

**The International Journal of Volunteer Administration**

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**“Volunteerism in the Arts and Leisure”**

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**Key Words:** volunteer, administration, management, board

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**Key Words:** performing arts centers, volunteers, survey, outreach,

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**Key Words:** volunteer, museum, science, diverse

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**Key Words:** volunteerism, leisure

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**Key Words:** volunteers, satisfaction, change, evaluation, museum

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**Key Words:** volunteers, change, symphony, strategies

**In This Issue**  
**“Orchestrating the Symphony of Volunteerism:  
Volunteerism in the Arts and Leisure”**

This issue of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* has proven a challenging one to assemble. More than a year ago, when I first suggested to *The IJOVA* Board the issue topic as a possibility for July 2009, the Board members’ reactions were very positive. To my and the Board members’ knowledge, no other academic or professional journal has devoted much (if any) attention, resources, and energy to documenting and disseminating cutting-edge information and insights regarding volunteerism in arts and leisure venues. Thus, we perceived the issue as a wonderful opportunity to highlight this particular facet of volunteerism and volunteer resource management.

But alas – manuscripts were not immediately forthcoming. I came to realize that volunteer resource management in the arts and leisure is still a relatively young phenomenon, at least formally.

Thus, I began to consider this issue as one that sought to orchestrate a symphony of volunteerism and volunteer resource management resource for our readers. Now mind you – I am no music composer, much less conductor. But I do enjoy and appreciate all types of the arts and do consider myself a connoisseur of music and the theater.

I am very proud to say that the articles included in this issue will help to enlighten us all as connoisseurs of the phenomenon of volunteerism and as professional volunteer resource managers in arts and leisure venues. In the opening *Feature Article*, Carolyn Ashton and Marilyn Lesmeister Ph.D. share insights gleaned from their experience working with youth and adult partnerships as volunteer teams with community dinner theatre. They conclude, “This interactive theatre production . . . provided a fun, learning and profitable experience for the local program, the community, and participating youth and adult volunteers.” The second *Feature* focuses upon volunteer governance of arts organizations through nonprofit boards of directors. Authors Keith Seel, Ph.D. and Anita Angelini propose that “By examining the perspectives of the governance volunteers it is evident that proper and thorough volunteer administration practice could enrich the performance of individual board members and therefore impact the volunteer board’s overall effectiveness.”

Brooks Boeke, Manager of the Friends of the Kennedy Center at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. offers an interesting *Commentary* sharing insights she gained from an informal survey of volunteer resource managers with performing arts centers. Her comments will be of special interest to those responsible for in-house promotion of volunteer programs, outreach presentations on the status of volunteerism at performing arts centers throughout the United States, and promoting arts volunteerism globally.

We are pleased also to print a review by Nancy Macduff of *Transforming Museum Volunteering: A Practical Guide for Engaging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Volunteers* by author Ellen Hirzy for the American Association for Museum Volunteers, published in 2007.

In *Ideas That Work*, five nationally recognized professional leaders in performing arts volunteerism describe a relatively new resource and network for volunteer resource managers. Brooks Boeke, Ginny Bowers Coleman, Meghan Kaskoun, Sally Kutyla, and Connie Pirtle discuss Administrators of Volunteer Programs in Performing Arts (AVPPA), a free online forum created in 2007 by the authors to bring together colleagues in performing arts volunteer resource management to share best practices.

In *From the Annals*, we are also pleased to reprint four articles published previously in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*: “How to Make a Museum Volunteer Out of Anyone” (first published in 1977); “Volunteer Management in the Leisure Service Curriculum” (published in 1980); “Evaluating a Museum’s Volunteer Program” (published in 1991); and “Overcoming Road Blocks: Change Strategies for Arts/Museum Volunteer Programs” (published originally in 1991).

I join the entire Editorial Board and Reviewers of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* in sharing this issue so that managers of volunteer resources may better serve as composers and conductors, orchestrating harmonic symphonies of volunteerism in myriad arts and leisure venues that will entertain, benefit, and serve us all.

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

### **Volunteer Partners: *Our Town Picnic* Dinner Theatre**

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#### **Abstract**

*The authors describe how youth and adult volunteers created, directed, and produced an interactive dinner theatre to raise awareness about the 4-H program, and funds to support it. It describes the success of a youth/adult partnership in a community. Research shows that youth benefit from partnerships with adults when they are seen as individuals who are competent and able to contribute to important decisions. This interactive theatre production, *Our Town Picnic*, provided a fun, learning and profitable experience for the local program, the community, and participating youth and adult volunteers.*

#### **Key Words:**

interactive dinner theater, performance arts, youth development, youth engagement, youth/adult partnerships, volunteers

#### **Introduction**

Interactive theatre has been used by volunteer resource managers and not-for-profit administrators in a number of ways, including as a training tool for volunteers (Urbansky, 1998) and volunteers using theatre arts to teach youth about social issues (Cossa, Fleischmann Ember, & Russell, 1996). This article illustrates how one interactive dinner theatre provided a community environment for youth and adult volunteers to learn and work together, ultimately benefiting participants, their program, and their community.

Early in 2009, a small group of Oregon youth and adults planned to create greater visibility for their Lane County 4-H Youth Development program and to raise

funds to support it. Ten youth and adults agreed to produce an interactive, murder mystery dinner theatre. Eleven 4-H clubs participated. Some helped by donating items for the production, creating stage props, learning to be performers, and being a production crew. Others planned, prepared and served dinner to patrons during the two performances. Every youth and adult participant was involved in creative decision-making in all aspects of the interactive dinner theatre, *Our Town Picnic*.

#### **4-H: Positive Youth Development Education**

Positive youth development is important to volunteerism today and in the future. It occurs from an intentional process

that promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, relationships and the support they need to fully participate. Positive youth development programs help youth learn and grow in a safe environment. It takes place in families, peer groups (such as 4-H clubs), schools, neighborhoods, and communities. According to the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (2008) youth involved in high-quality, structured out-of-school programs are more likely to develop behaviors that result in thriving, engaged, and healthy young people. The study found that children who have participated in 4-H for at least one year by the eighth grade were more than three times more likely to volunteer in their communities.

In particular, non-formal youth development programs cultivate educational outcomes which include competence, character, connection, confidence, and caring, known in the youth development profession as “the five C’s. When youth develop the five C’s, they create environments in which the sixth C, “contribution,” emerges. During the interactive dinner theatre, youth experienced each of the five C’s in the following ways:

- **Competence:** Participants developed cognitive skills by helping to make decisions that affected the theatre production, and social skills by cooperating with others.
- **Character:** Participants learned the value and importance of the dedication and responsibility needed to complete a project.
- **Connection:** Participants were able to work together as team with their peers, families, and new community members. One adult participant commented, “I enjoyed watching them grow in friendships and confidence at each practice. They made great strides and were eager to please each other.”
- **Confidence:** Participants developed a greater sense of self worth and self efficacy

by honing their communication and leadership skills. “I witnessed very shy young (people)... who decided to join 4-H because they saw how much fun these kids have that they wanted to join and be a part of this. We have had several of these members speak at different public events since the dinner theatre. They have done a great job.”

- **Caring:** Participants shared their time, energy and talents for the betterment of the program.

The performance arts project addressed in this article grew out of these positive youth development roots. Performance arts is one of over 1,000 4-H projects that help more than six million young people develop life skills such as public speaking, teamwork, and decision making. Life skills that are learned in non-formal educational settings support formal school learning as well. Youth who may not be chosen for an acting position in school were still able to take part in this performance arts project, develop skills and enhance their opportunity to participate at new levels in the future.

When youth are involved in positive social relationships and activities with adults, they are less likely to engage in risky behaviors, more likely to have: strong communication skills and leadership experience, increased self-esteem, increased status and stature in the community (Camino, 2000). Youth and adults participating in the interactive dinner theatre were partners working, learning, and striving to reach their full potential – as encouraged by the 4-H mission.

### **Evaluation**

Following the project, participants were invited to provide feedback about their volunteer experience in the community and about working in youth/adult partnerships. Nine adults and ten young people received an initial e-mail informing them of the

evaluation they would soon receive. They then were sent a formal cover letter, consent letter, and questionnaire via Survey Monkey. The survey invited participants to identify all aspects of their involvement in the dinner theatre, comment on specific learning aspects of youth engagement that may have occurred during their involvement, and share observations regarding successes and challenges between youth and adults partners as they were involved in the project.

### **Youth Engagement**

Results from a 2005 national seminar hosted by W. K. Kellogg (interviewing 100 participants from 14 not-for-profit organizations) indicated that “one of the primary components of effective youth engagement has been partnership with elders and other adult community leaders. The crucial word in this context is partnership, in which all perspectives are valued, and young people’s ideas, wisdom and energy are genuinely and passionately represented at the table” (p. 8). The seminar reported eight “pathways” to youth engagement including youth service, youth organizing, youth leadership, youth philanthropy, decision-making and governance, youth civic and political engagement, youth media, and youth research and evaluation.

This performance arts program provided an opportunity for youth to engage in four of these eight pathways to youth engagement, including youth service, youth organizing, youth leadership, and youth philanthropy. Specifically, the ways young people experienced pathways to engagement in this project include:

- **Youth Service.** Youth were responsible for specific tasks such as managing other volunteers to design the theatre stage. As a result, youth were viewed

by both participants and audience members as a source of community support.

- **Youth Organizing.** As part of the team to plan each aspect of the interactive dinner theatre, youth shared decision-making power with adults as the script was adapted, props were secured, and dinner was planned. One participant said, “The ideas and thoughts that this group of young people brought to the play made it a huge success. It would not have been as successful without them!” Another said, “I think ... (this is) a great way for kids to learn how to organize successful events.”

- **Youth Leadership.** One way youth participated in group processes during the interactive dinner theater was by offering creative challenges at each table of theatre-goers. Participants said, “Through this project I observed youth increasing their leadership skills,” and, “Adults were able to see that youth are capable of a lot more than we give them credit for.”

- **Youth Philanthropy.** Youth were willing to give of their time, talents and energies. They applied their skills to create an artistic “product” that had value to participants and the community. The product was educational and unique in its appreciation for cultural arts. “(There is) one youth who has really taken an interest in leadership roles after helping raise money for this dinner theatre.”

Kleon, King, and Wingerter (2008) concluded that teens are potential resources available to many groups and organizations. They are willing to take leadership through volunteerism to improve the quality of life in their communities. However, it is important to recognize that teens must be allowed to be in partnership with adults in carrying out the group’s mission. It is important that both adults and teens be prepared in working in a volunteer environment together. As reflected in the project evaluation, 100% of the adult



respondents observed youth developing skills as leaders, event organizers, and fundraisers, and 80% of the adults observed youth developing volunteer service skills during the performance arts project.

### **Youth/Adult Partnerships**

Partnerships are generally understood to be relationships in which individuals understand one another's expectations, roles, and responsibilities. According to Jones, Bye, and Zeldin (2008), youth/adult partnerships thrive when there is shared ownership among the parties involved. Historically, volunteer administrators and volunteer managers have experienced, "...unforeseen obstacles as they seek to design, implement and manage community-based programs involving teens as partners" (Safrit, 2008, p. 103). Only during the past decade have youth/adult partnerships been viewed as an element of program quality when youth and adults work together for a common purpose (Zeldin, Petrokubi, & MacNeil, 2008).

In many youth organizations today, young people are being asked to take on responsible roles (Family and Youth Services Bureau, 2002). According to Safrit (2008), "engaging teens in meaningful leadership roles has become a major focus of many contemporary not-for-profit organizations. Today's cultural and political climates demand that community-based organizations approach youth not as mere recipients of programs, nor even as mere resources in program development, but rather as valued and equal partners in the holistic program development, implementation, and evaluation process" (p. 102). Barnett and Brennan (2008) stated that youth volunteerism is greatly shaped by positive and encouraging adults, and that adults may have the "largest impact overall on youth volunteerism" (p. 46). The adult evaluation findings suggested that prior to

this performance arts project, "The adults carried the burden" and that "more adults were leading the fund-raising efforts with few youth partners assisting." Another noted "the adults in the program pretty much told the youth members . . . what to do (and how to do it.)"

Not surprisingly, when adults and community organizations were open to, and in support of, youth volunteerism, youth were most likely to choose to become active (Barnett & Brennan, 2008). Safrit (2008) believed that "positive engagement is the most fundamental aspect of effectively working with teens as partners and volunteers in not-for profit organizations" (p. 106). He reiterated the importance of actively listening to and truly valuing the ideas and concerns of teens, even if an idea does not immediately resonate with adults.

The interactive dinner theatre provided an environment for a successful youth/adult partnership. Both were equally responsible. The theatre project was organized so that each person had a specific role, thus developing autonomy for everyone to use their skills and creativity within that structure, and respecting the value each person brought to the program.

### **Youth and Adults Benefited**

In addition to making 4-H more visible in the community, the two performances of the theatre production yielded more than \$1,500 to support the local 4-H program, and provided a stage upon which young people moved toward the outcomes of the five C's: competence, character, connection, confidence, and caring. During the interactive dinner theatre, all volunteer cast members had the opportunity to discover individual skills, practice public speaking, and take a risk in a safe environment. A mother observed the development of her child's self-assurance and commented, "my son grew in

confidence during his time practicing and performing.” They also planned a community dinner service, developed a sense of commitment, and learned responsibility to a larger team.

Research has shown that youth benefit from partnerships when adults see them as individuals who are competent and able to contribute to important decisions. As a result of participating in the interactive dinner theatre, adults were able to experience the positive contribution the youth brought to the project. After the dinner theater, all adult survey respondents observed that youth benefited from the partnership with adults. Project volunteers understood the importance of this opportunity for youth/adult partnerships to flourish. One shared, “this was a great venue to have young members learn to work with adults in a safe and fun environment that gave these youth an opportunity to walk away (with) a feeling of accomplishment.” According to another, “These kids would not have been able to have the experience of this (success) without all the adult help.”

Eighty-three percent of the adults surveyed observed that other adults also benefited from a partnership with youth during this project. One adult said, “Watching each adult smile with the achievements the (youth) make, warms your heart.” The value of listening, especially to youth, is evident in another participant’s observation: “Our theatre director was good when it came to listening to children about changes that would enhance the play...(which) could have been a personal issue for them...but they really worked well with listening and working together as a team.” Adults are developing greater acceptance of youth in community engagement roles, as stated by one adult, “...the kids should be taking the lead and making some of the decisions with the adults providing guidance.”

