

Volunteerism:
Pushing Past the Platitudes

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I. INTRODUCTION

The oldest military wisdom notwithstanding, millions of Americans are volunteers. How many millions? The estimates range from the Census Bureau's figure of 37 million ¹ to a scholar's figure of 74 million - the scholar charging that the Census Bureau missed all the people who volunteer outside the trappings of formal volunteer agencies. ² In one recent year, these volunteers contributed more than \$35 billion in support of colleges, candidates, clinics, concerts and causes which, when woven together, make up the fabric we call society. Authors on the subject disagree on the value of the nation's volunteered services. Some say it is impossible to estimate let alone calculate; others persevere and place the price at precisely \$33.9 billion annually. ³ We shall be guilty of neither heresy nor hyperbole if we say it is, in a word, significant. The purpose of this paper shall be to examine this significance and the factors which impact upon it.

Perhaps we should begin by defining the term "volunteer." There are detractors, of course, who say a volunteer is a do-gooder, or a meddler, or a radical or someone simply foolish enough to work for nothing. Yet both the present and the past seem to contradict this rather narrow view. For our purposes, we shall define volunteer as one who chooses to act in recognition of a need, with an attitude of social responsibility and without concern for monetary compensation. ⁴

As the figures above point out, volunteerism is so pervasive in the United States that it frequently goes unrecognized or unrecorded. For ex-

ample: Who donates blood? Who presses for less violence on TV? Who passes out campaign literature on street corners? Who leads Little League teams and 4-H Clubs and Scout troops? Who serves on the school board? Who writes letters and attends public hearings to preserve historic landmarks? Who runs bazaars, bingo games, and charity balls to benefit orchestras, museums, hospitals, schools and zoos? Volunteers do. Their participation throughout the history of the United States has played an important role in our nation's development and greatness.

II. HISTORY IN REVIEW

Despite a view prevalent among Puritans that "a person's poverty was largely the proof of failure to live correctly," Americans during the Colonial period developed early versions of what would later be known as charity or welfare or social service. One version, known as "taking in" unfolded as each family in a community took its turn providing for a destitute person for a certain period each year. As the population increased and such individualized solutions proved inadequate, almshouses - facilities to shelter the poor and disabled - were established in Boston as early as 1662. In the early 1700's, labor organizations known as "benevolent societies" were formed to assist with sick benefits and burial expenses.

Health epidemics were part of Colonial life. The lack of physicians necessitated the formation of citizen committees to combat such diseases. Though occasionally, a token fee was distributed to these citizens by the government, they more often served voluntarily perhaps knowing that their survival depended on their willingness to do so.

Education developed through the efforts of volunteers like a group of Massachusetts clergymen who founded the first American college in 1636. Its existence was assured through the benevolence of John Harvard on his death in 1638. In 1700 several of Connecticut's leading clergymen established what is today Yale University. One of the first steps taken by the co-founders was to make volunteer contributions of books from their personal collections.

As towns and cities were carved out of the wilderness, those services we know today as municipal were performed voluntarily: The snow-plowing, the public safety, the garbage collection, the road building and street cleaning and fire fighting. A spirit of cooperation - volunteerism,

if you will - prevailed and progress was the proud result. Progress, in many instances, meant the formation of governmental bodies to assume responsibility for organizing and funding these services. Inevitably, of course, the official response to citizen concerns and demands was sometimes considered inadequate. It was then that a powerful counterforce emerged. Known as the voluntary organization, its members simply took matters into their own hands and hearts. In so doing, they built hospitals, libraries, churches, and museums solely through private contributions and personal cooperation. Historians report that by 1775, "the voluntary organization had become a standard way to deal with any civic problem the government refused to face." 5

The 1800s saw dramatic advances in transportation and communication - and a continued reliance on volunteerism. Railroads, for example, printed on their tickets: "Passengers must assist the conductor on the line or road whenever called upon." This, historians report, included driving buffalo off the track and fending off both Indians and train robbers. The reader is left to wonder which was the most formidable foe! The country's early newspapers could not afford writers and reporters. This, however, did not inhibit the flow of information: citizens simply shared private letters containing news items. 6

Of the War Between the States, authors Ellis and Noyes report: "The Civil War divided the country, but unified the citizens of each side as never before. Volunteer efforts permeated every aspect of the war-torn society." The men took up arms, but the women took up what might be known as "organized relief." This amounted to an amazingly well-coordinated and comprehensive campaign to form Ladies' Aid Societies which made everything from bandages to uniforms to tents: "Ladies who had never worked before transformed their gay colored silk dresses into banners and flags, and many

wealthy women acted individually to outfit an entire military company or to endow soldier-aid institutions." ⁷

Joseph Henry Foth, a noted historian, wrote that the period from 1853 through 1917 could be called the "age of cooperation:"

Men are doing collectively the things which are not feasible to do alone. They are everywhere, in increasing numbers, uniting their efforts for the protection of a common cause. No where is the spirit of cooperation better exemplified than in the modern trade association movement. ⁸

The American Brass Association, founded in Connecticut in 1853, is the earliest trade association on record. It was organized out of necessity by the voluntary efforts of several mills located so close together that competition for labor, raw materials and customers had become counterproductive. Within three years, the Association had fixed prices, wages and discounts and apportioned production.

In 1882, some of the first college-educated women joined forces to publicize their position that, contrary to popular belief, schooling was not harmful to young females. They supported other women's efforts to get higher education and fought to make colleges co-educational. This volunteer group would later become the American Association of University Women. ⁹

Perhaps the American Red Cross epitomizes volunteerism as nothing else does. Mobilized by World War I, which, in effect, turned the organization into a civilian army, "it was an army administered, organized, and trained by a skeleton paid staff and filled in its ranks by volunteers." In addition to a massive effort overseas, the Red Cross was operating 700 servicemen canteens here at home and more than half of them included such incidentals as first-aid stations, showers and free telephone booths:

. . . all of which took an enormous amount of work - cleaning and cooking and dishwashing and carrying out the garbage. Who did this? Some 55,000 women who found time away from their homes and children, or their own regular war-time jobs, to be Red Cross volunteers. ¹⁰

Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem were not around to disapprove.

The agency's response in World War II was no less impressive.

In the early 1950s , one of the most well-known health efforts ever launched - distribution of the Salk polio vaccine - was an almost totally volunteer undertaking. According to author Richard Carter, the original plans called for the employment of 10,000 clerks to maintain the millions of forms required by the tests. But one of the program's top administrators put his foot down. "What makes you think our volunteers can't do it better?" he asked. "You can't hire ten thousand clerks with that kind of ability. But our people will do it free and do it better." His confidence was not unfounded. Between 1953 and 1955, more than 200,000 lay volunteers threw themselves into the Salk program with both skill and enthusiasm. They learned complex procedures, herded youngsters through the lines, transported youngsters to and from inoculation centers, kept voluminous records, ordered supplies and prepared press releases. Their contributions to the success of the Salk program were incalculable. 11

The late 1950s saw a resurgence of organized volunteering in court, school and education programs. Crime had grown explosively along with the school age population, the result of the post-war baby boom. In 1950 there had been 24 million youngsters enrolled in the nation's schools. By 1957 34 million, an increase of 42 per cent, crowded the classrooms. The teaching profession enlisted the help of volunteers, 200,000 of whom served in public, private and parochial schools during the decade. They worked as teacher aids, library assistants, and field trip chaperones. Their influence on the improvement of the quality of education in the United States cannot be overstated. Conservationists, distressed by the growing population's use and abuse of recreational areas mounted an effective citizen involvement campaign aimed at raising the conscience of the Congress which in 1956 responded with

generous appropriations to the Interior Department for national park improvements. Volunteer groups like the Sierra Club, the Natural Resources Council and the National Wildlife Federation gained stature and momentum.

The 1960s were years of political passion and racial turmoil. Volunteers were active in both causes. But perhaps the decade will best be remembered for ushering in a new national emphasis on volunteer service: the Peace Corps harnessed the idealism of youth to tackle problems abroad and VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) was established to work on solving problems at home. While purists objected that these were not truly volunteer programs because participants received a subsistence allowance and a modest monthly stipend, VISTA and the Peace Corps represented the federal government's attempt to test the viability of large-scale, government-supported volunteer programs. To most observers, the test results were extremely positive. ¹²

This leads us to the Seventies when a barrage of social, economic and feminist factors collided head-on with volunteerism. The full force of the impact is probably yet to be felt. But the initial confrontation has resulted in several significant effects. It was the Seventies, of course, when we first noticed books with titles like Looking Out for #1 and How to Be Your Own Best Friend. When legions long victimized by their own timidity flocked to assertiveness training seminars in record numbers. When, for the first time in history, over half of adult women were working and more than one out of three marriages ended in divorce. When unions protested vigorously against the use of volunteers in institutional settings saying they were a threat to union jobs. When the National Organization of Women (NOW) took an almost militant stand against volunteerism charging that it exploited women and reinforced their economic dependence by occupying them with unpaid service rather than gainful employment.

