

## **In This Issue:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Editor-In-Chief

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