The importance of equal partnership was made obvious when youth and adults relied on one another. As one youth member noted, “There were times when adults needed help with their lines and the kids would help the adults out. And sometimes when the kids needed help with their lines, the adults helped the kids out.”

Adults also saw the benefit of youth/adult partnerships. As one participant stated, “I experienced the youth members and adults coming together – especially when things needed to get done like preparing decorations and serving food. Members and adults were equal partners in this. It was especially great at the end of the play to see the results of how everyone came together. The project brought people together.”

The interactive dinner theatre created a venue for diverse youth with different interests to volunteer for a common purpose. Youth cast members ranged from age 13 to 19, and most had little or no acting experience. Some were involved with the 4-H program, others were not. The youth arrived at the community dinner theatre from very different interests. Some youth were involved only in animal science, while others were learning about food and nutrition or leadership. One youth commented that she “would never have had the opportunity to get to know people who were so different,” from her if she had not participated in the dinner theatre. One adult observed, “I saw a lot of opportunities for different clubs to work together as a team toward a combined goal.”

The performance arts project impacted community volunteers, too. One observer said, “It brought people together who wouldn’t have come together otherwise.” Several new volunteers had observed the 4-H program and came forward to contribute time and skill. These episodic

volunteers were valuable to this educational project and the overall program.

### **The Community Benefited**

Barnett and Brennan (2008) discussed the important role volunteerism plays in building community and creating effective adult-youth interaction. The volunteers in this local production helped to play such a role. One said, "I observed some community members come to the (interactive dinner theatre). Several of these adults did not know what 4-H was until that night." The community witnessed youth in expanded roles, as event managers, public speakers, event organizers, fund-raisers, and volunteers in community service. While community and institutional norms have not historically supported youth/adult partnerships (Zeldin, Petrokubi, & MacNeil, 2008), this interactive dinner theatre was successful because adult volunteers believed that youth have the ability and motivation to work collaboratively with adults; youth are accountable for their own actions; and that youth are valued in the community (National 4-H Council, 2002). "Youth/adult partnerships and the active role of youth in community development are currently being explored by researchers in both of the fields of youth development and community development, since both youth and community benefit" (Barnett & Brennan, 2008, p. 41).

### **Interactive Dinner Theatre**

This three-month project was made possible through the unique skills of one resource volunteer with ten years of experience writing, producing and directing interactive theatre. At the request of youth and adults, she authored a 4-H-themed play, entitled *Our Town Picnic*. She understood how to recruit cast members, coordinate rehearsals, conduct marketing, produce a theatre production, and involve volunteers

each step of the way. She was motivated to volunteer by her love for theatre and her desire to share that passion with young people.

The first month of the project was dedicated to creating a script customized for use with the 4-H program. Performers were recruited from within 4-H groups and in the broader community. Rehearsals were scheduled for three hours every week, over the course of two months. The first hour of every rehearsal was dedicated to improvisation to help novice actors gain skills and confidence. The second two hours were dedicated to rehearsing the script. The play was a western murder mystery that included dinner. The actors were seated among audience members, eating, conversing, and dropping an occasional clue as to who might have committed the crime. During the production, each member of the audience had an opportunity to write down their best guess as to who committed the crime and why. At the conclusion of the performance, the actors reviewed the physical and verbal clues with the audience, helping them to solve the mystery. All the correct guesses were collected for a drawing. One name was picked to become a lucky amateur detective and receive a prize.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The dinner theatre production, *Our Town Picnic*, can be adapted for other volunteer organizations. For more information on how to receive a production packet with details on ways to duplicate a successful interactive theatre, please contact the first author. The packet includes information about event promotion, theatre production, and dinner service, such as: (1) a marketing plan, ticket pricing, sale incentive ideas; (2) a production script, methods for recruiting performers, materials to support performers, stage props, instructions for production crew, and timeline for rehearsals

and performances; and (3) food preparation and service plan, and table and theatre décor ideas. The theatre production was publicized through organizational newsletters and the local media. Youth volunteers from 11 4-H clubs sold tickets via phone calls and door-to-door requests. Financial incentives were used to motivate volunteers to sell tickets. Each of the two clubs that sold the highest number of tickets received a \$100 reward.

The success of this local interactive dinner theatre is an example of adult volunteers believing in the contributions youth volunteers bring to a community partnership. Youth and adults agreed to work together and had mutual decision-making roles. The theatre project was organized so that each person had a specific role, thus developing autonomy for everyone to use their skills and creativity within that structure, and respecting the value each person brings to the program.

The dinner theatre did not require professional actors, a professional production crew, or banquet caterers to be successful. It required dedicated youth and adult volunteers who agreed to work together and were committed to making it happen. The best practices of youth volunteerism, youth engagement, and youth/adult partnerships were evident in *Our Town Picnic*.

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**Governance Volunteers of Arts Organizations:  
Volunteer Resource Management Considerations**

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**Abstract**

*This exploratory qualitative research utilized grounded theory to examine the experience of volunteers serving on nonprofit boards of directors in arts organizations. By examining the perspectives of the governance volunteers it is evident that proper and thorough volunteer administration practice could enrich the performance of individual board members and therefore impact the volunteer board's overall effectiveness.*

**Key Words:**

volunteer, administration, management, board

**Introduction**

The exploratory research presented in this paper addresses the question of the role of professional volunteer resource managers in impacting the work of governance boards. Board members (also known as directors, trustees, or governors) are volunteers. We argue, therefore, that the basic principles of volunteer administration apply as much to the board as to any other volunteer in the organization.

Volunteer administration as a profession addresses the broad range of competencies required by practitioners to be effective in developing, managing, and sustaining effective volunteer programs. The profession also addresses the competencies required by volunteer resource managers to fulfill their roles with

both volunteers and paid staff within their organization.

The literature on volunteer resource management does not currently address how a volunteer resource manager works with board or governance volunteers. In addition, literature on governance does not examine how the volunteer administration needs of governance volunteers are being addressed by the board itself. Typical bylaw structures of nonprofit organizations make the board itself responsible for the recruitment, development, and evaluation of volunteer members coming onto the board. Reviews of dozens of examples of bylaw by the authors have demonstrated that boards of directors do not reflect an understanding of basic volunteer resource management practice, nor consider using the organization's volunteer resource

management professional to support the board's recruitment, orientation, training or evaluation of volunteers serving on the board.

The authors' work with governors over the past three years (Angelini & Seel, 2007, 2008; Seel, 2006) suggests that volunteer resource managers are often not involved in board member recruitment, retention activities, or exiting processes. In part, this may be due to a generalized lack of information about the particular nature and role of the governance volunteer as an actual volunteer within the nonprofit organization.

This article presents findings from a peer learning circle of governance volunteers from arts and arts-serving organizations. Their experience compelled the authors to encourage the increased use of volunteer resource management practices with governance volunteers. We also believe that as governance volunteers become aware of the importance practicing proper and thorough volunteer resource management, the experience of those volunteers and of the holistic nonprofit organization will be improved.

While *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* style guidelines encourage usage of the contemporary terms "volunteer resource manager" and "volunteer resource management", the authors use the terms "volunteer administrator" and "volunteer administration" interchangeably with "volunteer resource manager" and "volunteer resource management," respectively, in this article. "Volunteer administrator" and "volunteer administration" refer to professional activity in keeping with the guidelines of the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration (CCVA, 2009).

## **Volunteer Resource Management and the Board**

A review of the literature demonstrated that the link between volunteer resource management practices and boards of directors is very tenuous. Much of the literature describes the centrality of the board in the operations of a nonprofit organization. The literature also discerns areas in which governance experiences of volunteers may become counter-productive. It is because of the centrality of the board, and because of the potential for weaknesses to develop unnecessarily, that volunteer resource management practice needs to extend into the governance arena.

Kikulis (2000) observed that the "volunteer board is a deep structure and a core practice" of an organization that "becomes taken for granted as appropriate and legitimate . . . providing a source of stability and resistance to change" (p. 308). In the case of national sports organizations, a "performance crisis" resulted in the erosion of volunteer control (i.e., the deinstitutionalization of volunteer control at the board level (Kikulis, p. 310). In the case of the sports organizations accountability increased along with a focus on compensated senior management, the appreciation of the board as volunteers diminished.

Ranson, Arnott, McKeown, Martin, and Smith (2005) examined the participation of volunteers in school governance. Specifically, they asked whether volunteers "enhanced democratic participation and public accountability" (p. 358). Their findings indicated that volunteers in governance roles built infrastructures leading to institutional practice, improved institutional leadership, and improved scholastic achievement by building "social and cultural conditions of learning" (p. 366). This affirms the central

importance of board performance to organizational health. However, the study also found that "school governance in many respects remains significantly unrepresentative of some of its significant parent constituencies. As such, citizen participation in school governance has yet to be realized in many communities" (p. 357).

The authors recognize the opportunity that volunteer administration has to make deeper and richer impacts on the process of governance. To illuminate this idea, it is worth taking a closer look at the experience of governors (i.e., board members) of arts organizations.

### **The Approach to the Research**

A governance research project began in 2006 undertaken by the Institute of Nonprofit Studies at Mount Royal College in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The project explores, in the tradition of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), how governance volunteers can realize greater community impact through their work. The research being reported on in this paper comes from a peer learning circle (McGill & Beaty, 1993; Suda, 2001; Wade & Hammick, 1999) comprised of volunteer board members from arts and culture organizations with offices in Calgary. Using an intensive and facilitated process, a peer learning circle of governance volunteers was convened to explore dimensions of governance in light of the complex context within which governance of nonprofit organizations takes place. Burnard (1987) observed that while adults may accumulate a considerable amount of knowledge, they may not have had any direct experience of situations about which they might have knowledge of. This difference between "knowing of" and "knowing that" is the gap that can be traversed in peer learning circles.

Participants in peer learning circles report high degrees of change to their behaviors and decision-making processes because of the impact of discussions and reflections they have had with one another during the circles (O'Donnell & King, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978). Research on peer learning (O'Donnell & King) demonstrated that the interaction between members of a learning circle influences the cognitive activity and, subsequently, the learning that is occurring. A learning circle helps "people to take an active stance towards life and helps overcome the tendency to be passive towards the pressures of life and work" (McGill & Beaty, 1993, p. 11). The authors served as facilitators to the peer learning circle, encouraging group members to explore, ask questions, critique their perceptions in the light of group input and thereby draw out the meaning within their own experiences (Burnard, 1987).

The participants invited to the project were contacted from a list compiled through social and professional networks in the arts community in Calgary. Criteria for participation were that (1) the governors identify that they have a governance board and (2) the organization's mission is focused on arts. There were four participants in the peer learning circle. Three remained active throughout the process and two completed all of the reflection activities. Six meetings, each 1.5 hours long, were hosted from February through April, 2008. Six dimensions of governance focused the conversations: educational, strategic, analytical, interpersonal, political, and contextual (Chait, Holland, & Taylor, 1996). Issues related to volunteer resource management such as recruitment, training, and orientation emerged through the peer learning circle process.



## Emergent Results

During the peer learning circle meetings, volunteer governors (i.e., board members) of arts organizations described challenges and difficulties in understanding their role as governors. Specifically, they raised issues that can be categorized as involving: identity, authenticity, roles, and legacy. The indicators of the challenges are presented along with the theoretical categories in Figure 1.

While these theoretical categories and observations inform governance practices, they also speak to the issue of volunteer resource management at the board level. The discussion that follows explores each of the theoretical categories in some detail. Implications for volunteer resource managers working with volunteers coming to the board of directors are also highlighted. This also includes referring to the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration's recently released *Body of Knowledge of Volunteer Administration* (CCVA, 2009).

### *Identity*

Participant comments regarding identity included: "Feeling heard and valued is different from everyone agreeing on a decision."; "How to ensure everyone is heard?"; "My board should discuss norms and culture."; "It is possible to educate governors to be good governors, it is not possible to expect good governance."; and, "I lack the trust and faith to think that if I give you the information you can take it and run with it." These comments suggest that transitioning from being an artist or supporter of the arts as a member of the community, to serving in an official role on a board of directors, poses some challenges in terms of reshaping a board member's identity. Identity is derived when individuals can create meaningfulness out

of their perception of the world and their relationship with it (Demerath, 2006).

Peer learning circle participants referring to challenges in adjusting to the norms, culture, and training of the board are signalling that orientation and training of board members, as volunteers, still requires attention. It appears that the assumption most usually made by the boards was that the responsibilities of orientation and training were to be taken care of by the board itself. However, the boards represented by the peer learning circle participants were not effective in providing these sufficiently. This may be due to a lack of knowledge or experience in conducting an effective volunteer orientation or identifying and then addressing training needs.

### *Authenticity*

Participant comments regarding authenticity were: "I feel left out- we're doing something not right."; "Be prepared to problem solve with people who may not see your point of view."; "Each has own definition of what art is – how do you get over the prejudice?"; "Whoever has stronger will, will make things happen."; and, "Placing procedures over people is not a considerate way of treating people."

Participants expressed feelings of emotional and cognitive conflict experienced in the governance process. These feelings may have arisen from perceptions that their decision-making did not reflect their artistic selves or their sense of themselves as governors, or fulfill their sense of how an arts organization contributes to community. Each of these points of conflict is related to the notion of authenticity. Within person-centered psychology, authenticity is a notion that connects three parts: (1) a person's primary experience, (2) their symbolized awareness, and (3) their outward behavior and

Figure 1. Theoretical categories of being a governor in an arts or arts-serving nonprofit organization and related peer learning circle observations.

