

**VOLUNTEERS IN THE HUMANITIES**

**NEW FACES IN  
PUBLIC PLACES**



**VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement**

# **NEW FACES IN PUBLIC PLACES**

## **VOLUNTEERS IN THE HUMANITIES**

**Isolde Chapin  
Richard Mock**

*My definition of the hard-to-involve volunteer  
is anyone who is not volunteering now.*

Miriam Pineo Johnson  
Director of Volunteers  
American Museum of Natural History



**VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement**

Prepared and published under Grant Number PD-31858-78-757 from The National Endowment for the Humanities.

VOLUNTEER gratefully acknowledges the permission of Volunteers in Action, Inc., Providence, Rhode Island for use of a title based on VIA's name for its project: "New Faces in Public Places: Volunteers in Cultural Institutions."

Copyright © 1979

VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement  
1214 Sixteenth Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036  
Post Office Box 4179  
Boulder, Colorado 80302

Honorable George Romney, Chairman

Kerry Kenn Allen, Executive Vice President  
Dorothy Denny, Executive Vice President

# Table of Contents

- I. Volunteers in the Public Humanities 1
  - Reviewing the Past: A Survey 2
  - Updating Programs: A Proposal 6
- II. Experiments in Six Cities 11
  - Mobile, Alabama 11
  - Louisville, Kentucky 13
  - Washington, D.C. 15
  - Akron, Ohio 18
  - New York, New York 19
  - Providence, Rhode Island 21
- III. Building on the Basics 25
  - The Volunteer Job 26
  - Finding Volunteers 30
  - Learning the Job 34
  - Keeping the Job 38
  - The Role of the Voluntary Action Centers 39
- IV. New Faces in Public Places 43
  - Obstacles 43
  - Accomplishments 45
- V. Addenda 48
  - Project Participants 48
  - Advisory Council 51
  - Book List 52

# Volunteers in the Public Humanities

*Up until now humanities institutions have been isolated from the mainstream of volunteerism. People looked at the plush buildings and thought such places didn't need any help from them. They thought such institutions used only their own members as volunteers, that the volunteering was only coming from within, so to speak. It was all too confined.*

Dil Hobbs  
Director, Volunteer Mobile

Culture has a special aura in America. People view it as something rarified, something elite. They are attracted, but many keep a distance. They drift in and out of museums and libraries, gazing at displays, riffling through the books. Guides in period costume escort tours through historic houses; little theatres put on *She Stoops To Conquer* and *Winterset*. The public is attentive, an absorbed onlooker. Interest is high, yet only a few of those who come to peruse stay to help these cultural programs flourish; only a small number volunteer with those organizations that give color and depth to existence.

An air of exclusiveness has long been settled over opportunities to volunteer in museums or libraries or theatres or other humanistic settings. Most people, if they think about it, think volunteers in these places must have special social standing or an extraordinary education. Among potential volunteers are many who have the impression they would not be welcome. Expecting a rebuff, they are not likely to offer their services.

If the humanities are to embrace a wide rather than a limited public, the encouragement of a more diversified group of volunteers is a necessary step, a positive declaration that these institutions belong to everyone. As long as the volunteer pointing out an early Picasso or a

rococo chandelier is almost always white, female and well-to-do, these organizations have lost a highly visible means of demonstrating that they are indeed "public." They have lost the knowledge and sensitivities provided by persons of many heritages.

As restrictive patterns of volunteer programming are replaced, general invitations to volunteer may be issued — in good faith — to the entire community. The Humanities Project described in this publication has been engaged in the development, on a small scale, of policies and techniques that enable volunteer programs in cultural institutions to operate on an egalitarian basis.

### **Reviewing the Past: A Survey**

In matters of volunteer policies and performance, the public humanities are at much the same point that confounded social service organizations not many years ago. The hazards blocking effective volunteer programming in many cultural institutions are already familiar. Volunteers are not involved to their fullest potential; the role of volunteer coordinator is ill-defined; paid staff harbors suspicions about volunteers; there are insufficient training opportunities. These and other difficulties were widespread according to a survey of volunteer activities in a number of museums, libraries and historic sites undertaken by the National Center for Voluntary Action in 1977 with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Making use of questionnaires and interviews in over 60 cities, NCVA's initial study sought to define the nature and scope of volunteer involvement in the humanities, to understand how volunteer programs were organized and administered, and to identify the support needs of program leaders and administrators. During these explorations, NCVA looked for efforts by cultural institutions to interest and recruit volunteers from groups generally considered to be hard-to-involve — minorities, low income, elderly, the young, the handicapped. By the conclusion of the survey it was apparent that only a few positive steps had been taken in this direction and that, for the most part, these groups remained uninvolved.

Research also showed that overall statistics on volunteering in libraries, museums and similar cultural institutions had yet to be compiled. A major statistical study on volunteer involvement, *Americans Volunteer 1974*, produced by the Census Bureau for ACTION, provided

no clear method to indicate involvement in either humanities or arts programs, a fact that appeared to reflect, in some measure, a lack of public recognition for the value of volunteers in these areas. Much of the data that was available was either anecdotal or dealt only with segments of the field. Yet, without question, for a number of institutions volunteers were an important resource. For example:

- the Oregon Historical Society reported 10,000-12,000 volunteer hours per year;
- the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped: 20,000 hours per year;
- the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, Connecticut, reported over 10,000 hours per year;
- the Los Angeles County Museum of Art: 80,000 hours per year;
- the Indiana State Museum: 24,000 hours per year.

A number of institutions attempted to place a dollar value on the volunteer service they received. This was often difficult to assess when volunteers were doing highly professional or technical tasks since hourly rates were usually based on minimum wage levels. Nevertheless, in terms of 1977 dollars:

- the J.B. Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, reported 10,000 hours of service valued at \$22,000;
- the Landmark Society of Western New York, Rochester, New York, estimated \$30,000-\$35,000 per year from volunteers and an additional \$50,000 in pro bono service from lawyers, architects and other professionals;
- the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Maryland: \$90,000 per year;
- the Weber County Library, Ogden, Utah: \$11,000 per year;
- the Palo Alto Cultural Center, Palo Alto, California: \$126,000 per year;
- the Sully Plantation, Annandale, Virginia: \$13,685 per year.

Two institutions valued the time contributed by their volunteers in relation to paid staff time:

- the Boston Museum of Science estimated that volunteers were equivalent to 21-23 full-time paid staff;
- the Missouri Botanical Gardens in St. Louis viewed its volunteers as equivalent to 20 full-time paid staff.

Program staff responding to questions from NCVA's research team made it clear that the value of volunteer service could not be expressed merely in terms of hours and dollars. There was consensus that volunteers provide institutions with a unique resource and, ultimately, a unique value. The volunteers and administrators queried identified a number of specific values:

*First*, volunteers supplement the institution's work force. They free paid staff to undertake other tasks, often long-range projects that of necessity have been ignored in the press of day-to-day business. Conversely, volunteers are able to assume responsibility for long-range projects so that paid staff has time for pressing administrative duties. In many institutions volunteers assist by extending the hours of operation to evenings and weekends.

*Second*, volunteers help cultural institutions meet goals in public education. The Rochester Museum and Science Center in Rochester, New York, estimated that without volunteers it would be unable to reach its audience of almost 100,000 school children a year. Similarly, Wadsworth Atheneum staff reported: "There would be virtually no interpretation to the schools and very little to the public without volunteers." Virtually every institution surveyed mentioned the important role volunteers play in public education.

*Third*, volunteers assist in building institutional relationships with the community. Several administrators noted that volunteers bring direct and immediate feedback from the community about exhibits, educational programs, facilities and future plans. This comment was made by an official of the Portland, Oregon, Neighborhood History Project: "Volunteers are a unique benefit because the project is involved in promoting community history. When the residents themselves take part as volunteers, it has more meaning for the whole neighborhood. With only three paid staff people, it makes possible the project's communication with the rest of the community."

*Fourth*, volunteers can be both a direct and indirect source of revenue. The American Museum of Natural History, for example, traced \$50,000 in income to the volunteer-maintained gift shop. Other volunteer fundraising activities brought the total to \$100,000. In Charlotte, North Carolina, the Arts and Sciences Council reported that volunteers have made a long-term impact on revenue: "They're some of the best PR we have . . . in a company where office workers were loaned for the drive, they enjoyed the experience as a break from their normal work routine."



They were enthusiastic about the Council when they returned to their company and employee contributions in that company increased dramatically that year."

*Fifth*, volunteers have the potential to open and extend the institution to new audiences. An official from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City observed: "Volunteers have opened a large constituency to the museum who otherwise might never have used the facilities." A specific example was related by staff of the Alameda County Library in Fremont, California: "Volunteers have really helped to sell the idea of senior outreach in the community, convincing institutions that it's not too much trouble and convincing shut-ins that it's not charity."

*Sixth*, the volunteer benefits from his or her involvement in the public humanities. New friends are made, job skills are polished, tasks are accomplished. Commenting on the achievements of student volunteers, an official of the Corpus Christi Museum in Corpus Christi, Texas, said, "They discover interesting things here that they never realized they could do and then go back to school or use their abilities to get a paid job."

*Finally*, many public humanities institutions recognize the inherent value of volunteers, the importance of the link they provide with the community and the creative energy they bring. As the director of the Illinois Historical Museum said, "Even if we had enough money to have all paid people, we wouldn't want to."

The survey also indicated that while they depended heavily on volunteers, humanities institutions have remained, for the most part, removed from the national and local volunteer support structures that have emerged over the past decade. Nor have cultural institutions developed a counterpart system. The result has been the continued lack of acceptance of volunteers, the inability to effectively build on each other's efforts and the failure to realize the full potential volunteers bring to the institution.

The majority of volunteer administrators in the public humanities have no formal training for their job. Very few surveyed by NCVA could recall participating in workshops on volunteer administration. Most had learned their roles on-the-job and had not been exposed to the literature in the field of volunteer administration. They had had little chance to interact substantially with volunteer administrators in other fields. For the most part they did not participate in workshops and conferences on

volunteerism with the result that many times difficulties with their programs seemed without precedent and insuperable.

Although some staff members surveyed referred to informal communications networks in the field, most were largely unaware of other individuals or programs outside the immediate geographic area. When asked to identify other volunteer administrators they had found particularly knowledgeable, most were unable to do so or named someone in their community. At a conference for volunteer coordinators in art museums, participants voiced their frustrations at not being able to identify quickly those museums with which they could share experience most profitably.

The need for more and better information about successful programs was expressed by almost all the institutions surveyed. Staff members recognized that their limited exposure to new ideas was, in turn, limiting the development of their own programs. One person commented, "I never get to travel, but I'm always eager to know what others are doing." A staff member of a program in Oklahoma said, "I feel like I'm operating in a vacuum and I wish someone with some perspective would look over this situation and offer suggestions." There was a consistent demand for well-researched, well-written, instructive and sophisticated information and materials from staff members working with volunteers. They expressed uniform disappointment with the materials available in the field. They recognized a need for high quality assistance.

### **Updating Programs: A Proposal**

Following completion of the survey NCVA submitted a proposal to NEH for the development of an experimental program that was intended "to assist the public humanities — museums, libraries, historical sites and societies — to serve their total communities through expanded, innovative and effective involvement of individual citizens as volunteers." As its primary goal, the project was designed to "demonstrate how those individuals traditionally considered to be 'hard-to-reach' — minorities, low income, elderly, handicapped — can be effectively involved in public humanities programs through the use of volunteers recruited from these constituencies."

