difference in rankings.

\*\* Wilcoxon Z score indicates ranking is significantly different from the rankings of (1) and (2) (asy. Sig. <.02).

Respondents' opinions about preferred training methods might have been influenced by the experience the volunteer had with the VITA program. First-time volunteers, for the most part, were trained in the classroom only. Returning volunteers may have participated in different training methods over the course of their total VITA experience. To test for this effect, training preferences were analyzed holding experience constant (Table 2). First-time volunteers reported clear

preferences about training methods. "Practice returns and then take a test" was clearly the most preferred training method with "attend a class and then take a test in class" as the second most preferred method. Returning volunteers indicated flexibility in training method preferences. However, they clearly preferred "practice returns and then take a test" or "attend a class and then take a test in class" over the other training methods.

Table 3  
*Mean Scores for Tax Content Understanding by Type of Training of Selected VITA Volunteers in Four Urban Areas*

VITA Topic	Training on Web	Training in Classroom	Training on Web and Classroom	Overall
Filing Status Single	6.25	6.36	6.59	6.38
Filing Status Married Separate	6.25	6.12	6.39	6.15
Filing Status MFJ	6.33	6.38	6.63	6.41
Filing Status HOH	5.92	5.95*	6.37*	6.00
Children Dependency	5.92	5.79	6.10	5.83
Parent Dependency	5.55	5.50*	6.02*	5.56
Earned Income Tax Credit	5.75	5.51	5.93	5.57
Taxable versus Non-Taxable Income	5.42	5.43	5.88	5.48
Self-Employment Income	5.17	4.98*	5.66*	5.06
Dependent Care Credit	6.00	5.69*	6.17*	5.76
Child Tax Credit	6.08	5.67*	6.15*	5.74
Education Credits	5.75	5.27*	5.80*	5.36
Interest and Dividend Income	6.00	5.59*	6.38*	5.69
Itemized Deductions	5.42	4.80*	5.78*	4.94
Retirement Savings Credit	4.75	4.54*	5.51*	4.67

\* Asymptotic significance for Wilcoxon Z scores all at < .05

*Volunteer Training Preparedness.* The second research question focused on how well volunteers understood tax content. Table 3 reports some variations in tax content understanding based on how training occurred. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in reported understandings between training on the web and training in the classroom, as well as no significant differences between training on the web and training about equally on the web and in the classroom.

However, those who trained about equally on the web and in the classroom reported better understanding of a number of tax content areas than did those who trained in the classroom only.

Since the results could be influenced by the volunteers' levels of experience, volunteer responses by training method were analyzed separately for first-time and returning volunteers. For first-time volunteers, the training method experienced seemed to have little impact on reported understanding of tax topics. First-time volunteers whose training was about equally on the web and in the classroom reported a greater understanding of only three of the 15 topics. For returning volunteers, results are the same as for first-time volunteers. Returning volunteers who trained about equally on the web and in the classroom also reported a greater level of understanding of three of the 15 topics.

Table 4  
*Mean (Median) Reasonable Training Time in Hours by Type of Volunteer of Selected VITA Volunteers in Four Urban Areas*

Type of volunteer	Reasonable Time for New Volunteers	Reasonable Time for Returning Volunteers	Discourages New Volunteers	Discourages Returning Volunteers
Overall	12.3(8)**	6.8(4)**	14.5*(10)**	9.1(6)*
Primarily Student	10.0(8)	5.0(4)	11.3(8)	8.6(5)
Work and Student	10.8(9)	7.2(4)	12.4(9)	6.3(8)
Full-time Employee	11.2(8)	6.7(4)	13.0(10)	7.9(6)
Self-Employed	11.6(9)	6.7(6)	17.0(15)	9.1(8)
Choose to Not Work Outside the Home	26.4(16)	9.3(6)	32.0(16)	23.6(8)
Retired	18.9(16)	8.2(6)	22.6(16)	12.2(8)

\*\* Tests of medians indicates at least one column median is significantly different at <.01

\* Test of medians indicates at last one column median is significantly different at <.02

*Volunteer Time Commitments.*

The issue of training time, and the design of training methods consistent with episodic volunteers' expectations about time, are important issues for many volunteer programs, and not just the VITA program. To gain a better understanding of this issue, the third research question focused on how training time commitments affected VITA volunteer participation. Most of the volunteers who responded to this survey trained primarily in the classroom or about equally on the web and in the classroom and all were expected to successfully complete an IRS certification examination on tax law and rules at the conclusion of training.

Volunteers were asked for their estimates of (1) a reasonable amount of time that first-time volunteers should be expected to train and (2) the amount of required training time that would discourage first-time volunteers. The question was repeated with respect to returning volunteers. The results are reported in Table 4.

Full and part-time students and full-time employees had considerably different estimates about reasonable training times than did those who chose to not work outside the home or were retired. Students and full-time employees thought that it was reasonable to expect new volunteers to train about 10 or 11 hours and new volunteers would be discouraged if required to train more than 11 to 13 hours. Those who chose to not work outside the home and who were retired thought that new volunteers could reasonably be expected to invest from 19 to 26 hours in training and were not discouraged until required training was between 23 and 32 hours.

The various volunteer groups believed that returning volunteers could reasonably be expected to train about seven hours, but estimates varied for the amount of time they thought would discourage returning volunteers with estimates ranging from about eight to about 24 hours.

Experience with the VITA program may have affected respondents' beliefs about reasonable and discouraging training times. First-time volunteers may have had an unreasonably high or low estimation of reasonable training times due to lack of experience with the program. Returning volunteers, who have some experience with the program, may have recognized that a great number of issues can arise at a VITA site during the tax season and judge that more training time is necessary. Training times were analyzed holding experience with VITA constant (Table 5). Surprisingly, statistical analysis revealed that the median times reported by returning volunteers for reasonable training times and for discouraging training times are all significantly lower than those reported by new volunteers.

**Implications and Conclusions**

The results of this study provide numerous insights into episodic volunteer training expectations for both VITA and other volunteer programs as well. The first research question investigated the training preferences of VITA volunteers. The American Taxation Association (2007) reported that IRS printed materials and the IRS web-based Link and Learn® system are the two most widely used sources of training materials.

Table 5  
*Reasonable and Discouraging Training Times (in Hours) by Length of VITA Experience of Selected VITA Volunteers in Four Urban Areas*

Type of VITA Volunteer	Reasonable Time for New Volunteers	Reasonable Time for Returning Volunteers	Discourages New Volunteers	Discourages Returning Volunteers
First-time Volunteer	13.2(10)	7.2(5)	15.7(10)	10.2(8)
Returning Volunteer	11.7(8)	6.3(4)	13.1(8)	7.7(6)

The IRS has made a considerable investment in the development of the web-based training program, Link & Learn®, which is a web-based training tool designed for volunteer self-study, followed by classroom instruction on return preparation software. Anecdotal data indicate that the IRS “pushes” the web-based Link and Learn® training method because of its flexibility and availability and because it does not require classroom trainers. However, no studies were found that empirically examined whether the IRS’s Link and Learn® training method is the volunteers’ preferred way to be trained. Yet, in this study, VITA volunteer responses indicated a preference for training by practicing returns and/or being trained in the classroom. This is an interesting result given society’s increasing reliance on web-based applications.

At least among VITA episodic volunteers there is still a strong preference for more traditional training methods. This is an important implication not only for the IRS but for any volunteer agency to understand. Research suggests that trainees prefer for training to maintain a high degree of fidelity (Noe, 2008) meaning that the

training environment mirrors the actual work environment. While the IRS has taken a major step in this direction by providing a process-based training method which focuses on teaching the volunteer to use research materials as opposed to learning a wide range of tax rules, the study results indicate that incorporating more training emphasizing return preparation using the VITA tax preparation software would further increase training fidelity. This approach should also increase volunteer satisfaction, since it is directly aligned with the way volunteers report they preferred to be trained. When agencies critically assess training methods and provide greater alignment with volunteer preferences while still attaining their training goals, then the agency may find greater volunteer retention and work effectiveness.

Second, the data suggest that substantial thought needs to be given to the training of returning VITA volunteers. The survey results indicated that experience with the VITA program has a much greater impact on volunteers’ understanding of tax topics than any other factor. Yet, other than allowing volunteers to “test-out” for the basic certification in Link and Learn®, the

VITA training curriculum is a “one size fits all” approach. One implication of this study is that agencies should provide customized training methods that build upon experienced volunteers’ expertise rather than using a more general training process. By structuring training methods to focus on more advanced information for returning episodic volunteers, agencies can provide those volunteers with opportunities for continuous learning which can be a huge advantage in retaining experienced volunteers and achieving greater process efficiency for the agency.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that VITA coalitions actually do modify the types of training volunteers undergo in preparation for the certification exams (American Taxation Association, 2007). In some coalitions, this takes the form of teaching tax content, rules, and tax software simultaneously in the context of preparing practice returns, which is consistent with how volunteers say they prefer to be trained. The fact that coalitions modify training in order to meet volunteers’ expectations about training time reinforces the results from this study.

Lastly, the study data suggest that understanding how episodic volunteers perceive time commitments can affect how they choose to participate or not participate in volunteer opportunities. Non-profit agencies rely heavily on volunteer participation to achieve strategic goals. Much of that participation comes in the form of volunteer time. Understanding volunteer expectations about service time is critical for agencies to achieve their goals. The results of this study are somewhat surprising in that the data revealed substantial differences in episodic volunteer time expectations

compared to IRS recommendations for training times. For new volunteers, the minimum IRS estimate of training time is 16 hours plus software training, yet full or part-time students and full-time employees, who comprised approximately 83% of the VITA volunteers in the sample, have a significantly lower estimate of reasonable training times.

The issue for the IRS is to maintain necessary standards for income tax preparation and accuracy while not requiring more time than episodic volunteers are willing to devote. Also, how that training time is focused for first-time volunteers versus returning volunteers is critical to achieving the IRS’s goals for the VITA program. From the volunteers’ perspective, other life commitments seem to have a large influence on perspectives about reasonable time commitments. Agencies should structure training programs that meet the majority of volunteer’s time commitment expectations and have additional options for those volunteers with greater time availability to engage in additional training as desired.

This study focused on the effects of training decisions for non-profit agencies specifically using the VITA program as an example. The study recommendations are intended to assist VITA coalitions in the design and implementation of training regimens that not only provide the requisite skills for tax preparers but also embrace volunteer feedback and preferences in the choice of training methods and scope. The implementation of these recommendations is designed to improve the recruitment and retention of VITA volunteers and also to improve the effectiveness of volunteers in the VITA worksite. These results, while focused

on the episodic volunteer patterns of VITA volunteers, also provide valuable insight into the training preferences and time commitment expectations of episodic volunteers used by numerous organizations.