Core Theoretical Category	Observations from the Peer Learning Circle
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The governors hold a “creative lens” while viewing their roles.</li> <li>• The creative lens contributes and focuses organizational culture that then frames how board, staff and other volunteers see themselves.</li> <li>• Arts organizations and the board see themselves as working with audiences not clients.</li> <li>• Board members see themselves as an audience for the work of the organization.</li> <li>• Board members view a primary purpose to be the advancement of arts and culture within a social context.</li> <li>• Identity as an artist or supporter/advocate of the arts takes precedence over identity as a governor.</li> </ul>
Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Authenticity comes through transactional leadership rather than emotional leadership.</li> <li>• Applying respectful, considerate approach to reach an outcome is emphasized over the outcome itself.</li> <li>• Social connection and trust build cohesion – and cohesion is perceived as necessary for respectful discourse.</li> <li>• The board uses individual and collective power to influence the behaviour and perceptions of others.</li> <li>• The board places a high value on permission to act and adherence to rules that respect the ways in which the organization carries out its business (e.g., policies, bylaws, documentation)</li> </ul>
Role Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boards lack of clarity in the governance role, for example, as a governor am I an artist, do I represent ‘art’, or do I represent interests of artists?</li> <li>• There are multiple and sometimes conflicting roles of governors, for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Governor as volunteer</li> <li>○ Governor as audience</li> <li>○ Governor as functionary</li> <li>○ Governor as social advocate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What portion of the governance process does each governor own?</li> </ul>
Legacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board questions the community leadership of the organization and the outcomes that are to be generated.</li> <li>• The board operates within a partial understanding of the organization's past, present, future.</li> <li>• Looking into the future, the board faces the question of the role of art in society.</li> </ul>

communication (Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliouis, & Joseph, 2008). The literature on authenticity has recognized that a person's perception of an experience is different from the actual experience.

Within the profession of volunteer administration many of these issues are addressed. Specifically, a volunteer resource manager is knowledgeable about strategic alignment of volunteer activity; strategies for internal collaboration; problem-solving tools and techniques; volunteer roles (e.g., types, design elements, development process, etc.); volunteer orientation (e.g., design principles, strategies and tools, etc.); training volunteers (e.g., design principles, strategies and tools, etc.); and principles of conflict management (CCVA, 2009). Individually and holistically, these skills would be of great assistance to a board where volunteer members are trying to reconcile their previous board and organizational experiences with the particular and specific work of the arts organization. The situation of the board believing that it alone can resolve issues raised by board members leaves volunteer board members in a disadvantaged position. It also raises the need for broader relationship building inside the organization. Consultation with the organization's volunteer administrator would bring important and helpful skills to the table.

#### *Role Identification*

Participant comments regarding role identification included: "Asking what we've been able to do with what we've done, what we've been missing, how much we can lobby for."; "We can do our own self reflection – not necessarily as a group."; and, "How to do good board work is removed from day to day operations and

purpose of the organization so may lead to loss of motivation."

Volunteer administrators recognize that creating a good match between the individual volunteer and their role within the organization is critical if the needs of the organization and of the volunteer are to be satisfied. The newly released *Body of Knowledge for Volunteer Administration* (CCVA, 2009) includes two relevant categories: (1) "Volunteer Staffing" including: volunteer roles (types, design elements, and development process); marketing principles and strategies (internal and external); volunteer engagement (recruitment trends, approaches, and messaging); volunteer placement (interview techniques, screening principles and techniques, assignment tools); volunteer orientation (design principles, strategies and tools); and, training volunteers (design principles, strategies and tools); and (2) "Support for Volunteers" including: supervision (principles, strategies and tools); principles and procedures for corrective action/dismissal; principles of conflict management; team building principles and strategies; and, recognition and acknowledgement (principles and strategies).

The content addressed within these areas of the *Body of Knowledge* identifies competencies for volunteer administrators to ensure that volunteer board members are appropriately screened. This helps to ensure that the board members are suited to the organization; have clarity about their roles on the board and within the organization; receive training to improve their effectiveness in their role; and, work as a team. Board members in the peer learning circle, however, did not report having experienced anything like the support provided to other volunteers under the direct responsibility of a volunteer administrator. This particular theoretical

category also provides important information for volunteer administrators who have an opportunity to work with volunteers on the board of directors.

Governors of arts organizations placed dramatically more importance (as indicated by the frequency with which it was raised and the amount of time spent discussing it) on relationships and their own sense of identity as a board member when compared to the results from other peer learning circles focused on other kinds of nonprofit organizations. The literature in governance and psychology demonstrates that governors have identities framed around social relationships. As cited in Brewer and Gardner (1996, p. 83), Breckler and Greenwald have identified that “individuals seek to define themselves in terms of their immersion in relationships with others and with larger collectives and derive much of their self-evaluation from such social identities.” According to Demerath (2006), “the quantity and quality of the relationships one has with others positively influences the significance of whatever role, status, or identity those relationships are dependent upon” (p. 499).

For volunteer board members in arts organizations, the quantity (which includes frequency and sheer volume of) and quality of relationships are essential to the role of being a governor. The relationships are many: between board members; between board members and organizational administrators; between board members the broader artistic community; and, between board members and individual artists. Weaknesses in any of these relationships could diminish the identity and the effectiveness of volunteers in governance roles.

Governors in the peer learning circle identified challenges in overcoming or setting aside their sense of self and their needs as the “audience” that the arts

organization serves while they govern. Some governors in arts organizations are themselves artists. Others are individuals who appreciate the role of art in society.

Stability plays an important role in creating meaning. Stability means that governance is a readily identifiable activity and the outcomes of the activity are tangible and focused. Seemingly counter-intuitive, another way that stability and commitment can be generated is to increase the exposure of members to multiple roles within an organization (Demerath, 2006). To realize what it means to be a volunteer board member in an arts organization, board members may want to give serious consideration to facilitating and enabling governance volunteers to explore multiple identities while governing. Volunteer resource managers working with governance volunteers in arts organizations need to pay special attention to how the identity of those volunteers is created and sustained.

### *Legacy*

Participant comments regarding legacy included: “When things are going well, communicating with stakeholders on roles takes a back seat.”; “Constituents are likely to identify where the problems may reside.”; “Arts education – is it still part of what we are doing?”; and, “Not wanting to participate anymore when decision making doesn’t meet expectations.”

The theme of loss was not one that was expected to surface in the peer learning circle with governors from arts organizations. For context, the notion of the sense of loss emerged pervasively during the peer learning circle process hosted with governors of Christian faith-based organizations (Angelini & Seel, 2007). What is constructive to understand about this similarity of governance experience across two extremely different

nonprofit subsectors, faith and art, is that meaning-building guides an individual's frame of the future (Demerath, 2006).

Meaning helps an individual makes sense of the past. Meaning determines how an individual responds to certain events or objects in the present. Demerath maintained that for something to have meaning, there are three variables derived from information theory and research on memory and attitudes: frequency, stability, and impact. In the context of governance, frequency would be related to how often a governor perceives something unique about a situation and that this perception helped the governor understand the world around him or herself. The impact of frequency would be fully realized when the governor was able to articulate an experience. Stability would be achieved when governors could clearly articulate the nature and scope of their role on the board. Impact is achieved when a particular meaning is surfaced and then connected to help governors understand other things in the world around them or help them understand other things about themselves. Proper orientation about their governance role, training along the way and other dimensions of volunteer engagement familiar to volunteer administrators such as team building could positively contribute to each of these variables and strengthen the governance experience in the organization. When governors are exploring an issue and are able to take a step back from the issue to discuss the values, philosophy or ideology of their thinking, and then apply that philosophy, ideology, or set of values to another set of governance concerns, we would see impact coming to life.

### **Conclusion**

The impetus for the arts peer learning circle was to explore whether the way governors (i.e., board members) of arts

organizations go about making sense of what it means to be a governor is similar to, or different from, the experience of governors in other nonprofit subsectors. Differences in the experiences of governors across subsectors are evident in the emergent theoretical categories derived in from each peer learning circle project. The experience, however, of determining what it means to be a governor is similar for all governors in one way: the need, as governor, to communicate authentically and to build relationships that serve authenticity such that governors affirm their identities. How governors come to know their authentic selves will likely require a different process in the various subsectors, but, for the sake of effective governance, identity-building cannot be ignored. Volunteer resource management can and should play a larger role in cultivating and strengthening the identity of governors.

It is evident that volunteer resource management could offer a great deal of knowledge and experience that could improve the functioning of boards of directors. It may be that boards of directors and individual governors are not aware of the close relationship between how the board operates and volunteer resource management practices. Two points can be made from this research. First, boards of directors and governors themselves would benefit from the experience of volunteer resource managers. To that end, boards of directors should begin to establish ties – through policy and procedures – to the volunteer administrator in their organization. Second, volunteer administrators need to make direct connections between the principles of effective volunteer resource management and board governance. Instead of treating board members as a class of volunteers apart from the other volunteers associated with the organization, volunteer

administrators should make every attempt to demonstrate how the basic aspects of a volunteer program and also basic elements of an effective board.

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## The Emerging Impact of Volunteers at Performing Arts Centers in the United States

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### Abstract

*During the 1960s, when performing arts centers were first being established in the United States, thousands of individuals began to volunteer for these institutions. However, there is very little documentation on how these volunteer programs evolved and what they have become almost 50 years later. Performing arts venues simply could not have survived in our communities without the support of volunteers. In 2007, the author realized how valuable it would be to everyone in the field to learn basic information about these volunteer programs. She informally surveyed volunteer resource managers and program administrators at performing arts centers, with the goal of sharing the results with the group for purposes of in-house promotion of volunteer programs, outreach presentations on the status of volunteerism at performing arts centers throughout the United States, and promoting arts volunteerism globally.*

### Key Words:

performing arts, volunteers, volunteer resource managers

### Introduction

Toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, volunteer resource managers at performing arts centers (PACs) attended volunteer conferences, yet little attention was given to the role that volunteers played in the arts. At an annual International Association of Volunteer Administrators Conferences, a small group of volunteer resource managers at museums, PACs, theaters, and other cultural venues began to discuss best practices for volunteerism in their venues. It was at these gatherings that the author (who is the Kennedy Center's volunteer program manager) began to develop a vision that led to compiling basic statistics on volunteer programs at PACs.

While doing research in the field, she discovered how little information was available on volunteer programs at PACs in the United States, or for that matter, world-wide. The need for basic information

became an issue as she consulted more arts administrators, especially those from other countries who were seeking advice about the roles volunteers played at Washington, DC's Kennedy Center. In 2007, she sent an informal survey to the volunteer resource managers at PACs in the United States to find out what their volunteers did. The results would be used for outreach initiatives by the Friends of the Kennedy Center program to promote the importance of volunteers in the arts for local communities. In addition to sharing this information with peers in the field, these results would also serve to assist arts administrators from other countries wanting to utilize volunteers at their venues.

### Defining the Audience

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, concert halls generally presented only musical performances, and opera and theater



venues, likewise. In the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, performances in artistic disciplines began to be presented in one facility rather than in separate locations. In the last 40 years, communities throughout the country began building modern PACs that allowed the community to go to a central location to attend performances in various art forms, e.g. music, theater, dance, opera, etc. In the 1960's and into the early 1970's, the institution that today we consider a PAC came into its own as a complex of multiple venues of varying sizes, enabling simultaneous presentations of many kinds of performances. Volunteer programs began to emerge as well in conjunction with this new form of PAC.

In late winter of 2007, the author emailed a survey to 95 volunteer resource managers at targeted PACs around the United States. The email stated that the information gleaned from the survey would be an excellent resource to share with management as a reflection of how vital volunteers are to the operations of each of these venues. The questions asked explored three most fundamental aspects of volunteer programs: (1) the management hierarchy of volunteer resource managers and staff vs. volunteer ratios; (2) the utilization and variety of volunteer positions available at these PACs; and, (3) the value of contributions made by volunteers annually. Fifty-four individuals responded (a 57% response rate).

### **Survey Findings**

The survey findings were heartening, indicating a healthy state within the industry along with plenty of room for growth.

#### *Management Hierarchy of Volunteer Resource Managers and Staff vs. Volunteer Ratios*

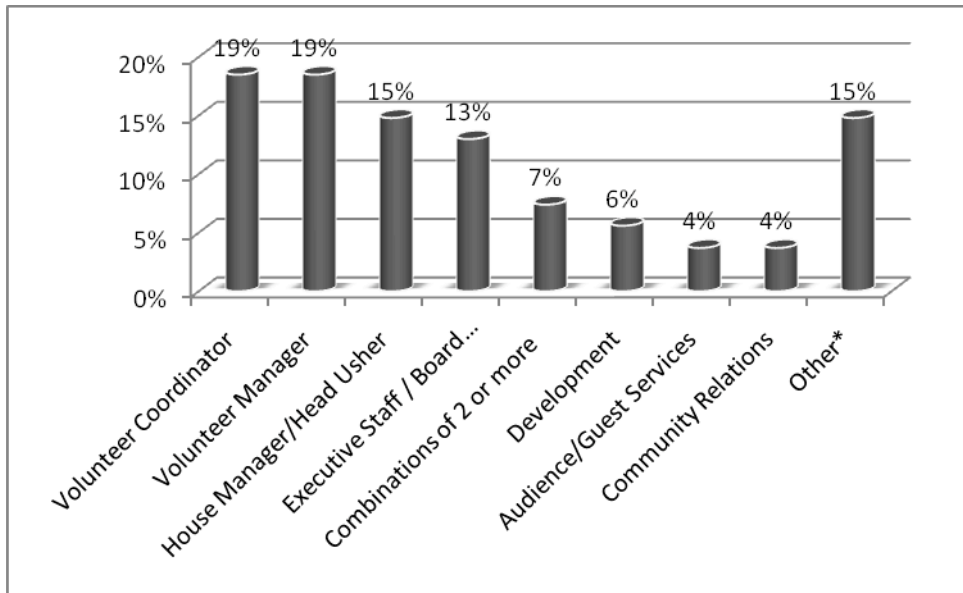
The organizational structure of the respondents' volunteer departments varied greatly, making it difficult to accurately analyze management hierarchy of volunteer resource managers and staff vs. volunteer ratios (Figure 1). Some PACs had dedicated staff who oversaw all the volunteers within the organization, while others use a department-based volunteer coordination program wherein the department manager was also responsible for the volunteers, with volunteer coordination being one element of the job description. It was difficult to draw clear lines between these two types of organizational structures and subsequently compare them. A small number of volunteer resource administrators (15%) reported to executive staff or were executive staff members themselves.

An overwhelming number were run by one or two paid staff people (61%). The average number of staff running these programs was 1.6. Based on the average number of volunteers at each respondent organization, each staff managed an average of 200 people (i.e., 1.6 average paid staff managing an average of 362 volunteers; Figures 2 and 3).