Funds for the demonstration program were awarded in 1978. NCVA began working on the project — generally referred to as the Humanities Project — on July 1, 1978.

For assistance in carrying out the project, NCVA worked through

its network of 300 affiliated Voluntary Action Centers (VACs). Developed out of the need for agencies at the local level to serve as focal points for community volunteer activity, VACs provide volunteer recruitment and referral services to all volunteer-involving agencies. VACs are also sources of technical assistance and training services. Significantly, VACs are prepared to help any citizen in creating new projects, fostering voluntary citizen action rather than serving merely as conduits for volunteers into established volunteer programs.

During the survey and at the outset of the project, the VAC network helped to pinpoint examples of innovative programs involving the hard-to-reach volunteer. Voluntary Action Centers in six cities were asked to undertake local projects. The purpose of the community projects was to show that successful programs may be encouraged with a minimum of new resources and with the support of information, technical assistance and training services from an external source.

The six communities and VACs selected to participate were:

Akron, Ohio — Voluntary Action Center of Summit County, Inc.  
(Akron VAC)

Louisville, Kentucky — Voluntary Action Center (Louisville VAC)  
Mobile, Alabama — Volunteer Mobile

New York, New York — Mayor's Voluntary Action Center  
(Mayor's VAC)

Providence, Rhode Island — Volunteers in Action, Inc. (VIA)

Washington, D.C. — The Volunteer Clearinghouse of the District  
of Columbia (D.C. Clearinghouse)

Criteria used in choosing demonstration communities included the presence of a VAC already actively engaged with humanities institutions and the knowledge that staff at some humanities institutions in the community were responsive to wide citizen participation.

Participating VACs were given small grants, not exceeding \$3,000, to defray expenses related to the project. The stated responsibilities of each VAC included:

- selecting from two to five public humanities institutions to participate in the demonstration;
- taking part in a project orientation seminar in Washington, D.C.;
- orienting supervisory staff of public humanities institutions on working with hard-to-involve volunteers;
- consulting with participating public humanities institutions on existing and potential volunteer programs;

- recruiting hard-to-involve persons as volunteers for public humanities programs and assignments;
- orienting and training prospective volunteers in cooperation with public humanities staff;
- maintaining close liaison with appropriate staff at all participating humanities institutions;
- maintaining records and submitting brief monthly reports to NCVA.

NCVA suggested that VACs consider the following guidelines in deciding which institutions might be asked to join the project:

- present involvement of volunteers;
- enthusiasm for using hard-to-involve persons as volunteers in existing and new programs;
- receptivity to the development of programs especially attractive to hard-to-involve persons;
- development of assignments, if necessary, that fully utilize volunteers' qualifications and interest and that permit growth opportunities;
- assignment of volunteers to specific and appropriate staff.

Basing choices on these guidelines, the six VACs invited a variety of programs to take active roles in the project. Museums and historic sites comprised the largest group. Among the 25 programs spread over six cities, seven were museums and eight were historic sites or societies. In addition three special museums for children and one children's theatre were involved in the experiment. Two ethnic theatre groups, one a black company and the other Spanish-speaking, took part. The remaining organizations included a central library, a community arts center and a government agency, the National Archives.

Within each city as well as from one city to another, the volunteer programs differed in purpose, in size, in structure. The target groups also varied within and between communities.

While many of the jobs assigned volunteers in the public humanities were traditional — docents, guides, working in gift shops, bookstores, clerical work, library indexing, mending, shelving — there was also the challenge of innovative roles. For example, during the course of the project:

- at the Crispus Attucks Park of the Arts in Washington, D.C., college student volunteers taught dance, crafts, theatre arts to inner city children;

- in the Akron-Summit County Public Library a volunteer began the development of an index to 30 years of local obituaries as an aid to genealogical researchers;
- young mothers who brought their babies along, junior high school students and grandparents all took part in helping hundreds of young visitors to enjoy the Children's Museum in Pawtucket, Rhode Island;
- the Louisville Preservation Alliance made plans to develop a corps of volunteers skilled in restoration of older and historic homes and willing to provide no-cost consultation to owners of older homes;
- volunteers have developed what the director calls the best public relations program the Summit County Historic Society has ever had;
- drawn from the city's large Hispanic community, volunteers have been active in all aspects of Washington's GALA Hispanic Theatre;
- young college-age intern/volunteers, working closely with professional staff, have developed their own teaching units to engage the interest of young visitors to the Brooklyn Children's Museum;
- misdemeanants have provided volunteer service as an alternative to prison at the D.C. Children's Museum, the Locust Grove historic house in Louisville, GALA Hispanic Theatre in Washington.

Throughout the project members of a small national Advisory Council, selected by NCVA, served as an added resource. With broad experience in the public humanities, these individuals were available for consultation by NCVA, VACs and community program staff. Several members of the Advisory Council attended the general discussion meetings held for project participants in Washington. Advisors also conducted training sessions for some local programs.

Participants in the project found common strengths. They found similar problems as well. Most of all they found each other. Program leaders in every city expressed thoughts similar to those of Mildred Jones, volunteer coordinator for the Capital Children's Museum in Washington, D.C. Asked about the value of the Humanities Project in developing the museum's volunteer program, Mrs. Jones said: "The important thing is that I found out that somewhere there was someone I could talk to if I had problems with my program. I knew there was someone working on solving the same kind of problems. When I met the people at the workshops, I could see there were others who had the same problem."

This publication is intended as an extension of the support and encouragement Mrs. Jones experienced in discovering she was not alone. Its purpose is to provide sketches of the problems and achievements of a small number of programs that reflect the issues faced by other volunteer programs in the humanities. It is meant as one more link between the resources of the volunteer community and the volunteers who have perpetuated the cultural life of America. It is an attempt to make it simpler for everyone who is not volunteering now and would like to take part in some phase of the humanities to become a volunteer. Essentially it is a report on the contribution to be made by volunteers from all walks of life to the work of vital cultural institutions, a look at voluntary efforts that enable the humanities to flourish and that, concurrently, give new purpose to the life of the volunteer.

# Experiments in Six Cities

Each program taking part in the Humanities Project—whether in Mobile, Louisville, Washington, Akron, New York or Providence—had its own special character and distinguishing features. Some were small, casual programs, others were big and well organized. Some were managed by professional volunteer directors, others were administered by a volunteer. Some responded enthusiastically to the project and built on the assistance offered, a few continued on their own paths and paid the proffered help slight heed. Whatever the differences, all 25 programs had problems and interests in common. How to get on with volunteers on a day-to-day basis, recruiting volunteers, retaining volunteers, developing appropriate ways of saying thank you. Promoting good volunteer-staff relations and enlisting board support of volunteers were concerns in Providence as they were in Mobile. The question of whether most volunteers gravitate toward social service activities, preferring the hospital emergency room to the museum exhibition, was debated in Louisville as it was in New York.

Brief descriptions of each of the programs involved in the project follow. Some acquaintance with each program separately will serve as background to the subsequent discussion of the issues faced by all programs.

## **Mobile, Alabama**

In working with the Humanities Project, Volunteer Mobile chose to emphasize “involving the whole community” rather than to focus on a particular group as hard-to-involve. Dil Hobbs, director of Volunteer Mobile, said she preferred the positive approach.

Grant funds were used to employ a part-time recruiter. Cecile Sherman, who joined the staff, is a native Mobilian, long-time New Yorker by adoption, retired opera singer and newspaper writer. To contact the community at large, she began by making hundreds of telephone calls to newcomers to Mobile. Introducing herself and Volunteer Mobile, she quickly sketched out the opportunities to volunteer with the City Museum, Carlen House, the Historic Mobile Preservation Society and the Mobile Historic Development Commission.

**The Museum of the City of Mobile** Two of the museums operated by the city of Mobile took part in the project: City Museum and Carlen House. The City Museum, its collections ranging from Mardi Gras finery to elegant carriages, is set in a renovated house in the downtown area; Carlen House, a restored 19th century farmhouse, is used as a center for teaching and displaying crafts. Jo Ann Cox, project coordinator, divides her time between the volunteer programs at the two museums. In all some 20 volunteers are engaged in answering questions, leading tours, teaching crafts of the 18th century—quilting is a favorite—and helping in the gift shop.

Prior to the Humanities Project the city's museum system had little formal contact with Volunteer Mobile and recruited and screened its own volunteers. With the project underway, Ms. Cox referred all recruitment and screening to Volunteer Mobile; even people who came into the museum to offer their services were referred to the VAC for interviewing and screening. This arrangement freed Ms. Cox for more on-going supervision of volunteers and development of the volunteer program.

Ms. Cox has experienced few problems with the volunteer program. She attributed this fact to the support given the program by museum director Caldwell Delaney, who has stated forthrightly that the museum couldn't get along without volunteers. The firm backing of top administration has enabled a good working relationship with Volunteer Mobile and the development of a substantial volunteer effort.

**Historic Mobile Preservation Society** Two historic homes, Oakleigh and Landmark Hall, are administered by the Mobile Preservation Society. The Society maintains its offices at Landmark where Director Cynthia Rush sees volunteers as jacks-of-all-trades, taking visitors around, answering phones, arranging flowers, helping with plans for the weddings that take place in the high-ceilinged rooms to raise money for further restoration work. At Oakleigh volunteers guide visitors through the antebellum mansion, resplendent with silk, silver and dark wood. In



the gift shop, volunteers help shoppers purchasing momentos. At Christmas time Oakleigh volunteers are particularly busy hosting candle-light tours of the great house and recounting its history in the flickering light.

**Mobile Historic Development Commission** Operating without a director from the fall of 1978 to the following summer, the Development Commission continued its work through the efforts of its board and staff, but little time was available for new projects and new directions. At intervals, however, some work was done on volunteer job descriptions and some thought devoted to the problem of staff reluctance to involve volunteers in the research needs of the commission. Meetings with Volunteer Mobile staff and other project participants at general workshops in Washington helped to dispel some feelings of resistance.

Toward the close of the project in June 1979, a new director was hired who is supportive of a strong volunteer program. The commission believes it can now make new progress in the area of volunteer involvement.

## **Louisville, Kentucky**

All four of the programs selected to take part in the Humanities Project in Louisville were already working with the local Voluntary Action Center. VAC Director Mary Sullivan saw the project as an opportunity to focus on details and build a solid program in each of the cooperating organizations — Stage One, Locust Grove Historic Home, the Floyd County Museum and the Preservation Alliance. Grant money was used chiefly to develop brochures and posters as aids in publicizing the volunteer needs of the agencies.

**Stage One** Following 32 years as a successful amateur group, the Louisville Children's Theatre went professional. For its 1978-79 season, the theatre hired a director, paid a small technical crew and renamed itself Stage One. During this period of growth and change, volunteers have helped with an assortment of backstage and front office assignments. A volunteer, Sandra Holden, took on the demanding job of volunteer coordinator. Under her direction the volunteer corps has grown from four to 15 in a period of several months. The goal is 25 volunteers by the fall of 1979, 50 the second year and 75 the third. Volunteers are needed for a range of services, including theatre display, babysitting for the children of volunteers, ushers, box office, fund-raising.