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## **Episodic Volunteering: A Comparison of the Motivation of Volunteers from Two Professional Golf Events**

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### **Abstract**

*Understanding volunteer motivation has been widely recognized as a valuable component to volunteer resource management, specifically for elite sport events which attract episodic volunteers. This cross sectional descriptive study investigated the primary motivation of volunteers from two elite golf events, the Professional Golf Association (PGA) Championship, and the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Solheim Cup event. Findings indicated that volunteers from both events have a strong desire to help make the event a success. Solheim Cup volunteers had significantly higher motivation than PGA Championship volunteers for the five factors explored. The study's implications may assist sport managers and/or volunteer resource managers in designing quality volunteer experiences that enhance the overall volunteerism experience, strengthening both the episodic volunteers' work ethics and event management logistics.*

### **Key Words:**

episodic, volunteers, motivation, sports, golf

### **Introduction**

Each year as more sporting events are held, event organizers and sports managers face a growing challenge to find enough personnel, particularly volunteers, to manage the event economically and operationally. Recent decades have

witnessed a significant increase in the use of such events by national, regional, and local governments to bolster economic development (Mules & Faulkner, 1996). Research has documented the need and importance of volunteers for the successful operation and management of sporting

events (Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998; Strigas & Jackson, 2003). Volunteers are a critical core component of the sport service industry (Green & Chalip, 1998). The Professional Golf Association (PGA) conducts more than 30 tournaments utilizing more than 80,000 volunteers per year; the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) recruits over 60,000 volunteers annually. The scope of such events combined with limited economic resources point to a continuing heavy reliance upon volunteers in general, and especially episodic volunteers.

Researchers have studied the demographics, motivations, and commitment levels of volunteers for professional sport events (Hamm & MacLean, 2007). Of concern is research suggesting that the available pool of volunteers may be declining due to the increasing demands of everyday life. As a result, organizers must become more effective in their volunteer recruitment and retention.

An additional stress on sports volunteerism involves the special nature of traveling locations or one-time events. Volunteering at such events is episodic rather than sustained. Episodic volunteers are individuals who prefer short-term volunteering assignments or task-specific volunteer project opportunities (Points of Light Foundation, 2004). According to recent research, managing episodic sports volunteers is considerably different from managing continuing or permanent volunteer positions, suggesting the need for different strategies (Getz, 1991). It is important to understand the unique opportunities, demographics, and motives of episodic sports volunteers.

Professional golf tournaments differ from other sport events and non-sport episodic volunteerism opportunities. Golf events are often held at different locations

each year, forcing managers to recruit primarily a new volunteer group at each location, making management efforts more challenging. For example, the annual PGA Championship rotates geographically within the United States, while the bi-annual LPGA Solheim Cup rotates every two years between the United States and a different European country. An event held at traveling locations may appeal to a different set of motivations for volunteering as compared to fixed locations (Fairley, Kellett, & Green, 2007). Professional golf events also require volunteers to pay a substantial fee. For the PGA and LPGA events, this ranges from \$75 to \$175 to cover the cost of a volunteer uniform. A required payment may influence the motivation of volunteers and thus recruitment strategies.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Various disciplines have contributed theories and models regarding volunteer motivation. Previous research has also examined the motivation of volunteers in a variety of contexts including social services (Clary, Snyder, & Ridge, 1992); health professions (Fletcher & Major, 2004); and sports events management (Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998). One predominant theory, the functional approach, suggests that volunteers may be recruited and sustained by satisfying their psychological gain. Central to this model is the idea that people engage in various activities for purposeful, goal-oriented reasons (Katz, 1960). Clary et al. (1998) proposed six primary functions served by volunteerism: values, social, career, understanding, enhancement, and protective. They found that when the volunteer experience matched an individual's primary motivation for volunteering, individual volunteers reported greater satisfaction and stronger intentions to continue. The

researchers also acknowledged the multi-motivational nature of volunteering (i.e., diverse and multiple goals).

Most theoretical research on volunteer motivation has been conducted in the non-profit sector involving traditional settings. While sports organizations need volunteers on a regular basis, much of sports volunteering is episodic and short term (i.e., 20 or fewer total hours at a single annual event). Professional sports events seem to have a strong attraction for episodic volunteerism while social services seem to be related more to purposiveness or intrinsic motivation. Research has demonstrated the significance of subcultural elements of sports involvement which may provide insight into sport volunteers (Donnelly, 1993). Sports cultivate their own expectations, beliefs, and values (Green & Chalip, 1998). Episodic volunteers join a special subculture where they can meet athletes, socialize with executives, and share experiences attracting sports enthusiasts. From these unique experiences they tend to motivate themselves to do more (Farrell, Johnston, & Twynam, 1998). Based on these differences, researchers must continue to examine sports volunteers as a separate entity.

Strigas and Jackson (2003) developed the Sport Volunteer Motivation Scale to assess volunteers' motivations in sports settings, defining five possible motivational factors: material, purposive, leisure, egoistic, and external. The purposive factor recognizes the volunteers' desires to support and contribute to the sports organization and community. The material factor is the expected gain by the volunteer (material or social status) in exchange for his/her service. The leisure factor refers to an individual volunteer's need for various leisure choices. The external factor examines the extent to which volunteers are influenced by factors outside of their

immediate control, such as family traditions or significant others. The egoistic factor involves an individual volunteer's needs for social interaction, interpersonal relationships, and self-actualization.

Recently, researchers have begun to explore the demographics, motivations, and intentions of golf volunteers. Hardin, Koo, King, and Zdroik (2007) utilized an exploratory factor analysis to identify and assess four factors that explain how individuals' motivations to volunteer: self interest, external, purposive, and escapism. Self interest, followed by purposive, explained the majority (33.18%) of the total variance among the study's volunteer participants. Hamm and MacLean (2007) examined volunteer motivations, commitment, and intentions to remain at a professional women's golf event. They found that volunteers were motivated by leisure pursuits and a commitment to their community. More studies are clearly needed to expand the knowledge of episodic volunteerism at golf events. Twynam, Farrell, and Johnston (2003) recommended that future research examine and compare special event volunteers among different sports. Research is also needed to examine volunteers from different gender-focused sports events.

## Methods

This descriptive, exploratory study utilized a quantitative methodology and written questionnaire to examine the primary motivation of episodic volunteers at a men's (2005 PGA Championship) and a women's golf event (2005 LPGA Solheim Cup). The researchers posed three research questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of episodic volunteers for these two events?
2. What factors motivate these volunteers?

3. Are there significant differences between volunteers' motivation for a men's and women's golf event?

#### *Participants*

The population for this study consisted of episodic volunteers from the 2005 PGA Championship and LPGA Solheim Cup, held in the Northeast and Midwest regions respectively. The convenience sample consisted of a total of 877 episodic volunteers: 470 for the PGA Championship and 407 for the LPGA tournament. Episodic volunteer duties included: course marshal, hospitality, merchandising, walking scorer, credentialing, and ticket sales. Volunteer time commitment was a minimum of 20 hours; only 25% spent more than 25 hours assisting with each annual event. Volunteer responsibilities primarily occurred during the tournament week. Episodic volunteers with higher levels of responsibilities worked with the tournament year round and upwards to 60 hours during tournament week.

#### *Instrumentation*

The research instrument was a written questionnaire consisting of two sections, (1) demographics and (2) volunteer motivation, with a total of 52 items. Demographic questions investigated age, gender, educational level, marital status, income, employment status, golf participation, and previous sports event volunteer experience. Volunteer motivations were examined utilizing the Sport Volunteer Motivation Scale (Strigas & Jackson, 2003). The 40-item self-report measure of motivation to volunteer explored the five factors (i.e., material, purposive, leisure, egoistic, and external) described previously. The wording of four questions that referenced a marathon event was modified to reflect a golf event. A Likert-type response scale was used ranging from "not

important at all" (1) to "extremely important" (5). Summated scores for the five factors were calculated by the procedures outlined by Strigas and Jackson. The scale has been shown to be both internally valid and reliable with a  $\alpha = .93$  in two studies of episodic marathon volunteers.

#### *Data Collection*

The questionnaire was hand distributed to episodic volunteers who were willing to participate at each respective event's orientation and credentialing two weeks before the event, over the course of two and a half days (i.e., Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday). Questionnaires were administered during mandatory volunteer credentialing (i.e., orientation) meetings conducted throughout the day so as to ensure that volunteers assigned to all time shifts would have the opportunity to participate in the data collection. During the meetings, event organizers briefed the episodic volunteers about their responsibilities and distributed uniforms and credentials. This opportunity was selected since all volunteers had to attend one of these sessions. The researchers explained the purpose of the study and directions for completing the survey. Questionnaire completion required approximately 10 minutes. By collecting the data prior to the actual event, the actual volunteer experience would not influence participants' responses.

The researchers attempted to have all episodic volunteers attending the mandatory credentialing meetings complete the survey; however, approximately 33% of the total volunteer population for each event participated.

#### *Statistical Design and Analysis*

Descriptive statistics were calculated for demographic information about participants. Mean scores and ranks were calculated for each of the 40 volunteer

motivation items. Means and standard deviations were then calculated for the five motivation factors. MANOVA was then conducted to compare the motivation factors (purposive, egoistic, leisure, material, external) by event (PGA Championship and LPGA Solheim Cup). Follow-up univariate tests and Scheffe's post hoc tests were calculated when appropriate. The level of significance was set at  $p < .05$  for all analyses.

### **Findings and Conclusions**

The findings for the demographic profile of volunteers from the PGA and LPGA events are presented in Table 1. Unlike most other sports event volunteers, the episodic volunteers in this study closely resembled the general golf-playing population in: age (45 years and older, 76.8%), ethnicity (Caucasian, 96.6%), and household income (\$75,000+, 75.1%). This is not surprising based on the statistics of golf participation as 45 million people call themselves golfers in the United States (Graves, 2003). The demographic profile aligns with previous research regarding volunteers for golf events (Hardin, Koo, King, & Zdroik, 2007). The majority of participants in the present study could have been influenced to volunteer by their familiarity with golf. The first recruitment strategy for episodic golf events should be to consider golf enthusiasts. However, if knowledge of golf is not necessary, event managers and VRMs may utilize various tactics to demystify the sport to draw a broader volunteer population.

The episodic volunteers in this study were experienced; the large majority of respondents (93.4%) reported prior sport event volunteerism, but the Solheim Cup

volunteers had significantly more experience. Almost 99% of LPGA volunteers reported previous sports experience, with a mean of 144 hours for an average of 8 events. In comparison, 84% of PGA volunteers reported prior sports experience with a mean of only 56 hours for fewer than four events. Interestingly, the volunteers were recruited from different sources. Volunteers for the PGA Championship were recruited through the PGA office. Solheim Cup volunteers were recruited through the local sports corporation, which puts on multiple events. This could explain the variation in the amount of previous sport event volunteer experience. Event managers seeking volunteers should consider recruiting volunteers from other episodic sport events. Through sport corporations and commissions, organizers have the opportunity to obtain more experienced individuals, since they already attract episodic world-class events.

Regarding the second purpose of the investigation, descriptive statistics revealed the importance of 40 items in influencing the motivation of volunteers. Table 2 ranks the 18 highest and five lowest reasons for volunteering by event. For the PGA, the highest ranked reason was "It is fun to volunteer for this event," while for the LPGA volunteers, the primary motive was the "desire to make the event a success." Both of these items reflect purposive motivation, supporting the desire to support the event and community. Volunteers did not expect any form of personal gain for their service as the least motivating reasons fell within the material factor.