#### *Utilization and Variety of Volunteer Positions*

Volunteers were utilized in a remarkably wide range of positions. The areas that received the highest number of responses – ushers (87%), tour guides (56%), administration (55%), retail (29%), concessions (27%), and special events (18%) – might have been expected. Some PACs were very creative and used volunteers for a variety of activities including data maintenance, gardening, information technology, writing for the web page, and serving as “house doctors” for theaters.

Figure 1. Job titles reported by respondents.



\* Included Administration, Event Coordinator, Operations Manager, Programs Assistant, and Staffing Coordinator

Figure 2. Numbers of volunteers reported by respondents.

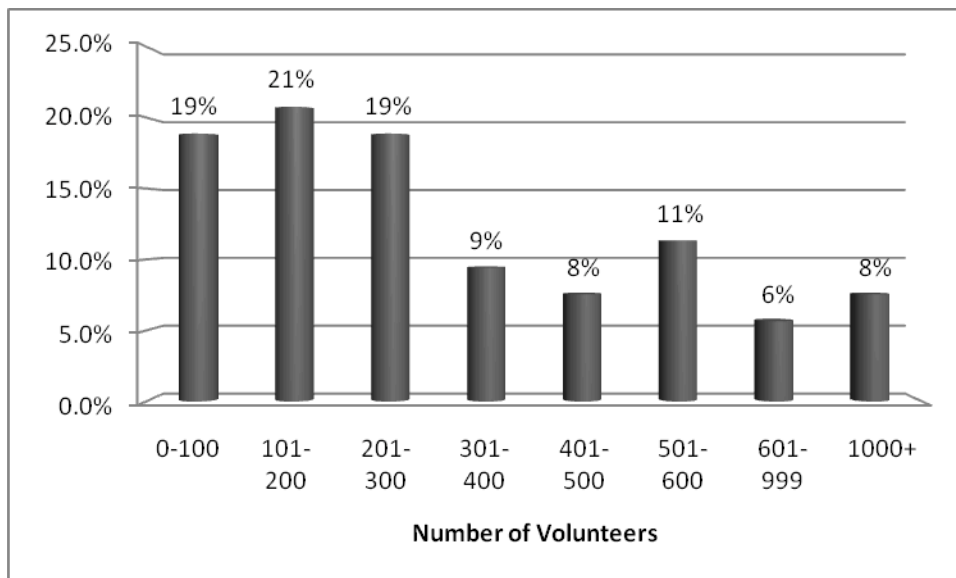
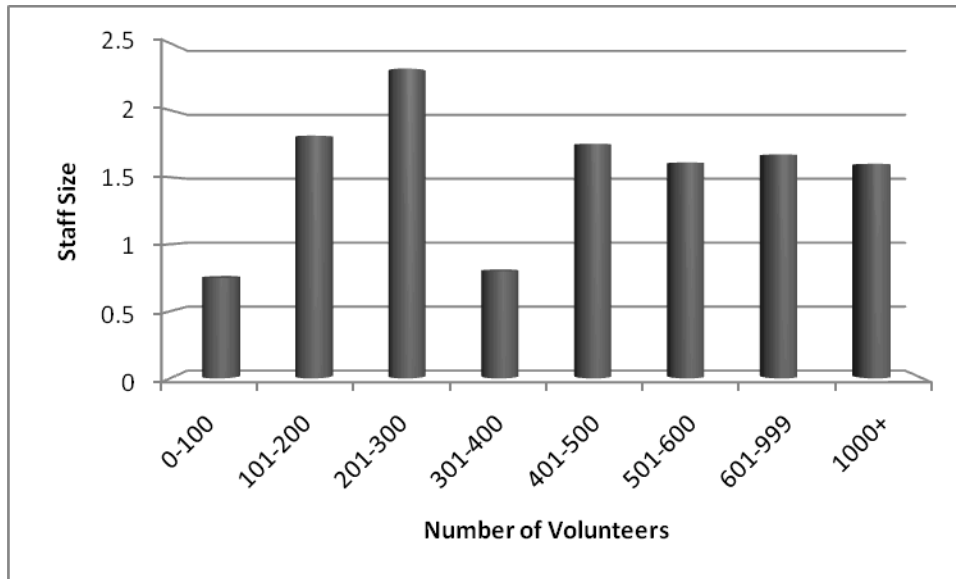


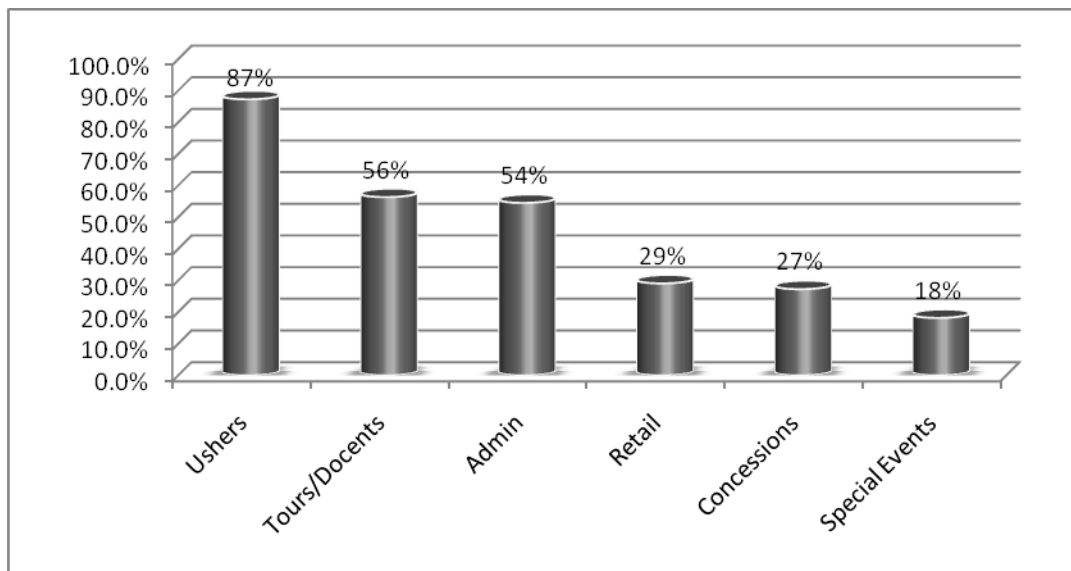
Figure 3. Average staff size per volunteer corps reported by respondents.



Volunteer resource managers may take a cue from the answers to the question, “In which areas do you utilize volunteers?” to develop growth and diversity for their programs. Since almost half of the

responders (44%) indicated they used volunteers only on an as-needed basis, the areas where others utilize them may help managers develop a wider range of permanent ongoing positions.

Figure 4. Areas of volunteer utilization reported by respondents.



### **Value of Contributions Made by the Volunteers Annually**

While many of the respondents appear small and/or underdeveloped (i.e., 52% of volunteer programs contributed fewer than 10,000 hours of service per year), the impact of volunteer time was exponential (Figure 5). One-half of the programs saved their organizations more than \$100,000 a year, and the average savings was \$338,926.73 annually. Dollar values were independently reported by the respondents. Therefore, their calculation methods for the value of a volunteer's time varied, based on the most accurate method of calculation for each particular organization.

Responding volunteer resource managers were accomplishing a great deal with small budgets (Figure 6). More than half of the respondent organizations (54%) operated with budgets of less than \$10,000 annually, and four had no established budget.

### **Sharing the results**

In July 2008, the results were shared as an executive summary and graphs with all PAC volunteer resource managers, with the hope of keeping everyone engaged for future research and outreach efforts. The author encouraged them to share the information with staff and identified one piece of data that she found particularly interesting — where volunteer resource managers, or those staff who supervise volunteers, fit into the organizational hierarchy of their PACs. At some organizations, all volunteers reported to the same administrator (whether or not “volunteer” was in their job title) while at others, volunteers reported to different individuals depending on what their volunteer duties entailed. The author responded strongly to this because she believed that when addressing the “three Rs”

of volunteer management — recruitment, retention, and recognition — having the entire volunteer corps managed by the same department bodes well for a healthy and stronger program.

The results encouraged everyone to acknowledge the invaluable services their volunteers provided, and that their contributions of time, talent, and care would only increase with the right practical and innovative tactics to promote new volunteer positions to staff. The money volunteers save PACs annually should never be undervalued. However, the human resources they provide cannot be measured in dollars. The assumed incentive for their willingness to commit themselves to these organizations, a love of the performing arts, is the most valuable commodity and we should never lose sight of this fact.

### **Looking Ahead**

PAC volunteer resource managers should use the results to market their programs institutionally and within their communities. These results could also serve as an excellent resource for reflecting how vital the volunteers are to the operations of PACs.

Founded in 1965, six years prior to the Kennedy Center's opening in 1971, the Friends of the Kennedy Center volunteer program has always been a vital part of the national PAC's day-to-day operations. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Friends consider outreach regarding the impact of arts volunteerism on local, national, and international levels to be an important component of the program. Two outreach committees address this vision, one for local and national outreach and the other addressing the importance of arts volunteerism from a global perspective. They reach out to the community by educating audiences on how to promote arts volunteerism to international circles in the

greater Washington, DC area as well as other countries. They continue to develop

strategies to inform targeted arts centers in other countries about the Friends program.

Figure 5. Estimated annual value of volunteer services reported by respondents.

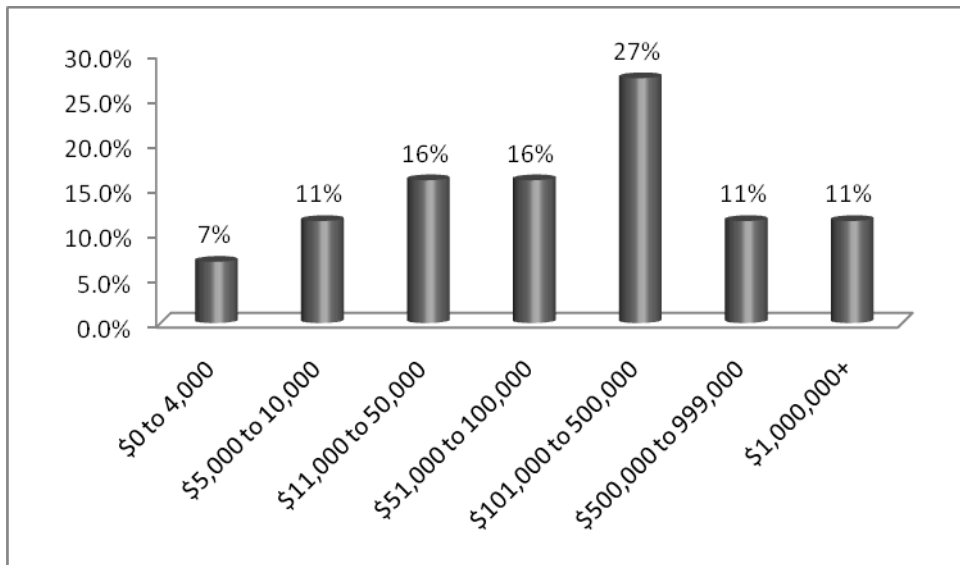
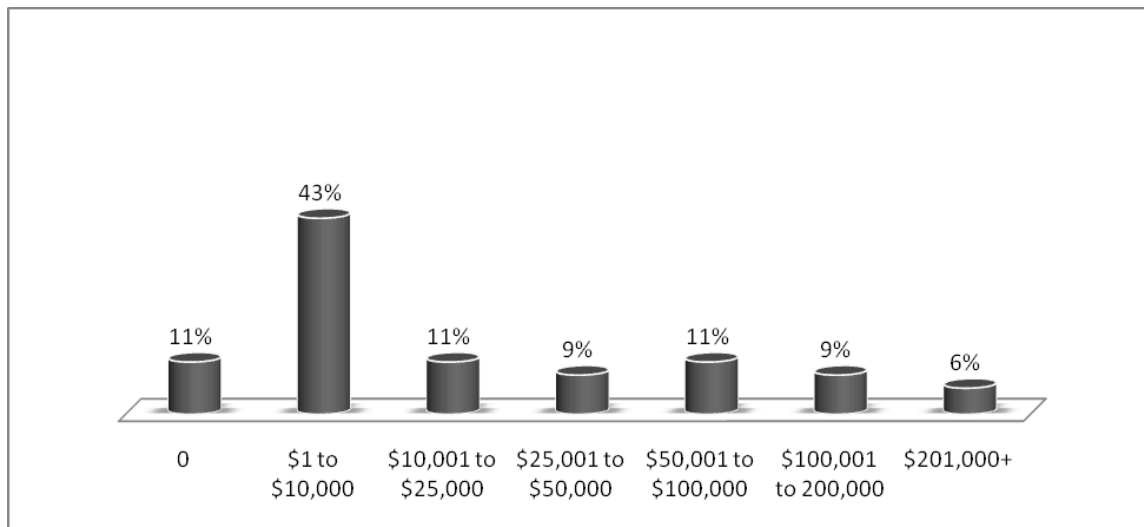


Figure 6. Budgets of departments responsible for volunteers reported by respondents.



Regarding future surveys, another will be sent in early 2010 to PAC volunteer resource managers to continue to collect data. A separate survey will be sent to volunteer resource managers at concert halls to begin collecting data on these volunteer programs. Theater and dance venues will also be targeted for information about their program. Posting the results with Administrators of Volunteer Programs in Performing Arts (AVPPA), the first-ever network for volunteer resource managers in

the performing arts) at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AVPPA/> is another goal. Although some AVPPA members received the survey when they were invited to join the network in 2008, the resource will always be there for access by members. Encouraging these members to continue research in their communities could potentially be another way to unify the members and share the importance of arts volunteerism with others.

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### **About the Author**

Brooks Boeke is the Manager of the Friends of the Kennedy Center volunteer program in Washington, D.C., and has more than 15 years of experience in the field of volunteer resource management. In conjunction with her position, she has published two books: *Cooking with Friends* (a cookbook which remains a top-10 bestseller in the Kennedy Center's gift shops) and *Curtain Up on the Friends, A History of the Friends of the Kennedy Center Volunteers*, which is not only a history of the Friends of the Kennedy Center organization, but also a valuable resource on the "three Rs" of volunteer management: recruitment, retention, and recognition. She also consults regularly with arts administrators worldwide to assist them in starting up their own volunteer programs.

