

# ***VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION SKIT KIT***

*Arlene Grubbs  
Evelyn Levine, CVA*



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**This book is fondly dedicated to Betty Hepner  
who started it all.**

**And the electronic version is also dedicated  
to the memory of co-author Evie Levine,  
whose humor never deserted her  
and whose spirit lives on in this book.**

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## PROLOGUE

Years ago we each volunteered to help create a skit for a state conference on volunteerism. It was extra work and extra time which had to be shoehorned into our busy schedules. We had both lived and worked in the same city for years, but had never met. So it was through a volunteer opportunity that we came together. We laughed at each other's jokes; we each thought the other was clever; and we found we had many experiences in common. Thus are collaborations born. But without the initial willingness to volunteer, none of this would have happened!

We never set out to write a book. We began writing skits because it is something that we both enjoy doing. We think that is what volunteering is all about: doing something you love to do and then discovering that it can grow into areas you never dreamed of exploring.

Venturing into anything new involves hard work, frustrations, doubts. We had plenty along the way. But we kept coming back to the idea that we started to do this because it was FUN and that kept us going. If you put genuine laughter into any activity there will be enough energy generated to get you through all the rough spots. We feel that, for many of you, volunteer recognition has been the words without the music—a real burden. It is our hope that this book will put the FUN back into this part of your volunteer work.

We hope you will enjoy reading (and producing) these skits and that we, like the “Wizard of Vol,” will give you the courage to try to explore your own creativity. As the song in *A Chorus Line* says: “Hey, I can do that....” Who knows where it will lead?! We would love to hear about your experiences with our skits. Please let us know if the words and the music come together for you.

# RECOGNIZING VOLUNTEERS

We used to have a running gag: “How do you recognize your volunteers?” “Oh, I can never recognize them. They look like everyone else in our organization!” In fact, we do recognize volunteers all the time, starting by welcoming them into our organizations.

Current management wisdom stresses that all workers need to feel appreciated. Witness the interest in quality circles, the development of employee teams who manage their own production schedules, the wish for union representation on boards of directors—all designed to give workers the recognition they deserve for their skills and diligence.

Volunteers, on the other hand, have always received this form of acknowledgment. Nonprofit agencies are, in fact, run by the volunteers on their board of directors. Volunteers in all settings expect to have a say in how the work is done and to control their schedules. Because agencies and even all-volunteer groups know they do not offer a paycheck to their volunteers and members, they tend to be more conscious of the need to say “thank you.” So it may be that volunteerism has something to teach workplace management experts when it comes to recognition.

In addition to expressions of daily appreciation, most of us try once a year to give volunteers distinctive recognition that singles them out from all the other people who contribute to our organization. We know that certificates, plaques, mugs, or banquets have little intrinsic value. Instead, it’s the fact that someone took the time and trouble to order the merchandise, organize the luncheon, and present the awards. It’s the individual effort that makes volunteer recognition special—just as it is individual effort that makes volunteers special.

As we thought about recognizing volunteers, we realized there are two quite different types of organizations in which volunteers are involved: agencies in which volunteers work alongside paid staff (and in which there is often a volunteer administrator), and all-volunteer groups. Despite structural differences, each shares the need to provide recognition to its volunteer workers. In the first case, it is usually employees who organize the thank-you event. In the all-volunteer group, members are, in effect, thanking each other.

A survey of the written material in the field of volunteer administration reveals little information on volunteer recognition *per se* compared to the material available on issues related to general program management. There are a considerable number of articles on the importance of involving paid staff in the volunteer program. Volunteer administrators are urged to include paid staff in writing volunteer job descriptions, providing volunteer training, and evaluating volunteers. These are perfectly legitimate activities but, we began to ask ourselves, how can we involve paid staff in volunteer programs in a way that gives them some fun and recognition instead of only more work?

The all-volunteer organization, on the other hand, typically pays tribute to special contributors or its elected leaders, but has a tendency to ignore the contributions of the rank and file. The question here seems to be how to recognize the efforts of *all* the members without putting an unwanted burden on *some* of the members.

As we worked together over the years we came to realize that recognition skits provided the perfect answer to both questions. We also began to realize that we had developed a real philosophy about recognition which we used to judge whether our recognition activities were appropriate. First of all, we believe that recognition is as important for those who are on the receiving end as for those doing the giving. After ten members of our organization joined an impromptu chorus for a recognition event that featured only two songs, other members began to ask if they could take part in the next volunteer recognition program. It became something of a status symbol to be part of the “troupe.”

Secondly, a recognition activity can and should generate enthusiasm and interest in the organization and its mission. In one of our skits, we used labeled boxes to identify our many service areas. The boxes were piled up and kept falling over. There was much laughter at this unintended result, but later several members of the audience spoke of their appreciation for the complexity of the organization and the range of services it offered.

A recognition event can also provide an opportunity for people to get to know each other in new ways. The fun and work of putting a skit together is an ideal activity in this respect. People share their heretofore hidden talents and interests. We have found that shy people become extroverts, that we discover latent singers and dancers, and that the stereotypes we hold about each other begin to be discarded. During one rehearsal, a staff supervisor told us that we were not only providing recognition for volunteers, but that we were also “bonding” the staff. Months and even years after participating in a recognition program, staff members still remember and refer to their experiences.

Finally, we believe that people need to have fun and that laughter is good for the soul. There is increasing evidence that laughter is stress reducing and frees up creativity. Sometimes it is difficult to convince heads of organizations that activities can be informative, serious, *and* fun. We think it is worth the effort to try to convince them. There is something about laughing together that is its own reward and, believe us, in producing volunteer recognition skits you *will* laugh.

We know that by using this book you can produce a skit for your organization, even if you have never done so before. We have included information on costumes, music, choreography, sets, casting, and rehearsals. Experience has taught us something about what works and what does not. Use this book as you would use a recipe book. Mix and match to suit your needs. You may want to add more songs or use variations of the songs in these skits. Remember there is some ham in everyone, so why not go for it?

Break a leg.

## **BEHIND THE SCENES**

This chapter contains general information on putting your show together. We have included suggestions on what to do and what to avoid. Much of it was learned through trial and error. We think this chapter will save you many tribulations, but we make no guarantee about trials! We also hope these guidelines might stimulate you to write your own skits.

### **THE PRODUCER**

Somewhere in every show there is a producer. Since you are reading this book, it may be you! So, what does a producer do?

- ★ Decides to do a skit for volunteer recognition in the first place.
- ★ Locates a director. The director and the producer must work closely together. In fact they might be the same person.
- ★ Handles budgets. You may have money to spend or you may not. There are lots of suggestions in the following pages about how to spend next to nothing on your production.
- ★ Handles logistics. The producer must locate a performance area and set the time and date of the performance.

In addition, the producer is the adviser and court of last resort for the director and acts as a liaison between the director and any other people involved in the recognition event. For example, there is often a need for last minute checking of awards or organizing speakers at recognition events. The producer can make sure this activity occurs away from the area where the production is taking place. There is nothing so frustrating as losing the audience because of whispered commotion to one side.

### **THE DIRECTOR**

As is true in any enterprise, one person needs to be responsible for coordinating the work. The Director is chief cook and bottle washer and general trouble shooter and as such is responsible for:

- Selecting cast locating not only performers, but assistants such as prompters, stage crew, people to locate properties and costumes and to do choreography.
- Listening to complaints be patient, the compliments will come later!
- Scheduling rehearsals.
- Making adjustments to stage directions.
- Inserting and deleting script material so the skit works for your group.