Table 1  
*Selected Demographic Characteristics*

Characteristics	Number (Percent of Participants)					
	PGA Championship (n=470)		Solheim Cup (n=407)		Total (N=877)	
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	354	(75.3%)	140	(34.4%)	494	(56.3%)
Female	116	(24.7%)	267	(65.6%)	383	(43.7%)
<b>Age</b>						
18-24	10	(2.1%)	2	(0.5%)	12	(1.4%)
25-34	18	(3.8%)	28	(6.9%)	46	(5.2%)
35-44	73	(15.5%)	71	(17.4%)	144	(16.4%)
45-54	123	(26.2%)	92	(22.6%)	215	(24.5%)
55-64	154	(32.8%)	132	(32.4%)	286	(32.6%)
65+	91	(19.4%)	82	(20.1%)	173	(19.7%)
<b>Ethnicity</b>						
Caucasian	452	(96.2%)	395	(97.1%)	847	(96.6%)
African American	3	(0.6%)	6	(1.5%)	9	(1.0%)
Native American	5	(1.1%)	0	(0%)	5	(0.6%)
Hispanic	5	(1.1%)	4	(1.0%)	9	(1.0%)
Asian American	5	(1.1%)	2	(0.5%)	7	(0.8%)
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Married	376	(80.0%)	270	(66.3%)	646	(73.7%)
Single	52	(11.1%)	103	(25.3%)	155	(17.7%)
Divorced	23	(4.9%)	26	(6.4%)	49	(5.6%)
Widowed	18	(3.8%)	8	(2.0%)	26	(3.0%)
<b>Household Income</b>						
Less than \$75,000	64	(13.8%)	153	(37.5%)	217	(24.9%)
Over \$75,000	405	(86.2%)	254	(62.5%)	659	(75.1%)
<b>Employment Status</b>						
Full-Time	256	(54.5%)	215	(52.8%)	471	(53.7%)
Part-Time	45	(9.6%)	28	(6.9%)	73	(8.3%)
Unemployed	22	(4.7%)	38	(9.3%)	60	(6.8%)
Retired	147	(31.3%)	126	(31.0%)	273	(31.1%)
<b>Golf Experience</b>						
Play Regularly	369	(84.3%)	341	(83.8%)	737	(84.0%)
Do not play	101	(15.7%)	66	(16.2%)	140	(16.0%)

Table 2  
*Means and Ranks of Volunteer Motivation Items*

Volunteer Motivation Item (Factor)	Overall	PGA event		LPGA event	
	Mean	Mean	(Rank)	Mean	(Rank)
<i>Highest Ranking Reasons (top 18)</i>					
I wanted to help make the event a success (P)	4.18	3.95	2	4.44	1
It is fun to volunteer for this event (P)	4.18	4.08	1	4.29	2
Volunteering creates a better society (P)	4.03	3.83	3	4.27	3
I am genuinely concerned about the event (Ex)	3.86	3.70	4	4.05	5
Complimentary items played a very important role in my decision (M)	3.76	3.39	7	4.19	4
I wanted to be appreciated by others (Ex)	3.73	3.52	5	3.97	6
Volunteer activities energize me (P)	3.63	3.49	6	3.79	7
Others to whom I am close place a high value on community service (M)	3.43	3.34	8	3.53	11
Volunteering for this event enables the organizational committee to provide more services for less money (P)	3.38	3.10	9	3.71	8
I wanted to put something back into my community (P)	3.30	3.06	10	3.57	10
I wanted to volunteer because the events put on mirror our national values, image, or heritage (P)	3.28	2.94	12	3.68	9
I wanted to work with people from different age groups and backgrounds (Eg)	3.15	2.96	11	3.36	12
I wanted to develop friendships with other volunteers (Eg)	3.08	2.91	13	3.27	13
My friends/significant others are volunteer for this event (Ex)	2.79	2.76	14	2.83	17
Volunteering for this event is worthy of my time and effort (Eg)	2.74	2.66	15	2.84	15
Most people in my community volunteer (Ex)	2.71	2.57	17	2.87	14
I wanted to improve my skills and abilities (Eg)	2.68	2.54	18	2.84	15
Volunteering for this event is considered prestigious (Eg)	2.58	2.61	16	2.59	20
<i>Lowest Ranking Reasons (bottom 5)</i>					
Volunteering will look good on my resume (M)	2.00	1.96	36	2.05	35
I wanted to slow down the pace of life (L)	1.96	1.95	37	1.98	37
Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles (L)	1.92	1.91	38	1.94	38
I wanted to gain some practical experience toward paid employment (M)	1.81	1.83	39	1.78	39
My employer/school is going to give me extra credit for volunteering (M)	1.54	1.56	40	1.53	40

Key: P=purposive; M=material; Eg=egoistic; Ex=external; L=leisure

Table 3  
*Test of Between-Subjects Effects for Volunteer Motive Factors*

Factor	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Purposive	1	105.23	.001
Egoistic	1	16.06	.001
Material	1	11.96	.001
Leisure	1	3.86	.050
External	1	16.35	.001
Error	862		

In comparing the motivating factors among the two volunteer groups (Table 3), MANOVA results revealed significant differences between the PGA and LPGA events [Wilk's  $\Lambda = .888$ ,  $F(5, 858) = 21.65$ ,  $p = .001$ ]. The between-subjects tests revealed that Solheim Cup volunteers were more highly motivated than PGA volunteers on all five factors. The nature and uniqueness of the LPGA event could have had an effect on the overall motivation of the volunteers. The Solheim Cup is held only in the United States every four years at traveling locations (versus the annual PGA Championship) - a rarer opportunity. Volunteers for the Solheim Cup exhibited higher motivations on all five factors, perhaps based not only on the uniqueness of this opportunity but also being influenced by the significantly higher sport event volunteerism experience of the LPGA volunteers. Based on their prior experiences, volunteers may have been able to align their motives more closely to their event responsibility.

The researchers also examined the means and standard deviations for the subscale scores (Table 4.) The findings support using a multifactor functional approach with golf event volunteers,

particularly for episodic opportunities. The episodic volunteers in this study indicated motivation across all five dimensions with purposive, egoistic, material, and leisure being stronger than external for both events. The highest ranking reasons supported the purposive factor ( $M = 3.84$ ): volunteers from both events had a genuine concern for contributing their time, efforts, and experience to make their event a success. In contrast to the existing literature, the external factor was the least important to these volunteers ( $M = 2.23$ ). Strigas and Jackson (2003); Williams, Dossa, and Thompkins (1995), and Farrell, Johnston, and Twynam (1998) all found that motivation related to the material factor least influenced individuals' decisions to volunteer; however, in this study, material was the third most reported motive.

Because of the required fee, the episodic volunteers in this study may have expected some form of material return for their services. The elite status of these events may also have influenced their material motivation. Overall, the results of this study align with previous research on volunteer motivation (Williams et al., 1995; Farrell et al., 1998), yet differ from more recent studies (Strigas & Jackson, 2003).



Table 4  
*Means and Standard Deviations for Volunteer Motive Factors*

Factors	Mean Score (Standard Deviation)					
	PGA Championship (n=470)		Solheim Cup (n=407)		Total (N=877)	
Purposive	3.62	(.035)	4.09**	(.028)	3.84	(.024)
Egoistic	2.57	(.041)	2.79**	(.038)	2.67	(.028)
Material	2.36	(.036)	2.52**	(.032)	2.43	(.025)
Leisure	2.29	(.039)	2.40*	(.036)	2.34	(.027)
External	2.15	(.030)	2.32**	(.031)	2.23	(.022)

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .001$

The reason for the different results could be attributed to the type of event being studied, as only the work of Williams et al. (1995) and Farrell et al. (1998) focused on elite episodic international sports events. Specific to golf events, the present study supports the work of Hardin et al. (2007) yet is different from Hamm and MacLean (2007) in regards to motivations to volunteer.

#### **Implications for the Profession**

Episodic events, including sports events, bring together volunteers of different demographic characteristics and motivations. Motivations of episodic volunteers associated with an elite episodic sports event relate to a balance of personal, social, and material factors with common interests in being part of a special event and contributing to its success. To ensure satisfied episodic volunteers, prospective volunteers' motivations should be assessed early in the recruitment and training process. Individual volunteers may then be better aligned with tasks they likely find the most rewarding.

The findings also suggest practical actions for other organizations interested in maintaining the support of volunteers in their activities, particularly for episodic events. The present study, along with previous research, provides a clearer picture of the golf volunteer population as well as contributes to knowledge on the overall volunteer population. The multifactor functional approach to understanding the motivations of volunteers is further substantiated. Volunteer resource managers who understand the motives sought by episodic volunteers will be better prepared to provide experiences that satisfy purposive, egoistic, and material functions. This will result in more effective, recruitment, management, and retention strategies that are effective in meeting the needs of both the organization and episodic volunteers.

For episodic events, organizers and VRMs may need to alter recruitment tactics based on the type of event as well as the target volunteer market. Event organizers must understand motivating factors, which in the present study included an emphasis on

purposive, egoistic, and material factors, in order to align with the volunteers' rationales and aid in the satisfaction of their experience. The application of the present may also provide current VRMs with suggestions on how to appeal to the most important motivational factors. For recruitment, appeal to the purposive factor by providing meaningful opportunities, such as giving a significant task and asking episodic volunteers to present their findings to event administrators, who may also learn more about means to effectively manage the event. This will allow volunteers to feel they are appreciated and making a difference. Egoistic factors should also be considered. Event managers should provide opportunities to socialize through a reception after the event or by setting up a volunteer tent during the course of the event. Another recommendation is to align episodic volunteer activities with individuals' specific motivations for volunteering. Event organizers looking to incorporate the material factor should ensure the availability of tangible benefits sought by volunteers, since this appears to be a cornerstone management strategy for sustained episodic golf events. Since golf event episodic volunteers must pay, they expect a material gain of some form (e.g., a reception, thank-you note, or a free round of golf). These strategies may contribute to an event's short- and long-term success.

In order to advance the application of the functional theory within sports volunteerism, future research is recommended to examine potential connections between golf and other episodic sports events. Furthermore, two episodic volunteer populations should be explored, one within the sports sector and the other in the non-sports sector, in an effort to directly compare the motivational differences between the two groups. This will further assist with volunteer management as it may

be possible to draw from non-sports volunteer-based programs for episodic sport events. It could also greatly assist events operations based on the vast number of volunteers needed.

Volunteers for episodic events will continue to have a significant impact on event management. For event managers, high operation costs as well as a continuing struggle for volunteers emphasize a continuing need to be more effective in all aspects of volunteer resource management. By better understanding and targeting episodic volunteer motivation as well as the different constituencies prior to recruitment, from an event management standpoint, episodic events will have the opportunity to be more effective.

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## Episodic Volunteers . . . A Fleeting Species?