It was neither a quiet nor colorless decade. And though assailed

and analyzed, critized and stigmatized, volunteerism survived. It may never be the same, of course, but talk of its demise is profoundly premature. It was in 1971 that the Nixon administration attempted to organize the first major peace-time mobilization of American volunteers by funding a federal umbrella for volunteerism called ACTION. More than 24,000 full and part-time volunteers in six existing programs were included: Peace Corps, VISTA, the Foster Grandparent Program, the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and the Active Corps of Executives (ACE). At the same time, most major federal departments were integrating volunteers into their game plans. To educate and assist the public in effectively releasing the potential of the nation's volunteers in the private sector, the National Center for Voluntary Action (NCVA) was established. It began serving as a clearing-house to match up volunteers and agencies who could be mutually beneficial to each other. NCVA has aggressively supported the development of grassroots volunteer programs and the professional education of directors of volunteers. 13

III. THE DEMOGRAPHICS

The Census Bureau's first attempt to count and analyze the country's volunteers was in November of 1965. At that time, 18 per cent of the population participated in volunteer activities. Of these 15 per cent were men and 85 per cent were women. When the Census Bureau conducted its next survey in April of 1974, it found that 24 per cent of the population - or about 37 million people over age 13 - were involved in volunteer work. Of these, 40 per cent were men and 60 per cent were women. Both whites and non-whites increased their participation in the nine years between the Census Bureau's studies. Among whites, it was 19 per cent in 1965 and 25 per cent in 1974. For non-whites it was 10 per cent in 1965 and 13 per cent in 1974.

Using marital status as a variable, there is greater volunteer participation among married people than among the single, widowed, divorced or separated. This held true for both years of the study.

The 1974 study was somewhat more refined than the earlier one and revealed some additional information about the nation's volunteers with respect to age, income, education, employment status and the type of volunteer work performed.

There is a high correlation, for example, between educational levels and the rate of volunteerism. Of Americans with four or more years of college, there is a participation rate of 43 per cent; for those with less than four years, it drops to 32 per cent. Those who complete four years of high school volunteer at a rate of 25 per cent which drops to 15 per cent among those with less than four years of secondary education.

There is, similarly, a high correlation between family income and volunteerism: the higher the income, the greater the rate of volunteer participation. For example, among families making \$20,000 or more a year, there is 37 per cent participation. For families in the \$15,000 - \$19,999 bracket,

the rate falls to 31 per cent; for the \$10,000 to \$14,999 it is 27 per cent and shows a gradual by steady decline to 12 per cent for those earning \$4,000 or less.

It is interesting that among the employed population, 25 per cent are volunteers while among the unemployed only 17 per cent are. Of those outside the labor force - the elderly, disabled and those not looking for work, there is a 22 per cent participation rate. Public sector employees volunteer at a rate of 33 per cent as compared to 23 per cent for private sector employees.

In looking at age as a variable in volunteer participation, we find that adults aged 25 to 44 have the highest rate at 30 per cent. The second highest rate of participation is found among those aged 45 to 54 when it is 25 per cent. Teenagers from 14 to 17 volunteer at the rate of 22 per cent. A close fourth is the 55 to 64 year old age group where the rate is 21 per cent. Among young adults who are 18 to 24, there is 18 per cent participation and among those over 65, the rate drops to 14 per cent.

Religion is far and away the most popular volunteer activity and attracts more than 50 per cent of the nation's volunteers. Tied for second place are education and health each with 15 per cent. Civic and community action which includes consumer and environmental concerns involve 14 per cent. Citizenship activities, which includes scouting and veteran's organizations, account for 12 per cent. Recreation groups like the YMCA attract 11 per cent. In the social and welfare category, we find seven per cent of the nation's volunteers working in such areas as orphanages and with the elderly. Only three per cent of those who volunteer do so in the political sphere of fund-raising, pollwatching and campaigning. Justice organizations attract one per cent of the volunteer population. Some of these categories necessarily overlap and what one terms social another might classify as political; what to one is community action might to another be recreation. The study of

volunteers is perhaps more an art than a science and rather than criticize the instrument used by the Census Bureau, it seems more productive to consider the figures as a reference point from which we can make additional assumptions and conclusions based on the many volatile factors that, acting together, make the issue of volunteerism dynamic indeed. ¹⁴

IV. INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

A. THE SOCIOECONOMIC ONES

As maxims for daily living go, the one which says, "The only thing constant is change" seems particularly appropriate to introduce a discussion of the socioeconomic factors which have so profoundly affected the composition of the nation's volunteer ranks.

Of the many, varied, complex and sometimes conflicting phenomena readily observable and identifiable, the surge of millions of American women into the work force is probably the single most important factor to influence volunteerism. In 1978, the civilian labor force averaged 100 million persons of whom 42 million or 42 per cent were women. Just 30 years ago, in 1950, women comprised only 25 per cent of the nation's labor force. By 1960, they represented 32 per cent of the work force and by 1970 they held about 38 per cent of the country's jobs. The proportion of women in the work force grows every day. Of every 100 new jobs created by the economy, 60 are being filled by women. If, as estimated, 55 per cent of volunteers in 1974 were women whose activities are concentrated in direct service, then the remarkable rise of women in the work force is bound to interfere with volunteering.

Another statistic that is startling is that in 1950, 70 per cent of all workers were men who were the family's sole wage earner while their wives remained at home caring for their children. In 1978 this "traditional" male breadwinner made up a mere 14 per cent of the work force and was outnumbered even by working women with children under six years old.

The declining birth rate has no doubt affected the decision of women to join the work force. In 1890, the average population per household was 4.93. In 1930, it was 4.11. By 1950 it was 3.37 and by 1970 it was 3.14. The average household population of 2.81 in 1978 is an all-time low. At the turn of the century, the average woman lived 47 years and spent 18 of them in

childrearing. She now lives 77 years and has fewer than 10 years with pre-school children at home. 15

Some observers credit the rise of working women to the Women's Movement and say that this phenomenon is just a "phase" or a "fling." They seem to say that once all the bras have been burned and all the formerly all-male bastions have been infiltrated by females, women will head back to home and husband. This is a terribly inaccurate assumption. For one thing, fewer women have husbands to return to. Between 1970 and 1979, the ratio of divorced persons per 1,000 husbands and wives in intact marriages rose 96 per cent from 47 per 1,000 to 92 per 1,000. One out of three marriages currently ends in divorce and predictions are that this will rise to one out of two. Nearly half - 43 per cent - of all women who work have never married or are widowed, divorced or separated. If some women are working because they want to, most women are working because they have to. Many support not only themselves but dependents as well. In 1978, 11 per cent of the nation's households were headed by a woman with no husband present - an increase of 46 per cent since 1970. Only a quarter of eligible divorced and separated mothers receive regular child support. Alimony is no longer a foregone conclusion in divorce. Women have actually lost ground in terms of their earning power. In 1977, women were paid only 58 cents for every dollar earned by men - down from 64 cents in the 1950s. 16

If the economic pressure on divorced and single women is enormous, we must not forget that divorced men, especially those with minor children, are also badly strapped financially if they meet their obligations responsibly. Especially if they remarry and, in effect, support two and sometimes more families, divorced fathers are likely to have cash flow problems. If, like Dustin Hoffman in the Oscar-winning film, "Kramer vs. Kramer," they fight for custody of their minor children, they stand a much greater chance

of winning and maintaining one of the single-parent households that make up an ever-growing proportion of the nation's families. In fact, 50 per cent of children under 18 now live in single-parent homes.¹⁷ What this increase in marital instability means for the volunteer field is that for a large segment of Americans, family and financial demands are going to seriously restrict outside activities. Ask any single parent.

And even among those in intact marriages, the woman's income is, in most instances, no longer supplemental but necessary to maintain a standard of living being constantly chipped away by double-digit inflation, 17 per cent mortgages, and soaring gasoline and home heating costs. In fact, although reliable figures are not available on the number of persons who hold more than one job, it is generally believed that this is on a dramatically rising course and there is little doubt of the negative consequences for the volunteer field.

Educational levels have, of course, risen during the last century. Among persons aged 18 to 24, 77.3 per cent have completed high school; this is twice the rate of 38.1 per cent among those aged 65 and over. Nearly a quarter of those aged 25 to 34, 23.6 per cent, have completed four or more years of college. This is three times the 7.9 per cent rate among those 65 and over.¹⁸ Although, we know that education was positively related to volunteerism in 1974, we must not forget that factors rarely act alone and far more frequently act in combination with other factors. As far as education is concerned, more highly educated people tend to be employed, tend to have more demanding positions that provide self-esteem and fulfillment and tend to be more mobile - situations which may reduce the time and/or motivation to volunteer.