- Making decisions about the production.
- Being a general trouble shooter.

The director receives advice from everyone, especially the actors! Some of this advice is constructive and some of it is worth what you pay for it, nothing! The director must try to keep cool and remember who is in charge, but must also listen, because some suggestions may be worthwhile.

Sometimes the director has to be a diplomat and replace a cast member. You will find that often people want to be in the production and have agreed to take a role, but when push comes to shove, do not really have time for rehearsals. The director has several options at this point. First the director must decide how important the talent provided by the person is and how much experience s/he has in performing. It may be possible for someone with experience to step in at the last moment with minimal rehearsal time. Sometimes people are relieved to be given a smaller part, for example as part of the chorus or as a narrator who can simply read off his/her lines.

And through all of this the director needs to maintain a sense of humor and perspective. The Director must walk a fine line between being conscientious enough to get things done, yet not taking the whole event too seriously.

## **CASTING**

Casting can get touchy with paid staff or volunteers because everybody wants to get into the act and there are usually a limited number of roles. We do try to use everyone who wants to be in the production, particularly in a small organization. In large organizations it's a good idea to have at least one representative from each area of the organization. Following are some ideas that might be helpful when you cast your show:

Find that person who can act, sing or dance. Once in a while one person is able to do all three. (Liza Minelli should only be in your organization!)

Do not take recommendations from others until you check out the person for the part. We once accepted a staff person's word that her son had talent and would love to be in our production. The young man could not have cared less, rarely came to rehearsals and was a disappointment on stage. On the other hand, some people are shy, but can be talked into joining the cast and prove to be a real asset. Don't judge a book by its cover.

If you need someone special for your show, don't be afraid to look outside your organization. S/he can make your skit a big hit and you just may recruit yourself a talented volunteer.

Try casting someone outrageous for a part. If you have a big strapping man, give him the part of a little boy. We had a conservative middle-aged woman in our organization who brought down the house when she sang a wildly theatrical rendition of "Feelings."

Be honest when you are recruiting cast members. This cardinal rule of volunteering certainly applies to recognition events. If you expect your cast and crew to put in a certain amount of rehearsal time, they need to know this up front. Then, when they complain (and they almost surely will), you can remind them that they had been warned!

## **PERFORMANCE AREA**

The stage set is the background for your performance. Simplicity and wit should be your guidelines. We are not talking about elaborate Broadway productions, although in past years

some of the best theatrical productions have used minimal sets. The audience's attention should not be pulled away from the performance.

You may or may not have a raised stage and, even if you do, you may want the performance to take place at audience level. The latter is more intimate and informal. It lends itself to small groups.

Performance areas can be delineated with fabric or paper tacked or taped to the wall, screens, large plants, saw horses, or standards and rope. The important thing is to designate the performance area clearly.

It is crucial to check out the actual performance area. Your space must fit the production and vice versa. If you have a small cast, using a large stage will make your production feel lost. Exits and entrances need to be carefully worked out. In theater this is called "blocking." If you are doing any kind of choreography, be sure you know the dimensions of your stage. You may need to scale down your chorus line, so that no one is pushed off the edge of the stage!

On one occasion we rehearsed a skit moving the actors on and off both sides of the stage, discovering to our chagrin the night of the performance, that there was only one exit in the actual performance area. That exit became both front and back doors! There was a fair amount of confusion all around.

It's a good idea to have all exits and entrances remain constant. That is, if you have a spot designated as a specific exit, for example, the front door, make sure all actors going "outside" leave the stage by that exit.

If you are lucky enough to have a stage with a sound system by all means use it. If a built-in sound system is not available, you may want to use a microphone, depending on the size of the room, the size of the audience, and how well your players can project. It is a good idea to have someone seated in the last row of the audience at rehearsal to give you feedback on how well your players can be heard and understood. Some skits, such as "The Radio Hour" and "Sixty Moments," lend themselves more readily to the use of a sound system with a microphone. If you are using sound equipment, be sure to recruit someone who understands sound systems. There is nothing worse than the squeal of feedback during a performance.

If stage lights are readily available, use them. If lights are not available, special effects can be created with strobe lights or use spotlights to focus attention on one area of the stage. Again, be sure you get someone who knows what s/he is doing and who has a chance to attend at least one rehearsal if you are using lights during the performance or for special effects.

## **SETS AND PROPS**

Once again simplicity can be your hallmark. The power of suggestion is not to be dismissed when it comes to creating a setting.

Do not clutter up the stage area. Chairs and tables, stools, boxes, banners and signs can suggest many things. Easels and signs can be used to change a scene.

Boxes and trunks can be used to hold costume changes which can be done on stage.

Sometimes pantomime can eliminate the need for props, but this takes some skill and practice in order for it to be understood. Sound effects can be effective and a lot of fun. We discovered some information about the man who set up the sound-effects department for NBC radio in Hollywood. For those who remember Fibber McGee's closet, here is the way it was done by Mr. Ed Ludes. He used a set of sound-effect stairs about six steps high. On the steps, he placed pots, pans, tin cans, skates and other items. When the time came and Fibber McGee opened the closet, Mr. Ludes began throwing things off the bottom step, then worked his way up making sure that each item hit the stairs below as it fell. When the last piece cleared the bottom step, he paused and dropped a small hand bell. We have only one skit that uses sound effects, but this does not mean that you should not use them for other skits. Be creative.

We have provided you with a starter set of props for the skits in this book. In the introductory pages for each skit, before the script, you will find graphics that you can use for signs. badges

and other props indicated in that script.

If you plan to change sets or move props between scenes, you will need a stage crew. Be sure the stage crew comes to rehearsals and practices their part in the production. A Laurel and Hardy stage crew may get some laughs, but they can also cause a disaster.

## **COSTUMES**

Costumes should easily identify characters and not hinder their movements. There are decisions to be made about what the cast should be wearing. Would it look better for everyone to be dressed alike or would it be easier to identify characters if they were dressed differently? Do you want to put a lot of time, money and effort into costumes? Is there someone in your organization who has talent in this area?

Identify groups by reversing costumes. The good guys could wear white slacks and black shirts and the bad guys wear black slacks and white shirts.

Hats are a good way to identify characters. Wearing a hat can transform you from the villain to the heroine. As a costume, hats are quick and easy and lend themselves to immediate audience recognition. We have found that people enjoy “wearing a different hat.”

Use signs. They work well and can be funny.

Have everyone wear jeans with different colored T-shirts. T-shirts are inexpensive and readily available. Messages can be written on T-shirts and they make wonderful mementos. We had “applause” written on the back of our T-shirts for one of our productions. We turned our backs at the finale and received a hearty round of applause. Maybe it’s true that you get what you ask for!

Have everyone wear body suits or tights. These make good basic costumes when teamed with shirts, vests, aprons, etc. A simple, but sophisticated costume to wear for a dance sequence is black tights or slacks, white shirts with bow ties and white gloves.

Don’t forget the miracle of Velcro. It can be used to create all kinds of costume variations, such as attaching animal tails, ruffles, cuffs—you name it.

Purchase paper jumpsuits. They are sold in stores that sell work uniforms and are inexpensive compared to other costumes. You can paint, paste and add all sorts of trimmings to these. We used paper jumpsuits in a musical and painted lapels, studs and tails on them. We added white top hats and “voila,” we had an instant “Chorus Line” finale.

Visit your local thrift shop for costume ideas. It is fun, but it can be time consuming.

Look in your attic (yes, some people still live in homes with attics) for articles such as an old coat or hat, a pair of glasses, a wig, or a cane. Perhaps one of these items is all that a character needs in order to be identified.