***A Review of Transforming Museum Volunteering:  
A Practical Guide for Engaging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Volunteers***

**By Ellen Hirzy (for the American Association for Museum Volunteers)**

Author House, Bloomington, IN, 2007. 122 pages. \$35.

ISBN 978-1-4259-9393-1

Reviewed by Nancy Macduff

Ellen Hirzey's book is a practical guide to managing volunteers in the museum setting, and is perfect reading for professional volunteer resource managers, volunteers who lead other volunteers, and paid staff who work with volunteers. The aim of the author is to encourage new thinking about engaging volunteers while preserving traditional positions common in museums with large sophisticated programs and small all-volunteer operations.

The book begins with a quick but well referenced chapter on why include volunteers in museum programs, what those volunteers can expect, and how things are changing. There are statistics mixed with opinions from those who actually administer museums along with a brief review of things to do to organize volunteer engagement, i.e. planning, purpose statements, job descriptions, policy handbooks, etc.

At the end of this first (and all subsequent) chapter, the author includes a list of questions titled "Food for Thought." The questions are designed to have readers assess the elements of their museum volunteer programs that have been covered in the chapter. "Have we faced situations that a policy statement would have helped resolve?" is an example of one such question.

Succeeding chapters in the book outline the infrastructure essential to creating and maintaining volunteer programs in a museum setting. Readers are urged to create an infrastructure that includes planning, job design, volunteer policies and procedures, and how to create information

systems. There is an especially useful list of tips for establishing and maintaining a teen volunteer program in a museum (page 23).

For those building a case to hire a manager of volunteer programs in a museum setting, Chapter 3: Management Matters provides everything from statistics to roles and responsibilities of those who staff volunteer programs. There are strategies to engage other staff in supervising the work of volunteers and to transition from unpaid to paid leadership. One Food for Thought question is especially poignant: "What works best about volunteer-relationships? What needs improvement?"

Chapters 4 through 7 provide practical information on building an actual infrastructure for a successful museum volunteer program. These infrastructure chapters are full of helpful tips, hints, and resources for the reader just beginning a volunteer program or for the experienced reader. The "Food For Thought" questions at the end of each chapter could be used as the foundation of an evaluation of the volunteer program. Recruitment, screening (applications, background checks, interviewing), and placement strategies and approaches are outlined in Chapter 4, and there is short discussion on when it is appropriate to turn a volunteer away. Chapter 5 addresses training and covers fundamentals of adult learning and establishing an environment, and includes a section on how to train volunteers with a "visitor" centered message. Techniques for supporting, retaining, and recognizing volunteers are contained in a Chapter 6 titled

“Beyond Pins and Parties.” The author makes the point that recognition begins with knowing the volunteers name and moves from there to outlining informal and formal ways to acknowledge the work of volunteers. While an element of the successful volunteer program frequently omitted in practice is the evaluation, the author recommends and provides strategies for evaluating programs, volunteer performance and satisfaction, and what to do with the results (Chapter 7).

A short Chapter 8 on risk management provides definitions and how certain elements of the volunteer program are risk reducers. This chapter seems to be intended as an introduction to the concept of managing risk rather than a comprehensive guide to risk management. The final Chapter 9 gazes into the future and asks the reader to consider such things as the “revolution” in the retirement of the baby boom generation and what that means for volunteer program, the increasing desire of people for episodic volunteer tasks, and how organizations need to get better at asking volunteers what they

want to do, rather than dictating what they can do.

The final section of the book is 25 pages devoted to lists of resources and samples, and this section alone should make this book a must-read for anyone running a museum volunteer program. The “Toolkit” (p. 80) begins a series of practical documents and forms actually used by museums. There are position descriptions for actual volunteer positions in museums from Oregon to Boston and range from children’s museums to science museums. There are sample policies and procedures, application forms, and volunteer agreements, as well as contact information for the museums that so generously contributed materials.

This book is aimed directly at a niche area of the volunteer world - the museum. It delivers on the promise of providing a tool to help the manager of volunteer programs carry out his/her duties, whether volunteer or paid staff. I have it on my bookshelf, and you should, too.

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### About the Reviewer

Nancy Macduff is a trainer and consultant on volunteerism, based in Washington State. Her clients over the years have included several museums and arts organizations. She is the author of several books on volunteer management, the most recent being *Volunteer Training: A Short Course* (2009). Nancy is publisher/editor of *Volunteer Today*, the free online newsletter for volunteer managers, and teaches online classes on the management of volunteer programs for Portland State University in Portland, Oregon.



## **Performing Arts Volunteer Program Administrators Create an Online Forum**

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### **Abstract**

*Administrators of Volunteer Programs in Performing Arts (AVPPA) is a free online forum created in 2007 by a group of professionals who shared the same vision of bringing together colleagues in performing arts volunteer resource management to share best practices. AVPPA is open to professional leaders and other specialists who actively manage volunteer programs at performing arts venues and who have a desire to promote effective performing arts volunteer resource management practices globally. AVPPA provides an online network for discussing the unique challenges of performing arts volunteerism and also serves as a resource for anyone interested in establishing a volunteer program in a performing arts organization. The authors discuss challenges to volunteerism in arts venues, including keeping volunteers motivated and engaged while monitoring that they are delivering accurate messages about the organization, ways in which volunteers are rewarded and recognized for their volunteering, and scheduling and supervision of volunteers who may be asked to work late evenings, weekends, or numerous hours per week.*

### **Key Words:**

performing arts centers, performing arts, arts volunteerism, global arts volunteerism

## Introduction

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, volunteers have faithfully supported the performing arts in the United States and also provided their own management. Professional performing arts volunteer resource management came into its own as an established career in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These volunteer resource managers need a forum for discussing the unique challenges in their field.

Administrators of performing arts volunteer programs wrestle with issues of scheduling and coverage of activities carried out by volunteers in organizations that are often open to the public more than 85 hours a week, while at the same time working in close proximity to artists, artistic management, and backstage functions. Many performing arts volunteers are in highly visible and important “front line” or “front-of-house” roles. The training and supervision of these volunteers is critical to the customer service provided to performing arts patrons, and the overall image of the organization. Just as the program for any performance says “programs and artists subject to change,” the volunteer work environment is prone to frequent change. This requires the volunteer resource manager to create and nurture a volunteer culture that embraces change and remains flexible.

Administrators of Volunteer Programs in Performing Arts (AVPPA), an online network of volunteer program administrators at performing arts venues (see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AVPPA/>) was created in fall 2007 to bring together individuals who manage volunteers in the performing arts to share best practices, challenges, and successes. AVPPA was co-founded by the volunteer resource manager at the John

F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the Founder/Director of Strategic Nonprofit Resources, both in Washington, D.C., with the support of the volunteer resource managers at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia, and the Aronoff Center for the Arts in Cincinnati. These five individuals comprise the AVPPA Steering Committee that facilitates communication and explores common issues, concerns, and experiences among AVPPA members to ensure that AVPPA focuses on issues relevant to the modern performing arts volunteer resource manager.

## Creating the AVPPA Network

In 1990, the director of Strategic Nonprofit Resources founded Volunteer Managers in the Arts (MVP Arts) to bring together Washington, D.C., based arts volunteer resource managers to discuss best practices. The volunteer resource manager at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is a long-time member of MVP Arts. Over the years, casual conversations took place between the two, and it became clear to them there was a need for a national group similar to MVP Arts. They subsequently established a Steering Committee, inviting three professional peers to join them in the creation of the first-ever online network of performing arts volunteer resource managers. The volunteer resource managers at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia, and the Aronoff Center for the Arts in Cincinnati accepted the invitation and the AVPPA Steering Committee became official in fall 2007.

Steering Committee meetings were held monthly via conference calls. The Committee's tasks were to: develop its statement of purpose; create the name and mission statement for the network; set goals for the network; establish membership guidelines; define the role of moderators; create guidelines for maintenance of the network; draft an invitation letter for potential members; create a marketing plan to promote the network; and expand membership internationally. The Steering Committee created a list of about 15 different potential names for the network which were then narrowed down to five. After a few more discussions and some online checking for acronyms already in use, Administrators of Volunteer Programs in Performing Arts (AVPPA) was selected as the official name for the network.

During these same conversations, the Steering Committee worked on AVPPA's mission statement. Although the initial invitation to join AVPPA went to performing arts volunteer resource managers in the United States and Canada, the Committee felt the word "global" should be in the mission statement since one of AVPPA's long-term goals is to become an international network. It was agreed that the AVPPA mission statement would be:

*AVPPA connects administrators of volunteer programs in performing arts and provides a forum for discussion of the unique challenges of performing arts volunteerism and the promotion of effective volunteer management practices globally.*

AVPPA's goals are to: (1) connect administrators of volunteer programs in the performing arts; (2) provide a forum for discussing unique challenges of performing arts volunteerism; and, (3) promote effective arts volunteer management practices globally. The

Steering Committee chose YahooGroups as the network provider and created guidelines for members using the network. The Committee chose to moderate the AVPPA network to ensure it would meet members' expectations and that it focused on issues relevant to the modern performing arts volunteer administrator.

Throughout the planning process, the topic of generating discussion among AVPPA members was frequently addressed by the Steering Committee.

One of the roles of the AVPPA moderator is to engage members throughout the month by posting relevant questions to the network. Topics such as recruiting and training volunteers, volunteers handling cash in concession areas, and issues related to providing volunteers with authority to resolve customer service concerns are just a few of the challenges performing arts volunteer administrators encounter that the Steering Committee wanted to address. It created a list of potential questions that could be posted to the AVPPA network periodically for discussion. Some resulting questions addressing the unique role volunteers play at performing arts venues include:

1. Do you have volunteers working with artists or working backstage with wardrobe and stage crews? If so, how do you supervise them?
2. How do you deal with the issue of volunteers photographing performers or asking for their autographs?
3. Does your organization use volunteer ushers? How often must they work to be considered an active member of your program? If no volunteer ushers are used, in what ways do your volunteers interact with paid ushers? Do they work side by side or are their roles separate? Is there friction between these

two groups or do they work well as a team? Do paid ushers and volunteers wear the same uniforms?

4. What are your policies regarding complimentary or discounted performance tickets for volunteers?

Each month, the AVPPA moderator archives topical discussions so they are available for access at any time by AVPPA members. Discussions around each topic are summarized into a Word document and saved in the “files” section of the network. This facility is valuable to its members because it is easier to have discussion summaries available instead of having to search through every posting.

### **Launching the AVPPA Network**

The Steering Committee decided to expand the AVPPA membership slowly during the first year, inviting performing arts volunteer resource managers from different performing arts venues to join over time. The first invitations were sent during National Volunteer Week 2008 to nearly 100 performing arts center volunteer resource managers. The invitation e-mail included AVPPA’s mission statement and goals, as well as some background information about the steering committee members.

A few months later, an e-mail invitation was sent to volunteer resource managers at concert halls in the United States including those of the Detroit Symphony, the New Jersey Symphony, and the St. Louis Symphony. Currently, invitations have been sent to volunteer resource managers at theaters and other performing arts venues. During the remainder of 2009, invitations will be sent to volunteer resource managers at theaters and dance venues in the United States and Canada.

AVPPA is still young. The Steering Committee is purposely building the membership base slowly, continuing to nurture current members and gain knowledge and perspective from them as they take the next

steps in promoting and marketing AVPPA. Like any new organization, keeping the network fresh and valuable to members will always be a top priority as well as one of the main challenges. Keeping AVPPA member “chatter” relevant and engaging, and continuing to post provocative questions and statements to the network, will always be goals.

### **The Future of the AVPPA Network**

AVPPA celebrated its one-year anniversary in April 2009. The initial group of five has now grown into a professional network of 44 volunteer resource managers at performing arts centers, concert halls, and other performing arts venues across the United States and Canada. The membership base includes volunteer resource managers from the Cleveland Orchestra in Ohio, the Phoenix Stages in Arizona, the Montalvo Arts Center in California, the Portland Center for the Performing Arts in Oregon, the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in Florida, and the Luminato Festival in Canada, thus representing various regions of North America.

AVPPA is the first-ever online network that brings together volunteer resource managers in the performing arts to share best practices, making AVPPA a valuable resource to its members. With performing arts centers facing challenging economic times, the AVPPA online network provides an opportunity for volunteer resource managers to collaborate at no cost to their organizations.

AVPPA shines a spotlight on a unique sector of volunteerism and volunteer program administration. Its existence alone could be considered a giant leap forward by bringing even more credibility and recognition to arts volunteer resource managers. The

AVPPA databases of volunteer resource managers at performing arts venues will need to be updated periodically as new contacts are developed and people change jobs. The Steering Committee will need to continue to develop contacts with performing arts venues outside the United States to fulfill one of AVPPA's goals of being an international network.

The Steering Committee must be alert to continuing technological advancements in professional online communication. Striking a balance between the virtual world we live in and good old-fashioned customer service will always be a priority because of the customer-centric nature of the performing arts. Even though most of AVPPA's communications take place online, an important function of AVPPA Steering Committee members is to add the personal touch, such as periodic phone calls to current or potential members.

AVPPA strives to be a resource to colleagues at performing arts venues, nationally and internationally, who want to strengthen existing or start new volunteer programs. The Steering Committee plans to expand the AVPPA files to include articles, photos, and training materials related to the field of arts volunteer resource management, as

well as sharing best practices that will benefit its colleagues in the field. Over the years, Steering Committee members have assisted colleagues from other countries and feel that sharing information and exchanging ideas will strengthen current practices and increase support for all arts volunteer resource managers. Expanding the AVPPA membership internationally will bring varied and historical perspectives of performing arts volunteer management to the network and will position AVPPA to capture new ways of thinking about traditional structures, approaches, and relationships not well known to arts volunteer resource managers in the United States.

It has been an exciting journey so far among fellow colleagues who are involved with volunteer resource management in the performing arts. Feedback from current AVPPA members and the online discussions indicate that AVPPA is growing into a valuable resource for volunteer resource managers in the performing arts. Because AVPPA is still in its embryonic stage, the Steering Committee looks forward to the participation and feedback of future AVPPA members and the growth of this valuable professional resource.