Thanks to a century of medical, technological and scientific advances, life expectancy has increased as dramatically as the birth rate has decreased. In 1900, life expectancy was 46.3 for men and 48.3 for women; by 1950, it was

65.5 and 71.1 respectively. By 1977, a male child could look forward to a life span of 69.3 years and a female 77.1 years. Of the nation's 1977 population, 11 per cent were 65 or older and an adult aged 55-60 could expect to live 23.5 more years. What this means is that the proportion of older adults is going to grow spectacularly in the future.¹⁹ What we do not know is whether older Americans will assume all the volunteer roles and responsibilities being vacated by women returning to school or work and by men who are devoting more time to family responsibilities.

Finally, there is the interesting dichotomy between the post Proposition 13 social activists and the somewhat aloof and introspective folks whose perspective is clearly every man for himself. For the former, whose spokesman, California Governor Jerry Brown, has said that volunteer activity is "a necessity for a civilized society,"²⁰ the passage of Proposition 13 signifies a victory for the individual citizen in his battle against the bureaucracy. For the latter, it underscores the need to look first, last always after oneself because in this dog-eat-dog world, no one else will. Which of these philosophies emerges triumphant will determine to a great extent the quality of life we face in the future.

B. THE FEMINIST ONES

It was once assumed, writes Nadine Brozen in "The Chicago Tribune," "that when a young woman married, she would leave her mother's home, but take along her mother's ties to the world of volunteerism." Like the treasures of a hope chest, the ties and affiliations with voluntary organizations were automatically passed on.²¹

There are no statistics on what's happened to hope chests but we do know that marriage is no longer as popular or permanent as it once was; that today's woman is far better educated than her forbears; that she has fewer children; that she is much more likely to be in the work force; and that she

has been exposed to a constant flow of literature urging her to exercise the power and options she has more of than ever before.

The Women's Movement - specifically the National Organization of Women (NOW) - has made archaic the assumption that women will follow their mother's footsteps into charity and "good works."²² The success of the movement can be documented in the declining memberships of many prestigious voluntary women's groups. The president of the League of Women Voters reports that the organization "is now an endangered species" and suffered a drop of 5,000 - 6,000 members in 1978. A spokesman for Hadassah reports attendance at only 10-15 per cent. The Junior League reported in 1975 that one-third of its members nationwide and two-thirds of its New York City roster were employed or in school. A Head Start leader notes that volunteering was, at one point, almost a dirty word: "It's not so bad now, but many women still feel guilty about it," she adds.²³ Says Deborah Seidel deputy director of programs for the 238-branch Association of Junior Leagues: "We're all in an arduous struggle: moving our organizations forward when there are competing demands on women's time and options."²⁴

It is ironic that the feminists' success as a moving force flows from the tireless efforts of volunteers who, assembled in livingrooms throughout the land, launched their plans to free women from the bonds of housewifery. From the feminists' perspective, volunteers - except, of course, those engaged in the pursuit of women's rights - take on very negative stereotypes.

Let us not split hairs about their logic and examine the feminists' criticisms of volunteer work. As stated by NOW, volunteerism:

- serves to reinforce the second-class status of women
- exploits the time and talents of women
- takes jobs from the labor market and weakens the case for increased part-time employment opportunities and flexible work schedules
- contributes to a lack of adequate funding in the field of

human services

- buttresses the structures which keep women in a subordinate role
- diverts attention and energy into short-term "band-aid" approaches rather than concerted efforts to identify and eliminate the underlying causes of social problems
- is often "pseudo-work" designed to appeal to the volunteer rather than meet a demonstrated need.

NOW does, however, point out that there are two separate and distinct kinds of volunteerism: change-directed and service-oriented. Change-directed volunteerism, says NOW is not only acceptable but is "the cornerstone of a democratic society." Service volunteering is not.

We find volunteers, mainly women, in all areas of the society where - due to the malfunctioning of our society - governmental action is needed, and voluntary efforts are expected to pick up the slack in governmental negligence. We find them in schools, welfare, rehabilitation, the legal system, in hospitals, nurseries and poverty programs. Here, women, as everywhere else, play subordinate, supporting roles, always deferring to male authority. They are often used and ridiculed by professionals, rarely have any decision rights, real responsibilities or challenging tasks. ²⁵

Who can respond to these scathing allegations better than a volunteer like Jacqueline K. Levine, 1975 Co-chairperson of the National Governing Council of the American Jewish Congress? Ms. Levine is quick to refute the NOW position that work done for pay is acceptable but that done "for love or compassion or just plain neighborliness" is necessarily inferior or demeaning. On the issue of greater government involvement, Ms. Levine says:

. . . until the millennium comes, when the government is going to accept those responsibilities, the black boy I tutored in Newark, the old people who are taken care of by friendly visitors will be consigned to limbo . . . We're in a period of a constricting economy. If money isn't there for all the other absolute necessities, it certainly isn't there for the jobs that volunteers do. I'm not willing to say, 'O.K., all you kids in Newark, you'll never learn to read because we're waiting for government funds.' ²⁶

Mary Poole of the Association of Junior Leagues, Inc. disagrees with

those who say volunteering keeps women in a subordinate role. First, she points out, volunteering is done by choice not by force. If a woman chooses a volunteer role, chances are it is not subordinate for her. Second, women frequently achieve management positions in voluntary organizations and community projects which were denied them elsewhere. Through volunteering they are able to demonstrate leadership qualities and management abilities - budgeting, planning, training, implementing and evaluating.

Poole and others find it impossible to reconcile NOW's exploitation charge with something done voluntarily. The woman who is or feels exploited in her volunteer assignment has a most powerful prerogative: she can quit. Men who volunteer have never complained of being exploited.

The practice of volunteering is not what reinforces economic dependency say volunteerism's defenders. It is, rather, the labor market's failure to recognize skills acquired through volunteer experiences as valid preparation for a job.

No one denies that trimming federal, state and municipal budgets resulted in the firings of many professionals in health, education and welfare programs. But it is silly to assume that funds would have magically reappeared if volunteers had not rushed in to try and fill the vacant spots. Funding is, after all, finite, but society's demands and expectations seem to well up from a bottomless source. We could safely say there's more human suffering and misery than we can afford. To accuse volunteers of being "band-aids" or "stop-gaps" with no long-term effect on the human condition is to be ignorant of their roles and achievements.

Finally, there are strong arguments from those who work with and are served by volunteers in institutions and programs that service volunteers provide something intangible and for which money can never compensate. The value in what a volunteer offers lies in that it is offered freely. Whether we call it concern, or caring or friendship, there are many who feel it is

what "makes hospitals and other institutions tolerable for those who inhabit them." 27

Effecting change is not confined to the board room or the policy statement or the legislature. It includes every volunteer who serves with commitment.

C. THE UNION ONES

Among the groups least enthusiastic about the growth of volunteerism in America is organized labor. Labor unions and professional organizations, particularly in the health and welfare fields, view volunteers as an added threat to job security. Some unions fear that volunteers can be used as strike breakers thus undermining the effectiveness of the workers' ultimate weapon. Some feel that volunteers handle jobs that someone could be paid to do and thus contribute to unemployment. Also if "just a volunteer" can perform the same work done by paid workers, how successfully can the workers bargain for skilled wages? Many union members perceive volunteerism as a strictly middle and upper class phenomenon and assume that volunteers are anti-labor. This frequently leads to strained working relationships and sabotage of volunteer activities. 28

The issue of volunteers in organized facilities has become so controversial that most institutions insist on a protective clause in union contracts:

Voluntary organizations and workers perform services at COH that are a valuable and necessary contribution to the welfare of patients and to the operation of the Hospital. Also, the Hospital engages in education and research which involves persons performing tasks and being taught to perform tasks which are similar or identical to work of employees of COH. COH shall continue to have the right to avail itself of any and all such voluntary services and to engage in such educational and research activities. Volunteers and persons engaged in education and research activities shall not be used for the purpose of displacing a regular employee. 29

Such language does not guarantee tranquility but it does establish some basic ground rules.