Recruit a theater person to help with costumes or find a good seamstress. Costume rental establishments are a good source, but they tend to be expensive. However, they might be interested in donating costumes for a good cause and for a little publicity. Ditto with your local college or professional theater group.

## **MUSIC**

Most of the musical numbers in this book are parodies of popular songs and show tunes. If a song in one of these skits is unfamiliar to you, it may be helpful to listen to it on a record or tape.

You can write your own parodies (or for that matter your own music). It is a way of making the skits more personalized. Always check sheet music before writing a parody, particularly if you plan to use an accompanist. This is the only way you can be sure your words will really fit the music. It is amazing how each of us hears the rhythm of a song differently. Go to the source and save yourself a lot of headaches.

It is also crucial to remember that words not only need to have the right number of syllables, but need to be accented correctly to coincide with the rhythm of the song. For example, if you were writing lyrics with the word “volunteer,” you would have to be certain that the strongest

beat of the music fell on the last syllable.

A good accompanist can make or break your show. Not everyone who plays a musical instrument is a good accompanist. Better to have no accompanist at all than a poor one. A major problem is that the music may be written in a key that is pitched too high or too low for your singers. Your musician needs to be able to transpose printed notes to another key.

We have most often used a piano to accompany our singers, but other instruments would be appropriate. It depends on what and who are available. Some of the new electronic keyboards are portable and lend themselves to this type of program. A tape can be useful if you cannot find a piano player, especially for rehearsals. Musical accompaniment does not have to be serious. Kazoos and washboards can be effective and funny.

Background music that is appropriate to the theme or era of the skit can be played before the show. It helps create an atmosphere of anticipation and prepares the audience for the performance.

People sometimes will say they cannot sing, but we have found that these same people often do well in a chorus. Do be careful, however, about asking someone to sing a solo. One of our soloists sang an entire number off key, but the audience thought it was intentional and loved it. We cannot predict that the audience will always be so cooperative.

Make sure the audience understands the words to the songs. You may need to slow some portions of a song to make sure that the key phrases are heard. You want your audience to go away humming. If the tune is familiar, your new words will be better understood.

Try to have a song that identifies your production. Sometimes changing one word will do the trick. We changed “Thanks for the Memories” to “Thanks for the Volunteers” and we changed “The Age of Aquarius” to “The Age of the Allergist.” We lean towards Broadway show tunes, but any kind of music, country, rock, even opera, is fine. Just keep your audience in mind. Use newer songs if you are doing a show for young people. The old standards will bring a smile to older people. Themes from movies or TV shows should not be overlooked. The theme from the “Brady Bunch” comes to mind.

It is good to have at least one person who is willing to sing out and can carry a tune so that the others in the chorus are encouraged and feel comfortable. We believe that you can always find one person who sings well, but sometimes you do not discover this until rehearsal.

We have used audience participation which is especially good with the big finale. Hand out the words in advance and have everyone join in. We did a skit with audience participation in a round with each of three competing characters directing a segment of the audience. It was great fun and made a point as well about competition versus cooperation.

A complete listing of all the songs (with full credit citations) used in the skits can be found in the Appendix. Sheet music can be purchased from a music store or borrowed from your local library. The Music Department of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh appears to have every song ever written in its collection.

On several occasions we provided the cast with “cue cards” by having words to songs on large pieces of paper and having someone sit in the front row to hold them up. This eliminates a bit of pressure on your cast and enables them to feel more relaxed and secure about singing.

## **CHOREOGRAPHY**

Dancing adds notably to a show and can be an important ingredient in amateur productions where acting skill and voices can't carry the day.

Keep dance steps simple. They can look good even if they are easy to execute. If the dance steps are too intricate, it is discouraging and the dancers will resist learning them. You can create an illusion of professionalism by doing something as simple as walking around a cane.

Recruit a choreographer. This could be a friend, relative, or someone at a local dancing school or university drama department. Good choreography adds class and pizzazz to your production.

Find people who can dance. If you happen to have a member with talent, by all means use him/her. You may have a friend who is a dancer and will be happy to appear in your production. Recruit, recruit!

Tie costumes and dances together. Be sure costumes do not inhibit dancing. People who are dancing together look good if they are dressed alike.

To restate the obvious, the size of the stage must be taken into consideration.

## **REHEARSALS**

It is important to have at least three full rehearsals, one of which is a dress rehearsal. Be sure to make the time commitment for rehearsals clear. It is frustrating for the director to have only half of the cast show up, but it happens. Individuals and groups can and should rehearse separately, but full rehearsals are needed to make the show flow smoothly. It is a big help if you can have a dress rehearsal on the performance stage as close to the time of the performance as possible.

You should run through the show several times at each rehearsal. The more confident the cast is with their movements and lines the better.

We've done skits with scripts in hand, but the performance looks ever so much better if people memorize their lines.

Try to have a small audience at rehearsals and especially at the final rehearsal. You will get good feedback about the show and the cast will also learn to wait for the applause or laughter to subside before speaking the next line.

All technicians (lighting or sound) and the stage crew should be involved in the rehearsals. They, too, need to practice their timing and cues.

Do not try for a too slick performance. This should be fun for everyone. If the cast is having a good time, everyone will know it and enjoy it even more.

## **WRITING YOUR OWN SKIT**

Our first thought was that in order to write a skit you have to have a good friend to write it with! But even if you are writing solo, it's helpful to brainstorm with someone else just to get your creative juices flowing.

You need a central theme or idea, a premise for your skit. It could be current events, history, a take-off on a play or movie, events of the year in your organization, folktales or fables, etc.

Once you have a theme, you need to expand on it by thinking about what ideas you want to include. Are there particular people or groups of people you want to spotlight? Are there certain volunteer or organizational activities that you want to let your audience know about? Has your organization accomplished some very important goals?

You should always start out with more ideas than you can include in a skit, because some of them turn out to be dead ends. Don't be afraid to discard ideas that you once thought were terrific. Also, you have to remember that "Nicholas Nickleby" was an exception! Keep your skit short.

Let someone else whose opinion you value review your skit. It's difficult to edit your own material.

We also think that reading this book can help you. One of our goals was to give our readers ideas. We hope that after you have read our skits, you'll want to say, "I can do that." You can use our skits as a base borrow songs from one of our skits and use them in one of yours write new words or personalize the material here to fit your volunteer recognition needs, adding your own

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references and in-jokes. After each skit in this book we have given you some ideas about how to adapt that skit so it becomes special for your organization.

All of our skits include song parodies, but that is not to say that all skits must have music. Our experience has been that songs lighten the production and put less pressure on the dramatic skills of our performers, but you can be the judge of what you want in your own production. Go for it.

# SIXTY MOMENTS: A VOLUNTEER EXPOSÉ

This skit began with a discussion about the difficulty of recruiting volunteers. We wondered facetiously if volunteers were becoming an endangered species and decided that if they were, no one seemed to know about it! “Someone needs to investigate,” we joked, “How about the EPA?—No, this is clearly a case for that premiere investigatory news program, “*60 Minutes*.” In a serious vein, we wanted to point out what precious resources volunteers are. We also wanted to poke a bit of fun at the idea that any one group or organization could have exclusive rights to its volunteers. We did some teasing of the whole process of recruiting, training and retention of volunteers.

## **Description**

“Sixty Moments: A Volunteer Exposé” is a take-off on the investigative reporting shows currently on TV. The script is complete with commercials and includes several songs. This skit deals with the idea that volunteers may be an “endangered species.”