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### Abstract

*The episodic volunteer may be considered a "fleeting species," i.e., here today and gone tomorrow. This commentary suggests that more intentional management of episodic volunteers can pay benefits to the volunteer resource manager. The author explores three problem areas that hamper and impede the effective engagement of short-service episodic volunteers in some programs: 1. Resources; 2. Running parallel programs for episodic volunteers; and, 3. Applied research.*

### Key Words:

episodic volunteer, resource development, parallel programs, applied research

### Introduction

The episodic volunteer is somewhat like the butterfly – fleeting. . . here today and gone tomorrow. There is a cosmic connection between the fleeting beauty and utility of the butterfly and the episodic volunteer. Butterflies come in more than 120,000 varieties and are intrinsic to our world, an often-overlooked fact (Butterfly and Moth World, 2008). The butterfly is a plant pollinator and food for other animals in the larger ecological chain (e.g., birds, mammals, spiders, and other insects). Perhaps one of their most important functions, however, is as an early detection system for changes in the surrounding environment, warning of unhealthy conditions.

Episodic volunteers fill similar functions. Their short-term service often "pollinates" others to engage in volunteering. One person shows up for a short service assignment and tells his/her friends. "Fruit", in the form of new volunteers, is created by that single episodic experience. The episodic

volunteer is not necessarily "food" for other volunteers (or professional staff!) but may often be the grist for a larger endeavor. Long-term service volunteers provide the stability for a program while episodic volunteers aid in ways that add to the "nourishment" of the client being served. Imagine a large fund raising event without scores of volunteers who contribute 4-hour shifts, but nothing else.

Episodic volunteers also bring in new ideas and opinions which, if listened to, may serve as a barometer of the holistic health of the sponsoring volunteer program or agency. This can be likened to an early warning system, again like the butterfly. A program that organizes strategically to engage short-term volunteers has likely learned how to be more effective in recruiting and managing both episodic and ongoing volunteers.

Butterfly experts and scientists, known as lepidopterists, know everything there is to know about the butterfly: what plants and flowers appeal

to them, how they are nourished and grow, where they like to live and work, and what discourages them from a particular plant, site, or environment. Lepidopterists do so by actively and aggressively seeking out and cultivating appropriate resources and opportunities for research involving observing, tracking, and monitoring butterflies, both as an overall insect order as well as for specific butterfly species.

Why is it then that managers of volunteer resources often seem to know so very little about their own “fleeting” population of episodic volunteers? More than one volunteer resource manager (VRM) has told me that s/he refuses to waste scarce organizational resources and time learning how to better attract volunteers who only want to volunteer for a few hours rather than on an ongoing basis.

Even if they wanted to nurture and attract episodic volunteers, managers of volunteer programs often cannot locate contemporary valid and reliable research on the topic of episodic volunteering. Empirical studies on episodic volunteering are few and far between. Two notable examples have been conducted, one in the 1990’s and another in 2003, conducted as part of a larger study for the Flemish Red Cross (Hustinix & Lammertyn, 2003; Weber, 2002).

Volunteer resource managers (VRM’s), like their professional Lepidopterist colleagues, need to know much more about the episodic volunteer “species” in the volunteer program’s immediate surroundings in order to more effectively recruit and engage them in meaningful volunteer service. But, what is it that keeps VRM’s from more effectively recruiting and engaging the “fleeting” episodic volunteer “species”?

I would suggest that the answer is three fold: 1. Resources; 2. Running a parallel program; and 3. Research.

### **Resources**

There are few resources available that describe how to create a structure for an episodic volunteer program. In *Episodic Volunteering: Organizing and Managing the Short-Term Volunteer* (Macduff, 2004), I first suggested the establishment of parallel programs for episodic and long-term service volunteers. This is by no means the only effective model available for engaging episodic volunteers. More recent publications such as *Boomer Volunteer Engagement: Collaborate Today, Thrive Tomorrow* (Friedman-Fixler & Eichberg, 2008) also suggest new language and strategies to attract baby boomers as volunteers, many of whom are interested in short (i.e., episodic) volunteer assignments. While the overall aim of the book is to engage baby boomers in long-term traditional service, and the authors plead for flexibility in scheduling, the recruiting and engagement suggestions are modern variations on what has been touted for decades as the most effective way to engage volunteers (i.e., written position descriptions, interviews, support, and retention).

Unfortunately, the hapless VRM is most often left to his/her own devices to figure out how to best organize for the short-service volunteer. Consistently, s/he finds herself/himself asking rhetoric questions: “Do I develop screening tools?” (i.e., Do we need to screen someone who only is there for 4- 8 hours of service?); “What would a training program look like?” (i.e., Does everyone need to attend the 4-hour orientation?); “What about awards and recognition?”

(i.e., Let's just give everyone certificates).

However, there are VRM's who are creating new resources to recruit and engage episodic volunteers by adapting traditional volunteer programs or running a parallel program. As an example, the VRM for the Paso Robles Library conducts routine assessments of staff for volunteer jobs or tasks that would require no more than 2-4 hours, with none lasting longer than one month (Robitaille, 2008). The VRM then posts those volunteer opportunities to a special page on the library web site devoted to "express" jobs available to people interested in short-term assignments. Thus, the recruitment for episodic volunteers operates as a parallel program that is integrated into that of the overall program of engaging volunteers in service to the library.

### **The Parallel Program**

A 2004 report on volunteerism in the United States (Urban Institute, 2004) concluded that few VRM positions were full-time jobs, with only one in eight having such a full-time assignment. Thus, the notion of creating a separate yet parallel management infrastructure for episodic volunteers is fairly unlikely based on the availability of the VRM's time. The 2004 study identified challenges of working with traditional long-service volunteers, and it is a daunting list including resistance on the part of paid staff or board members to involve volunteers; regulatory, legal, or liability constraints; absenteeism, unreliability, or poor work habits by volunteers; recruiting volunteers with the right skills or expertise; lack of paid staff time to train and supervise volunteers; recruiting sufficient numbers of volunteers, and lacking funds to support

volunteers. If these are the litany of problems in running a single program for traditional volunteers, is it any wonder that VRM's resist organizing and sustaining yet another parallel system for episodic volunteers. An effective parallel program for episodic volunteers would require establishing new record keeping systems, developing different recruiting tools and alternative screening policies, etc. All of this would have to be done for the volunteer who stays for only a few hours or a few weeks, and it seems like simply too much work for too little return on investment.

### **Research**

Given the lack of resources and time to establish a systematic program to engage episodic volunteers, it seems clear that conducting research is the furthest thing from the minds of most VRM's. In most cases it is enough to know that 200 people provided some type of volunteer service during a year.

The problem with this thinking is that episodic volunteering is not going to go away; rather, it is a growing part of the contemporary volunteerism phenomenon. The more we know about episodic volunteerism, the more effective the resulting engagement will be on both sides of the partnership (i.e., the individual volunteer and the organization.) Perhaps a good experience by an episodic volunteer will result in a future long-term volunteer.

Some VRM's are conducting research to get a better handle on this "fleeting" volunteer work force. Marie Tucker, a hospital-based Director of Volunteer Services, was interested in her attrition levels (Tucker, 2008). She questioned how many volunteers left the program in a year and why? In a flash of insight she realized that everyone

(episodic volunteers, drop-ins, interns, community service volunteers, etc.) was being measured by the standard of the traditional long term volunteer. That method skewed the accuracy of her attrition numbers.

Tucker set out to create a new database to see if people completed their commitment, whether episodic or long term. If a community service volunteer (i.e., mandated volunteering, often by courts) agreed to 100 hours of service, did s/he complete the 100 hours? If s/he did, then that meant 100% completion of agreed-upon time had been served. Her database is set up to monitor the agreed-upon time-to-serve for all volunteers, with the actual time served being recorded. The resulting attrition level is based on what the individual agreed to initially and is a more accurate reflection of the actual attrition rate. Another focus of her research was those who left before their service was complete. Now, exit interviews are helping her build a knowledge base to attract and retain all types of volunteers. This is just another example of a VRM inventing it as she goes, using applied yet empirical research to guide her policy and practice.

Another VRM tracked conversion rates from episodic volunteers to long term continuous service. Tim Deegan (2008), coordinator of volunteers at a large urban art museum, recruited episodic volunteers specifically for two events: 1) a special exhibit of great public interest and 2) the opening of a new wing of the museum. His conversion rates from episodic to long-term volunteers were 50% from the special exhibit, and 80% from the wing opening. These types of statistics in reports to administration can help the case for funding and resources allocation to develop the intentional program to

engage the short-term volunteer. They also establish benchmarks against which future efforts can be measured.

### **In Closing**

Returning to our butterfly metaphor, the world at large has done much to preserve butterfly habitats across the globe. People plant butterfly-friendly flowers and plants at their home and public gardens. Researchers follow the trajectory of migrating butterflies in ultralight aircraft. Habitat destruction has been reduced. Developing new resources, planning an intentional and conscientious conservation program, and conducting applied empirical research have helped Lepidopterists and conservationists prevent many species of butterfly from becoming extinct.

Managers of volunteer resources, collectively, are not there yet. Some are tackling this new species of volunteer with inventiveness and creativity, while others are ignoring the episodic volunteer completely, hoping the desire to contribute service in this format will disappear and the days of traditional volunteering will return. Perhaps we need to take a cue from our professional colleagues in the world of butterflies and become more serious, intentional and dedicated in our recruitment and engagement of the “butterfly” species we call the episodic volunteer.

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Nancy Macduff is a teacher, trainer, and consultant on the management of volunteers, with 20+ years experience managing volunteers prior to her teaching role. She is the author of *Episodic Volunteering: Organizing and Managing the Short-Term Volunteer Program*, and numerous other textbooks and journal articles, and teaches management of volunteer courses for Portland State University's Institute for Nonprofit Management. She is the co-chair of the Environmental Sustainability Committee for the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, and Program Chair of the Practicum section of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA).

**A Review of Episodic Volunteering: Organizing and Managing  
the Short-Term Volunteer Program by Nancy Macduff**

Walla Walla, WA, MBA Publishing, 2004. 93 Pages. \$25.00, ISBN - 0945795-15-7

Reviewed by Ryan J. Schmiesing, Ph.D.

Episodic Volunteering is an ever growing concept for community-based volunteer-led programs throughout the world. More common in North America and western countries, episodic volunteering will certainly continue to grow in popularity as more countries establish and maintain volunteer programs. As individuals continue to reduce their overall volunteer time commitment, managers of volunteers will increasingly look towards episodic volunteers to fill gaps and, in fact, them will soon become the norm for organizations. Macduff (2004) offers this timely publication in an effort to bring to light the important management, leadership, and administrative issues related to episodic volunteering.

Like many organizations today, the organization that I work for is undergoing a review of the volunteer administration functions that have long been in existence to support community-based educational programs. This book, easy to read and full of practical tools and resources, has proved to be very helpful as we begin to look at how we recruit, retain, support, evaluate, and recognize episodic volunteers. Particularly useful is the recognition by Macduff that many organizations, including ours, have policies and procedures that only support long-term volunteer commitments. Interestingly, our organization has many episodic volunteer opportunities available and has support mechanisms in place; however, after reading this publication I can see we are simply not recognizing these

facts and taking advantage of the opportunities.