One recent case involving unionized hospital workers' objections to volunteer activities sent shock waves throughout the Chicago medical community. The dispute arose at Chicago Osteopathic Hospital (COH) and involved members of Hospital Employees Labor Program (HELP) and Local 743, International Brotherhood of Teamsters. According to facts presented at an arbitration hearing on November 8, 1979, COH had been faced with a serious shortage of funds in the spring of 1979 and had introduced cost-cutting measures which included a ten per cent reduction in staff affecting Bargaining Unit employees, supervisory and clerical personnel. The hospital notified the union of the impending lay off and the union responded that it would not object to the lay off if the seniority provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement were met. As a result of the lay off, the hospital attempted to have the patient transport functions of the Surgical Department performed by one employee where that work had been performed in the past by three employees. The union contended that the use of volunteers and CETA employees in patient transport functions increased substantially in the wake of the layoff. There was also an almost total elimination and reduction of the services of couriers whose principal function was to transport specimens to the laboratory and to pick up medicines at the pharmacy. Until this critical function could be reassigned to laboratory personnel - a period of about one week - the Director of Volunteer Services and her assistant performed the courier service.

The hospital denied allegations by the union of collaboration between the personnel and volunteer services department prior to the workforce reduction and held that volunteers and CETA personnel were used in exactly the same manner before and after the layoffs.

The hospital defended its use of supervisory personnel to perform

courier services under the management rights section of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. It contended that it had the absolute right during periods of emergency to use members of its staff, volunteers and CETA personnel to carry out its obligations to its patients.

To the charge that volunteers had replaced HELP employees performing patient transport functions, the arbitrator ruled in favor of the hospital: ". . . the record will not support a conclusion or finding that the use of volunteers for that purpose on some occasions resulted in a replacement of a laid-off Bargaining Unit employee by a volunteer."

To the charge that supervisory personnel had been illegally used to perform the work of Bargaining Unit employees, the arbitrator ruled in favor of the union: "While the incidental performance of courier services by a supervisor would have been appropriate under the provisions of Section 14.9(a), the use of the two Supervisors as a replacement for two laid-off couriers would constitute a violation of the provisions of Section 14.9(a)." The arbitrator found further that "no real emergency existed" and that two of the laid-off employees could have been immediately recalled. The arbitration resulted in an award of one week's salary to each of the two laid off individuals who should have been recalled. All other forms of relief requested in the grievances were denied. 30

As usual in such matters, each side views the results of the arbitration as a victory for them. James Hoskin, business agent of Local 743, I.B. of T. says, "We got what we wanted." Dorine Kenney, Director of Volunteers Services at Chicago Osteopathic says, "We didn't have to prove the worth of our volunteer program."

The most significant aspect of the arbitration - at least for the volunteer field - is the fact that it occurred. Any because it did, notice has been served that the activities of volunteers, or at least those who

serve in organized facilities, will be closely scrutinized and, therefore, must be carefully and skillfully administered.

D. THE CORPORATE ONES

As noted earlier, employed persons have traditionally volunteered at a higher rate than those who are unemployed or outside the labor force. Though we may only speculate on why this is so, it seems reasonable to suggest that people in the work force are generally better educated and have higher incomes than the unemployed - two factors with a direct positive relationship to volunteerism. Employed people are also generally younger and healthier than those outside the work force which makes volunteer activities easier and more accessible for them. A higher proportion, we can safely assume, are homeowners and have a child in school and/or neighborhood activities. In short, the employed person is more likely to have a vested interest in his community and is, therefore, more likely to take part in those activities which affect his interest(s) and the quality of his life.

A recent phenomenon, however is involvement by the corporation itself in volunteer endeavors. To determine the extent of this involvement, the National Center for Voluntary Action (NCVA) conducted a one-year study, "Volunteers from the Workplace." Of the 3,500 companies surveyed, 300 reported ongoing volunteer activity. NCVA's executive director, Ken Allen attributes corporate enthusiasm to reasons of self-interest and genuine social concern. An active corporate volunteer program is one sure way of establishing a positive company image in the local community. It does more to create credibility than the advertising and public relations professionals ever can. Corporate leaders, says Allen, are saying, "We are not separate from our community, we are part of it. It's up to us to keep it alive and growing. Money is not enough. Human resources must be mobilized." ³¹

Probably the most sophisticated program of its kind is the Corporate Volunteer Coordinators Council (CVCC) which was founded in New York City in

1971. Its 22 active members include such corporate giants as American Express, Manufacturers Hanover, AT & T, Exxon, Bankers Trust and Metropolitan Life. Monthly meetings are held to exchange ideas on individual projects and develop collaborative approaches. The Council's annual volunteer recruitment fair draws more than 10,000 people.

Some companies not only permit but promote volunteering on company time. Lauren Katzowitz, a contributions adviser at Exxon in New York City, volunteers her services to the Arts and Business Council, a nonprofit organization bringing together the artistic and business communities. Ms. Katzowitz loves the arrangement for it satisfies her long-standing interest in the arts, draws directly on her professional expertise as a fundraiser and is flexible enough to be coordinated with her responsibilities at Exxon. Employee volunteer activities are coordinated through Exxon's Public Affairs Department.

If one were to look for a working model of corporate volunteerism, the best in the nation is probably Citibank. With headquarters in New York City and more than 25,000 employees worldwide, it boasts of 6,000 employee volunteers whose activities are coordinated by its Community Service Division. Like many companies, Citibank operates a clearinghouse to match its employees' interests with community agencies' needs. It has also pioneered a number of "in-house" programs like an on-site tutoring program for illiterate adults.

A "loaned executive" program is also part of Citibank's commitment to volunteerism. Through the Loaned Executives and Professionals (LEAP) program, Citibank annually sends 10-20 executives to work full-time for non-profit agencies in need of business expertise while keeping them on Citibank's payroll. Initial reaction to the program has been positive but little objective analysis has been done due to the program's newness. 32

In Chicago, two companies best known for their corporate volunteer activities are Illinois Bell which operates a clearinghouse for employees to

match their interests with agency needs and Montgomery Ward which conducts an in-house tutoring program for children who live in the vicinity of its corporate headquarters. Bankers Life systematically includes community volunteer opportunities in its pre-retirement counseling program - a lead which area volunteer administrators hope will be followed by other employers.

Still another development at the corporate level is the move to recognize and give credit for volunteer experiences in making the employment decision. This is perhaps most critical to the thousands of mid-life women who of choice or necessity want to enter the labor force - perhaps for the first time or following a 10-20 year interruption to fulfill childraising responsibilities. Inflation, divorce, widowhood, higher educational attainments and the Women's movement have all played a role in the soaring number of women entering the labor force.

Women who for years had managed the household budget, run church bazaars, served as den mothers and PTA officers, spearheaded fundraising drives for the library, the museum, the arts, read to the blind and arranged tutoring for the young, clothing drives for the poor and homemaking services for the elderly, found themselves with nothing to list as "work experience" on job applications. Employment interviewers who, when told of the volunteer activities, often responded, "Yes, but do you have any REAL experience?"

Some volunteers like Marion Lloyd who chaired Chicago's Ravinia Festival and Frances Loeb, New York City's Commissioner to the United Nations, could confidently answer "yes." Mrs. Lloyd could then discuss how she helps raise and administer a budget of \$1.8 million, directs 300 volunteers and 10 paid professionals. Mrs. Loeb, who also serves without pay, could explain how she supervises 80 volunteers, 17 paid professionals and deals with scores of municipal, public and private agencies. Lloyd and Loeb are not average or typical volunteers but they are shining examples of women with managerial talent acquired outside the business sector. Writes Myra H. Strober in

Bringing Women into Management:

Some women in the educational sector and women doing volunteer work have outstanding qualifications for corporate management. The failure to facilitate job transfer for women now in nonbusiness sectors leads us to overlook an important source of experienced managers. It also deprives business of different ideas, insights and approaches to problems. ³³

A volunteer-turned-career woman interviewed by Betty Friedan in her book, It Changed My Life, agrees:

Any woman who has gotten volunteers to raise money and accomplish real goals has better administrative and management training, I have discovered, than men who have simply bought the talent they needed, and when it didn't fit, fired it. ³⁴

The revision of employment applications to include volunteer experience did not happen overnight and is still far from universal. But some of the nation's largest employers - Neiman-Marcus, the U.S. Civil Service Commission, United Airlines, Atlantic Richfield, Bell System, and Southern California Gas Co. - have made the change and many other employers, at the urging of women's groups, have promised to do so at the next printing. Says Art Johnson, gas company vice president for industrial relations: "In looking at any applicant, we want to know as much as possible about that person in order to make a decision." Diana Britt, senior personnel analyst for the Los Angeles city personnel department, feels the change in employment applications was prompted in part by the government's edicts on the underutilization and underrepresentation of women in the work force. Simply put, acceptance of volunteer experience in lieu of paid experience can improve an employer's affirmative action statistics.