Because of its present location in a school in a blue collar neighborhood, Stage One has named the residents of that geographic area as its hard-to-involve group. A volunteer recruiting campaign has been planned for the next theatre season. Volunteers will begin by contacting churches, PTAs and local civic groups. A special free performance is being considered as a way of introducing Stage One to this new audience.

**Locust Grove** It was volunteers who convinced the county to buy Locust Grove, a frontier Georgian plantation built in 1790, and to restore it in memory of General George Rogers Clark who had lived there the last nine years of his life. "You can be a part of interpreting the past" reads the brochure for recruiting volunteers for this historic property. Approximately 100 volunteers are involved in various capacities: arranging flowers, gardening, conducting tours, running the gift shop.

Gertrude Bleisch, director of Locust Grove, selected college students as the hard-to-reach volunteers most needed at Locust Grove. Students have been paid to guide visitors and care for the property over weekends when staff is unavailable. As volunteers, additional students would be a considerable asset. With the help of the VAC, Locust Grove is approaching college history departments and history professors to help in the search for qualified student volunteers.

**Floyd County Museum (New Albany, Indiana)** With a paid staff of one, the Floyd County Museum depends on volunteers to keep its doors open and its program operating six days a week. About 35 volunteers are presently involved with this small art-history museum. Many of the group have been with the museum for some time and Jer Sample, the new part-time director, feels the volunteer corps must be expanded to include younger people. At present, only some 20 percent of the volunteers are under 30; however, through the active involvement of a college art professor who is on the museum's board, a number of students have been recruited for short-term projects.

Soon after agreeing to participate in the project, museum board members named men as its target group, however recruitment did not proceed until the new director was hired some months later. Working with the VAC branch located in this small Indiana town across the river from Louisville, Ms. Sample has plans to train a core group of three or four responsible volunteers and then add to that number.

**Preservation Alliance** The Restoraid program conducted by Louisville's Preservation Alliance is designed to advise its members, without

cost, on the restoration or renovation of structures at least 50 years old. With this program, the Alliance, a non-profit coalition of more than 50 neighborhood and civic groups, is seeking to maintain the integrity of the city's historic buildings with the help of skilled volunteers. These include building company executives, consultants in architectural design, structural engineering and landscape design, craftsmen from the building trades. In addition to the Restoraid program, Preservation Alliance has a corps of specially trained volunteers who give tours of Old Louisville to school and civic groups. Wendy Nicholas, program coordinator at the Alliance, expects Restoraid will be ready for clients as soon as a corps of volunteers — about 15 to begin with — is recruited and trained.

### **Washington, D.C.**

Ruth Sloate, executive director, and Lastenia Brathwaite, assistant to the executive director, of the D.C. Clearinghouse invited a diversified group of volunteer programs to take part in the Humanities Project. Several were small ethnic programs, some were long-standing programs, others were just taking shape. Several workshops sponsored by the D.C. Clearinghouse on such subjects as recruitment and retention of volunteers, interviewing, designing job descriptions and program development proved popular with volunteer coordinators from the varied programs. Though coming from different settings, participants felt they profited from the meetings and found each other's experiences instructive.

**Capital Children's Museum** Once crowded into several rooms of an elementary school, the Capital Children's Museum now has more than ample room to spread out in the former convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor. A series of painted yellow footsteps leads from the gate to the door of the museum amid a cluster of buildings.

Here volunteers are trained to help young visitors learn everything possible from the hands-on exhibits in the museum. Mexico is the current theme. Along with staff, volunteers are trained to make tortillas, cut out lace paper sculptures, shop in a Mexican store, paint with yarn and weave. They learn how they may enhance each child's experience in an environment designed for children. The museum's staff is agreed on the importance of training. Coordinator Mildred Jones commented, "I want the volunteers to know everything the staff knows."

Mrs. Jones named the older person as the museum's hard-to-

involve volunteer. The museum has worked closely with the VAC since its early days and it continues to rely on the VAC for recruitment and screening of its target group as well as other volunteers.

**Crispus Attucks Park of the Arts** Located in a converted warehouse in a predominantly black neighborhood, this community center provides neighborhood young people with classes in dance, gymnastics, crafts and visual arts. Once telephone company property that was donated to the community, the building has been renovated by civic groups. All the work of the center is carried on by volunteers, all teachers are volunteers. The one staff person who was paid left the program before the end of the project and has not been replaced. During the summer, regular volunteers are supplemented by referrals from the Mayor's Summer Jobs Program.

In addition to finding volunteer instructors, the Crispus Attucks Park of the Arts has been looking for a volunteer to take on the role of volunteer coordinator.

**GALA, Inc.** Organized to promote Hispanic culture and language by use of the theatre, GALA — Group de Artistas Latinoamericanos—depends heavily on volunteers in all aspects of production and management. The theatre group began with actors rehearsing in living rooms; in 1977 it moved to its present facilities, a house with a small stage on the ground floor and an audience capacity of 65. The company's offices are upstairs.

GALA's principal audience is made up of the city's middle class Hispanic community. Raul Rizig, both volunteer coordinator and actor, tries to help volunteers find the best assignments for their talents. The jobs available include: filing, bulk mailing, telephone answering, fund-raising, lights, sound, carpentry, maintenance, art work, production—hair, sets, lights, stage managing. GALA's hard-to-reach group consists of skilled electricians, carpenters and plumbers to work with the theatre's technical crew.

**Museum of African Art** Some 65 volunteers are involved in activities at the Museum of African Art in the course of a week. They are assigned in a variety of departments: as salespeople in the Boutique Africa; photo mounters and slide order processors in the photographic archives; special assistants in the library; receptionists and information specialists at the front desk of the museum; fundraisers and organizers of membership activities; clerical help in the director's office; hosts at evening receptions for the public relations office.

The museum's volunteer coordinator Mary Lynn Perry makes every effort to place volunteers according to their specific qualifications and interests. For example, two students enrolled in a Master of Library Science program at a local university are gaining career experience as library assistants. The D.C. Clearinghouse has helped the museum recruit additional black volunteers, its target for the Humanities Project.

**National Archives** Housing such historic documents as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, the Archives depends on a carefully trained volunteer staff to serve its many visitors as docents, tour guides and information volunteers. Docent training, for example, is given once a year with volunteers attending 11 five-hour sessions before beginning their work and then continuing on with monthly seminars once they are assigned. Topics for training include the history of the Archives, architecture and sculpture of the Archives, genealogical research, preservation of documents, judicial and fiscal archives. All sessions are directed to familiarizing the volunteer with the many activities of this government institution.

Young people and black adults were named as the Archives' hard-to-involve volunteers. Wider recruitment has been promoted through newspaper columns and articles; publicity has been generated by radio interviews and by the D.C. Clearinghouse. Eighty people responded following a radio talk show during which the Archives' volunteer coordinator Nancy Mannes described the institution's volunteer program. Fifteen of that number signed up for training and completed the course.

**National Collection of Fine Arts** Black and Hispanic volunteers were named by project coordinator Nora Panzer as the hard-to-involve volunteers at this art museum, which is part of the Smithsonian Institution. Docents for groups ranging from school children to adults are usually trained at sessions held once a year. All recruitment materials — radio spots and printed materials — are prepared in both Spanish and English.

**Paul Robeson International Center** Established three years ago with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this community center provides productions of works by black playwrights and summer classes in theatre arts for city youths. Except for the director, Jay Williams, the theatre is totally dependent on volunteers for its operations.

Mr. Williams named the black professional with specific skills (electricians, public relations, carpenters, stage hands) as the hard-to-

involve volunteer. The VAC and Mr. Williams have worked together to determine areas where volunteers are needed, to write job descriptions and recruit volunteers. Several volunteers have been referred, one has been scheduled to begin developing public relations tools for the theatre.

## **Akron, Ohio**

While the Akron VAC, under the direction of Hope Bair, was accustomed to working with local humanities programs prior to the project, the grant allowed the VAC to concentrate on developing relationships and building volunteer programs in two Akron humanities institutions: the Summit County Historical Society and the Akron-Summit County Public Library.

The project also enabled the VAC to hire Cynthia Bohmer as a part-time recruiter/interviewer who devoted her efforts to locating and referring interested volunteers to local cultural institutions. In addition, during the last quarter of the project, the VAC developed a recruitment brochure for humanities organizations. Also, because of the emphasis on cultural institutions, Mrs. Bair organized a "Library Roundtable" for volunteer coordinators in libraries. These discussions were modeled on VAC-sponsored roundtables for a number of social service programs.

**Summit County Historic Society** In 1977 when James Strider became the director of the Historic Society, located at the Simon Perkins Mansion, the operation was entirely run by paid staff; however, ensuing budget cuts made the involvement of volunteers a necessity. By the time Mr. Strider agreed to participate in the Humanities Project in 1978, close to 100 volunteers were working at the mansion. However the volunteer program was disorganized at that juncture and involvement in the project has allowed him to focus on organizing and refining its administration. In addition to improving the management of the volunteer program, a new volunteer organization, the Service League, has been formed with its own officers, committees and fund development projects.

Since it had been difficult to interest young people in the society, Mr. Strider began by involving three students from Akron University in semester-long internships — one in research and two in developing a public relations program for a special museum exhibit. According to Mr. Strider, the public relations work was outstanding.

**Akron-Summit County Public Library** Although over 90 young people are involved as volunteers in branch libraries, recruiting adult volunteers for the main library has been difficult because of the down-

town location, according to Steve Hawk, assistant director. Involvement in the Humanities Project came at a critical point in the library's development. Library staff was beginning the design of a "five year plan" when the library agreed to participate in the project. The volunteer program has overcome past staff resistance and has figured prominently in the recently completed development plan.

Recruited and screened by the Akron VAC, volunteers complete a job application form and are interviewed by library staff, much the same as paid staff is. Five volunteers are now in place; the long term goal is to have up to 30 part-time volunteers and a staff volunteer coordinator.

## **New York, New York**

The Mayor's Voluntary Action Center in New York is the only VAC in the country to be an official part of a city government. With branches in Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx, it serves a vast metropolitan population, matching the needs of agencies and interests of volunteers in the little known as well as the famed areas of the city.

When New York was selected as one of the cities to take part in the Humanities Project, the VAC decided to involve institutions in each of the city's five boroughs. Joan Simon, the VAC's assistant director, has coordinated the project, with the VAC serving as a development and training agency for participating programs.

Through its Volunteer Service Program under the direction of Susan Nicosia, the New York Department of Cultural Affairs also cooperated with the Humanities Project.

**Brooklyn Children's Museum** Located on the edge of the Bedford Stuyvesant and Crown Heights sections of Brooklyn, the Brooklyn Children's Museum draws patrons from all over the city. Earth, air, fire and water have provided dramatic themes in designing exhibits for this museum that has been constructed half underground and is approached through the doors of a restored subway entrance. A corrugated metal pipe high enough for classes of school children and accompanying adults to walk through runs at an angle across the slope of the display area. Tubes of different colored neon are swirled inside the pipe. Giant plastic replicas of molecules, large enough for a dozen children to climb in at once, dominate the scene. A movie has been filmed here. It looks like a set for adventure, for visitors and volunteers.