Macduff opens the book with an important overview, including a listing of volunteer position taxonomy definitions. Following the definition section is a chapter that will be familiar to many of us as it outlines and discusses barriers to formal episodic volunteer programs. Readers will easily relate to the barriers as we have all heard them before, or for some of us, we have used them as reasons to not explore episodic volunteering. Not only are the barriers identified and discussed, Macduff also provides some simple solutions for leaders to implement in order to address and overcome commonly identified obstacles.

Perhaps the most important information for many readers will be contained in Chapter 3 of the book. Macduff does an excellent job of not only defining an episodic volunteer, but also providing categories, based upon time spent volunteering, including temporary, occasional, and interim positions. Like the other chapters, Chapter 3 ends with a very useful worksheet that allows the reader to categorize positions and brainstorm management ideas.

Assessing the need for episodic volunteers is an important step that all managers of volunteers must complete. Macduff provides a step-by-step process that will assist managers in this process, again using the three categories (temporary, occasional, and interim) described in the previous chapter. Additionally, and perhaps most useful, is the information related to the

development of a planning team. Key points are offered by the author related to organizing the team, membership, and individual/group responsibilities. This is an important component of the process for developing and implementing episodic volunteering in your program as it begins to build the always important, and sometimes forgotten, support network that helps bring about positive change in organizations.

For many managers of volunteers, it is sometimes difficult to see how they can incorporate strategies into existing organizational structures to engage and support episodic volunteers. Throughout the remaining chapters, Macduff offers specific management functions and then provides examples of ways that they may be modified for the administration of an episodic volunteer program. Included in the analysis are (1) position descriptions and discussion on how they apply to the three categories outlined in Chapter 3; (2) recruitment, focusing on the four "Ps"; (3) screening with a focus on interviewing and task listing; (4) sustaining and supporting efforts; and (5) supervision with emphasis on a supportive environment. Sometimes record keeping may seem overwhelming, but Macduff provides examples of how this can (and really must be) accomplished within the short-term volunteer program. Finally, recognizing volunteer efforts, regardless of their time commitment, is important. The author provides examples of both formal and informal recognition strategies, including a very valuable checklist that can be used in the planning process.

A very useful part of the book comes in the concluding chapter in which Macduff writes about conducting a "field test." An excellent idea, especially for large nonprofit organizations that are attempting to start a short-term volunteer

program while maintaining an established, long-term program. The discussion in this brief chapter provides excellent points to consider as administrators are seeking to implement the ideas and suggestions offered throughout the book. While I have indicated, on more than one occasion, that several components of the book may well be considered the most important, it is really the entire book that is important to the profession. Macduff has offered a publication that outlines important planning steps for administrators who are beginning the process of starting an episodic volunteer program or those that need to revisit and strengthen a current program. Reflecting on the book, I found it to be very helpful as our organization begins to look at the very concept of episodic volunteering. In fact, the following are key points that I took away from the publication: (1) know your current volunteer corps, including actual or potential responsibilities; (2) engage a planning team; (3) review potential tasks and categorize them within your organization; (4) develop realistic, yet easy to understand task lists; (5) develop intake strategies that are representative of the episodic volunteer responsibilities; and (6) start small and allow it to grow in the organization!

It should be noted and is a key component of this publication—that designing, implementing, and supporting an episodic volunteer program is not an easy endeavor. Additionally, the management practices that we commonly use in long-term volunteer programs are not necessarily going to work for the short-term program. Certainly, this publication will add depth of knowledge and practical tools for managers of volunteers working in this important area of volunteerism.

**About the Author**

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## **An Application and Screening Process for Episodic Volunteers that Works!**

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### **Abstract**

*The author describes the statewide application and screening materials she developed for use with episodic volunteers in the North Carolina 4-H Youth Development program of the Cooperative Extension Service at North Carolina State University.*

### **Key Words:**

volunteer, episodic, application, screening

It was almost a decade ago that Merrill and Safrit (2000) pointed out that episodic volunteering was no longer a “trend” in volunteerism but rather a reality. And almost a decade earlier, Macduff (1991) shared her ideas about analyzing internally for organizational readiness for the involvement of episodic volunteers. She identified five constructs for organizations to consider in terms of readiness for episodic volunteers: 1) whether there are already episodic volunteer opportunities; 2) whether regular volunteers will accept episodic volunteers; 3) whether there are human and financial resources for the additional volunteers; 4) whether there is documentable need for episodic volunteers in the organization; and 5) are organizational partners ready to support a dual component of the volunteer program. These factors combine to create a welcoming environment for all volunteers in agencies, but are especially important to consider with episodic volunteers.

Current research indicates that while more Americans than ever are volunteering (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2008), they are doing so for fewer hours than in previous years. In fact, Dr. Robert Grimm, Director of Research and Policy for the Corporation for National and Community Service, stated, “The research shows that volunteering isn’t as much about having the time to volunteer but creating volunteering opportunities that people want to make the time for” (2008, ¶12). So, the question becomes have volunteer resource managers created positions and processes to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities for those who seek involvement in episodic volunteer activities?

In beginning to address this need to examine internal procedures and opportunities, an important first step is to define the concept. Episodic volunteering is defined as individuals engaged in volunteer activities for short terms, usually three to four months or

less, of service or for specific projects (Macduff, 1991). This differentiates between episodic volunteers and the more traditional ongoing or continuous service individuals who are involved in and committed to an organization on an ongoing basis for long periods of time. Macduff (2005) further categorized episodic volunteers into three basic types. Temporary service volunteers are engaged for single days or very short terms, and this service assignment is typically their only attachment to the organization. A second type of episodic volunteer is the interim volunteer. This includes unpaid interns and others who may volunteer for a longer period of time, but still on a focused assignment. A third type of episodic volunteer are occasional volunteers who return to the organization year after year to assist with a specific annual event or activity and are sometimes referred to as recurring volunteers. It is important to recognize that episodic volunteers might be any of these three types or some combination of these types of volunteer roles.

Historically, volunteering within the national Cooperative Extension Service has involved committing to a long-term, continuous service role, with volunteers taking on local leadership for education and program planning (Ferguson, 1964). In its almost 100 years of existence, Extension has maintained its relevance by being responsive to the changing needs of citizens, with foci adjusting from solely agrarian interests to include urban and home management audiences in addition to traditional programs (Caldwell & Shore, 1993). In an organization with a long and extensive history of volunteer involvement, shifting procedures and attitudes to

accept the reality of episodic volunteers have presented an opportunity to engage staff members in identifying new strategies for volunteer engagement.

In 2003, the author initiated a review process to update existing volunteer screening and application procedures within North Carolina Cooperative Extension and specifically the 4-H Youth Development program. As a result, the opportunity was presented to develop a new, more episodic volunteer appropriate application in addition to the traditional volunteer application. Based upon data indicating that 4-H Youth Development agents were generally ready at the local level from an organizational standpoint to engage episodic volunteers along with their ongoing volunteers (Edwards, 2005), the author led a process to develop tools and procedures to assist in bringing episodic volunteers into programs in greater numbers with a formal structure for management. Today, almost 15 years later and with only a little early resistance to this new option, 4-H Youth Development Extension agents have extensively incorporated this new streamlined application into their local programs.

All 4-H volunteers in North Carolina are recruited and placed through local County Extension Centers. State Extension Specialists in the State 4-H Office (an academic department at North Carolina State University) provides guidance and structure to the overall process, while county Extension professionals actually engage community members as volunteers in local programs. With the 2003 review, a system of levels of screening was developed which allowed local Extension agents to develop written

volunteer position descriptions specific to the exact work the volunteers would be involved with and to decide how the screening should be conducted within prescribed guidelines.

The most intense screening is for those who are engaged in direct relationships/contacts with youth in any component of the program. This includes serving as a club advisor, being an overnight chaperone at camps and events, or serving in any other volunteer role that could include a one-on-one relationship with a young person. This screening includes a five-page application covering personal information, educational background, employment history, volunteer history, references, and permission to perform a criminal background clearance.

For those positions that do not include direct supervision of/interaction with youth during the performance of the volunteer assignment, a one-page application (Figure 1) was developed to allow the agent to establish written files for all episodic volunteers while utilizing a process that more appropriately matches the assignment for the individual. These assignments might include serving as a concession stand worker at a local event, assisting with a local activity or event while other screened volunteers are supervising the youth, serving as a fair judge, and other such short term roles. Note that this episodic application is not used for any overnight volunteer experience, regardless of whether the volunteer is occasional or fits within some other category of episodic volunteering.

One very critical aspect of this process is the development of accurate written position descriptions for volunteers engaged in service, regardless

of the length/tenure/duration of their service. This allows for orientation that reviews roles and responsibilities outlining specific scope of service details so that volunteers understand the limitations of their service. These position descriptions are vital for every volunteer opportunity, and are the keys to deciding which level of screening is most appropriate for those interested in serving.

Providing this new tool gave Extension 4-H agents an option to create meaningful episodic volunteer opportunities and to methodically involve individuals in these short-term positions is leading to a more systematic approach to engaging volunteers in episodic roles in local Extension programs. It also provides agents with a consistent process within which to engage other staff members in local programs in conversations about the changing demographics of the volunteer population and how to better recruit and retain volunteers. Making a basic adjustment to create a more easily managed process is helping North Carolina 4-H Extension agents to view episodic volunteers as important program partners to extend their reach into local communities.

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*Figure 1. North Carolina 4-H Episodic Volunteer Application*

**EPISODIC VOLUNTEER INFORMATION**

Last Name	First Name	M.I.	Name You Prefer
Mailing Address			Daytime phone
City	State	Zip	E-mail
I give my permission for staff of N.C. Cooperative Extension, N.C. 4-H, and/or _____ County Extension to take photographs and/or record video and/or audio of me and/or my property for use in educational, promotional and/or marketing materials. Neither individual addresses nor telephone numbers will be published within these materials.  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Signature _____ Date _____			How did you learn about this 4-H volunteer opportunity?
			Were you a 4-H member? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, in what county & state?
What additional 4-H events, activities or projects would be interesting to you as a volunteer?			Would you like to be added to our mailing list?  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
I understand that the coordinator of the event for which I am volunteering is responsible for informing me of my responsibilities as a volunteer participant, and will provide any specific training needed to carry out these duties. Although Extension staff will use the utmost precaution in guarding the health and well-being of all participants, I release them from any liability in case of injury as a result of this activity.  Signature _____ Date _____			

**RECORD FOR AGENT USE**

Date	Event/Position	Time Given	Comments	Follow-up Completed

This form is designed for use in enrolling short term volunteers. It is to be used in situations when it is not appropriate to follow application and reference checking as for long-term volunteers. Adults who have been screened and have a current application on file need not complete this form.

Do NOT use this form in the following situations:

- Adults who will be responsible for youth at overnight events.
- Adults who will be responsible for youth when no other adult is present at all times.

*Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted (with updated format editions) from The Journal of Volunteer Administration, 2005, 23(4), pp. 23-30*

**Making a Difference in a Day: An Assessment of "Join Hands Day"**

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**Abstract**

*The authors surveyed participants in an annual intergenerational episodic volunteerism program called Join Hands Day (JHD) that endeavors to bring youth and adults together through meaningful volunteer activity. Findings suggested that effective intergenerational community service programs must be generational partnerships that offer opportunities for common, valued contributions, balanced relationships between young and old participants, preparation and support for all participants, and opportunities for reflection.*

**Key words:**

episodic, volunteerism, community service, intergenerational

National days of service have become a common means for mobilizing resources around important causes and symbols and for building an ethic of volunteering across America. The Corporation for National and Community Service, Points of Light Foundation, Volunteer Center National

Network, Youth Service America, and USA Freedom Corps are among the organizations sponsoring at least five national days of service, among them Martin Luther King Day, Make a Difference Day and, most recently, One Day's Pay. Although national days of service have become quite common,

they have seldom been systematically evaluated. This study begins to fill that gap by assessing the effects of "Join Hands Day" (Join Hands Day, 2002, 2005), a national day of service that endeavors to bring youth and adults together through meaningful volunteer activity. JHD began in 2000, and addresses some of the challenges of an age-segregated society by encouraging youth and adults to join in an annual day of service. JHD is a collaboration among Join Hands Day, Inc., a 501(c)3 established by America's fraternal benefit societies, the Points of Light Foundation, and the Volunteer Center National Network.

### **The Impetus for JHD**

The rationale for initiating JHD rests with two different sets of circumstances. The first set of circumstances involves perceived estrangement between young people and adults. Although generational differences are an accepted rite of passage, the perceived gulf between generations appears to have grown. Schneider and Stevenson (1999) report that American teenagers, on average, spend 20% of their waking time—three and a half hours each day—alone. This is more time than spent with family and friends. Furthermore, the amount of time teenagers spend alone increases as they progress from middle to high school. Schneider and Stevenson attribute the large amount of time that teenagers spend alone to major demographic changes like declining family size and increasing divorce rates. Putnam (2000) goes as far as to suggest that increasing suicide and depression among young people is a product of the social isolation that Schneider and Stevenson document.

A second set of circumstances involves a decline in membership in America's fraternal benefit societies. These societies, which were founded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, have been at the core of America's social capital for the last century. As Putnam (2000), Skocpol (2003), and others have shown, however, their membership has been growing older and gradually declining since the 1960s.

These circumstances brought the leadership of the National Fraternal Congress of America to create the JHD organization in 1998. This new 501(c)3 joined with the Points of Light Foundation and Volunteer Center National Network to initiate a national day of service in 2000.

### **Best Practices**

When JHD was created, the authors reviewed research on youth-adult partnerships to identify best practices applicable to assessing JHD's effectiveness. The review suggested that several factors must be present for interaction among age groups to result in positive attitude development. Simply putting mixed age groups together in a social setting is insufficient to ensure positive intergenerational results. The experience should be rewarding for both age groups, fostering interaction where both groups are involved in meaningful goal setting and participation (Aday, Sims, McDuffie, & Evans, 1996). JHD was conceived as a way to encourage intergenerational interaction, "adding a community service component to intergenerational programs [that] can benefit the participants, achieve the goals of breaking down generational barriers, and enrich society as a whole" (Perry, Littlepage, & York, 2000, p. 9).

Table 1  
*Level of Youth and Adult Involvement in Planning JHD in 2003*

How involved were you in planning for the event	Percent of Youth	Percent of Adults
Very involved	24 (22 in 2002)	36 (41 in 2002)
Somewhat involved	24	25
Slightly involved	15	11
Not involved	37 (36 in 2002)	28 (35 in 2002)

Source: (Christensen et al., 2003, p. 22)

Research by Scannell and Roberts (1994) suggested that effective intergenerational community service programs are characterized by several attributes:

- *Reciprocity.* There should be a balanced relationship among young and old participants with the relationship clearly stated, planned and incorporated in the goals and activities of the program.
- *Common, valued contribution.* Young and old should work together to get things done that are valued in their community.
- *Reflection.* There should be a planned program activity where participants examine the value of the service and the intergenerational relationships.
- *Partnerships.* Both groups should have a shared vision of how the community will benefit, build on existing relationships and resources, and collaborate with a variety of community groups.
- *Preparation and Support.* High value should be placed on supporting both younger and older participants, and involving them in the activity's preparation.

### Goals and Logic Models

With these practices in mind, JHD's founders articulated several goals for which logic models were

created to support evaluation of JHD. The JHD Steering Committee articulated the following long-term goals:

- Make a contribution to solving the problem of America being an age-segregated society.
- Address problem conditions in local neighborhoods.
- Increase the visibility and public awareness of fraternal benefit societies.
- Reenergize local lodges by increasing membership and participation in local chapters or lodges, particularly among young people.

The logic models created for each goal included the background factors, program activities, and immediate and intermediate outcomes. The models have guided JHD's development, specifying criteria to gauge success.

### Assessment: Survey Methods

To assess progress relative to the program components outlined in the logic models, the authors administered a national participant survey each year from 2001-2004. The present study uses only results from the 2001, 2002, and 2003 surveys. For each year, the survey was usually administered by project manager volunteers immediately after a service project was completed, but

participants also had opportunities to complete a web-based or downloadable survey instrument.

The questionnaire probes the respective experiences of youth and adults with Join Hands Day and compares perceptions across generations. The forty-seven questions on the survey assess the perceived presence of best practices, components of the logic model, and respondent demographics. The survey also probes program outcomes or impacts.

Twelve thousand surveys were distributed in 2001 and 2002 to service project managers, parent fraternal organizations, or volunteer centers. In 2001, a total of 1,560 completed participant surveys were returned: in 2002, a total of 2,520 completed participant surveys were returned. Based on these figures, and on the assumption that project managers distributed all the surveys to participants, we estimate response rates of 13% and 21% respectively. These estimates likely understate response rates because some surveys were probably not distributed. In 2003, the authors distributed 15,000 surveys, with an estimated response rate of 17%. In 2002 and 2003, respondents were given an opportunity to participate in a draw for a cash incentive if their response was received by a specified date and they provided their contact information. The cash incentive appears to account for increased response rates in 2002 and 2003.

In 2002 and 2003, the authors also resurveyed participants who had responded the previous year, to determine if their attitudes had changed over time and if they had participated in JHD again. For example, in 2002, over 1,300 surveys were sent to those who had returned a survey in 2001 and

provided a mailing address. In 2003, approximately 2,300 surveys were sent to 2002 participants. These follow-up surveys yielded 21% and 23% response rates, respectively.

### **Analyses**

The analyses presented here report selected findings from (a) the annual survey, 2001-2003, and (b) the follow-up survey, 2002-2003. The former is organized by the four long-term goals that serve as the bases for the JHD program logic model.

### **Annual Survey**

Surveys distributed annually were analyzed to assess the presence and effects of best practices.

*Encourage youth-adult partnerships.* In each annual survey, the perceived extent of youth-adult partnership was measured. One of the best indicators of this partnership is evident in examining the planning stage. Youth and adult respondents were asked how involved they felt in planning the service project in which they participated. The results from 2003 reported in Table 1 are consistent with the results in 2001 and 2002. We note that variations in youth and adult responses are statistically different; adults are more likely to be involved in planning than are youth.

Level of involvement has significant consequences for JHD's impact. Youth respondents who felt more involved in the planning process were more likely to positively alter their perceptions of adults (see Table 2) across all five survey items used to measure youth attitudes toward adults. For example, youth more involved in planning were more likely to reexamine their perceptions of adults and better

appreciate adults in the days following the JHD. These findings confirm other research on youth voluntarism. In a nonintergenerational setting, Handy and Keil (2001) demonstrated the importance of youth involvement—in their case as peer volunteer leaders and managers—for positive volunteer outcomes.

Involvement in planning also had a significant impact on adult attitudes

toward youth. Adults more involved in planning were more likely to positively and significantly alter their perceptions of youth (see Table 3) on five measures of adult attitudes toward youth. For example, those adults very involved in the planning process were much more likely to come away from the service project believing that they learned a lot about young people.

Table 2  
*Effects of Planning on Youth Attitudes Toward Adults, 2002*

	Percent of youth respondents <u>not at all involved</u> in planning who strongly agreed/agreed	Percent of youth respondents <u>very involved</u> in planning who strongly agreed/agreed
I learned a lot about adults from my participation in JHD*	53	69
Because of JHD, I reexamined my beliefs and attitudes about adults*	40	61
My experiences with JHD helped me to better appreciate adults*	52	69
JHD helped me understand the challenges of being an adult*	45	71
After JHD, I realized that adults value young people more than I thought*	52	72

\*All five differences are statistically different at the 0.05 level  
Source: (Littlepage et al., 2002, p. 12)

Table 3  
*Effects of Planning on Adult Attitudes Toward Youth, 2002*

	Percent of adult respondents <u>not at all involved</u> in planning who strongly agreed/agreed	Percent of adult respondents <u>very involved</u> in planning who strongly agreed/agreed
I learned a lot about young people from my participation in JHD*	46	73
Because of JHD, I reexamined my beliefs and attitudes about young people*	33	56
My experiences with JHD helped me to better appreciate young people*	54	77
JHD helped me understand the challenges of being young*	39	65
After JHD, I realize that young people are more responsible than I thought*	52	72

\*all five differences are statistically different at the 0.05 level  
Source: (Littlepage et al., 2002, p. 12)

The mutual benefit of involvement in planning is reflected in respondents' observations. As one youth respondent noted in 2002, "The planning process that included three generations truly opened my eyes up to the fact that all ages of people have significant contributions and are equally important" (Littlepage, Jones, Perry, & Christensen, 2002, p. 12). Again, in 2003 a participant observed that "much work went into organizing, planning, and carrying out this project, but it was very gratifying to see adults and young people joining hands and working side-by-side to improve their community. I feel like the project was a great success" (Christensen, Littlepage, Perry, & Linders, 2003, p. 28).

In addition to joint planning and preparation, a formal opportunity to reflect about community service experiences is recommended for effective intergenerational programs (Scannell & Roberts, 1994). Reflection provides an opportunity to reinforce lessons from JHD projects. Reflection is recommended as a planned program activity where participants examine the value of the service and the intergenerational relationships at the event. Table 4 shows that most respondents reported time for reflection in conjunction with their service. When respondents were asked how strongly they felt that they had a chance to discuss the service they did with others, 68% of adults and 53% of youth responded, "A great deal." In general, adults were more likely to have spent time reflecting on their service. The proportions of both adults and youth reporting that they took time to reflect on their service increased each year from 2001 to 2003. This could again reflect learning and improvements

in service program execution as JHD matured.

Table 4  
*Comparisons Between Youth and Adults of Perceived Time for Reflection, 2003*

Percent who strongly agreed that they had time to reflect upon their service experience

Year	Youth	Adults
2003	53	68
2002	47	64
2001	38	46

Source: (Christensen et al., 2003, p. 14)

In summary terms, Join Hands Day appears to foster a desire for more intergenerational experiences among respondents. Table 5 shows that about half the youth and adult respondents were strongly interested in being involved in more intergenerational events. The large increase in desire for intergenerational experiences from 2001 to 2002 also suggests that learning about programming for service events may have occurred, which improved intergenerational results.