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### About the Authors

Brooks Boeke is Manager of the Friends of the Kennedy Center volunteer program in Washington, D.C. She has more than 15 years of experience in the field of volunteer management. In conjunction with her position, she has published two books: *Cooking with Friends*, a cookbook which remains a top-10 bestseller in the Kennedy Center's Gift Shops; and *Curtain Up on the Friends, A History of the Friends of the Kennedy Center Volunteers*, which is not only a history of the Friends of the Kennedy Center organization, but also a valuable resource on the "three Rs" of volunteer management: recruitment, retention, and recognition. She also consults regularly with arts administrators worldwide to assist them in starting their own volunteer programs.

Ginny Bowers Coleman has been Director of Volunteer Services at New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark for the past three years. She also serves as President of Directors of

Volunteers in Agencies (DOVIA) of Essex County where she has been active for 3 years. Previously, Ginny worked backstage in theatrical productions as stage manager, production manager and other roles with NJPAC and other companies. She is currently Stage Manager with Masterwork Chorus under the direction of Andrew Megill.

Meghan Kaskoun has been the Volunteer Manager at the Aronoff Center for the Arts in Cincinnati, Ohio, for the last 10 years, and has been involved in managing volunteer resources for a total of 15 years. She is a credentialed Certified in Volunteer Administration (CVA) and a Management of Volunteer Programs graduate through the Greater Cincinnati United Way & Community Chest and The Union Institute, and was also an instructor in this certificate series for 3 years. Actively involved with the Cincinnati Association of Volunteer Administrators (CAVA), her leadership was utilized for 5 years on the CAVA Board.

Sally Kutyla has been the Manager of Volunteer Services at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia for the past eight years. She also serves on the steering committee for the Kimmel Center's customer service program. She is on the board of the Delaware Valley Association for Volunteer Administrators, as membership chair, and is a member of the Cultural Volunteer Managers of Greater Philadelphia. Most recently, she was Members' Activity Manager for the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. Previously she was in retail management for more than fifteen years.

Connie Pirtle is the Founder and Director of Strategic Nonprofit Resources, a Washington, D.C., volunteer resource management consulting firm that supports volunteer program managers, executive directors, development and marketing directors, board members, and volunteers to increase the effective utilization of volunteers in nonprofit governance and direct service. Connie also writes a volunteer management advice column, "Ask Connie" at [www.VolunteerToday.com](http://www.VolunteerToday.com). She was executive editor of *Transforming Museum Volunteering: A Practical Guide for Engaging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Volunteers*, published in 2007 by the American Association for Museum Volunteers. Prior to forming her company in 1997, she was Vice President for Volunteerism at the League of American Orchestras for 10 years.

*Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted (with format edits) from The Journal of Volunteer Administration, 1977, 10(3), pp. 31-33*

### **How to Make a Museum Volunteer Out of Anyone**

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#### **(Editor-generated) Abstract**

*The authors describe a program that was implemented at the Science Museum of Minnesota in 1977, designed to identify, recruit, and retain diverse individuals as museum volunteers. Museum staff designed the entire physical facility with a strong emphasis on participatory activities which can be enriched by volunteer individuals.*

#### **(Editor-generated) Key Words:**

volunteer, museum, science, diverse

WANTED: VOLUNTEERS FOR THE SCIENCE MUSEUM (FOR EVERY KIND OF JOB IMAGINABLE). ANYONE AND EVERYONE QUALIFIED. THOSE INTERESTED PLEASE APPLY.

This ad could easily have been written by the Science Museum of Minnesota (SMM), an institution dedicated to the premise that anyone has a valuable talent or ability useful to the Museum.

The Science Museum of Minnesota is currently dispelling the myth that the typical volunteer is the white, middle aged woman with school age or grown children, and extra time on her hands. Karla McGray, Coordinator of Human Resources of SMM, is looking for ways to involve any member of the community in the Museum's program – people who might even be surprised

themselves to discover there is a place for them at the museum.

There are several reasons why this approach is a natural and necessary one for the SMM. The Museum is in the process of a major expansion program. This expansion includes a domed Omnitheater and three floors of exhibit hall space connected by a skyway to the present Museum in St. Paul. In an effort to make this new facility a "people" museum (as opposed to an electro-mechanical museum), involve the community at a maximum level and provide interpreters for the increased Museum program space, the natural solution was a full scope volunteer program (or "human resources" program as the SMM has chosen to call it). In making the decision to add this human dimension to all Museum programs and exhibits, the SMM staff has designed the entire Museum with a strong emphasis

on participatory activities which can be enriched by volunteer individuals. In this way the volunteer program is an integral part of the overall interpretive design of the new facility.

This humanistic approach pervades the whole Museum in several ways. "Man" is the theme which will unify the three sciences represented – the physical, cultural and biological. Each of the three floors will explore one aspect of man. The first floor deals with man's own perceptions of himself and the physical world, the second with man as a cultural being, and the third with man as a living animal.

Therefore, any subject that deals with man is appropriate for study in the Museum. As a consequence, a volunteer with almost any area of interest can fit into this far-reaching program. A volunteer need not have a science background nor an academic background to feel comfortable with his or her own contribution.

The Museum will be seeking many levels of volunteers. A very important group will assist the visitors in adding depth to their museum experience. These volunteers will dramatize, and personalize Museum programs. In addition to interpreters and demonstrators, the Museum will be using maintenance volunteers – individuals who will virtually help to keep the Museum running. The biology labs will need animal and insect caretakers, plant growers and even beekeepers. Volunteers with mechanical and electrical abilities will assist in keeping exhibits in good operating order and contribute their expertise in alternative ways of planning exhibits.

Those volunteers with expertise in specialized areas may be used as volunteer trainers. Volunteers with educational backgrounds may provide in-service workshops on communication skills and learning theories. A specialist from the Heart Association might train volunteers to

work in an exhibit area on the circulatory system. Or a professional potter might assist in training a volunteer to demonstrate for visitors how primitive cooking pots were made. A volunteer from the Weavers Guild may teach or interpret Mayan back strap weaving.

Karla McGray will also be looking for "volunteer managers" to assist her in coordinating this complex volunteer Program. "A person with extensive volunteer experience and knowledge of basic management skills could very easily function in a volunteer-volunteer management position here."

Besides recruiting people with a wide diversity of talent, training and interests, the Museum will be making a special effort to involve many age levels of volunteers and many sectors of the community in its volunteer program.

Physically handicapped persons, for example, will be recruited to be an essential part of the Handicapped Resource Center in the new Museum. The Resource Center, located near the Museum entrance, has been developed as a place where the handicapped visitor can find information on specially designed equipment and programs and obtain general advice on how they can maximize their visit to the Museum. This area is an excellent place for the handicapped volunteer – one who understands the unique problems which face the disabled visitor.

The exhibits and activities in this area will also give the non-handicapped visitor an opportunity to understand what it is like to have a disability. With the help of audio-distortion equipment, for instance, the visitors can discover for themselves what deafness is like. Formal or informal presentations by handicapped volunteers will add significant meaning to this program area.



The Museum is also exploring programs in the Twin Cities area for mentally retarded persons. Hopefully this versatile facility will serve to provide itself as a resource for programs seeking ways to involve mentally retarded individuals in meaningful experiences in the community.

A variety of ethnic groups from the metropolitan area will be recruited and can offer special enrichment to the cultural exhibit areas. By sharing cultural crafts and traditions, these volunteers may add a new dimension to programs on an on-going basis or for special events related to ethnic holiday.

During the next year, the Museum will be inviting senior citizens to volunteer, informing them that they are very much needed. This thrust will be a part of the Museum's involvement in a statewide "life long learning" program supported by Vice President Mondale. The Museum feels that this particular group can enrich almost any area by sharing personal life experiences of historical value or contributing special acquired skills. In the Weather Station an older person may recount the "great Drought" of the 30's or share the experience of the Armistice Day blizzard. A retired television engineer could act as a consultant on the Communications Center and interpret this area to visitors once it is in operation. The Museum is already borrowing the knowledge and help of a retired 3M Company scientist in setting up a physics workshop.

This workshop will also be used by volunteers from the other end of the age spectrum. Interested junior high and high school age students will be able to work on special projects here with the aid of "advisor" volunteers from the scientific or educational community.

Staff members in the Museum have been assessing ways to involve children more directly in the Museum as volunteers.

Traditionally this group visits the Museum with parents or teachers and is not given the opportunity to share their own perspectives with others. Being in the Museum environment as a volunteer would help to stimulate a young person's enthusiasm for learning and enhance his personal growth while facilitating other children in learning.

The Science Museum of Minnesota will approach the corporate and business community with information about volunteer opportunities uniquely designed for working individuals. Exploring the concept of "release time," the Museum hopes to assist companies in fulfilling community involvement contributions. For companies not affording their employees this benefit, evening and weekend commitments will be negotiated for those individuals needing personal satisfaction and gratification outside of their work experience.

To aid many parents who would like to volunteer, the Museum is exploring the possibility of developing a day care situation, perhaps even in the Museum itself. This may be an area to involve University child development students or a 4H student needing to fulfill a child care project. It's an exciting concept and could facilitate unpaid staff in making their volunteer experience easier to arrange.

For every volunteer, involvement with the Museum will be an educational experience. Ongoing in-service workshops and training programs conducted by specialists and staff will provide valuable experiences for volunteers interested in acquiring additional job skills. The Science Museum will be keeping detailed records of training and skills acquired by each volunteer. These records will help the SMM staff in wiring job recommendations for volunteers seeking future employment and can be a valuable addition to their resumes. The Museum plans to negotiate with the

Twin Cities Universities to offer its volunteers the opportunity to have their experiences evaluated and assessed for college credit.

Volunteering at the Science Museum of Minnesota will also be a form of community education. A volunteer will be able to select or be placed in an area of interest, expand his/her knowledge in this area through an intense training program and spend as much time volunteering in this area as he/she chooses. Then the volunteer is ready for additional growth, he/she can either receive additional training in the same area or select another area of interest and add on to their skills with a new program. This "add-on" educational approach allows the volunteer flexibility plus the opportunity to increase his/her knowledge and skills at a speed that is comfortable for them.

The Museum will be making a special effort over the next year and a half to develop this Human Resources program and recruit and involve volunteers from many diverse communities. Each volunteer will have something special to contribute drawing from his or her own personal or professional background. In bringing this variety of personal experiences to the Museum programs, SMM will be a continually growing and changing place. The Science Museum of Minnesota's all-inclusive volunteer program drew this response from Barbara Fertig, Coordinator, Center for Museum Education, "To my knowledge, no other museum or science center is attempting to involve so many kinds of volunteers on so many levels . . . (it) points an exciting new direction for museums."

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### **About the Authors**

Nancy Johnston Hall was a Science Writer at The Science Museum of Minnesota in 1977.

Karla McGray was Coordinator of Human Resources at The Science Museum of Minnesota in 1977.

*Editor's Note: The following article is reprinted (with format edits) from The Journal of Volunteer Administration, 1980, 13(1), pp. 28-32*

### **Volunteer Management In the Leisure Service Curriculum**

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#### **(Editor-generated) Abstract**

*This article addresses the use of volunteers in public leisure service organizations to maintain and enhance recreation and parks programs. The author examines why volunteerism is an important area in leisure services; suggests steps which can be used in developing a volunteer management course as a part of the leisure service curriculum; and outlines objectives, course content methodology, and evaluation of a volunteer management course.*

#### **(Editor-generated) Key Words:** volunteerism, leisure

In a time of inflation and shrinking budgets combined with an increase in the demands for leisure opportunities, professionals in public leisure service organizations are seeking ways to maintain and enhance current recreation and park programs. One of the ways to accomplish this is the increased use of volunteers.

Philosophically, utilizing volunteers, particularly in leisure programs, has a double pay-off. Volunteers provide assistance to the leisure service organization and volunteering is also an activity which can meet the free-time or leisure needs of individuals. Providing opportunities for people to volunteer is creating an additional recreation service. For this double pay-off to occur, it is imperative that volunteers be managed effectively. The intent of this article is: 1) to examine why volunteerism is an important area in leisure services; 2) to

suggest steps which can be used in developing a volunteer management course as a part of the leisure service curriculum; and 3) to outline the objectives, course content methodology, and evaluation of a volunteer management course.

#### **Volunteerism in Leisure Services**

Persons who have studied volunteer management realize that basically the same skills are required in managing paid personnel as in managing volunteers. However, for many students and professionals in human or leisure service fields, it is useful and necessary to specifically apply management theory directly to volunteer administration.

Volunteerism is considered an important aspect of most social service agencies. Leisure services have traditionally used a number of volunteers in various capacities, such as Little League coaches, youth club leaders,

advisory committees, and in nursing homes to mention only a few. The number of volunteers is continually increasing. Two approaches may be used in coordinating volunteers.

Although some leisure service programs employ full-time volunteer coordinators or administrators, in many cases the coordination of volunteers within a particular recreation or park unit is the responsibility of the professional in charge of that unit. While there are merits to either approach, many times the leisure professional who spends a majority of time coordinating volunteers is not fully trained in how to be effective in managing these "unpaid" staff.

People generally volunteer during free time or leisure time. This time spent volunteering has been viewed as a constructive use of leisure (Henderson, 1979). Service to others is suggested to be at the top of the hierarchy of leisure time use (Jensen, 1977). The similarities between volunteerism and leisure may be a useful relationship to illustrate for both the leisure service provider and for others involved in managing volunteers. The following is a list of the attributes that might be in common to both volunteerism and leisure. Volunteerism and leisure both:

- are chosen voluntarily;
- address higher level needs (i.e., self-esteem, self-actualization);
- usually occur during non-work time;
- are engaged in for their own sake and not for extrinsic reward;
- make life meaningful and well-rounded;
- contribute to an individual's personal growth.

Granted, there are additional reasons for volunteering, such as serving others and career exploration, but these attributes listed above suggest the similarities between leisure and volunteering.

In studying both volunteerism and leisure from a professional standpoint, it is obvious that they are merging interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary subjects. Pure research related to either topic is in the neophyte stages as both are phenomenon that are reviewed and discussed mainly as aspects of the contemporary American lifestyle. That is not to say that both have not been around since the beginning of civilization, but neither has merited extensive study until the last half of this century. In a sense, the concepts of volunteerism and also of leisure have "come of age."