A number of times during the past few years, the museum has attempted to recruit volunteers from its immediate neighborhood, but in

general these tries have been unsuccessful. The Museum's Director of Education Frank Sellitto, who served as project coordinator, believes involvement in the Humanities Project has forced the museum to review all its plans for volunteer participation, particularly the role of community volunteers. Responsible for both the intern and volunteer programs, Sellitto concentrated on revising the museum's internship program geared to students from area colleges. Detailed planning resulted in the most successful intern program the museum had ever conducted. Staff responsible for the interns was given special training, job descriptions were developed and the interns underwent rigorous instruction before beginning their work.

This same care is being taken in the development of the volunteer program. Under Mr. Sellitto's direction, museum staff is developing guidelines, responsibilities and job descriptions for the volunteers.

**Hall of Science** Set in Flushing Meadow Park, the site of the 1964 World's Fair, the Hall of Science is the only museum in the city devoted solely to science and technology. Scientific concepts in such areas as aeronautics, communications, atomic energy, space science and the environment are dramatized for a continuous flow of school groups and other visitors. Of the 120 volunteers working in the Hall of Science, about 25 percent are retired, while another 25 percent are high school or college students.

Joan Munzer, the museum's director of education, has served as project coordinator. The time-consuming nature of both jobs led her to train a member of the staff to handle the specific duties of volunteer coordinator. Mrs. Munzer designated skilled crafts people with ability to develop new display materials as the museum's category of hard-to-reach volunteers. She viewed the recruitment of students from Pratt Institute as a first and promising step in locating volunteers with needed talents.

**The Jacques Marchais Center of Tibetan Art** The Tibetan Center was built in 1945 in the middle of a residential neighborhood on Staten Island. Its sponsor was a woman known professionally as Jacques Marchais who wished to house her extensive collection of Buddhist art. The contents include over 1,000 Tibetan bronze images, paintings, ritual objects, artifacts and musical instruments.

Located on a narrow road, the Tibetan Museum—the only one in the Western Hemisphere—must contend with a difficult location and with at least one extremely unfriendly neighbor. Joyce Cini, a volunteer



and director of the museum for the past several years, reported that because of the attitude of the neighbor, parking is extremely difficult for both volunteers and visitors. One outstanding volunteer has devoted three days a week for the past 20 years to the center's gardens and gift shop. Mrs. Cini recruits additional volunteer help for special events.

**Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum** Built in 1765 by Roger Morris, the mansion served as George Washington's headquarters when the American army retreated to New York in 1776. Located in Washington Heights, once a vacation spot for wealthy New York families when a trip to 160th Street was considered a fair journey, the mansion and its grounds are frequently toured by school children. Inside, the rooms are not only on view to visitors, but rented out for weddings and receptions.

Since her appointment in 1973, the mansion's Executive Director Jane Crowley has built a corps of some 50 volunteers. At least 40 of this group come from the immediate neighborhood, which is made up principally of an older, middle class black population. On weekends the museum is often run totally by volunteers who are well versed in its routine. Several representatives of the community serve on the mansion's board of directors and that representation is slated to increase.

**American Crafts Council and Museum of Contemporary Crafts** Located just off Fifth Avenue in the West Fifties, the American Crafts Council is a national, nonprofit membership organization founded in 1943 to stimulate interest in contemporary crafts. Since 1957, the Council has sponsored the Museum of Contemporary Crafts. Two blocks from the Council's offices, the museum houses exhibits of metals, clay, wood, textiles, glass, furniture and other examples of skilled craftsmanship.

A recent major cutback in staff meant that the volunteer program almost came to a halt. Without sufficient staff or staff time, Director of Volunteers Barbara Cohn felt new volunteers could not be successfully integrated into the program. Volunteers working with the library and the audiovisual divisions had been assigned before the changes. Museum staff has identified the elderly as the group it has found hard-to-involve.

## **Providence, Rhode Island**

Volunteers in Action, Inc. — the Providence, Rhode Island VAC — is the only VAC out of the 300 across the country to serve an entire state. All three of the programs selected to take part in the Humanities Project had statewide constituencies and, in the course of the project, efforts

were made to encourage residents of Newport, Woonsocket and other areas of Rhode Island to become involved in the programs along with volunteers from Providence and Pawtucket. It had been the experience of VIA that, even prior to high gas costs, many volunteers were unwilling to travel more than 15 minutes away from home even in a state of short distances.

Since the VAC had worked with humanities institutions prior to participating in the project, staff used this opportunity to direct training and technical assistance activities toward strengthening the volunteer programs of the three participating organizations. Both Betsy Garland, director of VIA, and Diane Disney, a member of VIA's board of directors and an independent consultant in volunteer administration who coordinated the project, contributed their expertise.

**Rhode Island Historical Society** For the first 150 years of its existence, the Rhode Island Historical Society was viewed as the private preserve of its membership and a professional association for scholars. In the several years since the Bicentennial, however, the society has sought to become a truly public organization, focusing on the interests of all Rhode Island citizens in their historic roots. Serving as project coordinator, the Historical Society's Curator of Education Laura Roberts is aware of the project's special impact in two dimensions: it has provided the society's staff with needed volunteer management training and it has forced staff to review the volunteer program, to make specific recommendations and formalize a structure.

Because the volunteer guiding visitors through exhibits on Rhode Island History at the Winthrop Aldrich House or acquainting them with the restored elegance of the John Brown House is the part of the staff the public is most likely to encounter, Ms. Roberts feels that a sound training program for the volunteers along with on-going supervision are essential to managing a successful volunteer program. Ms. Roberts and the VIA staff are also at work on a series of assignments that would interest volunteers during the slack periods between leading tours. If there is nothing for them to do but sit around and wait, the program is in danger of losing capable personnel.

**Pawtucket Children's Museum** There are 35,000 visitors to the Children's Museum in Pawtucket, Rhode Island during the course of a year. In groups of five children to one adult they tour the ten rooms of the museum, a rambling Victorian structure, that overlooks the freeway between Pawtucket and Providence. The children take turns touching the

real ice in the ice chest in Grandma's Kitchen, they dress in the costumes hanging in the Let's Pretend Room. In a room painted deep sea colors, they rock in a real row boat. They can get the feel of the instruments in a doctor's clinic and dentist's office.

More than 100 volunteers a week help to make this combination of fun and learning possible. Janet Bralove, head of the museum's education department and project coordinator, has developed a schedule to make the best use of every volunteer's available time. Adults without pre-school children are signed up for the morning, young mothers with babies or small children work the 12:30 to 2:30 shift, teenage volunteers take over in the afternoon.

Increased emphasis on staff training in volunteer administration — from record-keeping to development of job descriptions and recruitment and retention of volunteers — by VIA has helped the museum staff to refine and structure its volunteer program during the past year. Like the Historical Society, the museum wishes to encourage volunteers to travel from Providence or other nearby areas to take part in the program.

**Rhode Island Black Heritage Society** The Black Heritage Society was founded in 1976 under the sponsorship of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Directed by Rowena Stewart, the society is developing archives of books, photographs, newspapers, manuscripts and artifacts related to the black population of Rhode Island. The society uses the help of volunteers in document restoration, cataloging, research, writing and clerical work. Additional volunteers are recruited for receptions and other special events.

# Building on the Basics

While there were institutional differences and regional differences and differences in the groups selected as hard-to-involve, most often the programs involved in the Humanities Project found they were dealing with similar issues and concerns. In the course of meetings and discussion, it also became clear that the problems these programs were encountering in developing a volunteer structure were the difficulties long familiar to the volunteer community. Experienced in working with volunteers and volunteer coordinators from both social service and cultural agencies, Providence's project coordinator Diane Disney observed: "These programs (in the humanities) have the same problems in volunteer administration as any volunteer program. They need the same basic materials on training and job descriptions. The techniques of volunteer administration cut across all volunteer programs."

If volunteer activities are to thrive, leaders agreed that programs must be built solidly on the basics of volunteerism. The staff working with volunteers must know how to enlist and recruit volunteers, how to develop job descriptions, how to retain the services of the people who sign up and to give meaningful recognition. People responsible for volunteer programs need to be aware of the effect volunteers have on paid staff. In addition, staff responsible for volunteer programs function better if they are cognizant of VACs and other resource organizations, both local and national, that will provide help and encouragement.

The 25 programs participating in the project had a variety of experiences around the fundamental issues involved in mounting, directing and carrying forward a volunteer program. Some of those experiences are summarized here.

## The Volunteer Job

What do people who want to volunteer in a museum, library or other cultural institution *do* when they get there? Are they assigned a specific task? Is there a chance they will be sitting around with barely enough to keep busy or scurrying about with no idea of why they are doing what they have been told?

Volunteer management experts state flatly that before an organization starts recruiting volunteers it should know exactly how it will proceed when the recruiting succeeds and ten people are sitting in the waiting room. In her book, *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs*, Marlene Wilson establishes priorities from long experience with what does and doesn't work with volunteers:

It is important to consider job design before recruitment, for you must know *why* you need volunteers before you try to enlist their help. Frequently, however, organizations (especially new ones), concentrate their first efforts on recruitment, in a sort of frenzy to obtain man-power. They come to our Volunteer and Information Center, which serves as a volunteer bureau, and state that they need ten, fifteen — or even fifty volunteers. When we begin to explore this with them in order to determine what these volunteers are to do, there is often a hesitant, general statement such as, "Well we need them to help us get our program off the ground." We then explain we cannot recruit volunteers for them until they provide us with written job descriptions so that we might refer appropriate volunteers.

Recruiting before designing jobs is rather like trying to dance before the music begins. The possibility of ending up out of step is very good indeed.

In Louisville some of the guesswork about volunteer jobs has been eliminated. The brochures produced by several of the Humanities programs provide clear outlines of volunteer jobs that need to be done.

Stage One material exhorts: "Be an ADVOCATE. Here's what you can do."

### HOSPITALITY

Theatre Display — Locate items for and set up attractive displays in the theatre entry hall

Archivist — Collect and maintain photos, news items, and other items of interest relating to Stage One

Gala — Organize and staff the Theatre's semi-annual gala event

Greeting Committee — Serve as the Theatre's representative, meeting VIPs such as guest designers and new actors

Celebration — Organize the theatre family's special end of the year party for Board, Staff, and Advocates only

Babysitting Service — Organize and run cooperative service for Advocates with small children to free them for Advocate activities

#### COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Publicity — Publicize all activities and projects sponsored by the Advocates

Newsletter—Edit and publish regular newsletter with information about all that's happening concerning Stage One and the Advocates

Membership — Assist in Stage One and Advocates annual membership drive

#### THEATRE OPERATIONS

Ushers — Serve as ushers for weekday performances

Box Office — Saturday performances — Serve as box office personnel

Clerical — Serve as clerical personnel either in the office at pre-arranged hours or at home

Technical Pool — Assist theatre personnel with set, prop and costume construction

Locust Grove's brochure provides details on the qualifications and responsibilities of volunteers who wish to serve as guides of the restored plantation.

Tour guiding at Locust Grove is a rewarding and stimulating volunteer position — a way of meeting interesting people from all over the country and abroad and a way of learning new and exciting facts about our colonial heritage.

**POSITION:** The position of docent is that of host and instructor at Locust Grove

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the position is to interpret to the visiting public the history of the home, family, and General Clark; to describe pieces of the collection; and to tell something of the lifestyle of colonial times and frontier Kentucky.

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:** To develop, from supplied resources, an interesting and informative tour of the mansion house, and to conduct said tour for the benefit of visiting guests.

**AUXILIARY RESPONSIBILITIES:** Taking admissions; ensuring the security of the collection; occasional gift shop sales; assisting with light clerical duties such as telephoning, addressing envelopes, etc.

