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FOUR FUTURES FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATORS Avenues of Enrichment and Growth

Two questions to consider throughout this discussion - and only you can answer them for yourself: (1) What is the most meaningful definition of professional growth for me: more status/power? More challenge? More financial compensation? Some mix of these, and if so, in what balance? (2) To what extent do I define myself (a) in terms of target group - "I work with volunteers" or "I work with hospital volunteers" versus (b) in terms of functions performed - I am a trainer, motivator, communicator, etc. (regardless of who I work with).

Four Futures

1. Exclusively as Volunteer Coordinator. Some people find the job endlessly enriching and challenging. They may therefore choose to stay with their present organization as volunteer coordinator, or move to another in the same role. This is fine if it's your choice for fulfillment. Others, though, tend to get somewhat restless and bored in their present volunteer coordinator position; for them, the job eventually comes to lack sufficient challenge, status, or money. Would a volunteer coordinator position in another organization be the cure? Perhaps, but the career ladder within volunteer administration is sometimes best described as "ambiguous zigzag".

2. Job Diversification. You continue to work part-time as a volunteer coordinator (in a larger organization probably acquiring an assistant) but also perform other functions in the organization, e.g. staff development, fundraising, public relations, general management/personnel, etc. A recent pilot study indicated that such job diversification is a fairly frequent pattern, sometimes deliberately sought out by coordinators. Most who have succeeded in doing so definitely consider diversification a career upgrade with clear potential also for strengthening the volunteer program through interactions with other work roles.

3. Job Change. The person no longer has any hands-on relationship to the volunteer program; yet, the new work role usually draws on one or more of the main functions of a volunteer coordinator:

- training/education
- motivation
- communications
- public relations
- fundraising/resource development
- organizational or program development
- personnel/management.

The move is often within the same organization, or if not, at least within the same (non-profit or care-giving sector). In about 1/4 - 1/3 of the cases, however, the move is to the profit sector. In all "job change" instances so far identified the move distinctly enhanced status and/or money and/or challenge, usually all three, for the person who made the move.

Most of the job change people still have considerable empathy for the volunteer leadership field; however, this is rarely tapped into fully by us. We are no doubt losing some wise counsel and powerful allies here.

4. Resource Person in Volunteerism. The idea here is to share the fruits of your volunteer coordinator experience with others, as a trainer, consultant, author, teacher, or evaluator. Many people do this part-time or spare time in addition to their regular employment in one of the three career tracks previously described. There is usually much satisfaction and little risk in so doing.

The case is somewhat more complicated if you want to be a resource person full-time or nearly so, and wish to earn a livelihood (or nearly so) in this manner.

Though some 80 people are listed as trainers/consultants in the 1986-87 Directory of Volunteerism, one wonders if more than a dozen or so of these make of it a full-time occupation and livelihood.

There are, nevertheless, increasing opportunities for getting training as a resource person, and new markets may open up in the future, e.g. consultant to a set of all-volunteer groups, teacher of volunteerism courses throughout the educational system, and expert on how to motivate people without (or beyond) money in corporations or business.

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Within the field, a definite trend to an enlarging re-perception of role is witnessed by name changes. A significant number of people who used to call themselves Directors (or Administrators) of Volunteers now title themselves as "human resource coordinators", community resource development specialist", or even "coordinator of community-based support systems". "Community Relations Coordinator" is another increasingly heard name; "work enrichment specialist" has not been heard yet, but, who knows, it might be.
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RECENT READINGS

1. "The Ingredients of Volunteer Leadership: A Capability Analysis for the Careerist." 1985.
2. "Moving Along: Case Studies of Career Paths for Volunteer Coordinators." 1986.
3. "The 1986 Directory of Volunteerism with 1987 Update." 1986-7.
4. "Trainers and Consultants in Volunteerism: A First Registry." 1985.

All are available from Yellowfire Press, 1705 14th Street, Suite 199, Boulder, Colorado 80302. Telephone (303) 494-7758. Ivan Scheier is also reachable via this address and phone number.

STUDIES IN PROGRESS--EXPECTED PUBLICATION IN 1988

The Center for Creative Community is currently enlarging the "Moving Along" or alumnae study; tying together some 15 demographic studies of the profession; gathering data on who DOVIA leaders consider a core member of the profession, and completing a fairly shocking study on the extent of part-time involvement.