## **Time**

Approximately 30 minutes. Each scene can be rehearsed separately if necessary. Ideally, there should be at least two full rehearsals and a dress rehearsal for the complete cast including the piano player or other musicians.

## **Cast**

This play can be done with a minimum of ten people. Key roles are shown with an asterisk (\*). Chorus people can double in other roles if need be.

- Three Reporters\*
- Three or more People for Chorus Members\*
- Three or more Recruiters
- Announcer\*
- Three people for commercials
- Trainer
- Volunteer
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Randy Gooney\*
- Musical Accompanist

### Music (See Appendix for full references.)

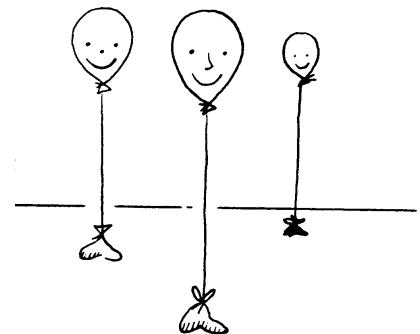
- ★ “Theme from New York, New York” by Fred Ebb and Jon Kander from *New York, New York*
- ★ “Hernando’s Hideaway” by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross from *Pajama Game*
- ★ “Honey Bun” by Oscar Hammerstein II and Richard Rodgers from *South Pacific*
- ★ “M-O-T-H-E-R (A Word that Means the World to Me)” by Howard Johnson and Theodore Morse
- ★ “Put On a Happy Face” by Lee Adams and Charles Strouse from *Bye, Bye Birdie*
- ★ “Guys and Dolls” by Frank Loesser from *Guys and Dolls*

### Costume Suggestions

- ★ Three reporters—TV anchor-style apparel
- ★ Chorus—similar outfits, for example, black slacks and white shirts
- ★ Recruiters—khaki shorts, pith helmets ala big game hunters
- ★ Announcer, man and woman in commercials—street clothing
- ★ Trainer—jodhpurs and boots—carrying a whip ala animal trainer
- ★ Volunteer—everyday clothing unless the organization has a distinctive volunteer uniform which should then be worn
- ★ Randy Gooney—somewhat rumpled suit with tie ala Andy Rooney of “60 Minutes”

### Props

- ★ Three chairs for reporters
- ★ Hand-held microphone for interviewing (does not need to be real)
- ★ Coffee table or other small table
- ★ Potted plants
- ★ Sign with a picture of a large bottle labeled “Bear It All” (*graphic provided on next page.*)
- ★ Helium balloons with faces painted on them (balloons are tied with string and weighted so that they float about shoulder height, as illustrated below)
- ★ Foam or plastic clubs and sacks for “recruiters”
- ★ Poster reading “Volunteer Clearinghouse Sweepstakes” (can have pictures of previous winners and a large picture of the announcer)
- ★ Pad and pencil for volunteer
- ★ Large box full of a variety of paper typically used in offices







## Sixty Moments: A Volunteer Exposé

### Scene I

Three reporters are seated in chairs to one side of the stage. The area resembles a talk show set with perhaps a low coffee table and several large plants. (*Throughout the skit, wherever blanks appear in the script, insert the names of your cast or your organization.*)

**First Reporter:** Good evening, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. Tonight we will be looking at volunteers. As you probably know, they are considered an endangered species and have recently come under the protection of the EPA. As more and more organizations come to depend on volunteers to provide services to local communities, practices in the field have often come close to violating EPA standards. Our reporters have been \_\_\_\_\_ investigating this serious problem and will report how one group in \_\_\_\_\_ is dealing with it.

**Second Reporter:** I'm \_\_\_\_\_. This is the story of the \_\_\_\_\_ and their search for volunteers. We will see where they go to find their volunteers and how they capture them...er-ah-I mean, how they *recruit* them.

**Third Reporter:** I'm \_\_\_\_\_. Once the volunteers are captured...er-ah-I mean *recruited*, they need to be trained. It is a long and grueling process and tonight's story will give us an idea of how those raw recruits turn into sophisticated, hard working volunteers. All this and more on tonight's version of "*60 Moments*." And now a word from our sponsor.

**Commercial:** A sign is carried across the stage saying "Bear-It All." A man and a woman appear on stage. She hugs him and pinches his cheek. He looks appropriately sheepish.

**Woman:** Look at him. He's my husband and I care about him. He cooks, does the dishes, cares for the children and still has time to go to work every day to earn a living. I'm so busy volunteering, I don't have time for anything else. I'm so happy that he takes "Bear-It-All." I think I'll keep him.

Man and woman exit smiling at each other.

## Scene II

Chorus comes on stage. They carry weighted helium filled balloons and deposit them randomly on the stage before beginning to sing.

**Chorus sings** “New Volunteers” (to “Theme from *New York, New York*”):

Start spreading the news  
 We're looking for you  
 We'll go to any length to get  
 New volunteers.  
 We'll go to the north,  
 East, south and west, too  
 We'll use up  
 All our strength to get  
 New volunteers.  
 We know our staff  
 Will need more help  
 They're in too deep  
 Some volunteers here with us  
 Would help a heap  
 Our agency needs  
 Would make you feel blue  
 We need to make a start to get  
 New volunteers.  
 We hope to find you there  
 We're looking everywhere  
 Please do come through  
 New volunteers.

Chorus exits. Three volunteer recruiters enter carrying clubs and large sacks. They hit the balloons and put them into their sacks. First Reporter, carrying microphone, moves to front of stage and approaches a recruiter.

**First Reporter:** We interviewed the people from the \_\_\_\_\_ about their recruiting practices. Here we are under the \_\_\_\_\_ bridge at 1:00 a.m. tell me, why are you looking for volunteers in the dark? Wouldn't it be better to look in the daylight?

**Recruiter:** No, no, no. How could we possibly do this in the daytime? People would see our bats and see us taking all these wonderful volunteers back to the agency. They would get jealous and would want their fair share of volunteers. No, no, no, I would

never do this in the daylight hours.

First Reporter watches while recruiters continue to bat balloons. Chorus enters stealthily, putting fingers to lips to indicate the need for quiet.

**Chorus sings** “Recruiting Hideaway” (to “Hernando’s Hideaway”):

Ssssssh! Ssssssssh! Ssssssssh!  
 We’ve come to get new volunteers  
 We’ll start them out on new careers  
 When we get through  
 They’ll give three cheers  
 At our recruiting hideaway, olé  
 We’ll look for them in every place  
 We’ll drag them out of every space  
 No man or woman will be safe  
 From our recruiting hideaway, olé  
 At the local grocery store  
 Or any place we go  
 We will find new volunteers  
 And no one else will know  
 That our crack recruiting team  
 Has struck another blow  
 You will give in quick  
 We are very slick  
 Away we’ll go  
 We’ll be together safe and sound  
 We’ll train the people  
 We have found  
 They’ll bring  
 Some other folks around  
 To our recruiting hideaway, olé  
 Ssssssh! Ssssssh! Ssssssssh!

Chorus exits. First Reporter speaks again with recruiter while others continue their “volunteer hunt.”

**First Reporter:** It seems to me that there should be a better way of recruiting volunteers. Other places advertise or better yet talk it up at cocktail parties.

**Recruiter:** Yes, and other mealy mouths say [*in a pleading tone*] “wouldn’t you please, please, please become a volunteer?” Can you

imagine? Not me. No, no. Not me. Haven't you heard? There's a volunteer war going on. In other areas organizations are giving away microwaves and toaster-ovens as an incentive to join them. I heard That over in \_\_\_\_\_, an agency is giving golf clubs and luggage and a senior center in \_\_\_\_\_ is giving away grandmothers. But not here in \_\_\_\_\_. Oh, no, here we gather things together and [*clears throat*] take them in, if you know what I mean. Things like [*whispers*] volunteers.