**HOURS:** Two mornings (10:00-1:00) or two afternoons (1:00-4:30) per month are required as minimal. Additional time is welcomed. Punctuality and reliability are essential.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** An interest in history and/or decorative arts. A friendly, out-going personality and courteous behaviour. Dress appropriate to the dignity of the house.

**SUPERVISION:** Docents report directly to the Director or staff member in charge in her absence.

**TRAINING:** Training is provided by Locust Grove in twice-annual class sessions and in on-the-job experience, with printed and taped resources available for study. Throughout the year, enrichment programs are offered from time to time.

Among the first volunteer assignments identified by the Akron-Summit County Public Library was an indexing project to aid in genealogical research. A volunteer with painstaking habits was sought to work with microfilm of obituary pages in an Akron newspaper going back 30 years so that a name file might be established and a new source of information made available. A similar project concerned developing an index to a newly published history of Summit County. As qualifications, it was suggested volunteers be interested in genealogy and have clerical skills. From these descriptions of tasks for which the library expressed a clear need, volunteers were found who were ideally suited to the work. Their enjoyment has matched the library's pleasure in their achievements.

In Washington, the Museum of African Art provides a sheet of information for volunteers interested in its Boutique Africa:

**PURPOSE:** To assist in the Museum's on-going efforts to foster understanding of the African facet of the American heritage, by generating through the sale of African craft, income which is important in off-setting the Museum's annual operating costs. Through the assistance of volunteers the Museum's regular staff is relieved giving them more time to devote to administrative duties.

**SUMMARY OF DUTIES:** The direct job of Boutique volunteers is to manage the Boutique's daily operation through the sale and recording of sales of craft items. This also includes such duties as organizing sales items and keeping the shop in good order and developing a familiarity with the items carried.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Ability to assist customers with friendliness. Execution of good judgment and honesty to prevent thefts.

**PROCEDURE:** Boutique Africa Hours: 12:00-5:00.

Beginning at 11:50 proceed to shop; count bank and put shelves in order, dusting where necessary. Replace items sold from the previous day. Alertness at all times to the possibility of thefts. Assist customers and write up sales slips.

Close shop at 5:00. Count money received and fill out daily accounting forms. Leave shop in order. Turn off lights and heat thermostat. Give all proceeds and keys to manager on duty.

**ORIENTATION AND TRAINING:** One orientation session focusing on Boutique procedures and their proper execution. One briefing on Boutique merchandise — price, place of origin, craft technique, function.

**TIME REQUIRED:** Weekday volunteers, 5 hours per week; weekend volunteers, 5 hours per month.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum has developed specific descriptions for education aides in the areas of anthropology, musicology, early childhood education, botany, art, zoology. All aides are expected to be able to:

- Communicate effectively with the public, especially children, in an informal instructional setting
- Encourage the reticent child to become involved with an activity, or with an exhibit
- Handle in a direct and knowledgeable manner questions pertaining to the Museum in general and questions dealing with Museum activities, exhibits and artifacts. The education aide's knowledge of these concerns must be sufficient to enable the individual to refer a child to the appropriate resource and/or person in the Museum should the child ask a question beyond the capability of the education aide.
- Conduct independent research and study pertinent to the Museum's educational activities and the Museum's collections.

The aide specializing in musicology at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, for example, will have the following specific duties and responsibilities:

Under the supervision of the instructor for Musicology, the educational aide's specific duties and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Maintaining control in the four booths in the museum's musical concept area
- Answering questions concerning all aspects of the contents of the four booths
- Instructing the public on the correct manner of playing the instruments in the booths
- Developing programs for utilizing the musical concept area which include both slide/tape and booths; this will involve additional instruments from our collections
- Assist the instructor for Musicology with school class groups

#### REQUIREMENTS

- An interest in music
- The ability to read at high school level
- A willingness to spend time not only learning about instruments in our concept area but also about cultures the instruments are from

Many of the remaining programs involved in the project have developed workable job descriptions or have begun to delineate assignments they believe lend themselves to volunteer assistance. Agencies have found that the time and thought that go into defining volunteer tasks are more than repaid in performance — the job gets done — and volunteer satisfaction in a definite accomplishment.



## **Finding Volunteers**

Volunteers don't just appear on the scene because they're needed. The right volunteers don't start calling the VAC or ringing the equivalent of an agency's doorbell unless they hear about the VAC or someone tells them about the agency and what it needs. Locating prospective volunteers happens in various ways.

Volunteer Mobile picked newcomers to the city as the group it would contact in a step toward involving the whole community in volunteer activity. Part-time recruiter Ceci Sherman worked from lists provided by a commercial service that gave the names of persons recently moved to Mobile. She made 120 to 150 calls a month to explain about Volunteer Mobile and the opportunity to volunteer in a cultural agency or some other organization of their choosing.

The responses were varied. Almost all were friendly, even when answers were negative. One woman said she would be interested in volunteering after her son started school and she asked Miss Sherman to call her back. A man said he worked 12 hours a day and had no time for volunteering. Another man said he was interested in history and would like further information about the volunteer program at the City Museum. A woman asked for a brochure about the Historic Mobile Preservation Society.

People often told Miss Sherman they appreciated her call. At the close of a conversation, she reported, they frequently said: "I was wondering where to begin. Thanks for your help." For those who were interested, Miss Sherman set up appointments with the VAC to discuss specific placements.

John and Kathryn Stanko, a young couple new to Mobile, were among the more than 40 volunteers placed as a result of the calls from Volunteer Mobile. They have found their work as tour guides at the City Museum an exciting way to get to know Mobile, to meet people and to practice their public speaking. "Our volunteer work has more than met our expectations," John Stanko said. "We are having a wonderful time."

The Stankos signed up at the City Museum several weeks after Miss Sherman's call. "Without the call, we would have done nothing," the young man said. "We needed the invitation, the prodding." He added that people who are moving around suffer from a kind of "future shock" and that volunteering helps them to put down deeper roots.

Volunteer Mobile also contacted new volunteers through a series of

radio and TV spots. Sometimes the focus was on a volunteer working in a cultural organization. The camera moved in close on a volunteer saying:

The things we do best are usually the things we enjoy most. I'm Betty Brown and one of my greatest pleasures is working through Volunteer Mobile as a volunteer at the City Museum.

YOU can do what you enjoy most when you work through Volunteer Mobile! Volunteer Mobile, filling the real needs of our town and our town needs YOU!

In Louisville, the brochures outlining volunteer opportunities were intended to serve as the principal recruiting instruments for Stage One, Locust Grove, the Floyd County Museum and the Restoraid Program of the Preservation Alliance. Because of complex printing problems, the brochures took longer to produce than anticipated and, as yet, it has not been possible to measure their effectiveness. The Louisville programs have thus relied on other means of recruiting.

Stage One, joining the Humanities Project in the middle of the theatre's season, found this a difficult time to interest volunteers. Next season a major recruiting effort is planned in the neighborhood adjacent to the school now housing the theatre. With its brochures and posters available, Stage One anticipates contacting newcomer clubs and working through local organizations and churches to reach families in the immediate neighborhood. The company is also considering introducing itself by putting on a free public performance and inviting local people to attend.

In Washington, members of the audience at GALA, Inc.'s performances are invited to fill out forms if they are interested in volunteering. Those who respond are then recontacted by letter or phone. In September 1978 there was a general meeting for everyone who had indicated interest. More than 100 people attended. Committees were formed from the group to work in such areas as administration, technical, publicity and public relations, newsletter, translating and play reading.

The D.C. Clearinghouse has also been a source of volunteers for GALA. Volunteer Coordinator Raul Rizig noted that one man sent by the Clearinghouse was working out alternate service for a misdemeanor instead of going to jail. "He worked very hard and was a good volunteer," Rizig said. Not all volunteers understand the often frenetic ways of the theatre. These people are not likely to stay, but retention is good among people who accept the ups and downs and thrive on the excite-

ment of each new performance.

At the Capital Children's Museum Coordinator Mildred Jones jokes that she recruits volunteers by standing in the street and striking up conversations with people. She also finds volunteers by talking with visitors to the museum, working through the VAC, attending museum parties and talking with the guests. Like the GALA theatre, the Children's Museum also helps misdemeanants perform volunteer service as an alternative to going to jail. Mrs. Jones works with other "transitional volunteers" such as persons returning to the community after a period of mental hospitalization. She is aware that these volunteers need special understanding and protection, but she also knows from experience that they are capable of doing excellent work.

Some prestigious cultural settings, for example the National Collection of Fine Arts of the Smithsonian Institution, have a waiting list of volunteers. In this case, the problem is not to find enough volunteers, but rather a varied group of volunteers. Reaching the black and Hispanic populations of Washington and conveying the wish for volunteer recruits from these as well as traditional white middle class groups means the museum's volunteer program must engage in active outreach.

In Akron as in Mobile, the Humanities Project has enabled the Voluntary Action Center to hire a staff member to devote attention to recruiting volunteers for cultural assignments. In a tiny office in the crowded but carefully organized VAC headquarters, Cynthia Bohmer answers responses to requests for volunteers published in the newspaper. Ms. Bohmer has emphasized assignments in the library and historical society but she does suggest other organizations if the caller asks for additional information. She is pleased to have recently recruited a horticulturist who will draw plans for an 18th century garden for the Historical Society.

Akron's VAC Director Hope Bair believes it takes imaginative approaches to involve groups of people new to volunteerism. Senior citizens, for example, comprise one of the city's hard-to-involve groups. One way of reaching them has been to ask the Tenant Council of the Metropolitan Housing Authority to assist in the search. Another idea is to interview every tenant in one of the city's highrise apartments for the elderly. Mrs. Bair suggests putting up signs in the lobby and elevators and then being on the spot to talk with people for as long as it takes.

When she first went to work for New York's Morris-Jumel Mansion in the early '70's, Jane Crowley remembers it was next to impossi-

ble to recruit volunteers from the immediate neighborhood. The elderly residents of this quiet black community found it hard to realize that changes were occurring and that the elitist policies of past decades had been displaced. Mrs. Crowley rang many doorbells. She visited the local churches and invited pastors to visit the property. She recalls that as she tried to persuade members of the community to volunteer, she found herself admonishing, "You know you don't want to be stereotyped, so please don't stereotype us. Work with us and you will find things have really changed."

The Mansion has continuing problems. The roof leaks, there are drainage difficulties and the threat of termites. But the community is no longer hostile. Apparently it has taken the old house to its heart. "You have to do an incredible amount to involve the community," Jane Crowley said. She is very proud that most Morris-Jumel volunteers come from the neighborhood.

On Long Island, the Hall of Science has been in contact with a variety of resources in recruiting its 120 volunteers. These include the Queens branch of the Mayor's Voluntary Action Center, the Second Careers program for older persons sponsored by the VAC and newspaper articles. In addition, like the GALA theatre in Washington, the science museum hands out forms so that visitors may note their interest in volunteering.

While the recent reorganization of the American Crafts Council has resulted in less active recruitment of volunteers, plans were formulating to involve more elderly people in the near future. Older volunteers will be sought through ads in the newspaper and by direct contacts with nearby churches and retirement homes. Barbara Cohn, director of volunteers, stressed her belief that the senior volunteer prefers to volunteer close to home, and she has developed a recruitment strategy accordingly.