There still exists considerable skepticism among some employers that volunteer experience is truly equivalent to paid work experience. Those in this corner argue that since volunteer agencies get something for nothing, they can afford to put up with minimum levels of competency. For this reason, it is imperative that those who list volunteer experience on job applications pro-

vide adequate documentation of what that experience included. ³⁵

E. THE PROFESSIONAL ONES

As a consequence of the changes which have taken place in the voluntary sector - the increased competition felt by agencies and organizations, the heightened interest in meaningful volunteer assignments, the push for the development of skills that are transferable to the workplace - a new field which embraces an ever-growing body of knowledge and expertise about volunteers is flourishing. This knowledge is being disseminated through academic courses and a wide variety of associations. Those who felt "the volunteer field" was a fad or a passing fancy were probably astonished to find "leadership of volunteers" as a bonafide occupation in the latest Dictionary of Occupational Titles. The University of Colorado even offers a degree program in volunteer administration and many other colleges and universities are setting up courses on volunteer leadership within their management curriculum. ³⁶ Why? Because volunteerism has finally emerged as a force - and a field - to be reckoned with.

Leadership of volunteers, once handled exclusively by volunteers themselves, is increasingly being turned over to salaried Directors of Volunteers. Debate continues over the kind of educational preparation appropriate for those in this position. Since the concept of volunteer administration is really only about a decade old, most directors of volunteers have backgrounds in diverse fields like education, social work, psychology or business. Controversy also rages over the issues of salary and career paths. There is widespread agreement, however, that to be an effective director of volunteers, one must be a good manager - a good "enabler of human resources" to quote author Marlene Wilson. ³⁷ For whatever else they have to recommend them, every director of volunteers must:

- identify and make use of each volunteer's interests and abilities

- develop tasks that are truly productive and have meaningful impact on the issues or needs being addressed
- match qualified volunteers to tasks appropriate for them
- arrange initial and ongoing training and orientation opportunities to insure optimum volunteer performance
- interact well with and work to earn the confidence and respect of all managers, staff and volunteers in the agency or institution
- involve a broad base of volunteers representative of the surrounding community
- keep top management fully informed of new developments in the volunteer field
- establish and maintain ties with other volunteer programs and organizations so that knowledge and resources are shared
- maintain adequate documentation of all volunteer duties, attendance and performance
- develop meaningful reward and recognition systems.

What has been an undefined profession for several years is now emerging to reveal an entity, stature, literature and character uniquely its own.

Hungry for knowledge, standards, research and technical assistance, directors of volunteers have formed the following associations during the last decade: Association of Volunteer Bureaus, American Association of Volunteer Service Coordinators, American Society of Director of Volunteer Services of the American Hospital Association, and the International Association for Volunteer Education. In addition to these which are national and international in scope, there are thousands of state and local organizations which have been formed to work toward the goal of helping volunteers and those who direct them to achieve their maximum effectiveness and potential.

Professions, of course, are generally distinguished by the certification of their practitioners. That is to say, one who practices the profession has successfully demonstrated his proficiency in an examination on the body of knowledge specific to the field. At this writing, only the

Ohio Society of Directors of Volunteer Services offers such a certification program but there is little doubt that others will follow. Generally speaking "the old guard" in the volunteer field feels somewhat threatened by this new push for professionalism. They stand, as they say, on their record. In many cases their record is not good enough and so the young and the restless press on!

In the health care field, there have been rumors from reliable sources indicating that the prestigious accrediting agency, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH), soon plans to issue compliance standards for hospital volunteer departments and would then systematically review the operation of the volunteer department along with surgery, nursing service, environmental services and other hospital departments in determining overall compliance. This has sent the directors of the estimated three to five million volunteers serving in hospitals scrambling to develop standards in case JCAH solicits their input.

In tandem with the growing professionalism of volunteer directors have come revolutionary changes in the ranks of the nation's volunteers themselves. One could speculate at length about what factors, in what combination, precipitated these changes and indeed we have looked at these elsewhere in this paper. If directors of volunteers have become more professional so, too, have volunteers. Where they once may have meekly arrived at volunteer agencies wanting only "to help out" or "fulfill my obligations" or "do whatever needs doing," they now arrive with clear expectations which more often than not include skills development and career exploration. They may even interview several agencies and then select the one which seems to best meet their personal needs and goals. This is not to suggest that they have adopted a totally narcissistic perspective but they do seem to bring a new-found sense of status and respect.

Brian O'Connell, author of Effective Leadership in Voluntary Organizations, advises: "keep action oriented. People are tired of going to organizations which seem to be caught up in maintaining themselves or which are too timid to really bite the bullet." 38 "Action oriented" seems to infer that all agencies must focus on the currently "in" issues - child abuse, prison reform, rape counseling, equal rights for women and equal access to medical care for the disadvantaged. What's "in" is endless.

Inevitably, all agencies cannot deal with "in" issues. Some voluntary groups have to keep feeding the elderly, transporting the ill, comforting the lonely, drawing blood, and planning recreation for the bedridden. It is these agencies that face the greatest challenge in attracting and retaining volunteers. Their salvation may well lie in the professional status and respect they afford their volunteers.

One director of a voluntary youth organization in Texas says, "We lose a lot of volunteers because we don't treat them seriously enough . . . Volunteers should be treated like any other staff, with the same amount of respect."

One of the vehicles being piloted by some volunteer agencies to confer respect is the use of written agreements or contracts. Though they have no legal force, these agreements may forever alter volunteerism as we have known it.

For in these written agreements, a volunteer pledges to work a prescribed minimum number of hours a week for a specified period while upholding the agency's goals and standards. But what is perhaps more extraordinary is that the agency clearly defines what it expects of the volunteer and commits itself to training, guidance, supervision and support. In the most sophisticated systems, the volunteer is evaluated at the end of the contract term and given a written evaluation. Among volunteer administrators who are enthusiastic about contracts between volunteers and their agencies is Marjorie

MacAdams of Dallas who directs Foster Child Advocacy Services. "We have a very small attrition rate in volunteers," she says, "A very strong point is that they are treated with the respect accorded a professional." 39

Even in more traditional, less activist settings, respect and professionalism can be upheld by maximizing volunteer participation in the agency's goals and objectives. Progressive businesses have had very good results with participative management approaches because people tend to work harder to achieve a goal they have helped to set and because they do not want to see their own plan fail. Progressive volunteer organizations can harness this same internal energy in their spheres and will almost surely achieve higher levels of performance and professionalism.

V. VOLUNTEER MOTIVATION:
KEY TO RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND REWARDS

One of least publicized results of the Census Bureau's 1974 study of volunteers was that 5.5 million or 15 per cent of the 37 million volunteers counted said they had decided to discontinue. While some cited reasons such as age, poor health and employment, many others said they had lost interest, found nothing useful to do, gained no personal rewards, or found poor supervision in voluntary organizations. In short, they were no longer motivated. The rewards of their volunteer assignments had fallen short of their expectations. Needs important to the volunteer were going unmet. ⁴⁰

The problem is not new. The number of agencies and organizations using volunteers is skyrocketing. As society's needs outstrip its resources, we face what some have called a "human energy crisis." What authors Arthur Blumberg and Seth Arsenian said in 1950 is perhaps more true today: ". . . we are faced with the indisputable fact that program services and effectiveness will only be achieved - in the great majority of cases - by obtaining the time and energy of large numbers of new volunteers." ⁴¹ And once an agency or institution or cause attracts a volunteer, still a greater challenge arises: how to keep him.

Although statistics on the exact rate of turnover among volunteers are difficult to come by, one reputable source reports that one out of three hospital volunteers drops out within a month of beginning service ⁴² and there is widespread agreement among volunteer administrators that turnover is a major problem.

Past research on volunteers' motivations has been mostly descriptive with no theoretical anchor. Dr. Benjamin Gidron, however, analyzes sustained volunteer activity within the framework of the expectancy model. His study, conducted in 1977, focuses on the attitudes toward their work of 317 volun-

teers in health care institutions. The rewards most often expected and received by volunteers are identified. Then the relationship between the age of the volunteer and the kinds of rewards he expects is examined and finally, the relationship of tenure and rewards received is studied. One cannot promise universal applicability, but the Gidron study does provide hard empirical evidence around which volunteer leaders and administrators can design programs and reward systems which will encourage sustained volunteer participation.

One of the most persistent myths about volunteers is that they bring to the volunteer sector nothing more than the Lady Bountiful "desire to help others." Altruism surely enters in, but volunteering is no longer a one way avenue where one gives and another gets. Today's volunteers expect not only to give but also to get and the retention of volunteers depends to a great extent on accurately assessing what they expect to get.