**First Reporter:** How do you find volunteers in such an unlikely spot?

**Recruiter:** Ha! I have a volunteer call: [*cups hands around mouth and calls*] "POTLUCK! POTLUCK!" When they bring their casseroles, I grab them!

**First Reporter:** Do you then accept every volunteer you er-ah find?

**Recruiter:** Accept? Accept? What kind of statement is that? Does the food bank take food? Does goodwill take old clothing? Does Texas accept J.R. Ewing? Of course we accept everyone we capture er-ah-I mean *recruit*. We are going to win the volunteer war. We will then start a volunteer bank with any extras so that there will be a pool of volunteers for the future.

Chorus enters and reprises "Recruiting Hideaway":

**Chorus:** At the local grocery store  
Or any place we go  
We will find new volunteers  
And no one else will know  
That our crack recruiting team  
Has struck another blow  
You will give in quick  
We are very slick  
Away we'll go  
We'll be together safe and sound  
We'll train the people  
We have found  
They'll bring  
Some other folks around  
To our recruiting hideaway, Olé!

Chorus and Recruiters exit sneaking off stage and taking remaining balloons with them.

**First Reporter:** Time now for another commercial break.

First Reporter returns to his/her seat. Announcer comes to center stage carrying a large poster as described under “Props.”

**Announcer:** [*With enthusiasm.*] Look for this envelope in the mail today with my picture on it! [*Points to picture.*] This is the only bonafide Volunteer Clearinghouse Sweepstakes! Don't be taken in by imitations! In fact, you do not even have to wait for your envelope. Come to \_\_\_\_\_ and sign up today. Volunteer Clearinghouse Sweepstakes Guarantees that you will feel like a million! Everyone wins—feel good about yourself, find new friends, and make a difference in the world. Here are some previous winners to tell you about their experience.

Announcer steps back and remains beaming at successful contestants.

**Older man or woman:** [*Enters doing a little dance.*] My family laughed when I entered the volunteer clearinghouse sweepstakes. I ignored them and sent my application in anyway and I won. It could happen to you. Now I feel like a million. Enter today.

Exits. Couple enters.

**Man:** We were non-believers. We thought it was a scam, but we took a chance and signed up.

**Woman:** Lo and behold, we won! Of course, we discovered that everyone wins in the Volunteer Clearinghouse Sweepstakes, but what the heck. Our lives have changed drastically. It's a dream come true. [*Smiles at husband.*]

Couple exit. Announcer steps forward.

**Announcer:** [*Holds up poster.*] Remember this is the only real volunteer contest. Get your application in early and you win a credit of 100 extra volunteer hours. You can be a winner, all you have to do is enter. Well there you have it. [Exits.]

### Scene III

Second Reporter takes microphone, leaves his/her chair and comes to the front of stage.  
Trainer enters to speak with reporter.

**Second Reporter:** We are at a secret location where volunteers are being trained. We're speaking with the director of training. What do you teach your recruits?

**Trainer:** First, we teach them never to talk to another volunteer. You never know if you are talking to a volunteer or a volunteer recruiter. We tell our volunteers never to talk to anyone, even to old friends or family members. One can't be too careful!

**Second Reporter:** Isn't that a bit extreme?

**Trainer:** We may have broken up a lot of relationships, but we haven't lost a single volunteer!

**Second Reporter:** Do your volunteers understand that they are an endangered species?

**Trainer:** No. We protect them from outside influences that would interfere with their volunteer status, such as paid employment and leisure activities. We are required to do this under the Volunteer Protection Act.

**Second Reporter:** May I interview one of your volunteers?

**Trainer:** I'm sorry, our current volunteers have been trained only in listening skills. They haven't had the session where they learn to speak!

**Second Reporter:** [*Indignantly.*] Well, I think it's very important that our viewers hear from at least one volunteer.

**Trainer:** We do have someone here who's been through our training six times! Maybe you could speak to him (her).

Trainer motions to volunteer who enters carrying note pad and pencil.

**Second Reporter:** Tell me, why is it you've taken the volunteer training so many times?

**Volunteer:** [*Looking distracted and writing on pad.*] I've never learned how to fill out my time sheets. But, I think I've got it now. Let's see, 6 a.m. to noon, 11:30 to 3:30, and 2:00 to 7:00 p.m. Hmm...then I substituted from 2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., did paper work from 8:30 to 11:30. [*Satisfied*]...and that takes care of yesterday!

**Second Reporter:** Wait a minute—that adds up to 25 hours!

**Volunteer:** [*Holding head.*] Oh, no! Now I'll have to take the training again!

Volunteer exits. Chorus enters as second reporter speaks to trainer.

**Second Reporter:** So how would you sum up your training?

**Chorus and Trainer** sing "Hours of Fun" (to "Honey Bun"):

A hundred and one hours of fun  
That's when training will be done  
Got to go to training class tonight  
I'm learning some stuff,  
Some is tough  
But I manage off the cuff  
My poor brain just needs some dynamite  
I'm learning how to listen  
I listen and I listen  
But when I talk  
Oh what a shock  
No one will listen  
Keeping records, meeting staff  
It's hard work, but we still laugh  
I signed up and I'm having fun  
But I just can't wait till  
Training class is done  
I signed up and I'm having fun  
But I just can't wait till  
Training class is done!

Trainer and Chorus exit.



**Second Reporter:** Time out for another commercial.

Second Reporter returns to his/her chair. Announcer and chorus enter marching. They stop at center stage and announcer speaks to first chorus member.

**Announcer:** How do you spell relief?

**1st Chorus Member:** I need something I can depend on: V-O-L-U-N-T-E-E-R-S.

**Announcer:** [*To second chorus member:*] How do you spell relief?

**2nd Chorus Member:** Believe me it works every time: V-O-L-U-N-T-E-E-R-S.

**Announcer:** Yes, if you want relief here's how to spell it.

**Chorus and Announcer** sing "V-O-L-U-N-T-E-E-R-S" to the tune of "M-O-T-H-E-R." (Because there are more letters in the word "volunteer" than in the word "mother", it is necessary to repeat the melody of the first four lines of the song, as in "M-O-T-H-M-O-T-H-E-R.")

V —is cause they're very special people  
 O —is for the others in their care  
 L —is for the listening ear they lend us  
 U —is for the umpteen hats they wear  
 N —is for the nifty notes they write us  
 T —is for the teamwork that we share  
 E —is for the extra efforts given  
 E —is for 'esprit de corps' that's rare  
 R —means that we really, really need them  
 S —is strength and strong is what they are  
 Put them all together, volunteers  
 With you we know we'll all go far

Chorus and announcer exit.

## Scene IV

Third reporter takes microphone, leaves his/her chair and comes to front of stage.

**Third Reporter:** Now that we know how volunteers are captured er-ah-I mean *recruited* in the

**Chorus enters and sings** “We’ve Got a Happy Face” (to “Put on a Happy Face”):

Troubles are gonna clear up  
 We’ve got a happy face  
 Everyone starts to cheer up  
 Helping around the place  
 We’ve cornered all the happiness around  
 With all our smiles  
 We always feel so good  
 Whenever we work on the files  
 When we are meeting clients  
 We give our nicest smiles  
 We try to make them happy  
 And know they are worthwhile  
 We spread sunshine all over the place  
 Cause we love to volunteer

Volunteer Coordinator enters and joins third reporter as chorus exits.