Table 5  
*Percentages of Youth and Adults Who Expressed Strong Desire for More Intergenerational Experiences After Participating in JHD*

Percent who strongly agreed to "wanting to be part of more events involving youth and adults"

Year	Youth	Adults
2003	55	60
2002	55	57
2001	46	43

Source: (Christensen et al., 2003, p. 28)

Address problem conditions in neighborhoods and communities. Our analyses of participant activities indicate that JHD is addressing neighborhood and community problems. If the tasks of

cleaning trails, riverbanks, or parks are combined with planting trees, bushes, or flowers into one category, 46% of the survey respondents in 2003 and 44% in 2002 participated in environmental activities. The second most common activity in 2002 (29%) and 2003 (22%) was helping sick, elderly, or homeless people.

By 2002, JHD had reached every state in the continental United States and Alaska and Hawaii, bringing thousands of youth and adults together in their neighborhoods and communities. These projects were primarily sponsored by fraternal benefit societies, but non-fraternal organizations such as volunteer centers also sponsored many projects.

*Encourage fraternal membership and increase visibility of fraternal benefit societies.* In his description of America's declining social capital, Putnam (2000) attributes part of the decline to the decreasing number of fraternal benefit societies. As significant sponsors of JHD, fraternal benefit societies hope to introduce individuals, particularly potential younger members, to the benefits of fraternalism.

The 2003 survey allowed us to gauge whether fraternal chapters sponsoring JHD benefited from increased exposure. We asked participants if they knew who was sponsoring the event. As expected, more adults than youth knew the sponsoring organization. In 2003, a total of 94% of adults and 84% of youth knew who was sponsoring the event. If we look at fraternally-sponsored projects only, 91% of the respondents who said they were not members of a fraternal benefit society knew who sponsored the event (Christensen et al., 2003). This indicates that JHD is a venue that continues to raise awareness about fraternalism among nonmembers, including young people.

With an understanding that JHD can encourage new membership among young nonmembers and reinforce commitments among young members, our 2003 analysis affirms JHD's potential. Seventy percent of young nonmembers are very willing to attend future fraternally-sponsored events (see Table 6), and 23% are somewhat willing. Among young, fraternal members, 84% are very willing to attend future fraternal events (see Table 6), and 15% are somewhat willing.

Table 6  
*Willingness of 2003 JHD Respondents to Attend Future Fraternal Events*

Percent of Respondent Type	Very Willing	Somewhat Willing	Not at All Willing	Not Sure	Total
Fraternal Youth	83.6	14.7	0.9	0.9	100
Non-fraternal Youth	69.9	22.79	0.0	7.4	100
Fraternal Adult	88.3	10.59	0.0	1.3	100
Non-fraternal Adult	72.0	23.4	0.5	4.1	100

Source: (Christensen et al., 2003, p. 14).



**Follow-up Survey**

As part of an effort to understand longer-term impacts of episodic service, we surveyed past participants a year after their JHD experience to assess outcomes relative to JHD's goals. Among the respondents to the 2002 follow-up survey who participated in 2001, 62% participated again in 2002 (Littlepage et al., 2002). Among the respondents to the 2003 follow-up survey, of those who participated in 2002, 45% participated again in 2003 (Christensen et al., 2003). We found, as would be expected, that being a member of a fraternal benefit society is associated positively with repeat participation. For example, of those respondents who participated in 2002 and 2003 consecutively, 81% were fraternal members. Of those who participated in 2002 only, 61% were fraternal members. This may suggest that affiliation with an institution supporting JHD is important to encourage continuing, individual participation.

We also found that age is significantly related (at the .05 level) to repeat participation—repeat participation is more closely associated with older volunteers than with younger volunteers (there is a higher mean age among repeat volunteers). Of those who participated both years, 15% were young adults and 85% were adults. Among those respondents who participated only in 2002, 23% were young adults and 77% were adults.

Table 7 illustrates potential lasting effects from JHD. We note that the comparison groups - the non-follow-up 2003 respondents and those who participated in 2002, but not in 2003 - had very high cross-generational perceptual responses. However, those who participated in 2002 and 2003 had statistical-higher responses. This suggests that while one-time participation in JHD may lead to lasting, cross-generational perceptual changes, repeat participation is even more likely to be associated with change.

Table 7  
*Attitudes Toward Intergenerational Relationships and Variations between Repeat and Non-repeat Participants, 2003*

Statement	Percent Who Agreed/Strongly Agreed with Statement		
	General Respondents in 2003 (baseline)	Follow-up Respondents ( <i>not participating</i> in 2003)	Follow-up Respondents ( <i>participating</i> in 2003)
Teams with both younger and older people can be fun*	96	96	99
It is important that both older and younger people take time to understand each other	97	97	99

\*statistical difference among means at the .05 level among the follow-up populations (right two columns)

Source: (Christensen et al., 2003, p. 26)

Among those who participated in 2002 and 2003, almost all (99.5%) agreed/strongly agreed that they are "comfortable interacting with people of a different generation. Among those who participated only in 2002, this figure was 98%. The mean differences between the two groups' responses are statistically different (at the .01 level), with the mean response being more positive among those who participated in 2002 and 2003. This finding also suggests that participation in JHD the previous year is associated with more positive perceptions of cross-generational interaction.

### **Conclusions**

Join Hands Day is an experiment in how episodic community service can be used to solve serious social problems. JHD was designed to address two primary problems, one involving the social isolation of young people from adults and the other the aging and declining membership of fraternal benefit societies. Survey data gathered and analyzed from 2001-2003 participants suggests that JHD has had some success in addressing the twin concerns that motivated the creation of this annual day of service.

JHD is also a microcosm of the proliferation of social innovation in America resulting from the search for new institutions to repair eroding social capital. America's fraternal benefit societies hope to make connections to youth who, in turn, will help the societies to rejuvenate themselves and restore their roles as important threads in the fabric of our communities.

The results of our research reinforce program design guidance based upon previous research and practice (Scannell and Roberts, 1994). Effective

intergenerational community service programs must be generational partnerships that offer opportunities for common, valued contributions, balanced relationships between young and old participants, preparation and support for all participants, and opportunities for reflection.

Perhaps our most significant practical finding is that not all projects were equally successful in eliciting common contributions from youth and adults. Adults tended to have a larger role in planning community service projects. When implemented effectively, however, involvement in planning was a powerful tool for creating the effects the JHD founders had intended. Youth and adults involved in planning the community service activity were more likely to have positive views of the other generation as a result of their participation in JHD. Join Hands Day, Inc.'s Web site offers an online Action Guide (2005) with recommendations for developing youth-adult partnerships. Among the Guide's suggestions are hosting intergenerational icebreakers before service events, developing intergenerational listening skills, and developing self-expression skills.

The outcomes associated with JHD suggest that episodic service can be an effective tool for producing targeted change. In light of increased reliance upon episodic service as an alternative to more intense service, this is a significant finding. Although Martin Luther King Day, Make a Difference Day, and Youth Service Day are not panaceas, they may be among the tools our society can use to solve community and social problems and build solidarity across our divisions. We also found that episodic service can make a positive difference in relation to societal-level generational disconnection.

Moreover, more frequent participation in JHD leads to even more favorable cross-generational perceptions.

Finally, we note the role that service can play in promoting organizational renewal. We find some evidence that sponsoring a service day like JHD can lead to greater organization visibility and improved perceptions of the sponsoring organization.

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*Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted (with updated format editions) from The Journal of Volunteer Administration, 2005, 23(3), pp. 24-29*

**Organizational Effectiveness in Utilizing Episodic Volunteers  
Based on Perceptions of 4-H Youth Development Professionals**

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**Abstract**

*Managing contemporary volunteer programs requires administrators to be alert to trends and their implications for voluntary agencies. The reality of episodic volunteerism and practitioners' attitudes related to this phenomenon of modern volunteer management was the focus of this study. The Points of Light Foundation's Changing the Paradigm Report Action Principles (Allen, 1995) and Macduff's (1991) indicators of organizational readiness for episodic volunteers provided the bases for this exploratory, descriptive-correlational study assessing 4-H Youth Development agents' perceptions of organizational effectiveness in utilizing episodic volunteers. Study findings reveal valuable information for the profession in preparing administrators for the reality of episodic volunteer involvement.*

**Key Words:**

episodic, volunteers, 4-H, organizational, paradigm

Effectively involving volunteers in 4-H Youth Development programs is critical to success. No other program delivery area in Cooperative Extension depends so heavily on volunteers. In fact, Rasmussen (1989) refers to volunteers as the heart of the modern 4-H program. Volunteer involvement provides the energy and community support necessary to make events and activities available for young people in North Carolina, and this has been the case since the beginnings of 4-H club work in the state in 1909. Local lay leaders with specific subject matter

knowledge led Corn Clubs and Tomato Clubs, precursors to modern 4-H clubs (Clark, 1984). Local clubs were not organized until leaders were identified and accepted by the parents of potential members (Brunner, 1949). Agents trained these adult leaders to conduct programs for club members.

Currently, in North Carolina, at least one professional youth development staff person is based in each of the state's 100 counties and on the Qualla Boundary to assume responsibility for 4-H youth development work locally. These

professionals spend approximately 25 percent of their time in the management of the 25,000 volunteers involved in delivering 4-H programming to more than 200,000 youth annually.

North Carolina 4-H volunteers may serve in any of six categories of service (Groff, 1994). They may provide programs to 4-H youth directly, they may serve other volunteers as trainers or middle managers, or they may provide indirect services with technical support for ongoing programs. Volunteers may be advocates for young people in 4-H as they solicit funding and seek public support for legislation that impacts 4-H programs, are sometimes asked to serve in administrative roles to carry out larger programs, and may also serve on policy setting boards and councils to assist in program planning and decision making. Regardless of the assigned task, volunteers play critical roles in delivering 4-H programs. As 4-H programs expand to meet the changing needs of today's youth, the need for adult volunteer involvement also continues to expand.

### **Episodic Volunteering**

Episodic volunteering involves volunteer opportunities or jobs that allow for short durations of service, usually 3 to 4 months or less (Macduff, 1991). These jobs may be one-time projects or activities, or they may be assignments that recur, with the same volunteers returning year after year to provide needed service. This type of volunteer involvement is also called sporadic volunteering (Andrews, 2000), short-term volunteering (Macduff, 1995), informal volunteering (Scheier, 1980), or any of several similar names. Many organizations that involve volunteers include episodic opportunities in addition to longer-term volunteer assignments. This allows for greater volunteer

participation by a larger diversity of individuals.

For more than 20 years, the trend toward episodic volunteering has been discussed among administrators of volunteers. A 1987 study conducted by the National Volunteer Center and JC Penney Company found that 79 percent of those participating in the study, indicating that they did not volunteer, said they would be more interested in volunteering if the commitments were of shorter duration (National Volunteer Center, 1989). The Independent Sector's 1999 report showed that while the number of adults volunteering increased, the amount of time volunteering each week decreased. Safrit and Merrill (2000) indicated that episodic volunteering is no longer merely a trend, but rather the reality within which administrators of volunteers must function.