Just as researchers have developed the expectancy theory to explain turnover and absenteeism among paid workers, we can use this theory in looking at the same problems among unpaid volunteers. Simply stated, the theory or model holds that the reason a worker quits or is absent from his job is that a discrepancy exists between his expectations for rewards and the actual rewards he receives in light of other possible alternatives. Thus, in order to keep both paid and unpaid workers, it is necessary to make the level and nature of rewards fit their expectations: The issues we will address are the rewards expected and received by volunteers and the relationship between the volunteer's age and his reward expectations.

The Gidron questionnaire, administered to volunteers in four separate health and/or mental health institutions, consisted of two parts. The first part was biographical and asked about the volunteer's age, education, and volunteer responsibilities. The second part consisted of two lists of re-

wards - one extrinsic meaning they could be controlled by the institution and the other intrinsic meaning they were concerned with the subjective meaning of the job for the volunteer. For each reward, the volunteer was asked two questions: "Do you expect this reward?" and "Do you receive it in your work?" Responses offered were "Yes," "No," or "I don't know." Of the 317 respondents, 84 per cent were women, 52 per cent were 55 years old or older; 26 per cent were aged 25 to 54; 22 per cent were 24 or younger.

As illustrated in the following graphs, the Gidron study showed that the age of the volunteer functions as an important variable in his expectations.

Although randomly arranged, the extrinsic rewards presented to volunteers can be categorized into: (1) learning and self-development; (2) social interaction with other volunteers; (3) symbols of social recognition; (4) praise; and (5) authority. As seen in Graph 1, the most outstanding result was that the respondents' level of expectations for extrinsic rewards was not high. This blows holes in another pervasive myth about volunteers - that they are stuffy sorts with giant egos in constant need of massage. Of the 16 extrinsic rewards, only three were expected by more than half the respondents. These were "professional supervision" (56%) and "training" (66%) both in the learning and self-development category and "contact with other volunteers" (67%) in the social interaction with other volunteers category. A revealing result - at least for volunteer directors and agencies who, traditionally, have provided pins and parties to honor volunteer contributions - was that fewer than a third of those polled expected rewards in terms of banquets, external symbols or praise.

Also presented in random order to the respondents, the 20 intrinsic rewards can be broken down into six categories: (1) stressing one's other-orientation; (2) self-development, learning and variety in life; (3) opportunity for social interaction; (4) fulfilling an obligation; (5) social

recognition; and (6) connection with paid work. Not unexpectedly, we see in Graph 2 that a very high proportion of volunteers (90%) expected their work would allow them to stress their other-orientation. This, of course, is the foundation upon which volunteerism depends.

If we analyze volunteer expectations by age group, the hypothesis is that reward expectations differ dramatically. From Graph 3 we see that older volunteers are less likely than younger ones to be interested in rewards dealing with learning and self-development. Older volunteers were more inclined toward rewards dealing with social interaction than their younger colleagues. The older and younger age groups generally expected symbols of social recognition more than middle aged volunteers. Middle aged volunteers were more interested than the other age groups in "supervision of other volunteers," "opportunity to share my ideas, opinions and problems with other people" and "opportunity to be engaged in an activity that is similar to paid work." One can see why these motivations are important when they consider some of the social and economic realities of the 25-54 year-old age group. For both men and women, this is the period in which divorce most often occurs leaving feelings of insecurity and loneliness. Among women of these ages, divorce often forces them back into the work force. If divorce has not done it, perhaps the Women's Movement's urgings to fulfill oneself and be paid for it have. That volunteer work can serve as an important interim step between homemaking and employment or can shore up a spirit burdened by mid-life vagaries is the inescapable conclusion.

According to the expectancy model, to retain volunteers it is necessary to provide them with the specific rewards that they expect or to change their expectations to fit the rewards available. Graph 5 shows the relationship of negative discrepancies (rewards expected but not received) and volunteers' tenure. Clearly, the average number of negative discrepancies decreases with tenure. Long-service volunteers, then, are either those who

were interested from the start in the rewards available or modified their expectations to what was offered. Gidron's research shows that the first six months are especially important in determining whether or not the volunteer will remain in the program over time. As measured by average numbers of negative discrepancies, volunteers with 7-11 months service more closely resemble those with more than 11 years of service than those with 4-6 months. Volunteer directors confirm that "dropping out" usually occurs within six months and is highest in the first three months.

CHART 1

EXTRINSIC REWARDS EXPECTED BY VOLUNTEERS FROM THEIR WORK

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100 %
Training										
Professional Supervision										
Contact w/Professionals										
Consultation by Professionals on a Patient										
Contact w/Other Volunteers										
Banquet										
Lounge for Volunteers										
Letter of Appreciation										
Pin										
Receiving an Award										
Picture in Newspaper										
Praise from Volunteer Coordinator										
Praise from Administrator										
Praise from Professionals										
Supervision of Others										
Uniform										