**Third Reporter:** We understand that it’s difficult to retain volunteers. You not only retain yours, but they seem so happy.

**Vol. Coordinator:** Yes, we detain, I mean *retain*, volunteers because we keep them so busy. That wasn’t even their happy song. They are rather low today because they don’t have enough work to do!

**Third Reporter:** You people here certainly have licked the volunteer shortage. I bet lots of others would like to know how you have made this work so well. Do you mind if I tell the world that volunteers are alive and well in \_\_\_\_\_?

**Vol. Coordinator:** You certainly may not! The reason our volunteers are so happy is that they are protected, so that they can breed. Predators are lying in wait—there are lots of organizations who would like to get their hands on our volunteers. There is a black market out

there. It would be folly to expose our volunteers to that.

**Third Reporter:** But, what if they want to leave?

**Vol. Coordinator:** But, there would be no one to protect them! This way there's no doubt about how much we value them.

**Chorus** enters and sings "When We See a Guy" (to "Guys And Dolls"):

When we see a guy  
 With a gleam in his eye  
 It's a cinch we can get him to volunteer  
 When we spot a Jane  
 Walkin' round in the rain  
 Chances are she's fair game  
 To sign up with us  
 At least for a year  
 When they answer "fine -  
 Yes, I'll give you some time  
 Like a day or an hour  
 Might even give two"  
 Call it great, it seems funny  
 But it's better than gettin' money  
 We're so glad that you've come here  
 To volunteer.

Chorus and Volunteer Coordinator exit.

**Third Reporter:** We know that most of us, including volunteers, are occasionally overwhelmed by paper. Now Randy Gooney is going to give us his opinion - doesn't he always?

Third Reporter returns to his/her chair. Randy Gooney enters carrying a large box of papers and begins pulling them out as he enumerates each reason for paperwork.

**Randy Gooney:** Did you ever think about how much paper work goes on in \_\_\_\_\_? And wonder why we do it? You can't eat paper and paper doesn't put its arm around you when you're feeling low. Paper doesn't mind your children. The only advantages I can see in paper work are first, it makes great scratch paper after it's used. Second, you feel important when you fill out any kind of a form on paper. Third, without it, where would file clerks be?

Fourth, if you need to keep statistics, paper makes as good a place to keep them as any. Fifth, life wouldn't be nearly so interesting without inter-office memos. [*Becoming more agitated*.:] Sixth, where would publishers be without paper and the government and the tax collector? I don't think I would trade a jelly doughnut for paper any day. Seventh, I would trade anything for a good volunteer to help me with all this.

Randy Gooney throws the remaining papers in the air and stalks off shaking his head. The three reporters come to center stage.

**First Reporter:** I'm \_\_\_\_\_.

**Second Reporter:** I'm \_\_\_\_\_.

**Third Reporter:** I'm \_\_\_\_\_. And that's "Sixty Moments" for tonight. We hope you've learned something about volunteers as an endangered species and that you will treat them with kindness and care whenever you run into them.

Entire cast enters and reprises "When We See a Guy":

When we see a guy  
 With a gleam in his eye  
 It's a cinch we can get him to volunteer  
 When we spot a Jane  
 Walkin' round in the rain  
 Chances are she's fair game  
 To sign up with us  
 At least for a year  
 When they answer, "Fine  
 Yes, I'll give you some time  
 Like a day or an hour  
 Might even give two."  
 Call it great, it seems funny  
 But it's better than gettin' money  
 We're so glad that you came here to volunteer  
 We're so glad that you came here  
 To volunteer!

— **The End** —



## Ideas for Personalizing this Skit

- ★ Either do a take-off on the names of the regular *60 Minutes* reporters or use names of important people in your organization.
- ★ Throughout the skit fill in local place names.
- ★ Replace or rewrite the commercials, perhaps using a take-off on a well-known local advertiser.
- ★ Use a particularly difficult piece of your own training program as the stumbling block in Scene III.
- ★ Insert names of your volunteers as appropriate throughout.
- ★ Add additional interviews with specific volunteers.
- ★ Watch *60 Minutes* for other ideas.



# HOORAY FOR VOLUNTEERS: A HOLLYWOOD EXTRAVAGANZA

This is one of those skits that developed simply because the song lyrics to “Hooray for Hollywood” transferred so readily to “Hooray for Volunteers!” That, combined with the endless possibilities for take-offs on famous stars and movies, made this a natural idea. The basic problem we encountered in writing this skit was how to narrow all those wonderful possibilities. We tried to use characters and songs that would be very familiar. We included this skit because we felt that it would serve as a catalyst for other ideas—maybe some of the ones we weren’t able to develop. Organizations could certainly update or add to the original premise without having to think too hard. We also feel this is one of our more entertaining skits—naturally, that’s what Hollywood is all about.

## **Description**

This is a musical review with take-offs on stars who are familiar to everyone. This skit is about the many different types of people who volunteer and the many different motivations and rewards that are involved in volunteering.

## **Time**

The running time of this skit is approximately 40 minutes. Scenes can be rehearsed separately, but ideally there should be three full rehearsals with the entire cast and musical accompanist, including one dress rehearsal.

## **Cast**

The total cast is 14 people, all of whom need to be able to mimic the stars they are portraying. All of the parts can be played by either a man or a woman. This skit also has need of a *stage manager* to assist with cues and props.

Narrator

Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz - has solo singing part

Tin Man

Scarecrow

Cowardly Lion - should be someone not afraid to “ham it up”

The Wizard of Vol  
 Volunteer Coordinator - has solo singing part  
 Mae West  
 Clark Gable  
 W. C. Fields  
 John Wayne  
 Greta Garbo  
 Laurel and Hardy

**Music** (See Appendix for full references.)

- ★ “Hooray for Hollywood” by Johnny Mercer and Richard A. Whiting from *Hollywood Hotel*
- ★ “We’re Off to See the Wizard” and “Over the Rainbow” by E. Y. Harburg and Harold Mien from *The Wizard of Oz*
- ★ “Just the Way You Are” by Billy Joel
- ★ Theme Music for Laurel and Hardy
- ★ “You Are My Lucky Star” by Arthur Freed and Nacio Herb Brown

**Costume Suggestions**

Characters should be easily identified by their costumes.

- ★ Dorothy - white pinafore and hair ribbons
- ★ Tin Man - silver tights, cardboard painted silver and taped together for the top part of the costume, a funnel for a hat and holding an oil can
- ★ Scarecrow - old clothes with straw sticking out all over
- ★ Cowardly Lion - wig and painted whiskers, a mustard colored sweat suit with a long tail attached. Tail must be long enough so that the lion can wipe his eyes with it.
- ★ Wizard of Vol - Suit and cape, perhaps a tall pointed hat with important organizational symbols on it
- ★ Mae West - Long blonde hair and formal dress (padded, if necessary)
- ★ Clark Gable - Moustache, suit and fedora hat
- ★ W. C. Fields - Stove pipe hat, cigar, and cane
- ★ John Wayne - Cowboy hat, jeans, plaid shirt
- ★ Greta Garbo - Street clothes, cape and hat with veil pulled over face
- ★ Laurel and Hardy - Suits and ties and derby hats

**Props**

## ★ Scene 1:

- Small satchel for Wizard of Vol
- Oil can for Tin Man
- Certificate of Recognition\*
- Hat with “INFORMATION” on the brim\*
- Large badge with “BOARD” printed on it\*