October, 1987

THE CENTER FOR CREATIVE COMMUNITY

An Institute For The Advanced Study Of Volunteerism

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FIRST REPORT ON THE CAREER IN LEADERSHIP OF VOLUNTEERS (CIVL) SERIES

This series of studies is currently taking shape at the Center for Creative Community, for expected publication in early 1988, by Yellowfire Press, Boulder Colorado.

The purpose of the CIVL series is to provide for officers of DOVIAs and other professional associations, a reliable data base for decisions on programs to attract and hold membership. For individuals in the field, the series is designed to provide guidance on optimum choices for fulfillment in the career.

None of these studies is fully complete as yet. Please consider the following as only a preliminary report.

The "WHO BELONGS" study polls people in professional associations as to who they think are more central vs. peripheral as members of their professional association (DOVIA, DOV etc.). Quite shocking (to the writer, at least) is the extent to which the following kinds of people, who must know how to lead and work with volunteers, are considered peripheral: leaders of service clubs and other community volunteer groups; freelance volunteer leaders; political campaign workers; Executives of (small) non-profits which depend crucially on volunteers and (most of the time) do not have a volunteer coordinator. Also somewhat disappointing is the extent to which present members see as peripheral, alumnae of the profession, and academics with an interest in volunteerism.

The "MOVING ALONG" study just about doubles the number of cases of people who have left the field. Trends remain quite constant among these people: almost all of them are doing better now, in status, challenge, and money. Most of them feel their experience in our field helps them in their present work, and most of them have not continued any substantial connection with the field--but would if asked.

Dodie Ledbetter's study ties together about 15 separate studies of DEMOGRAPHICS on professional leadership, totalling over 4,000 individuals. An additional advantage is the ability to see the real differences between people who belong to big national and/or state-provincial associations, and "the locals." Some overall trends continue to give pause, too: 86% are women; 89% are Caucasian; an astonishing 70% have BA's or are working towards them; and almost a third of BA's are working towards or already have advanced degrees. Salaries vary widely but center on a depressing \$15,00-20,000 range.

The PART-TIMER study solidly confirms that about 75% of the field works only part-time as volunteer coordinator/director etc. An average of about 50% of their time is devoted to a set of LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS which suggest some higher-order function of which volunteer involvement is just one part. The concept/function seems to center on "community resource development", "Human resource development" or "community-based support systems" which include money, materials, information, advocacy as well as time and talent of people. Moreover these people include others besides volunteers; e.g. staff.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS WELCOME. MUCH MORE COMING.

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June 1, 1987

To: Volunteer Administrators
C.E.O.'s and Executive Directors
Board Members/Government Officers
Interested Individuals

RE: RESEARCH STUDY ON CAREER TRACKS OF
VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATORS

From: Rob Cole - Project Associate
Centre For Creative Community Institute
For The Advanced Study of Volunteerism.

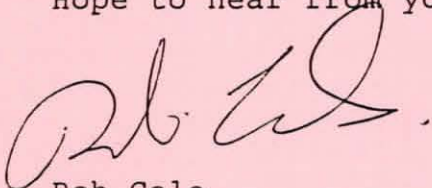
I am pleased to announce that I am a (Volunteer) Project Associate with the Centre For Creative Community - An institute for the advanced study of Volunteerism. The Centre is located in Santa Fe, New Mexico under the directorship of Dr. Ivan Scheier. The Centre, among other tasks, supports individuals and organizations across North America conducting research and studies on issues related to Volunteerism and Volunteer Management/Leadership.

My research project will involve a study on the career path of Volunteer Co-ordinators. I'd like to examine how they get into the field, why they leave the field or stay in it and where they go from there. If you have any thoughts, ideas and/or would like to help out, please write me or call -- I'd love to hear from you.

In return, I'll provide contributors/helpers with updates on my work. (For those who are members of O.A.V.A. or DOVIA Exchange subscribers look for updates in your newsletter).

I can be reached by mail at the above address and contacted by telephone at (416 - 965-6944) during the day and (416 - 270-6267) at nights and weekends.

Hope to hear from you soon.



Rob Cole

NOTE: We hope you'll communicate directly with Rob. We hope eventually to incorporate his findings in the CIVL series, described on the reverse side.

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