CHART 2

INTRINSIC REWARDS EXPECTED BY VOLUNTEERS FROM THEIR WORK

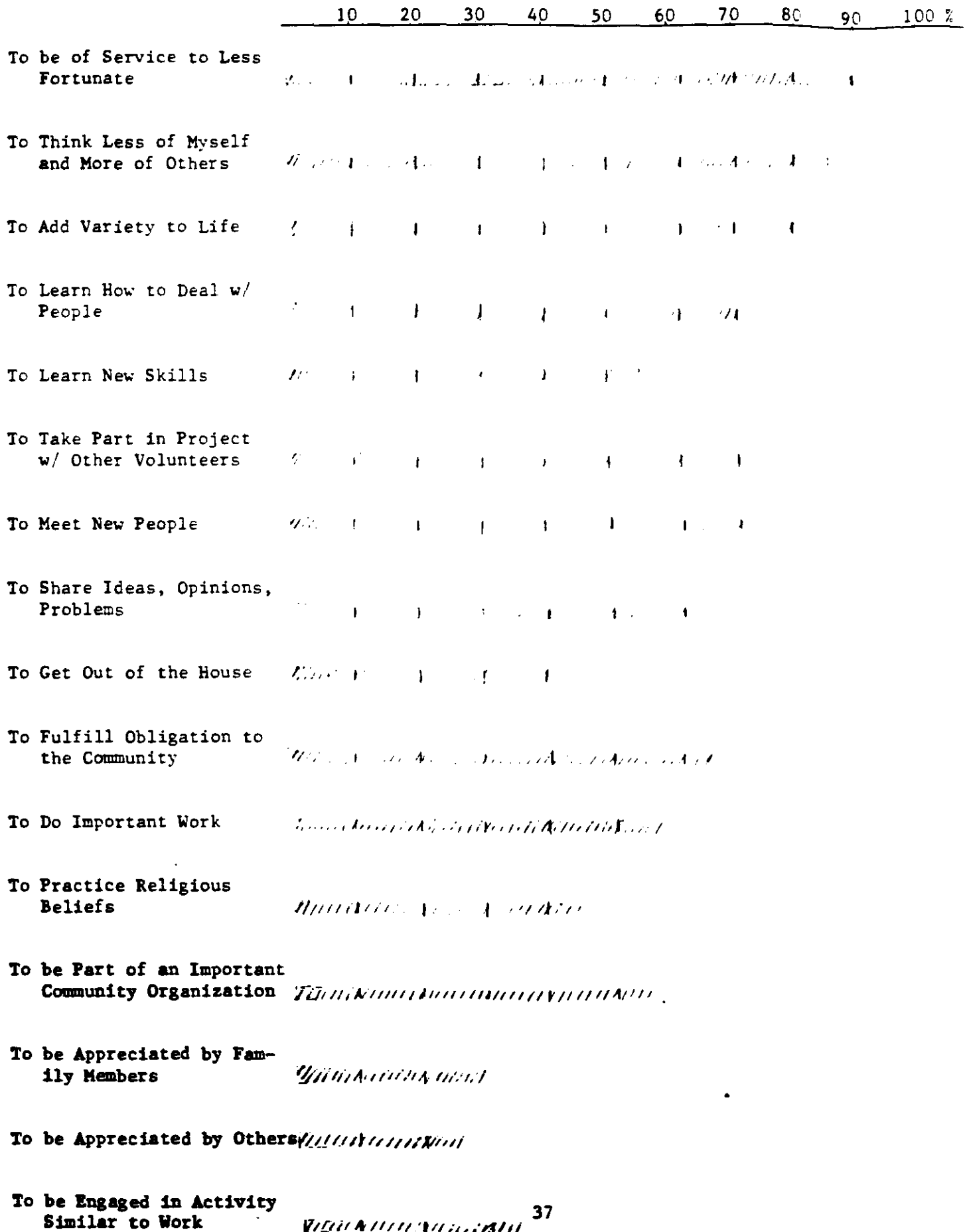


Chart 3

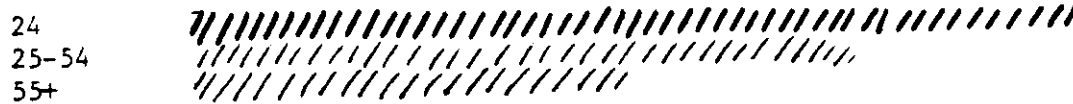
EXTRINSIC REWARDS EXPECTED BY VOLUNTEERS IN THREE AGE CATEGORIES

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%

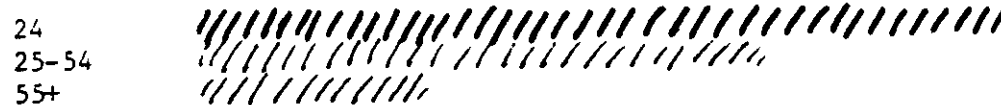
1. Training



2. Professional Supervision



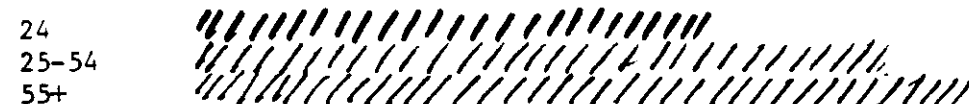
3. Contact with Professionals



4. Consultation by Professionals about a Patient



5. Contact with Other Volunteers During Work



6. Banquet



7. Lounge for Volunteers



8. Letter of Appreciation



9. Pin



Chart 4

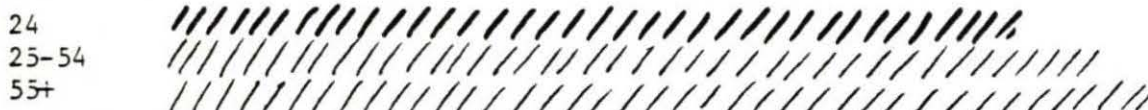
INTRINSIC REWARDS EXPECTED BY VOLUNTEERS IN THREE AGE CATEGORIES

10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100%

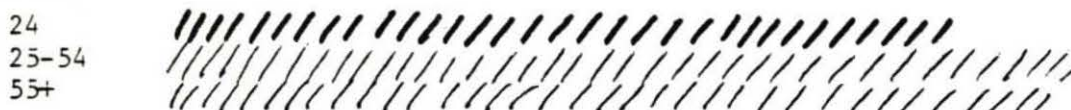
1. Opportunity to be of Service to Those Less Fortunate than Me



2. Opportunity to Think Less of Myself and More of Others



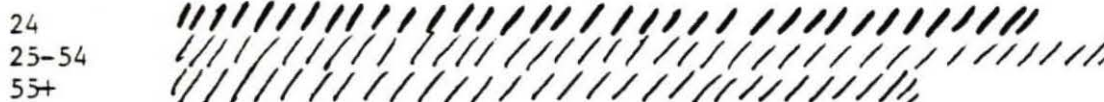
3. Opportunity to Do Something Useful which Adds Variety to Life



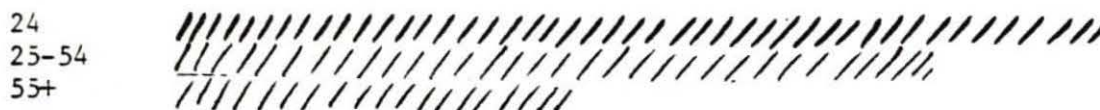
4. Opportunity to Learn How to Deal with People



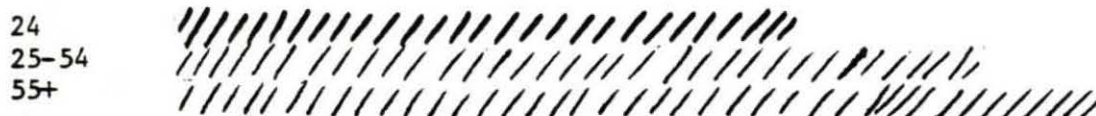
5. Taking Responsibilities



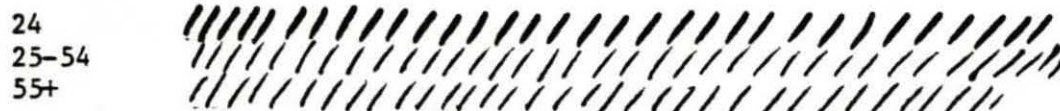
6. Opportunity to Learn New Skills



7. Opportunity to Take Part in Project with Other Volunteers



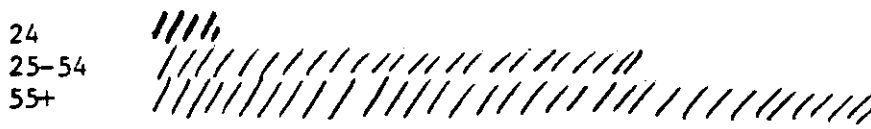
8. Opportunity to Meet New People



9. Opportunity to Share my Ideas, Opinions and Problems with Others



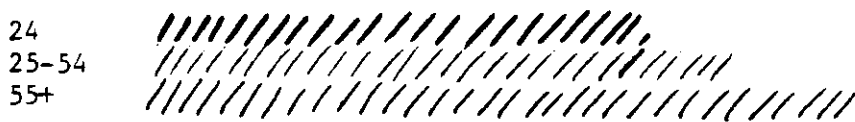
10. Opportunity to Get Out of the House



11. Opportunity to Fulfill an Obligation to the Community



12. Opportunity to Do Important Work



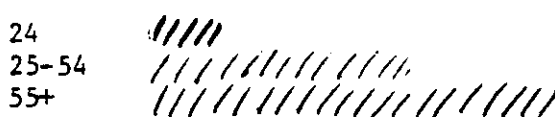
13. Opportunity to Practice my Religious Beliefs



14. Opportunity to be Part of an Important Community Organization



15. Opportunity to be Appreciated by my Family



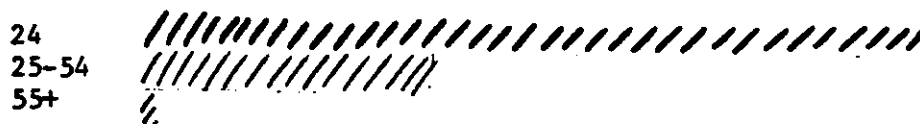
16. Opportunity to be Appreciated by Others



17. Opportunity to be Engaged in an Activity which is Similar to Paid Work



18. Testing Possibility of a Career in Health Field



19. Testing Possibilities of Paid Employment

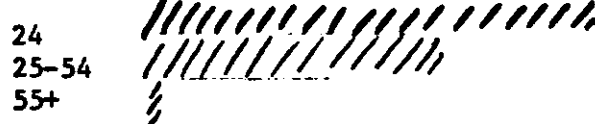


Chart 5

LENGTH OF SERVICE BY THE NEGATIVE DISCREPANCIES AND BETWEEN EXPECTED AND RECEIVED EXTRINSIC REWARDS

Length of Service	Number of Respondents (a)	Number of Negative Discrepancies (b)	Avg. Number of Negative Discrepancy Respondent (c) = b/a
1 - 3 months	59	86	1.46
4 - 6 months	23	27	1.17
7 - 11 months	19	14	0.74
1 - 3 years	70	55	0.79
4 - 10 years	82	54	0.66
11 years or longer	60	31	0.52
Total	313**	267	0.85

*A negative discrepancy is defined as a case where the respondent answered "yes" to the question of whether he expects a particular reward and "no" to the question of whether he receives it.

**Four respondents did not answer the question about length of time on the job.

VI. A VIEW OF THE VALUE AND COSTS OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

As pointed out earlier, America's volunteers contribute what is estimated at about \$68 billion annually in charitable donations and in-kind services. For many, a billion is one of those figures which seems lost in a sea of zeroes and clearly incomprehensible. Let's put it in perspective. It takes roughly \$1 billion to run a city the size of Los Angeles for one year. That thoroughly American institution - McDonald's - will have sold 35 billion burgers by the end of 1980. The 1980-81 Federal Budget calls for an outlay of \$219 billion to take care of the Health and Human Services needs of its citizens. That means that the estimated annual value of volunteer contributions equals about a third of what the government plans to spend on health and human services this year. \$68 billion is a sizable sum.

Let us not forget, however, that volunteer programs are not free. Particularly in the 300,000 formal agency or institutional programs throughout the country, there are costs involved with volunteerism like staff salaries, office supplies and equipment, utilities like heat, lights and telephones, recognition expenses, training costs, and various other outlays depending on the purpose and scope of the particular program.