Macduff (1991) identified five considerations in assessing organizational readiness for involving episodic volunteers. They were (1) episodic volunteer positions currently exist in the organization and position descriptions are in place; (2) ongoing volunteer and paid staff members are accepting of episodic volunteers in the organization; (3) financial and human resources are available for investing in the development of episodic volunteer opportunities; (4) there is documented need for episodic volunteer assignments; and (5) there is organizational support for the creation of an additional component in the volunteer program. She stated that agencies working through this assessment process to prepare for episodic volunteer involvement are more successful in the addition of episodic volunteers, and that there are no short cuts to providing quality, effective opportunities for those attracted by short-term service opportunities.

Table 1  
*Four Action Principles and the Characteristics of High Effectiveness in Organizations Utilizing Volunteers*

Action Principles	Characteristics of High Effectiveness
1. Lay the foundation through mission and vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The mission and priorities of the organization are framed in terms of the problem or issue the organization is addressing, not its short-range institutional concerns.</li> <li>2) There is a positive vision – clearly articulated, widely shared and openly discussed throughout the organization – of the role of volunteers.</li> <li>3) Volunteers are seen as valuable human resources that can directly contribute to the achievement of the organization’s mission, not primarily as a means to obtaining financial or other material resources.</li> </ul>
2. Combine inspiring leadership with effective management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4) Leaders at all levels – policy-making, executive and middle management – work in concert to encourage and facilitate high impact volunteer involvement.</li> <li>5) There is a clear focal point of leadership for volunteering but the volunteer management function is well-integrated at all levels and in all parts of the organization.</li> <li>6) Potential barriers to volunteer involvement – liability, confidentiality, location of the organization, hours of operation, etc. – are identified and dealt with forthrightly.</li> </ul>
3. Build understanding and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7) Paid staff are respected and empowered to fully participate in planning, decision making and management related to volunteer involvement.</li> <li>8) There is a conscious, active effort to reduce the boundaries and increase the teamwork between paid and volunteer staff.</li> <li>9) Success breeds success as stories of the contributions of volunteers – both historically and currently – are shared among both paid and volunteer staff.</li> </ul>
4. Learn, grow and change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10) There is openness to the possibility for change, eagerness to improve performance, and conscious, organized efforts to learn from and about volunteers’ experiences in the organization.</li> <li>11) There is recognition of the value of involving, as volunteers, people from all segments of the community, including those the organization seeks to serve.</li> </ul>

From *The Paradigm Organizational Effectiveness Series #1: Creating More Effective Volunteer Involvement* by K. Allen, 1995.

**Characteristics of High Effectiveness**

In 1991, the “Changing the Paradigm” project was created to encourage and support research to

understand not only individuals who are volunteering and the kinds of work being conducted, but also perceived barriers to service (Allen, 1992). More than 400

individuals involved in 20 nonprofit, human service organizations in five different communities were interviewed. This initial phase of the research identified 11 characteristics of high effectiveness that are consistently present in organizations utilizing volunteers (Allen, 1992). The 11 characteristics were grouped into four action principles (Allen, 1995) based on relationships among the characteristics. (Table 1).

While extensive energy was invested in the development of the Action Principles, no research had been conducted to investigate the realities of the characteristics of organizational effectiveness in relationship to the impact of trends on voluntary agencies. The Action Principles provided a solid base for

the exploration of episodic volunteer involvement in an organization that has historically depended upon volunteers.

**Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors related to the perceptions of North Carolina 4-H Youth Development agents related to organizational effectiveness in utilizing episodic volunteers. The researcher developed a mailed questionnaire based on the four Action Principles (Allen, 1992) and the five organizational readiness considerations (Macduff, 1991). Additionally, data were collected regarding various programmatic, professional, and personal characteristics of study participants.

Table 2  
*Associations Among Selected Personal Characteristics, the Action Principles and Organizational Readiness for Episodic Volunteers*

Action Principles	Age* N=73	Was Volunteer Activity Episodic* N=72
Action Principle 1		
Importance	.089	.254
Practice	.138	.289
Agreement	.177	.150
Action Principle 2		
Importance	.048	.252
Practice	.116	.239
Agreement	.251	.172
Action Principle 3		
Importance	.077	.277
Practice	.156	.324
Agreement	.130	.220
Action Principle 4		
Importance	.232	.359
Practice	.232	.359
Agreement	.105	.251
Readiness for Episodic Volunteers		
Importance	.080	.335
Practice	.174	.379
Agreement	.364	.056

\*Eta coefficient



The four-section instrument collected data from a population consisting of the census of 104 North Carolina 4-H Youth Development agents employed at the time of the study. The researcher established the instrument's validity utilizing a panel of volunteer and/or youth development professionals. Instrument reliability was established utilizing a pilot test group of former 4-H agents and running Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each study construct. Coefficients for the instrument ranged from .56 to .89, well within the reliability levels (.50-.60) needed for exploratory research (Nunnally,

1967). The final response rate for the study was 74%.

Data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. In the analysis of data, the coefficients offered by Davis (1971) were used in describing measures of association. Frequencies were calculated for each item of the dependent variable. For each of the five dependent variable constructs, a summated score was calculated. The descriptive statistics used for the independent variables concerning the characteristics of respondents were determined by whether the variable was nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio.

Table 3  
*Associations Among Selected Professional Characteristics, the Action Principles and Organizational Readiness for Episodic Volunteers*

Professional Characteristics

Action Principles	Academic Major* N=70	Participation in Ext. training ** N=73	Participation in Non-Ext. training N=73
Action Principle 1			
Importance	.188	.241	.072
Practice	.188	.147	.178
Agreement	.313	.362	.034
Action Principle 2			
Importance	.238	.181	.114
Practice	.335	.056	.264
Agreement	.290	.348	.019
Action Principle 3			
Importance	.296	.231	.154
Practice	.343	.181	.175
Agreement	.136	.037	.059
Action Principle 4			
Importance	.301	.179	.092
Practice	.301	.179	.092
Agreement	.147	.166	-.066
Readiness for Episodic Volunteers			
Importance	.302	.227	.129
Practice	.280	.268	.371
Agreement	.162	.073	-.190

\*Eta Coefficient

\*\* Point-biserial coefficient

**Findings**

Data revealed moderate positive relationships (Davis, 1971) between respondents' personal participation in episodic volunteer activities and several dependent variables: level of practice of Action Principle 3, level of importance of Action Principle 4, level of practice of Action Principle 4, level of importance of Readiness for Episodic Volunteers and level of practice of Readiness for Episodic Volunteers. (Table 2). A moderate positive relationship was also found between respondents' age and level of agreement with Readiness for Episodic Volunteers.

The researcher identified moderate positive relationships between the respondents' Academic Major and several dependent variables: level of agreement of Action Principle 1, level of practice of Action Principle 2, level of practice of Action Principle 3, level of importance of Action Principle 4, level of practice of Action Principle 4, and level of importance

of Readiness for Episodic Volunteers. In addition, moderate positive relationships were shown between participation in Extension-sponsored volunteer management training and level of agreement of Action Principle 1 and between participation in Extension-sponsored volunteer management training and level of agreement of Action Principle 2. A moderate positive relationship was identified between participation in non-Extension sponsored volunteer management training and level of practice of Readiness for Episodic Volunteers (Table 3). Simply stated, those respondents with academic degrees who participated in Extension or non-Extension training to build skills in managing volunteers are more aware of the importance of the four action principles, and put them into practice more often. These individuals are also more prepared for the involvement of episodic volunteers based on their perceptions reported in the study.

Table 4  
*Associations Among Selected Professional Characteristics, the Action Principles and Organizational Readiness for Episodic Volunteers*

Action Principles	Readiness for Episodic Volunteers		
	Level of Importance	Level of Practice	Level of Agreement
Action Principle 1			
Importance	<b>.874</b>	.504	-.448
Practice	.394	<b>.709</b>	-.203
Agreement	.250	.298	.209
Action Principle 2			
Importance	<b>.843</b>	.461	-.449
Practice	.396	.661	-.167
Agreement	.207	.277	.379
Action Principle 3			
Importance	<b>.876</b>	.552	-.454
Practice	.394	<b>.763</b>	-.149
Agreement	-.174	-.057	.534
Action Principle 4			
Importance	<b>.849</b>	.501	-.387
Practice	<b>.849</b>	.501	-.387
Agreement	-.160	-.210	.494

Person product-moment coefficient [r] used. N=73  
Very strong association statistics are bolded in the table.

The data revealed strong relationships between the respondents' perceptions of organizational effectiveness in managing volunteers and organizational readiness for episodic volunteers (Table 4). The researcher identified 7 very strong, 6 substantial, 11 moderate and 11 low relationships. These data reflect a pattern of concurrently increasing levels of importance, practice and/or agreement with the variables. This reveals a correlation between the perceived importance and practice of the four action principles with perceived readiness for episodic volunteers. Thus, those agents who value and practice high impact volunteer involvement perceive themselves to be well prepared for the involvement of short-term volunteers in their programs. The results are not, however, any indication of causality.

### **Conclusions and Implications**

While the study findings are limited to North Carolina 4-H Youth Development professionals, there are implications for other community-based, volunteer-led agencies. Study findings suggest that more important than personal, professional or programmatic variables, the organization needed to be effectively involving volunteers at all levels with staff in order to be prepared for episodic volunteers. This supports Macduff's (1995) theories that episodic volunteers are more successful in organizations where supervisors have skills in teambuilding and communications, thus helping short-term volunteers become involved with continuous service volunteers and staff.

A critical implication for the profession from this study is confirmation that organizations prepared for high impact volunteer involvement as defined by the "Changing the Paradigm" study will already be practicing the concepts and

valuing the contributions that have been identified as important to organizational readiness for involving episodic volunteers. Rather than focusing on training for the management of episodic volunteers, organizations should truly be focusing on building competencies and capacities needed for administration of any volunteer program.

Study data suggest that while respondents understood the value of involving episodic volunteers and had the operational skills to involve individuals in these roles, they did not necessarily want to include short-term volunteer assignments. Respondents indicated that episodic volunteers were sometimes difficult to manage rather than being important assets to the organization. In agencies like 4-H with a strong tradition of ongoing, long-term volunteers, such attitudes among managers of volunteers may limit the extent to which episodic volunteers are included in the organization.

The relationships identified between participation in volunteer management training and the respective Action Principles are among the most important findings of this study. By providing resources for administrators of volunteers to use in building skills relevant to volunteer involvement, agencies can be assured of greater effectiveness through volunteer involvement. Processes as basic as preparing position descriptions or developing targeted marketing appeals to recruit diverse volunteers can encourage greater episodic volunteer involvement.

The study supports efforts within the profession to increase identified competencies and capacities among administrators of volunteer programs to create greater effectiveness in managing modern voluntary organizations. Work invested in improving general volunteer management skills enhances organizational

success at involving episodic volunteers, a necessity for successful contemporary voluntary agencies.

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