The John Brown Mansion, headquarters of the Rhode Island Historical Society, sits on the slope of Providence's East Side. Its neighbors are other large and historic homes. Unlike many organizations involved in the Humanities Project, the Historical Society does not make the recruitment of volunteers from its immediate community a first priority. Fighting the elitism issue, it is reaching out to a wider public. Coordinator Laura Roberts says that so far only a few volunteers have been referred directly by VIA, which she feels attracts primarily people

oriented to social services; however, the VIA newspaper column describing volunteer opportunities with the Historical Society has been productive.

At the Pawtucket Children's Museum, a 15-minute drive from the center of Providence, coordinator Janet Bralove talked about recruiting. "It is important to stretch your mind to think of who can meet your need," she said. "Be practical as well and go after who is available. If your program is next to a high school then recruit high school students.

A highly visible and popular institution, the Children's Museum receives many calls from people who want to volunteer. In addition the staff has worked to keep the adult and teenage volunteers who helped to open the museum involved in its continuing operation. VIA has also helped, and Ms. Bralove has been resourceful. Volunteers who stop volunteering in the late weeks of pregnancy are called months later to see if they will come back, bringing the baby along if they wish. So far a five-month-old baby has been honored as the Children's Museum's youngest volunteer. Another tactic, Ms. Bralove explained, has been to ask volunteers to recruit their friends and the friends of friends.

Ms. Bralove also wrote to all the local junior high schools explaining the program and requesting volunteers. "We got some of their worst students and it turned out that they were wonderful volunteers," she said. "They needed us, just as we needed them. They found they had hidden talents. It worked instantly. The majority have been boys. Now their counselors call us and tell us it has really made a difference for these kids to find out how good they are with children."

Another season Ms. Bralove plans to do even more specialized recruiting. "I'll be looking for volunteers to do workshops for children in arts and crafts, and it looks as if I'll need a volunteer to be my assistant," she said.

## **Learning the Job**

Everyone agrees volunteers should be trained for the work they will be doing. Museum tour guides must learn history and practice public speaking. In libraries, volunteers assigned research projects must become acquainted with methods and resources. In a children's museum, the adults who are helping must learn about a child's attention span and how to make the material come to life. Training may consist of a brief one-to-one orientation, pointing out where to hang a coat, showing the person where to sit, introducing staff and then going into the details of

the job. Sometimes training is as complex as a college course. Some museums even require that volunteers take specific college courses before they may serve as docents. At least one museum, as an inducement, pays the cost of such courses.

The itinerary for the training of docents at the National Archives runs for two pages. The first month of intensive sessions is followed by an apprenticeship period with monthly business/education meetings. Trips, programs and workshops may also be added to the volunteers' schedules from time to time. Because of the extended and detailed training that is part of the program, docents are asked to sign up for two years.

Volunteer coordinator Nancy Mannes informs prospective docents that the entire success of the tour program in this government facility depends on the ability and dedication of the program's volunteers. The literature available to prospective volunteers describes the essential qualifications for docents as including:

an interest in people, especially children, as so many of our tours are school tours; an interest in history and research; and an interest in education. Teaching experience is valuable. Enthusiasm and an interest in learning and sharing this learning are equally important. Finally, the docent program requires a real commitment on the part of the volunteers. Although your tour time commitment is only three hours a week, you will be attending extra workshops and studying and researching in addition. We have found that those who put the most time and effort into the program get the greatest reward from the program and we are looking for persons who are looking for this kind of challenge.

One morning training session for volunteers at the National Archives centered on the preservation of documents and on genealogical research for half the group during the afternoon while the rest toured major exhibits. The 20 volunteers included two men. There were young, middle-aged and older women. Most volunteers took notes industriously as James Gear, director of the Preservation Services Division, guided them past employees who were sitting on high stools and carefully piecing together fragments of documents. He instructed the group about the humidifying room, the laminating presses, the detoxification of acid-based inks. Mr. Gear said that as of that very day he had been working in the Archives for 29 years and that during all that time he had gone on learning constantly. He talked with the volunteers and answered

their questions as if he expected they would be doing the same.

During a lunch break, the volunteers talked about their reasons for signing up for the program:

- A former teacher said she had joined the Archives program to keep her finger in things. She felt the docent program was in keeping with her personality and background. She thought she might especially enjoy it because she missed teaching and here she would be involved with groups of children in a new way.

- A retired lawyer said that he had begun his volunteer career at the Folger Shakespeare Library, that now he was taking the Archives training and that he planned to do both assignments. His volunteer work will be unrelated to anything he has done previously. He was very enthusiastic about the Archives' training and placement program. He believed strongly that a volunteer has to be given a worthwhile job to retain him. "Too often," he said, "a volunteer is given tedious work of no value. If the volunteers lose interest, the fault lies with the staff that does not delegate responsibility."

- A volunteer said her husband's job had brought the family to Washington from Texas and she had left behind her job as a history teacher. She felt that working at the Archives was a way of keeping up professionally until she could resume her career.

As the morning training session came to a close, a volunteer addressed herself to any lingering doubts. "I know several people who have gone through the Archives' training program and have been working at their assignments and they are just as enthusiastic now as when they started," she said.

Not more than a mile away from the Archives and a block from Washington's Union Station, the Capital Children's Museum is holding a one-day introduction and training session. The mood is relaxed and informal. There are coffee and doughnuts to start the morning and a lunch brought from home by staff members to finish it. Seven volunteers are on hand for the training; most of them have already been working at the museum. One newcomer to the group says she is "shopping around" at different places until she finds the right volunteer spot. Most of the volunteers are black. The group is joined by five women from Texas who toured the museum the day before and want to learn more about the volunteer program since they are hoping to open a children's museum in San Antonio.

There is a slide show to acquaint the volunteers, as it does museum

visitors, with the Mexican exhibit they will see. Like the children, volunteers are given the opportunity to explore and discover things for themselves. Staff members are at hand to answer questions. Volunteer Coordinator Mildred Jones believes it is helpful to involve staff in training sessions because staff members know the weaknesses as well as the strong points of any given aspect of the program and will help volunteers to avoid pitfalls.

Downstairs on a wall with pictures and information about the Children's Museum, there is a neatly typed statement by a volunteer, age 16: "I'm learning about a lot of things that I know something about, but I didn't have a real understanding."

"We hope that something like this is happening here today," says the trainer as the group moves upstairs for informal conversation with the staff and lunch.

In Pawtucket, Rhode Island, Janet Bralove has developed two training packets for volunteers at the Children's Museum — one for adults and one for teenagers.

"Why Aides?" inquires a headline at the start of instructions for teenage volunteers. The response reads:

Aides are needed because most people who visit us think this is an unusual place. They may agree with our beliefs but they don't know what each exhibit has or what they are expected to do in it. Aides *do* know the museum. You know what we expect from visitors — that they are free to touch and learn but not destroy. You *are* the museum to most visitors. They don't know who planned the exhibits or what we wanted to happen — they only know the person who is there to help them when they visit. That makes you very important.

Additional information is provided on "what aides do" — helping adults and children play together and use exhibits fully, introducing items which people may not be familiar with and showing how to use them correctly, helping to keep order, reporting problems to the person in charge, opening exhibit areas and cleaning up after closing.

A bright rose-colored sheet spells out rules for the young aides that include:

- Stay in your room at all times.
- Visitors are our *most* important people. Stop any cleaning, socializing or other activity to help them.
- Work begins at 2:30 (3:00 at the very latest) on weekdays and at 12:45 on Saturdays and Sundays. It ends at 5:00.



- Children are to be talked to and smiled at. Give *every* child this attention.
- Everything you do reflects the Children's Museum. *Think* before you do anything which could be uncomfortable for anyone else—especially a visitor.

Each aide is given a set of different colored sheets with instructions on suggested activities for a particular room as well as outlining appropriate steps in opening, closing and cleaning that room.

Along with written materials for study and reference, museum staff provides continual on-the-job training. The expectation is that adults will know how to handle people, teenagers will need help with interaction skills. For young volunteers to be and feel successful, they will need constant supervision, Ms. Bralove stressed.

The Brooklyn Children's Museum, which provides extensive training for the interns who work in its Planned Learning Environment (PLE), also found it necessary to set the following guidelines for behavior — “call them rules if you like.” The memo reads:

- No eating within the museum applies to *everyone*. No one is to be eating, drinking or anything of the sort out in the PLE. This includes gum chewing, candy nibbling, etc.
- For purposes of dignity, we ask that you are prudent in choosing your attire for working within the PLE. Above all, PLEASE DRESS NEATLY! Tailored jeans are fine. Any clothing which is ripped or in need of a good washing is simply not suitable. Also, no T-shirts please. It is easier to demand respect from others if your appearance shows them that you respect them. A neat appearance is a demonstration of respect for those you come in contact with.
- Please do not wear any buttons, etc. indicating any type of cause (political, religious, etc.). BCM is a public institution.
- All breaks should be taken off the floor. Please do not socialize with others in the PLE while you are on your break. If you wish to remain in the PLE during your break, then please be constructive about it. Do not prevent others from doing what they have to!
- If you are working with an exhibit, please stand tall! For example, do not sit on the air generator while you are doing an activity at the air lift. Etc., etc.
- Please limit all socializing to the Commons. The staff library is not for social gatherings. It is for researching or reading.
- When speaking to the public it is essential that you maintain a proper attitude. Please speak properly and do be courteous. If you have a problem, then see the floor manager.

## Keeping Volunteers

The staff of programs taking part in the Humanities Project understood the importance of recognizing the value of volunteers as an essential step

to retaining their services.

For example, the Morris-Jumel Mansion holds special receptions for its volunteers following some of the weddings and receptions that supply the historic home with needed funds. The volunteers are asked to bring their families. There has been a good turnout and the parties appear to be enjoyed by all.

At the Pawtucket Children's Museum Janet Bralove summed up her experience in planning for volunteer recognition by saying, "Listen to your volunteers. They will tell you what they want." The museum's staff was talking about a wine and cheese party to celebrate the end of a year of service. The volunteers preferred a pot luck supper and the decision was left to them.

Celebrations are fun, but other forms of recognition often turn out to be at least if not more important. Clear job descriptions, a well structured program, an understanding volunteer coordinator are built-in ways of letting volunteers know their work is valued. Encouraging volunteers to use their initiative is the type of appreciation that will particularly compliment some volunteers. At the Locust Grove historic house in Louisville, volunteers with experience and imagination are encouraged to develop tours of their own. As a volunteer who has taken on the taxing job of volunteer coordinator at Stage One in Louisville, Sandra Holden has been recognized as a person capable of handling responsibility piled on responsibility.

At the Brooklyn Children's Museum capable volunteers have been awarded new roles, some have become interns and a few of these have continued into paid staff positions. Raul Rizig first worked with the GALA theatre in Washington as a volunteer and later joined the staff as volunteer coordinator. On the strength of her volunteer work at the Pawtucket Children's Museum, a volunteer found the paying job she needed.

### **The Role of the Voluntary Action Centers**

All the VACs that agreed to participate in the Humanities Project have been supportive of the experiment. Each has been active in devising ways to bring a larger public to serve in cultural institutions. VAC directors have made themselves available for consultation. Often the VAC has served as the link between programs jostled by similar problems that might not otherwise have known to turn to each other for

commiseration and guidance.