For too many years, many volunteer programs have either survived on a shoestring budget feeling it was somehow improper to ask for more or assumed an almost nonchalant attitude of "it takes money to make money." This author believes that there are more of the former than the latter, but that both suggest a disturbing disregard for cost effectiveness. Still other voluntary organizations simply assume that because they are voluntary, they are also cost effective. This is not necessarily so and I believe the economic realities of the 1980s will force all volunteer departments and programs to take a hard look at maximizing program impact and monitoring

the return on investment in their programs. This ROI approach is not new to business and anything that generates \$68 billion in services and support deserves the same sort of analysis.

Historically, one of the most common methods of quantifying the dollar value of volunteer work has been to assign a dollar amount equal to the minimum wage in a given work area and multiply by the number of volunteer service hours. Proponents of this method point to its simplicity and the likelihood that those whose service demonstrably exceeds the minimum wage are balanced out by those whose service is worth less than the minimum wage. Opponents argue against the method on the grounds that effective volunteer placements supplement rather than supplant paid staff and that the assignment of a dollar value to volunteer service is simply inappropriate. Volunteers, according to this view, provide more to the agency or community than can ever be reflected in a dollar amount. But to simply say that the value of volunteer service is inestimable seems also unbusinesslike.

A former Director of Volunteer Services at a Chicago hospital recently proposed the following method to determine the actual costs of administering a volunteer program. Costs can then be weighed against the demonstrable achievements of the program. The formula proposed requires that volunteer departments have both direct as well as indirect expense budget allocations:

$$\frac{\text{DIRECT COSTS AND INDIRECT COSTS}}{\text{HOURS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE}} = \text{COST PER HOUR OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE}$$

This method allows for differences among programs and agencies and still permits each agency to evaluate whether or not the actual costs of administering its volunteer program are offset by the perceived benefits they derive from volunteers.

To test the method, the former Director compiled statistics submitted by 24 hospitals in metropolitan Chicago. These showed an average cost

per hour of volunteer service of \$1.749 with a range from \$.36 to \$4.29. ⁴³

It is true, of course, that the things volunteers are purportedly best at are intangible - warmth, empathy, patience and understanding. Pricing intangibles is never easy but an astute program administrator will be better able to evaluate these "products" if he is knowledgeable of the costs incurred in making them available to the agency's clients. It will also enhance the volunteer department's credibility if it regularly evaluates not just its performance but also its costs. Accountability must be welcomed rather than resisted if volunteerism is to achieve the status, respect and esteem enjoyed by other established professions.

Regardless of how accountable and cost effective volunteer departments become, the human impact of volunteers will still eclipse the economic. This is as it should be and was eloquently expressed by the executive director of the National Conference of Catholic Charities:

The volunteer helps preserve the warmth, the human touch, all that makes the institution more humane in a day when the demands of efficiency, productivity and cost-effectiveness bring the accusations of being cold and unfeeling.

The importance of the volunteer . . . also arises from the fact that he frequently performs tasks that would not otherwise get done. Further, the volunteer performs an inestimable service by relating (the agency) to the community and, in turn, the community to (the agency). ⁴⁴

VII. FORECAST FOR THE FUTURE

Having considered the history of volunteerism and the current climate in which it exists, the questions we must ask are: What is the forecast for the future? Will volunteerism prosper or perish? A crystal ball would help, of course, but even without it, I will offer a few predictions and conclusions based on the foregoing research, some private observations and personal interpretations.

My prediction is that volunteerism will not perish because there are enough people in America who will not let it. Granted, in these inflationary times when social uncertainties rival economic ones, there is a tendency especially among the cynics and pessimists to say, "Let the government do it." With all due respect to that venerable institution - the government - I side with The Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, President of the University of Notre Dame who says: "I say in all earnestness that when the government does it, the doing is almost always more costly, less free, more complicated and generally less productive and effective for America and Americans." ⁴⁵ While I admit to a basic philosophy of optimism, I think that the human spirit is going to triumph and will not let itself be strangled by the ribbons of red tape that every government program, however well intentioned, comes wrapped in. "Nothing," says George Romney, a staunch defender of volunteerism, "can melt our human and social problems faster than the willingness of one individual to involve himself voluntarily in helping another individual overcome his problems." ⁴⁶

The degree to which volunteerism will prosper depends on many factors but primarily on the ability of voluntary organizations to realistically assess their goals, their structure, their procedures and, most importantly, their product. Once this is done, they can then work at effectively mobilizing the vast potential of human resources resident in their army of volunteers.

Goodness and kindness cannot be ends in themselves. Goodness and kindness without effectiveness are often impotent, empty and meaningless. Sound management practices must be present to avoid pitfalls in the voluntary sector.

By assuming that the quality of the cause will sell itself, many an organization fails to develop a clear statement of its product or service, let alone a marketing plan and delivery system for the service. The same businessman who would not conceive of going into the toothpaste business without identifying the market to which the product must be sold, and developing a plan to bring the product to market will work in a voluntary organization without taking the same steps with respect to its "product." 47

Another pitfall to be avoided is that of self pity. Many volunteer organizations and programs waste countless hours lamenting the disappearance of the American homemaker who formerly served as the backbone of the volunteer sector. Wishing is not going to bring her back. By 1990, 60 per cent of adult women are going to be in the work force. Volunteer organizations must realize that their future rests in how effectively they recruit and develop from other able segments of society. These include younger Americans, older Americans and a segment that much of the literature has summarily overlooked: middle aged men.

The young are, of course, an obvious source. Supplies of part-time and summer jobs will continue to dry up as the economy worsens. Students may have to face the fact that their opportunity to get "hands on" experience in the field of their choice may have to come as a volunteer rather than an employee. Forward thinking schools and volunteer agencies will work together to set up cooperative programs where students will receive credit for their volunteer commitments. This arrangement may force volunteer leaders to adjust their perspective to accommodate short-term rather than strictly long-term assignments. If someone talented and enthusiastic arrives at an agency and says, "I will work for you for the next six months,"

that agency must learn to say "Thank you" not "We're unable to consider you unless you can give us a year." Volunteerism, for many, is going to become not an end in itself but a bridge to employment or career change. Volunteer agencies must accept this for what it is - an inescapable fact of life. Shorter term volunteer commitments place certain added burdens on volunteer agencies in terms of training, orientation and staff acceptance. But these are burdens that must be borne graciously and creatively as the future unfolds.

Another potential source of volunteers that has not been adequately tapped is the older American. Even if people retire later - and they will because of the inflationary erosion of their resources - they will enjoy greater longevity and vitality than ever before. Volunteer agencies must realize that older Americans - only 14 per cent of whom were volunteering in 1974 - will represent an ever-growing proportion of the population not to mention a lifetime of rich experiences that can be effectively channeled into volunteer projects and programs. Old people are also often very able. They may require volunteer agencies to make modifications in job design, work assignments, scheduling or physical facilities but my opinion is that making these minor changes and adjustments will be mutually beneficial to society and to a generation which might otherwise succumb to loneliness, despair, and feelings of worthlessness.

Of the many remarkable phases of adult life which Gail Sheehy so eloquently described in her best-selling book, Passages, the "Switch-40s" hold hope for the volunteer field. According to Sheehy, the female in her forties has never felt better or more confident. She may go back to school, get a job, start a business, do her own thing. But the man in his forties is frequently overcome with a sense of failure and frustration:

What struck me in the interviews was the unsalvageable loss suffered by so many men. Their

own tenderness comes into flow just when their children (and wives) are demanding distance. It comes too late.

After all the years spent (or misspent) on building his career, the midlife man so often turns back to the nest, to recapture "this human thing" at just the time when his children are in high revolt. ⁴⁸

I suggest that such a man is ripe and ought to be picked out of his disappointment and plugged into the volunteer network where "this human thing" he longs for can be returned to him.

Similarly, we hear much about dissatisfaction in the work force. Estimates on the exact dimensions of this dissatisfaction vary but it is probably experienced by around ten per cent of the work force. ⁴⁹ That means there are ten million people in this nation whose needs for self-esteem and self-actualization are not being met through their employment. It seems to me we ought to reach out to these people and try to involve them in the volunteer sphere.

I cannot guarantee, of course, that greater involvement in volunteer activities by the young, the old, middle-aged males, and disillusioned workers will make up for the loss of women who are returning to school and work. I am simply saying that these are potential sources of volunteers which we ought to more fully recruit and develop and cherish.

Men of great knowledge and wisdom and eloquence have talked of the common ties that bind our lives. It was John Dunne who wrote: "No man is an island entire of itself: Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." ⁵⁰ It was Herman Melville who said: "We cannot live for ourselves alone. Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers, our actions run as causes and return to us as results." ⁵¹ And it was Father Hesburgh of Notre Dame who said simply: "Volunteerism . . . is America uniquely at its best." ⁵²

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