## ★ Scene 2:

- Six chairs on stage in half circle

## ★ Scene 3:

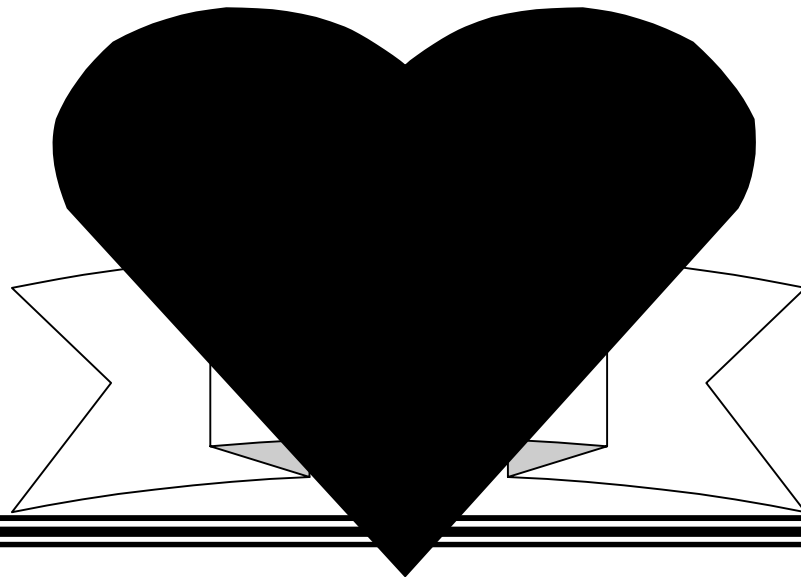
- Roll of calculator tape
- Bucket and mop
- Measuring tape

\*Graphics provided on the following pages.

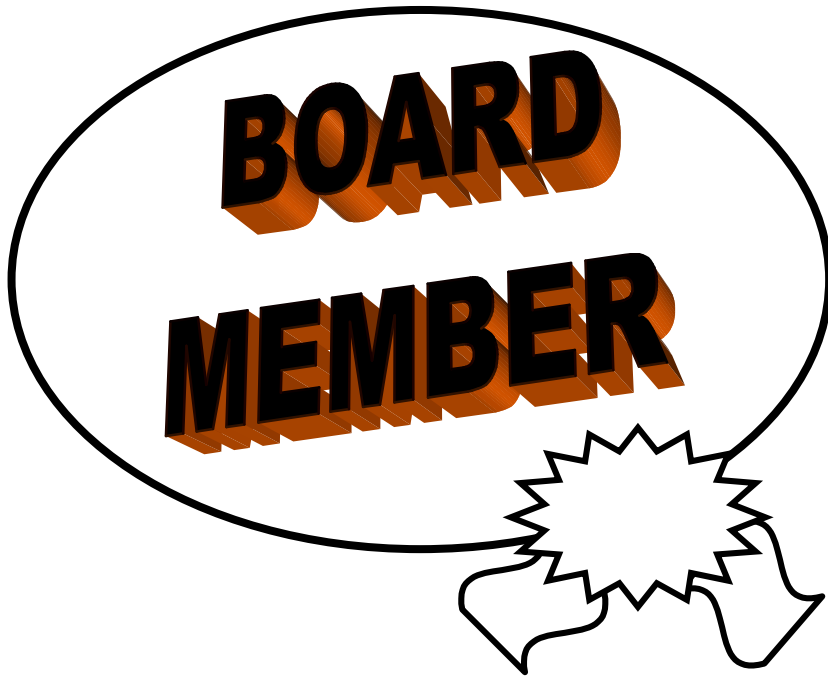


# Certificate of Recognition

is presented to you,  
a noble volunteer,  
on this day  
by your grateful associates.



# INFORMATION



# Hooray for Volunteers: A Hollywood Extravaganza

## Prologue

Entire cast marches on stage to music and sings “Hooray for Volunteers” (to “Hooray for Hollywood”):

Hooray for volunteers  
 Those extra super special  
     Volunteers  
 We couldn't cope without your  
     Smiling faces  
 And feel this place is  
 Great because you are here  
 Those tough jobs we wish  
 We could accomplish  
 You take on and do with the best of cheer  
 Hooray for volunteers  
 With you on board our troubles  
     Disappear  
 And any one of you will always come  
     Through  
 Each time we need you  
 To help us get the job done  
 We think the world of you  
 And of the job you do  
 Hooray for volunteers!

Cast exits and Narrator steps to center stage.

**Narrator:** Welcome to our star studded audience. It's such a thrill to see so many well-known faces out there. Today (tonight) we're taking you on a whirlwind tour of Hollywood. And, no Hollywood Extravaganza would be complete without a scene from the Wizard of Oz. But we Have our own wizard, the Wizard of Vol. And here we find Dorothy and her friends in the land of Vol, searching for a special something to enhance their lives, just as all of us are searching for that special something to enhance ours.

## Scene I

Enter Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion, holding hands and skipping across the stage. (*Throughout the skit, wherever blanks appear in the script, insert the names of your cast or your organization.*)

**Dorothy:** Here we are at volunteer city. Are you ready to meet the wizard?

**Tin Man:** I hope he can give me a heart, cause I really want to care about people.

**Scarecrow:** I hope he can give me a brain, so I can think about helping people.

**Lion:** [*Cowering.*] I'm afraid to meet the wizard. I bet he doesn't have any courage to give me.

**Dorothy:** [*Patting Lion on head.*] Don't worry, we're all in this together. I just hope he can get me back to \_\_\_\_\_.

Dorothy, Tin Man, Scarecrow, and Cowardly Lion sing "We're Off to See the Wizard." (Substitute "Wizard of Vol" for the words "Wizard of Oz.")

Wizard of Vol jumps onto the stage carrying a satchel and looking threatening. Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion are startled.

**Dorothy, et al:** Ohh! Who are you?

**Wizard of Vol:** I am the director of volunteers. They call me the Wizard of Vol.

**Lion:** [*Putting up fists.*] Put 'em up. Put 'em up. You don't look like a wizard to me.

**Wizard:** I may not be a wizard, but I know how to get things done. Volunteers are my secret.

**Dorothy, et al:** **VOLUNTEERS!!**

**Scarecrow:** We came here for help. How can volunteering help us?

Tin Man starts to cry. The Lion who has been hiding behind Dorothy steps forward to confront wizard, but quickly retreats after speaking his/her lines.

**Lion:** Yah-yah!

**Dorothy:** We've come all this way together because we each need something and we find the Wizard of Vol is **only** in charge of volunteering.

**Wizard:** **Only** volunteering! Volunteering, my dears, is the answer for everyone.

**Tin Man:** How can volunteering give me a heart?

The Wizard looks wise and reaches into his/her satchel pulling out a certificate which he hands to the Tin Man.

**Wizard:** Here's proof that you have a heart. It's your certificate of recognition for putting in all those hours with people in need.

**Tin Man:** [*Choking up and wiping his/her eyes.*] I feel something. I do care about people and now somebody cares that I care.

**Scarecrow:** How can volunteering give me a brain?

The Wizard thinks for a moment and then once again reaches into his/her satchel.

**Wizard:** Your brain is fine. You just needed others to know you have one.

The Wizard hands the scarecrow a hat with "Information" printed on it.

**Scarecrow:** [*Putting on hat and pointing.*] Down the corridor, second left—elevator to the second floor, turn right—through the double doors at the third table.

**Lion:** [*Once again cowering behind Dorothy.*] Ooow, I'm more afraid than ever. I'll never get any courage this way.

**Wizard:** [*Looking in satchel again and giving Lion a badge marked "Board Member."*] You have courage, but you never believed in it. I appoint you to the board of directors.