Among the major contributions of the VACs have been their aid in publicizing the program and in conducting training programs on basic techniques and principles of working with volunteers.

**Public Relations** In Mobile one of the first things VAC Director Dil Hobbs did after receiving the grant was to write a letter to the mayor and two city commissioners, describing the project and the VAC's plans and goals. *The Mobile Press Register* was supplied with updates on the progress of the project and responded with a feature story as well as including recruitment information in its regular column, Volunteer Anyone? Other local publications were contacted and responded with coverage. Mrs. Hobbs was also a breakfast and luncheon speaker on numerous occasions and a special guest on TV talk shows. In addition, five 30-second TV spots promoted by Volunteer Mobile were aired between major network shows and proved successful in recruiting qualified volunteers. The spots are expected to remain useful after the grant ends.

In Louisville announcements about volunteer activities and opportunities in general go out to eight suburban newspapers, five TV stations and 22 radio stations. These sources have been used for information about the humanities programs as well. Across the river, stories about the Floyd County Museum program are covered in the local New Albany, Indiana newspaper. The brochures developed with funds from the project and technical assistance from the VAC are intended to serve as both recruiting and public relations tools during and after the grant period. Akron published a brochure to help recruiting in its library and historic mansion.

In Providence an issue of *Volunteer Voices*, a four-page newsletter put out by VIA was devoted to a description of VIA's involvement with the Humanities Project along with articles describing the three agencies participating. Each story closed with the name of the coordinator, address and telephone number to help in making appointments for interviews. In addition, news stories, an open house, participation in community events have contributed to the project's visibility.

The D.C. Clearinghouse put out bilingual public service announcements. "Do you enjoy the Arts? Have you ever wanted to work with professionals in theatres or museums" reads one release. "*Le gusta las bellas artes? Le facina el teatro, el baile moderno, el ballet* " begins its companion. Those interested, whichever language they speak, are

invited to call the D.C. Clearinghouse.

Several events, which would have afforded considerable publicity, have been postponed to later dates. One was the all-day training event planned by VIA for humanities personnel from all over Rhode Island. The second was a volunteer fair for a number of Washington humanities programs that the D.C. Clearinghouse has now scheduled for the fall of 1979. Last minute administrative and weather difficulties necessitated the change of dates.

**Training** In all six cities VACs have made a basic contribution to the cultural programs invited to take part in the project — their experience. While the programs were at varying stages of development, every participating organization has voiced approval of the training events — meetings, workshops, seminars and field trips — sponsored by the VACs. Volunteer programs that had worked out successful procedures were willing to share with newcomers to the field. There was a chance for everyone to learn from each other. The VACs were effective in providing the practical and theoretical aspects of volunteering so that some mistakes could be avoided and other sound practices followed.

VIA's planning and training sessions for the Rhode Island Historical Society, Rhode Island Black Heritage Society and Pawtucket Children's Museum included meetings in the program's respective facilities, a workshop on developing job descriptions, another workshop on recruitment techniques, a meeting to plan brochures. The Rhode Island group also made trips to visit other agencies involved in the project in Boston and New York.

The Mayor's VAC in New York concentrated on orienting agencies involved in the Humanities Project to volunteer management techniques. Efforts included monthly meetings convened by the VAC for an exchange of successes and problems in the area of top administrative commitment, recruitment and public relations on a shoestring. Workshops were conducted on volunteer motivation, cross-cultural relations, public relations and the media. In Akron, topics discussed by the VAC and agencies' staffs have included volunteer-staff relations, program development and volunteer management. Agency staff, in turn, organized internal meetings to stress the need for greater numbers of volunteers, better management of volunteers and creative job development for volunteers.

Volunteer coordinators of the Washington programs feel the training sessions offered by the D.C. Clearinghouse are valuable, including

discussions on the recruitment and retention of volunteers, developing job descriptions and program development. At the Museum of African Art, Mary Lynn Perry found both the exchange of information and the interaction with others in the group to be helpful. "You find people with the same problems with their programs, and it helps to share," she said.

Louisville programs looked forward to meeting with an expert on how to work productively with a board of directors. In Mobile, VAC and program staff spoke in glowing terms of a workshop on volunteer/staff relations conducted by a specialist earlier in the spring. Members of the project's Advisory Council have been sought for speaking and consulting engagements.

VAC and agency leaders were also brought together for meetings in Washington to explore common problems and develop new approaches to structuring volunteer programs. In September the whole group met to make plans and exchange ideas. In December 1978 the VAC leaders brought each other up to date, while three months later the entire group of program coordinators and VAC directors met to consider achievements and continuing needs under the grant. In both local and regional meetings participants frequently found themselves breaking new ground as they sought to determine the gap, if indeed there was a gap at all, between the structure of programs for volunteers in the humanities or those in the social services. They paid heed both to the obstacles confronting good volunteer programming and to the accomplishments that had been made.

# NEW FACES IN PUBLIC PLACES

It takes time and a concentrated effort to convince people who, until recently, were excluded or felt themselves excluded from taking active roles in their community's cultural enterprises that they are now welcomed as volunteers. The pace is slow; nevertheless, gradually, more of a mix of people is giving ability and energy to museums and libraries, theatres, historic sites and other cultural environments. In the case of the 25 programs whose efforts to bring new faces to public places were spurred by the Humanities Project, the doors that were open have opened wider and those that were closed now stand ajar.

In March 1979, representatives from the six VACs and the participating programs met in Washington to discuss problems encountered in reaching their goals as well as to share achievements. During this informal exchange of information, the group developed a list of the obstacles that had most frequently blocked efforts at effective volunteer programming. The group kept track of accomplishments as well.

The following list of difficulties and successes encountered during the Humanities Project includes items mentioned during the March meeting as well as additional observations made by VAC leaders and program participants in the ensuing months.

## **Obstacles**

Often the problems that confronted each program seemed like individual disasters, without precedent. However, opportunities to learn about the experiences of other organizations in shaping volunteer programs always resulted in a sharing of common ground. Obstacles to smooth function and effective volunteer programs did not disappear because exchanged,

but persons responsible for those programs found they were more likely to think the problems surmountable when tackled with their peers. Major difficulties included the following:

- Organizational decision-makers — directors and boards — may fail to understand the need for a volunteer coordinator, either a full-time or part-time staff member, to be responsible for running a program. This staff person may be a paid or volunteer coordinator. If no one is assigned responsibility for the program, it is very likely to be concluded that the organization does not value volunteers.
- Staff members assigned to coordinate volunteer programs without a realistic appraisal of the time and energy involved will have problems in doing any part of their job well. In museums the job of volunteer coordinator often is given to the director of education, who is already in charge of a busy department. The need to do too many things at once works to the detriment of all assignments.
- The general lack of staff in many humanities institutions leaves little time for the training, supervision and recognition fundamental to successful volunteer programs.
- Some limitations to program design are implicit in the nature of volunteerism. Expectations of what volunteers can accomplish must be in line with these realities. For example, volunteers have other responsibilities, such as job and family obligations, that have priority. At times, this means they will not be able to keep volunteer commitments. Schedules need to be flexible and, in some cases, a system of substitutes may be necessary. Also, volunteers who work part of one day once a week or once every two weeks may have trouble keeping up with an agency's day-to-day operation, even when such information is important to their assignments.
- The potential for tension between volunteers who have been working with an institution over a long period of time and newly recruited volunteers should not be disregarded. The hostile feelings of some entrenched volunteers may even extend to staff members. The director of one small museum reported that when she asked a volunteer to do a simple job, the woman replied that she was a volunteer, that she had been a volunteer for many years, and that she didn't have to do it.
- One volunteer coordinator was troubled that members of her organization's board of directors did not think of themselves as volunteers. She hoped to bring in a trainer experienced in working with boards who might help them see themselves in the volunteer role.

- Procedures to evaluate the work of volunteers are generally lacking along with a reluctance on the part of many cultural institutions to hold volunteers accountable. As a result, volunteers who are unable or unwilling to perform assigned duties are rarely dismissed.
- Staff resistance to volunteers tends to flourish unless it is recognized. Training is essential to helping staff members who feel threatened by the changes implicit in volunteer programming. Dealing with staff concerns sympathetically and realistically may mean the difference between support or sabotage of the volunteer program.

Such obstacles to developing an effective volunteer program are not unique to the humanities. One of the major challenges to volunteer programming in every area—education, social services, the arts—is the development of a give-and-take relationship between paid and volunteer staff that is based on understanding, mutual respect and the consistent application of mutually agreed-upon standards. As indicated in the listing of accomplishments that follows, the successful program must deal with these complaints. The programs that work best are those that give volunteers the opportunity to best utilize their capabilities. Volunteers who are treated professionally act in a professional manner, but too few institutions and agencies in any field provide the professional support that volunteers should expect: comprehensive orientation to the agency, a full understanding of their role and responsibility, any needed skill training, supervision, insurance and expense reimbursement and regular evaluation based on previously agreed upon guidelines.

## **Accomplishments**

VAC leaders working with the project believed that in general there had been an expansion in the public quality of the programs involved. By dint of special effort, programs were made attractive to a wider community and volunteers were drawn from new sources. Achievements, such as those that follow, have made such gain possible:

- Because of the additional time and money afforded by the Humanities Project, organizations have developed volunteer *programs*, solid structures that replaced previously scattered handling of volunteer activities. In most cases this involved an administrative overhaul and a redefinition of the needs of the institution that led to appropriate volunteer job descriptions and placement criteria, recognition of the special needs of humanities institutions and the unique needs of each organization, the realization that volunteers must be recruited, trained



and evaluated and that this requires staff time and energy, the understanding that recognition is an integral part of a successful volunteer program.

- Volunteer coordinators have learned to be more effective by satisfying the needs of volunteers through selective placement, being honest and open with volunteers, learning to say "no" to potential volunteers who do not suit the needs of the institution.
- The identification of the appropriate community from which to draw volunteers has helped recruiting efforts. Pinpointing target groups has meant that requests for volunteers could be directed rather than diffused.
- Staff gives particularly high marks to the development of channels of communication between program and program, between the VAC and the individual programs and with the National Center for Voluntary Action and all the local components of the project.

The new understanding that resulted from the interchange of information was a benefit mentioned many times over by participants in the Humanities Project. The director of Volunteer Mobile, Dil Hobbs, felt the project had brought the volunteer directors of the various programs much closer together. At meetings scheduled every six weeks they discussed similar problems — how to write a job description, for instance, how to handle staff reluctance to volunteers they hoped to place. Mrs. Hobbs also felt that the Humanities Project had helped the entire Volunteer Mobile Program. "It has made us stronger and provided a new range of volunteering," she said. "When someone calls and says, 'I want to do some volunteer work with children,' now we can suggest the person call a museum in addition to schools or the other places we usually say."

With the help of volunteers, Volunteer Mobile is continuing to contact newcomers to the city, the endeavor started by part-time recruiter Ceci Sherman. Ending her employment, Miss Sherman in turn has signed on as a volunteer at Carlen House. "The grant got us started," Mrs. Hobbs said. "It helped us to get things off the ground and now it's up to us to keep things going."

Prior to the Humanities Project, some of the programs that were selected had been unaware of the local VAC, others knew such an agency existed, but had never asked for its assistance. Providence coordinator Diane Disney thought it had been useful to all concerned that

the programs were in touch with VIA and called each other when they needed help. The three Providence organizations were willing to cooperate whenever possible, she said. The agencies put out a flyer jointly to recruit people who had recently retired. They had also begun recommending qualified volunteers to each other's programs.