The interdisciplinary aspects of volunteerism and leisure enable them to have a meaningful emphasis in today's society. With the increased complexity of social and technological change, the search for personal meaning and identity, and the changing nature of work, achievement, and consumption, volunteerism and leisure in a holistic framework provide meaning in today's society. The holism suggests that all elements of life are interrelated. Aspects of leisure can be found in work, school, and religion, as well as in volunteerism. Thus, the need to manage volunteers optimally for the sake of the individual volunteer is becoming more apparent.

### **Considerations for Volunteer Management**

Volunteers today, compared to volunteers of the past, have an important combination of better skills, higher education, more experience, increased leisure, and a desire to use all of these

capacities. Certainly, the persons who supervise these volunteers should also have better management skill, a broader education regarding people and society, and more understanding of the importance of volunteerism and leisure. Many professional degree programs are beginning to design course work that includes volunteer administration (Schwartz, 1978). Most curriculums in leisure studies are designed to train and educate professionals to be supervisors, managers, and administrators. Personnel administration courses or units may or may not include volunteers. More emphasis is needed on "how to work with volunteers" as an aspect of the professional education program and as a part of the continuing professional education program of all human service professions, especially the leisure service fields.

If a college or university offers a major in volunteer administration, then students in various helping professions can take advantage of some course work that relates directly to volunteer administration. In colleges and universities where no formal major exists, there are two alternatives. Volunteer administration could be handled as an integral aspect of personnel management within a specific course such as park administration; or a separate course could be developed for persons interested in specifically exploring volunteer management, such as a course entitled "Volunteer Programs in Leisure Services" taught by the author. Whichever approach is taken, volunteerism and volunteer management is an aspect of human service, as well as other social service areas, must develop curriculum which incorporate volunteers as one integral part of their philosophy and organization.

Marlene Wilson (1976) stated, "A good manager is an enabler of human resources." Whether a professional works with paid staff or with volunteers, that individual is a manager. A manager is someone who works with and through others to reach organizational goals.

Managers of volunteers have the same kind of tasks and responsibilities as do paid staff. Myths exist about volunteers that suggest that volunteers are much different than paid staff. Some people think you can't manage volunteers because you have no money with which to "bargain." Others think using volunteers is like admitting inadequacy on the part of the professional. Some professionals feel threatened by volunteers. These misconceptions and others can be discussed and dispelled if they are addressed in preparation classes and planned experiences designed for persons who will be professional administrators involved with volunteers.

### **Designing a Volunteer Management Course**

Developing a course, a curriculum, a portion of a course, or a training session on volunteer management requires the consideration of several additional points. Tyler (1975) has suggested a method that may be helpful when applied to outlining a volunteer management program or course. Tyler assumes the educational program should be based on the needs of the learners and the objectives are based on the organization of learning experiences. In addition, he suggests curriculum or program development is a step-wise process. The four questions Tyler says should be asked in curriculum development are: 1) what educational purposes (objectives) should be sought;

2) what educational experiences (course content) are likely to attain these purposes; 3) how can these educational experiences be effectively organized (method of teaching); and 4) how can we determine whether these purposes are attained (evaluation). Based on these four steps in Tyler's model, aspects of volunteer management as a course or as a major component of a leisure service or human service curriculum will be discussed.

### *Objectives*

The source of the objectives or the course purposes is based upon what the student or learner needs and is interested in, what is required in the field of volunteer management, societal problems, and the subject area itself. In this case, the learner is whomever the volunteer management program is addressing, either college recreation, park or leisure students or the professional who is seeking additional continuing professional education.

Objectives are the basis for organizing learning experiences. Objectives address what "should be" in the management of volunteers. These objectives can be very broad in nature or more narrowly defined. Some educators and teachers have the opportunity to work side by side with their learners or students to determine the particular needs of students. In other cases, the empirical knowledge available and previous experiences of the educator may provide the basis for determining which objectives should be sought. Choosing educational objectives relates to how the student should think, feel, and/or act as a result of the learning. A list of broad objectives that apply to a volunteer management course might include the following:

- The student will identify trends in the history and philosophy of volunteerism and relate these to the delivery of leisure services.
- The student will apply management concepts to administration of volunteer services recreation and leisure service agencies.
- The student will discuss and analyze techniques of recruiting, training, supervising, and evaluating volunteers.
- The student will investigate methods of working with voluntary advisory boards and committees and the use of community resources.
- The student will design volunteer job descriptions that can be used in leisure services.
- The student will practice skills such as proposal writing, communication, and leadership techniques that are needed for effective and efficient volunteer management.
- The student will develop problem-solving techniques as related to volunteer management.
- The student will appreciate the role volunteers play in human and leisure service agencies.

In choosing objectives, the educator should ask the following questions: Can the objectives result from learning?; Are the objectives feasible?; Are the objectives or purposes educationally attainable?; Will there be opportunities to use this learning?; Are the objectives consistent?; Will the attainment of objective result in new or changed behaviors? Analyzing the objectives is a way to assure that the objectives are going to relate to the needs identified and to the area of volunteer management.

### *Course Content*

To a great extent, the volunteer management course content will be dependent upon the philosophy of learning. Generally, there are two kinds of learning: training and education. Training is the kind of learning in which the total pattern is given and learner follows exactly that which is taught. In future situations, the same learned pattern is used. Education, on the other hand, is the emphasis on trying to teach problem solving and alternative ways of thinking. Education extends beyond the time something is taught. Education emphasizes that learning is dynamic and not just repeated patterns. In general, the learning needed for volunteer administration can be a combination of both education and training emphasis. Aspects of administrative procedures and some specific techniques taught are considered training elements. The skills needed for human services require problem-solving skills which encompass the realm of education.

Any kind of learning takes place only when an individual learner or student relates to an experience. The course content of volunteer management should include opportunities to explore skills, knowledge, values or attitudes, and concepts.

Examples of topics which might be explored in a core volunteer management course might include: What is volunteerism?; Trends/history of volunteers; Volunteerism and leisure; Volunteerism and the women's movement; Voluntary Action Centers and other volunteer and community organizations; Roles of volunteer coordinators/managers; Goal setting/objective writing; Organizational behavior; Needs assessment; Using job descriptions; Recruiting volunteers;

Placing volunteers; Motivating volunteers; Supervising volunteers; Orientating and training volunteers; Communication; Legal aspects of volunteerism; Group processes; Problem solving; Rewarding/recognizing volunteers; Working with paid and unpaid staff; Volunteers in leisure activities; Proposal writing; Volunteer boards and committees; Evaluating volunteer programs; Record keeping; and, the future of volunteerism

These learning experiences should evoke the desired behavior (i.e., better volunteer management), give the learner an active involvement, deal with the content of volunteer management, and give the learner an opportunity for achievement and satisfaction.

### *Organizing Educational Methods*

The course content is of little benefit until it is organized into directed learning experiences. This involves the development of specific and general methods for teaching and learning. The criteria for this organization is integrated, sequenced experiences. An example of a specific sequential learning experience would be having students read about leadership styles, discuss these in class, role play the style, and, finally have students write a reaction to their own analysis of a personal leadership style.

In addition to the traditional educational approaches of reading written materials, lectures, tests and class discussions, there are a number of educational methods that may be used in a volunteer management course. These include:

- Guest speakers who are volunteer coordinators/managers.

- Students actually volunteering in the community in conjunction with the class.
- Students interviewing human or leisure service professionals in the community in regard to the volunteer manager's roles.
- Writing a volunteer handbook or manual as an individual or group project.
- Role play interviewing/orienting sessions in class.
- Using case studies for problem solving discussions.
- Each student write a case study of a situation which might happen in volunteer management.
- Write and/or analyze volunteer job description.
- Analyze personal communication skills via a short paper.
- Write a grant proposal (as a group or individual) for funding a volunteer program in an agency – include statement of the problem, objectives, plans, budget, method of evaluation.
- Write a program proposal for using volunteers in a human leisure service agency (including philosophy of volunteering, objectives, recruitment techniques, job description, a training plan, record-keeping system, evaluation techniques).
- Design a recruitment brochure or poster.
- Develop 100 ways to recognize and reward volunteers.
- Visit a human or leisure service agency and analyze their board and/or committee structure.
- Analyze the component of effective training by attending volunteer training meetings.
- Students write a written evaluation of their potential as volunteer coordinator.

- Because volunteer management involves both broad and specific skills, the methods used in the course should provide opportunities for broadening and deepening the subject matter. These experiences should provide both specific and general information and address both real and abstract concepts. A variety of methods are necessary because managing volunteer experiences requires an interdisciplinary approach with a variety of skills and expertise required.

### *Evaluation*

The last aspect in the course development is evaluation. Evaluation is the process of determining the value or worth of something relative to the given purposes or objectives. Evaluations generally includes examining the behavior changes using some kind of collection method, relating the changes to the stated objectives, and making judgments about the overall value of the course.

Evaluation methods might include knowledge tests, evaluation of specific skills, observation of skills, noted attitude changes, or by written or oral evaluation of specific individual and class projects.

### **Summary**

Volunteer programs in leisure service agencies, as well as in other human services, can extend, enhance, and expand current services. In addition, when volunteers are humanistically managed, the volunteering itself becomes more rewarding and important to the individual. Volunteering can provide a meaningful use of leisure. Loeser (1974) stated, "There is a real danger that people will fritter away the new time of the mechanics of living, on



busy work, on activities that waste time without increasing the happiness of either the individual or the group in society.” Volunteer managers in any human service have the responsibility of facilitating volunteers to increase the happiness of the individual and the society. Good volunteer management developed through a leisure service curriculum can provide for the growth of individuals as well as organizations.

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### **Evaluating a Museum's Volunteer Program**

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#### **(Editor-generated) Abstract**

*The author describes a nine-step evaluation process developed to assess volunteers' attitudes and opinions regarding growth and change in a restored historic home serving as a cultural museum.*

**(Editor-generated) Key Words:** volunteers, satisfaction, change, evaluation, museum

#### **Background**

Early in the 1970's, an extraordinary historic property entered the Chicago-area real estate market. This cedar-shingled complex, located at Forest and Chicago Avenues in Oak Park, Illinois, was built in 1889 by a 22-year-old fledgling draftsman, Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright borrowed \$5,000 from his employer, Louis Sullivan, to build a small cottage for his bride, the 18-year-old Catherine Lee Tobin. This home marked the beginning of a remarkable career destined to change the face of American architecture.

Here, between 1889 and 1909, as the architect's colorful and controversial life unfolded, he created wonderful rooms for his expanding family. In 1898, he attached a studio to his home, merging his architectural practice with his family life. Here the Prairie School of architecture was conceived and developed. And here it thrived until 1909 when Wright abruptly left both the home and studio.

In the ensuing years until 1972, the property changed hands frequently, its ample space producing both rental

income and living quarters for its owners. When the building was offered for sale, it was badly in need of repair.

#### **Volunteers Take Leadership**

Through the efforts of determined and dedicated volunteers, funds were raised to purchase, restore and preserve the first home created by Wright for his family and his Oak Park studio. In 1974, volunteers formed the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation and negotiated the property's purchase by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in a co-stewardship agreement. In 1976, the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio was designated a National Historic Landmark.

#### **Staff Added**

Professional staff were hired to work with volunteers to develop a restoration plan and to oversee 13 years of extensive and carefully authenticated restoration activities. Volunteers gave tours throughout the restoration process to assure a steady income and to build public awareness of Wright's impact on American architecture. The Ginkgo Tree Bookshop, which provides

important financial support for the Foundation's programs, was launched and operated by volunteers. While the bookshop now employs a core staff, volunteers still are the backbone of daily operations and serve visitors on a daily basis. Today, the property is a fully restored historic house museum where over 550 volunteers offer a range of services daily to tourists and scholars alike. In addition to the public serving volunteer components, a board of directors and 23 volunteer committees participate in long-range planning and work closely as partners with staff to direct the foundation's programs. Volunteer involvement is the most consistent strength of the entire organization.

By 1988, when the tasks associated with volunteer management had exceeded the time and energy constraints of both volunteers and existing staff, the first volunteer coordinator was hired.

### **Organizational Changes**

The homey, relaxed, "let's do it" atmosphere of a small, single-minded volunteer group underwent change as more volunteers were needed to accommodate daily demands. There were more forms and record-keeping, more restrictions on use of the home and studio, fewer spontaneous "happenings." The atmosphere had shifted from one of active hands-on involvement in restoring a building to a more guarded, white-gloves approach to preserving a museum. Many changes had occurred. As goals were accomplished, new goals were developed and new volunteer responsibilities evolved. Volunteers were still essential to maintain the upbeat, enthusiastic quality of daily operations but now staff were

responsible for the scheduling and supervision of volunteers.

### **Need for Program Evaluation**

A formal evaluation of volunteer satisfaction had not been undertaken for at least three years prior to the arrival of the new volunteer coordinator. The volunteer coordinator, aware that the organization's growth had created some stress-points, was committed to establishing an ongoing evaluation process to "take volunteers' temperatures" on a regular, preferably triennial, basis.

What evolved was a nine-step process which has become the model for future evaluations.

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#### *Figure 1. The Nine-Step Evaluation Process.*

- Step 1. Gain acceptance for and ownership in the process.
  - Step 2. Gather information about issues and/or trouble spots.
  - Step 3. Organize focus groups.
  - Step 4. Formulate a general survey.
  - Step 5. Distribute, collect and tabulate surveys.
  - Step 6. Prepare a final report; schedule report meetings. Recognize strengths and celebrate them!
  - Step 7. Identify areas needing change. Involve groups in problem-solving. Develop an action plan.
  - Step 8. Implement changes.
  - Step 9. Savor the results! Take a break! Then get ready to start the process again.
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## The Evaluation Process

### *Step One: Gain acceptance for and ownership in the process*

One of the volunteer coordinator's first accomplishments was to recruit and activate a Volunteer Services Committee. This committee is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the volunteer program in close partnership with the volunteer coordinator. Initially, when the coordinator introduced the evaluation concept to the committee, some members were apprehensive. Shadows of an earlier attempt to "evaluate" individual volunteer performance still darkened memories. A new proposal for a volunteer program evaluation seeking to measure the *satisfaction* levels of current volunteers, rather than to *evaluate* individual volunteers, gained support. One committee member not only agreed with the concept but persuaded a market research firm to donate its services to assist with the project. With few exceptions, both committee members and staff were ready to support the project.

