

In This Issue:
Each Individual Has Something to Offer, and a Right to that Opportunity

Harriett Naylor is largely recognized as one of the (if not, *the*) founders of the volunteer resource management profession. And as early as 1967, in the introduction to her pioneer work *Volunteers Today: Finding, Training and Working With Them*, she stated:

This book expresses the need of each volunteer to be treated as unique and valuable, to become involved in the lives of others, to be awed by the difference and enjoy building unity out of diversity.

This has always been one of my favorite quotes; I use it extensively as I teach and train others in the area of volunteer resource management, and especially as I work with learners and peers to guide and challenge them in developing their personal philosophy of volunteerism and volunteer resource management. As a foundation tenet of my personal philosophy of volunteerism, I believe that each individual, regardless of race or age or creed or gender or ability, has something, some gift or talent, to share with his/her community through volunteerism. I further believe that one of our most critical professional responsibilities as volunteer resource managers is to develop opportunities that allow each willing individual who so chooses to exercise his/her right to share that talent or gift with others as a volunteer.

Therefore, on behalf of the Editorial Board and Reviewers of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration*, I am very proud to introduce this issue focused upon engaging volunteers with disabilities. In my opinion, too often this aspect of human diversity (and pluralism) is overlooked and/or under-valued in our professional development initiatives, our volunteer-based programs, and our personal sensitivities as professional managers of volunteer resources.

The issue opens with an excellent *Feature Article* by Kimberly Miller, Pam Scoglio, and Stuart J. Schleien who emphasize that “when individuals of diverse abilities are supported appropriately . . . barriers [to engagement] can be successfully overcome and a win-win scenario realized” (p. 3). In their article, “Inclusive Volunteering: People, Family, and Community Perspectives”, the authors describe initiatives of Partnership F.I.V.E. (Fostering Inclusive Volunteer Efforts) in Greensboro, NC, a collaborative initiative of the local volunteer center, volunteer resource managers and nonprofit agencies, self-advocates, and inclusion specialists. A major premise of the collaboration is that “every citizen has a basic right to full community participation through volunteerism, to be recognized as a community asset, and to have the opportunity to give of oneself to others for the betterment of the community” (p. 5). The personal testimony of one mother’s perspective regarding the positive impacts of inclusive volunteerism in her family’s life, and six pragmatic strategies presented by the authors, provide an insightful window into how volunteer resource managers may successfully engage volunteers with disabilities. (NOTE: Miller and Schleien are also co-authors on two additional articles in this issue in *From the Annals* that were published previously in the former *Journal of Volunteer Administration*.)

In *Ideas That Work*, Michele Scheib and Stephanie Gray provide practical suggestions for engaging volunteer with disabilities, not just in the United States, but worldwide. According to the authors, “Like all volunteers, those with disabilities bring a unique knowledge and skill set to any program or project” (p. 13). In “Not Just recipients of Service: Including People with Disabilities in Volunteer Abroad Programs”, the authors introduce volunteer resource managers to excellent information and resources regarding creating inclusive volunteer abroad programs compiled by the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange (NCDE).

Two excellent *Tools of the Trade* share valuable resources available to volunteer resource managers who seek to better engage volunteers with disabilities in their programs. (Coincidentally, both resources were also developed under the auspices of the 4-H Program, although in two different states.) Lucinda Miller and Ryan Schmiesing describe the 4-H PetPALS (People and Animals Linking Successfully) program that enables youth volunteers to interact and work with senior adults and individuals with disabilities. Mitzi Downing describes the 4-H Shine Up and Step Out curriculum that guides youth and adults in interacting and working with individuals with disabilities, and especially youth with disabilities.

From the Annals includes six articles published previously in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*, all relating directly to the current issue’s focus. “The Self-image of a Mentally Retarded Volunteer” by Elaine K. Hollander and Hedy Peyser was first published in 1980, while “The Handicap May Be Yours” by Claudia Apfelbaum was published in 1983. “Disability as a Part of Diversity” by Lisa Taylor was first published in 1995; “It Shouldn’t be this Difficult’: The Views of Agencies and Persons with Disabilities on Supported Volunteerism” by Linda L. Graff and John Vedell was published in 2003. The July issues closes with two articles by Kimberly Miller, Stuart Schleien, and Mary Merrill, both first published in 2005: “What’s In It For Me and My Agency? A Survey on the Benefits of Engaging Volunteer with Disabilities (co-authored with Paula Brooke) and “Engaging Volunteers with Disabilities: A Qualitative Study” (co-authored with Suzanne Stroud).

I join the entire Editorial Board and Reviewers of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* in sharing this first-of-its-kind resource so that managers of volunteer resources may better mobilize and engage all individuals, regardless of ability or disability, in exercising their right to offer their unique time, energies, and talents in improving our society through volunteerism.



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