In New York the workshops sponsored by the Mayor's VAC and by the Department of Cultural Affairs were considered assets by participants. Such meetings brought together program staff from scattered locations and provided a chance to exchange experiences and information. Frank Sellitto from the Brooklyn Children's Museum said he particularly appreciated the opportunity to concentrate on one topic at a time — interviewing, working with high school students, for example — with a general presentation followed by small groups and role playing.

Joan Munzer from New York's Hall of Science found all the meetings — both those close to home and those in Washington — helpful to her work with volunteers. "Talking to friends or to strangers with similar problems helps you to crystallize your own," she said.

To open up volunteer opportunities in the public humanities for everyone and to communicate this policy to the whole community requires a substantial investment of time, funds, planning and determination. The elitist tradition is deep-rooted. It will be dislodged only by conviction on the part of the institution, its staff and present volunteers that programs will be better served by taking action to recruit and retain new volunteers who are representative of the whole community.

# Addenda

## Project Participants

### Mobile, Alabama

Dil Hobbs  
Executive Director  
Cecile Sherman  
Project Administrator  
Volunteer Mobile, Inc.  
P.O. Box 6184  
Mobile, AL 36606  
(205) 479-0631

Jo Ann Cox  
Project Coordinator  
City Museum System  
(City Museum and Carlen House)  
355 Government Street  
Mobile, AL 36602  
(205) 438-7569

Cynthia Rush  
Executive Director  
Historic Mobile Preservation Society  
(Landmark Hall and Oakleigh)  
1005 Government Street  
Mobile, AL 36604  
(205) 433-5119

Anna Bantens  
Project Coordinator  
Mobile Historic  
Development Commission  
P.O. Box 1827  
Mobile, AL 36601  
(205) 438-7281

### Louisville, Kentucky

Mary Sullivan  
Coordinator  
Voluntary Action Center  
207 West Market  
Louisville, KY 40202  
(502) 583-2821

Jer Sample  
Director  
Floyd County Museum  
201 East Spring Street  
New Albany, IN 47150  
(812) 944-7336

Gertrude Bleisch  
Director  
Locust Grove  
561 Blankenbaker Lane  
Louisville, KY 40207  
(502) 897-9845

Wendy Nicholas  
Project Coordinator  
Preservation Alliance  
(Restoraid)  
712 West Main Street  
Louisville, KY 40202  
(502) 583-8622

Jenan Dorman  
General Manager  
Sandra Holden  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Stage One: The Louisville Children's Theatre  
2117 Payne Street  
Louisville, KY 40206  
(502) 895-9486

### Washington, D.C.

Ruth Sloate  
Executive Director  
Lastenia Brathwaite  
Assistant to the Executive Director  
Volunteer Clearinghouse of  
the District of Columbia  
2424 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20037  
(202) 333-0455

Mildred Jones  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Capital Children's Museum  
800 Third Street, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 544-2244

Carmella Mazzatta  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Crispus Attucks Park of the Arts  
77 U Street, Rear  
Washington DC 20001  
(202) 232-4552

Raul Rizig  
Volunteer Coordinator  
GALA Hispanic Theatre  
2319 18th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20009  
(202) 462-3032

Mary Lynn Perry  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Museum of African Art  
316 A Street, N.E.  
Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 547-6222

Nancy Mannes  
Volunteer Coordinator  
National Archives  
Education Division  
Room G-9  
Washington, DC 20408  
(202) 523-3183

Nora Panzer  
Volunteer Coordinator  
National Collection of Fine Arts  
Smithsonian Institution  
8th and G Streets, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20560  
(202) 381-6541

Jay Williams  
Director  
Paul Robeson International Center  
1632 O Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 483-7773

### **Akron, Ohio**

Hope Bair  
Executive Director  
Cynthia Bohmer  
Referral Specialist  
Voluntary Action Center of  
Summit County, Inc.  
326 Locust Street, Suite 213  
Akron, OH 44302  
(216) 762-8991

Steven Hawk  
Librarian-Assistant Director  
Akron-Summit County Public Library  
55 South Main Street  
Akron, OH 44326  
(216) 762-7621

James Strider  
Director  
The Summit County Historical Society  
550 Copley Road  
Akron, OH 44320  
(216) 535-1120

### **New York, New York**

Joan Simon  
Associate Director  
Mayor's Voluntary Action Center  
61 Chambers Street  
New York, NY 10007  
(212) 566-5952

Barbara Cohn  
Director of Volunteers  
Rufus Crown  
Volunteer Coordinator  
American Crafts Council  
22 West 55th Street  
New York, NY 10019  
(212) 397-0604

Frank Sellitto  
Project Coordinator  
Brooklyn Children's Museum  
145 Brooklyn Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11213  
(212) 735-4400

Joan Munzer  
Director of Education  
Hall of Science of the City of New York  
Flushing Meadow Park  
111th Street & 48th Avenue  
Corona, NY 11368  
(212) 699-9400

Joyce Cini  
Director  
Jacques Marchais Center of Tibetan Art  
P.O. Box 296  
Staten Island, NY 10306  
(212) 727-2727

Jane Sullivan Crowley  
Director  
Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum  
West 160th Street & Edgecombe Avenue  
New York, NY 10032  
(212) WA3-8008

Susan Nicosia  
Coordinator of Volunteer Services  
Department of Cultural Affairs  
City of New York  
830 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021  
(212) 360-8125

## **Providence, Rhode Island**

Betsy Garland  
Executive Director  
Volunteers in Action, Inc.  
229 Waterman Street  
Providence, RI 02906  
(401) 421-7472

Diane Disney  
Consultant, Project Director  
Disney Lightfoot Lee Ltd.  
490-C Angel Street  
Providence, RI 02906  
(401) 272-1018

Janet Bralove  
Exhibit Staff Coordinator  
The Children's Museum  
58 Walcott Street  
Pawtucket, RI 02860  
(401) 726-2590

Rowena Stewart  
Director  
Rhode Island Black Heritage Society  
45 Hamilton Street  
Providence, RI 02907  
(401) 461-5340

Laura Roberts  
Curator for Education  
Rhode Island Historical Society  
52 Power Street  
Providence, RI 02906  
(401) 331-8575

## **Advisory Council**

Daniel Perrino  
Associate Dean  
College of Fine & Applied Arts  
University of Illinois  
110 Architecture Building  
Urbana, IL 61801

Shirley Franklin  
Director  
Bureau of Cultural Affairs  
317 Marietta Street, N.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Connie Wyrick  
2616 West 16th Street  
Wilmington, DE 19806

Miriam Pineo Johnson  
Director of Volunteers  
American Museum of Natural History  
Central Park West at 79th Street  
New York, NY 10024

Katina Leodas  
Consultant  
2 O'Leary Way  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

## Book List

These and other books devoted to effective volunteer programming may be obtained by writing for the *Volunteer Readership* catalog giving current prices and mailing information. Send requests to: *Volunteer Readership*, VOLUNTEER, Post Office Box 1807, Boulder, CO 80306.

### *Effective Management of Volunteer Programs* by Marlene Wilson.

The author discusses management theories about leadership, motivation, organizational climate, planning and evaluation, and delegation, and then applies them to the tasks that most often confront the volunteer coordinator. Volunteer job design, volunteer supervision, recruitment, volunteer staff training and interoffice communication are among the topics explored.

### *Winning with Staff: A New Look at Staff Support for Volunteers* by Ivan H. Scheier.

Dr. Scheier develops seven specific, practical strategies to deal with the all too frequent problem of agency staff that does not support the agency's volunteer program. The approaches discussed include: staff rewards, staff participation and a role shift for volunteer leadership, volunteer job diversification, and training and education.

### *Effective Leadership in Voluntary Organizations: How to Make the Greatest Use of Citizen Service and Influence* by Brian O'Connell.

This handbook provides specific guidelines on such basic topics as: fundraising; constructive planning, fulfilling the role of organization president; the distinction between volunteers' roles and the functions of staff; involvement of minorities; dealing with controversy, dissent and disruption; evaluation; and the charting of new directions.

### *People Approach: Nine New Strategies for Citizen Volunteer Involvement*, by Ivan H. Scheier.

This book sets forth the position that volunteering will be reinvigorated by specific strategies more closely approaching people's natural styles in helping. By relearning and applying to today's world the forms of helping out that have always gone in families and neighborhoods, volunteer activity may be revitalized.

### *How To Do It "Kit": Aids for Volunteer Administration*

This collection of 14 publications designed for leaders of community-based volunteer programs includes: *Local Fund Development*, *Recruiting Volunteers*, *Community Needs and Resources Assessment Guidebook* and *Telling Your Story: Ideas for Local Publicity*. Also included are: a summary of "Rights and Responsibilities in Volunteer Relationships," a guide for staff who work with volunteers and an article outlining a successful campaign to recruit male volunteers.

### *Releasing the Potential of the Older Volunteer* by the Andrus Gerontology Center.

This monograph describes the evolution of a successful older volunteer program at the Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center. It deals with the benefits of involving senior volunteer personnel and the costs of tapping this resource as well as the theoretical and practical aspects of work in later life.

## **VOLUNTEER**

### **The National Center for Citizen Involvement**

**VOLUNTEER:** The National Center for Citizen Involvement was established on July 2, 1979, the result of the merger of the National Center for Voluntary Action and the National Information Center on Volunteerism. VOLUNTEER offers the most comprehensive array of services, resources and capabilities available to volunteer-involving organizations today. VOLUNTEER maintains offices in Washington, D.C. and Boulder, Colorado.

*Leadership Development*—Offering both basic skill-building training and advanced curricula designed to meet specific needs, VOLUNTEER training events attract over 5,000 participants annually.

*Organizational Development*—Through consultation and evaluation services VOLUNTEER assists a wide range of organizations—Voluntary Action Centers, state offices of volunteerism, corporations—in developing and maintaining effective volunteer programs. With grant support from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, VOLUNTEER provides training and consultation in management and program development to over 80 local recipients of grants from the Community Anti-Crime Program.

*Network Building and Information Exchange*—Serving as a bridge between the various segments of the volunteer community, VOLUNTEER publishes the quarterly journal/magazine *Voluntary Action Leadership*, the advocacy-related newsletter *Volunteering*, and the bi-monthly *Newsline* as well as technical assistance and program-oriented publications. Through its *Volunteer Readership* catalog, VOLUNTEER offers publications on virtually all program and management areas.

*Model Development and Demonstration*—VOLUNTEER has created a series of local demonstration projects demonstrating innovative ways volunteer programs can be structured and ways in which individuals not traditionally involved may become involved in their communities.

*Policy-Issue Analysis and Research*—VOLUNTEER actively studies and monitors legislation and regulations affecting the voluntary sector and shares this information regularly with local leaders and with other national voluntary organizations.

*Public Awareness*—Through the National Volunteer Activist Awards and by sponsoring National Volunteer Week, VOLUNTEER focuses public attention on the indispensable role private citizens play in problem-solving.

*Citizen Mobilization*—VOLUNTEER plays a leading role in motivating Americans to become involved in volunteer activity and in developing the structures which will insure the effectiveness of that involvement.

To be placed on VOLUNTEER's mailing list, please write:

VOLUNTEER  
Post Office Box 4179  
Boulder, Colorado 80302