### *Step 2: Gather information about issues/trouble spots*

A meeting was scheduled with staff, who supervised volunteers, and volunteer leadership, whose close daily contact with volunteers helped to identify any concerns and friction points. Among the trouble spots named for further examination by volunteers in focus groups were:

- level of discomfort with organizational changes;
- methods of selection for key leadership positions and special assignments;
- timeliness of updates about pertinent information;

- degree of satisfaction with supervision and recognition.

Group members also wanted feedback about their own effectiveness as supervisors and leaders, and an overall reading of the volunteers' satisfaction with the organization.

The volunteer coordinator convened a meeting to share the "laundry list" of concerns with the market research consultant who transformed the concerns into a sequenced set of focus group discussion questions. The committee was now ready to poll volunteers.

### *Step 3: Organize focus groups*

It was important to select a well-rounded cross-section of volunteers to participate in the focus groups. Among criteria were:

- length and time of service: how many years? Week-end or weekday? Four hours or four days a month?
- volunteer role: public serving? Behind-the-scenes? Board or committee member?
- demographics such as age, sex, and place of residence; job status.

With a selected list of about 30 people representing all volunteer areas, the committee easily recruited two focus groups of 10-12 members each.

A central off-site location was arranged for the meetings. Notes were sent to each focus group member confirming date, time and place. Aided by an assistant who recorded all comments, the consultant facilitated both groups, then compiled the responses into a written report. The consultant met with the *ad hoc* committee one more

time to discuss the findings from the focus groups.

*Step 4: Formulate a general survey*

With the focus groups' verification of the original "laundry list," and the addition of a few new questions, the consultant developed a four-page survey for mailing to all 550 volunteers.

The survey began with a few "warm-up" questions such as a checklist of reasons for volunteering and a rating of overall satisfaction with the program. Volunteers then were asked to rate 24 straight-forward statements such as, "I am given enough updates . . . (to do my job)." Three ratings were used: either "agree," "neutral," "disagree," or "satisfied," "neutral," "dissatisfied."

A checklist on the last page allowed respondents to identify their volunteer assignments and mark the one in which the most time was spent. The last page also requested demographics such as place of residence and length of service both in years and in hours volunteered each month.

*Step 5: Distribute, collect and tabulate surveys*

Every volunteer was mailed a survey and given a return deadline. Almost 50% of the surveys were returned, far exceeding normal response rates. The survey's format was developed for easy input into a database program created by a computer-literate volunteer. The program could also generate computer reports for comparison and analysis. Another volunteer skilled in data input helped the volunteer coordinator log individual survey responses into the database. The program allowed every survey question to be compared in an unlimited number of ways for each volunteer position.

Staff and volunteer leadership were able to request reports compiled from only their own volunteers. Reports for the whole volunteer corps as well as smaller segments were also calculated.

An open-ended question, "What could the Foundation do to make volunteering a better experience for you?" offered an opportunity for unsolicited comments and generated many additional handwritten comments. Each was transferred to a 3" x 5" note card, then sorted into general categories such as:

- Leadership;
- Scheduling;
- Recognition;
- Effect of Change;
- Continuing Education;
- Communication;
- Training;
- Social.

The comments were then typed into verbatim report, giving a valuable compilation of viewpoints.

*Step 6: Prepare a final report; schedule report meetings*

Several types of reports emerged from the summarized database ratings and the verbatim comments. Staff and volunteer leaders could request data comparisons from only their own volunteers as well as the figures compiled from all respondents. The board of directors, staff and committees received preliminary written reports as well as verbal ones at their meetings.

Respondents were effusive in their many complimentary comments and warm appreciation for the Foundation's programs and personnel. These comments were shared as were comments of a more critical nature. Selected results were reported through

the *Volunteer Newsletter* as a way to disseminate information and to generate interest in a full report meeting.

*Step 7: Identify areas needing change;  
Involve groups in problem-solving;  
Develop an action plan*

Finally, a special report meeting was scheduled for all volunteers, as the culmination for all volunteers, as the culmination of almost a full year of planning, preparation and analysis. The agenda included a report given by members of the Volunteer Services Committee, time for small group discussions and for the full group to reconvene and share mutual concerns.

Discussion helped promote better understanding of mutual concerns by encouraging direct dialogue. For example, volunteers who felt overlooked when appointments to key leadership positions were made, expressed their concerns. On the other hand, those charged with filling key positions wanted better information about willing volunteers. All agreed that a better system for posting and filling key positions was needed. The Volunteer Services Committee accepted the assignment of developing such a system.

*Step 8: Implement changes*

Simple-to-make adjustments happened immediately: more informational updates and new volunteer job openings were published in the *Volunteer Newsletter*; soft drinks were made available. More extensive organizational change such as review of committee structure and leadership selection procedures were delegated to appropriate committees.

*Step 9: Savor the results! Take a break!  
Get ready to start again!*

The workable and replicable Nine-Step Evaluation Process documented here is a product of the successful completion of this volunteer program survey.

The Volunteer Services Committee of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation hopes that others may benefit from the process developed with guidance from a professional in market research and the creative efforts of our own staff and volunteers. This process enables us to seek direction for program improvement from our own most valuable resource – our volunteers.

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### **About the Author**

At the time this article was published originally, Shirley M. Lundin, CVA served as a principal of Lundin and Associates, a management consulting firm which included coordinating, teaching and developing new courses for the Volunteer Management certificate program at Harper College in Palatine, IL. She achieved CVA while serving as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation. An active volunteer, she holds a BA from Northwestern University and a Master's degree in Adult Continuing Education from National-Louis University. Though now retired, she still does occasional consulting for the Central Midwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association.

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### **Overcoming Road Blocks: Change Strategies for Arts/Museum Volunteer Programs**

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#### **(Editor-generated) Abstract:**

*The authors describe a planned change initiative implemented with a small town symphony that was led by the organization's volunteer resource manager functioning as a change agent. Seven stages of change are described: 1) shock; 2) disbelief; 3) guilt; 4) projection; 5) rationalization; 6) integration; and 7) acceptance. The authors conclude that volunteers can be encouraged to accept change by providing an environment where it is permissible to work through the stages of change. The volunteer program manager can be the catalyst to help volunteers process and accept change more quickly and in a supportive environment.*

#### **(Editor-generated) Key Words:** volunteers, change, symphony, strategies

Volunteers in arts organizations face constant changes: paid staff change, the expectations for volunteers change, the leadership of trustees changes or the expectations of the community toward the organization shift. And just when the volunteer things change is done, a new form or procedure is introduced. Managing volunteers means helping them accept change.

By understanding the stages of change the volunteer program manager can orchestrate or plan for change. Because everyone deals with change on a daily basis, some predictable stages or steps have been identified. The movement of individuals through these stages can be quite haphazard. For example, when the volunteer manager at

a small town symphony knew that the conductor would be leaving, she recognized that each volunteer would react differently to the news. Since the leave-taking was not sought by the conductor, but forced by the trustees, it was expected that the fall-out would include lawsuits and adverse publicity. This would in turn cause musicians, staff, and volunteers to react to the change in ways that could hurt the symphony. The volunteer manager decided to plan for the change by becoming a change agent and helping her volunteers handle their various reactions in a way that would not hurt the symphony.

### Stages of Change

A change agent begins by understanding that change has some predictable steps or increments. The stages of change according to Lippitt, Langseth, and Mossop (1986) are: 1) shock; 2) disbelief; 3) guilt; 4) projection; 5) rationalization; 6) integration; and 7) acceptance. Volunteers may not move through these stages in order, they may become stuck at one stage, refuse to move ahead, bypass a stage, or speed through all the steps in a minute or more (depending on the scope of the change). Volunteers dealing with the change of a new artistic leader (e.g., curator, conductor, or artistic director) might experience these typical reactions:

- \* Shock: "This isn't happening!"
- \* Disbelief: "I can't believe this is happening."
- \* Guilt: "This is my fault! If only I had..."
- \* Projection: "This is their fault. They caused this problem."
- \* Rationalization: "Well if she leaves then maybe we will get someone who understands the volunteers." Or, "If *they* think this is a better way to do it, I suppose I better learn how."
- \* Integration: "I'm having trouble remembering the way it used to be done." Or, "The new conductor has a certain flair."
- \* Acceptance: "I want to show you how to do this, it's really easy and a valuable skill." Or, "We made this change at the museum and it might be worth trying at the church."

Volunteers can be encouraged to accept change by providing an environment where it is permissible to work through the stages of change. In fact, there must be acceptance of the pain of change and a willingness to

assist the individual in processing change. Every effort should be taken to reduce the likelihood of volunteers feeling forced into maintaining old positions or procedures to avoid the new change.

### Change Strategy

Change in an arts organization usually is conducted with an intense media spotlight. Many people are affected by decision: patrons, artists, visiting professionals, critics, paid staff, volunteers, musicians, actors, and others. This scrutiny can make it difficult to bring about change without strong resistance. With adults it is virtually impossible to avoid all resistance, but it can be reduced through the use of a change strategy.

The change agent is a leader with insight and clarity of direction. This individual is not simply accepting of change, but actively strives to manage it. This is most effectively accomplished through the use of a planned change strategy.

### Awareness

At this stage the volunteers are introduced or made aware of the idea or possible change. It is important to provide information, no matter how skimpy. Even if few details are known, the volunteers should be alerted long before the actual change is made. The volunteer coordinator or director needs to be positive about the change. For example if a new gift shop is being designed, volunteers should know about it as soon as possible. Rumors abound and it is better if even the most meager information comes from a reliable source. This is also the time to educate volunteers about the current financial situation and potential gains to be



expected from the new gift shop. It helps them understand the broader dynamic of change throughout the organization.

### *Interest*

As volunteers become more aware of the impending change their attitudes about the change can be positively influenced. This is done by increasing the flow of information about the change. It is especially important to present this information as it relates to the volunteers. For example, if a museum is changing access for security reasons, it is wise to relate the changes to the need for security of both volunteers and things. Everyone wants the collection to be safe, but if it will take five minutes longer to get into the building from the parking lot, the reasons for the change are best explained in personal terms. As the volunteers' interest increases, they begin to see the impact.

### *Evaluation*

This is a process of visualization. Here the volunteer can be asked to evaluate the change by thinking or sharing all the pro's and con's related to the change. They might be encouraged to "imagine" the change as it relates directly to them. It is important to allow the volunteers to express anxiety about their own ability to make the change. Many adults have a fear of failing in new situations and, rather than explore those new situations, they retreat (and not always quietly). The effective change agent creates an environment where it is "o.k." to mentally experiment with the change. Suppose volunteers are talking about the change in museum access for volunteers and staff mentioned earlier. The volunteer director/coordinator might

say: "What new things will you see coming into the building that way?" "Are there things you will miss coming in the old way?" "What will it be like for visitors seeing volunteers arriving at that door?" This sounds like mental gymnastics, but it gives the volunteer the opportunity to express anxiety and practice dealing with the new change mentally before it becomes a physical reality.

### *Trial*

This is where the volunteers try out the change on a small scale or practice level. An ideal way to deal with this step is to train a core group of volunteers to carry out the change and have them teach other volunteers. This strategy increases the number of change agents in the organization. This technique is especially effective in dealing with new internal systems: new forms, new check-in procedures, new ways to sign up for complimentary tickets or events, etc. It is at this step that volunteers make the decision to make the change or reject it and sometimes leave the organization. A successful transition in this phase leaves volunteers proud of skills and more willing to tackle the next change. Arts volunteers can be heard to say things such as, "Well, if we mastered the new computer security system, we can adapt to anything."

### *Adoption*

An effective leader who plans for change and gives the opportunity for volunteers to express their shock and disbelief is rewarded. This step occurs when the change has been implemented and volunteers handily accept and integrate the new "thing" into their exiting jobs. The surest indicator of

adoption is when a volunteer becomes the best advocate for the change when talking with other volunteers or staff. For example, a symphony orchestra fired its conductor of 11 years in the glare of a media spotlight. A part-time volunteer coordinator began a systematic process to help volunteers deal with the loss and get them ready for the arrival of a new conductor. In the six months prior to the arrival a new conductor there was ample opportunity to deal with shock and disbelief. The volunteers who stayed worked through their anger to express their support for the orchestra. This happened not by accident but through a systematic plan to make volunteers aware of the change build their interest and commitment to change, think about the effects of the change, practice the reaction to the change by greeting visiting conductors, and adopt the new persons coming to lead the orchestra.

### **Conclusion**

Helping volunteers arrive at the adoption stage occurs more easily if volunteer concerns have been considered in the entire process. Volunteers cannot be forced through the five steps. Instead, they need to be an integral part of the change process by having the opportunity to air their concerns and suggest options and alternatives.

The stages of change are natural and occur without any assistance from the outside. The severity of reaction to change can be mitigated. The volunteer program manager can be the catalyst to help volunteers process and accept change more quickly and in a supportive environment.

### **Reference**

Lippitt, G. L., Langseth, P., & Mossop, J. (1986). *Implementing organizational change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, Inc.

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### **About the Authors**

Heller An Shapiro has worked in nonprofit and volunteer management since 1984. From 1997 until 2007, she served as Executive Director of the Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation in Gaithersburg, MD. While serving as Director of Volunteers at the Friends of the Kennedy Center, her program received a President's Volunteer Action Award. She chaired the National Summit on Trends in Volunteer Leadership Development and served as a member of the boards of the Association for Volunteer Administration and the National Health Council. Heller founded Managers of Volunteer Programs in the Arts, a networking and education group, served as a columnist for *Volunteer Today*, and is the author of the *Christmas in April\*USA Board Building Manual* and a chapter in *Managing Volunteer Diversity*.

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 juried articles, and teaches management of volunteer courses for Portland State University's Institute for Nonprofit Management. She is Program Chair of the Pracademics section of the Association for Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA).

**Appendix A**  
**Stages of Learning Work Plan Sheet**

**What will you do about change?    What will volunteers do?**

<b>Awareness of need or problem</b>		
<b>Active interest, information gathering, self-inquiry</b>		
<b>Evaluation</b>		
<b>Trial, practice of new behavior and emotional insight</b>		
<b>New learned behavior</b>		