**Lion:** [*Becoming pugnacious.*] Let me at 'em! Let me at 'em! Fund raising! Fund raising!

**Dorothy:** But what about me? How will any of this help me get back home to\_\_\_\_\_?

**Wizard:** Dorothy, there are volunteers in\_\_\_\_\_. There are volunteers everywhere. You've Known how to get home all along. All You have to do is volunteer.

**All** sing "There's a Volunteer Rainbow" (to "Over the Rainbow"):

There's a volunteer rainbow  
 Wait and see  
 Catch a volunteer rainbow  
 Be all that you can be  
 There's a volunteer rainbow  
 Just for you  
 With a volunteer rainbow  
 Skies will be always blue  
 So when you wish upon a star  
 Remember that your dreams  
 Aren't far behind you  
 Your troubles melt  
 When you are here  
 It happens when you volunteer  
 That's where we'll find you  
 There's a volunteer rainbow  
 Wait and see  
 Catch a volunteer rainbow  
 Be all that you can be.

Cast exits.

## Scene II

Stage is set with chairs arranged in a semi-circle center stage. The volunteer coordinator enters holding a handful of papers, presumably volunteer applications. Dialogue is

written for female volunteer coordinator, but if the coordinator is male, adjustments can be made in the lines.

**Narrator:** Sometimes it's amazing the variety of people who respond to a call for volunteers. And in Hollywood the surprises are, as always, larger than life. Just watch.

Narrator exits.

**Coordinator:** I see it's time to interview a new crop of volunteers. This group looks like a really mixed bag. [*S/he beckons off stage:*] Come on in folks.

**Mae West:** [*Slinks in, holding out her hand to coordinator.*] Mae West, honey. Hope you'll come up and see me sometime.

**Coordinator:** [*Shakes her hand.*] Welcome, Ms. West. Please have a seat.

Clark Gable enters. Volunteer coordinator extends hand to Clark Gable who kisses it instead of shaking it.

**Coordinator:** [*Swooning.*] Oh, Mr. Gable!

**Clark Gable:** My dear, I really should be out attending to business, but frankly, I don't give a damn. This is more important.

**Coordinator:** [*Impressed.*] Please, have a seat.

**W.C. Fields:** [*Swaggers on stage surveying the others who are seated.*] Good day, good day. W. C. Fields here. I hope you're planning to have a little libation for this select soiree!

**Coordinator:** [*Indicating seat.*] Good to have you here, Mr. Fields.

**John Wayne:** [*Enters, hat in hand and looking off stage.*] Pardon me, ma'am, there's a little lady out there and I think she's supposed to be coming to this meeting. But when I said "can I help you, ma'am?" she just turned her head and said, "I want to be alone." Shucks, I was just trying to help.

**Coordinator:** Thank you, Mr. Wayne. I'll take care of it. Please have a seat.

Coordinator walks toward Greta Garbo who is shyly peeking on to the stage.

- Coordinator:** Miss Garbo, so glad you could join us.
- Greta Garbo:** [*Pulls one chair away from the circle and sits with her back to the others.*] I want to be alone.
- Coordinator:** I'm sure we can accommodate you. [*She shakes Greta Garbo's hand and begins to address the group.*] I'm so glad you came to volunteer I'm sure all of you will find something rewarding to do here. Tell me about your interests.
- Mae West:** Well, honey, everyone knows my interests. [*Winks at audience.*] I just want to help folks have a good time. This volunteering game sounds too good to be true. One thing bothers me, though, I hear it's all free.
- John Wayne:** Listen up, pilgrim. There's nothing wrong with freedom. Why that's what this country is all about. We're all here by choice.
- Clark Gable:** Frankly, I don't usually give a damn, but I always was a sucker for a good cause.
- W.C. Fields:** Sucker! Sucker! Yes, there's nothing like a sucker! Some of my best deals have been with suckers. I think I'm going to like this place. Tell me just one thing—do you have any dogs or children volunteering here?
- Coordinator:** Are you interested in working with dogs or children?
- W.C. Fields:** [*Looking somewhat evasive.*] Ahhh, the little darlings... hmmmmm.
- Greta Garbo:** [*Interrupting.*] I 'ust vant to be alone!
- W.C. Fields:** [*Turning to her and tipping his hat.*] My sentiments exactly, my little chickadee. Canines and nippers are not my strong suit.
- Coordinator:** I hope you know that we regard volunteers as the true stars of this organization. I know each of you will deliver an award winning performance in your work here at \_\_\_\_\_.
- John Wayne:** The little lady's got a point, pilgrims. We're all here to help out and I, for one, am proud of it.



**Clark Gable:** Frankly, I *do* give a damn about \_\_\_\_\_ but I'm a realist, too. You need us, but we need you, too. We're in this together.

**Greta Garbo:** But, I 'ust vant to be alone.

Mae West goes over to Garbo. Takes her by the hand and motions to John Wayne to move Garbo's chair to the circle. He does.

**Mae West:** Help me out here you big, strong, handsome man. Come on, honey, I've always found it's more fun not to do anything alone, if you know what I mean!

Garbo joins the circle.

**Coordinator:** I want to tell all you how very pleased I am that you have decided to do your volunteering with \_\_\_\_\_. We need all kinds of volunteers here and I want you to know that we will certainly put you to work.

**Coordinator sings** "Just the Way You Are" (to "Just the Way You Are"):

Don't go changing  
To try to please us  
Just cause you want to volunteer  
Mmm mmm  
Don't imagine  
That you won't suit us  
We're all so glad that you came here  
We surely need you  
To cure our troubles  
We never could have come this far  
Mmm mmm  
You'll take our bad times  
And make them good times  
We'll take you just the way you are.

All exit smiling.

### Scene III

**Narrator:** We are now going to take a look at two of our volunteers doing their work on a typical day at \_\_\_\_\_. Their names happen to be Stanley Laurel and Oliver Hardy.

Theme music for Laurel and Hardy is heard. Enter Laurel and Hardy. Laurel is reading a roll of calculator tape and letting it lay on the floor behind him as he moves across the stage.

**Hardy:** Stanley, will you quit playing with that paper? We have a very important job to do today.

**Laurel:** [*Continues to unroll paper.*] Ollie, we have a very important job to do today.

**Hardy:** I just said that, Stanley.

**Laurel:** You just said that, Ollie. I want you to tell me what that very important job is.

**Hardy:** The computer people are coming today to design a program for compiling volunteer statistics, Stanley and I thought we could use the total number to play the lottery! [*Realizing that this is a good plan.*] I bet we could *clean up!*

**Laurel:** I don't know how to work a computer, Ollie.

**Hardy:** You don't have to know, Stanley. Just do what I tell you.

Laurel goes offstage dragging his paper trail. Hardy begins to pick it up and calls after him.

**Hardy:** What are you doing, Stanley?

Laurel returns with a mop and bucket.

**Laurel:** I'm cleaning up, Ollie. Just like you said.

Hardy throws down the paper he has been picking up and starts to become exasperated.

**Hardy:** Put that mop away, Stanley. I meant we could make a *killing* on the lottery for \_\_\_\_\_.

**Laurel:** [*Looking puzzled.*] But Ollie, isn't killing against the law?

**Hardy:** [*Now really exasperated, he storms over to Laurel and puts his foot into Laurel's bucket.*] If I could get my hands on you, I'd wrap calculator tape around your neck and press the equal key.

**Laurel:** [*Innocently.*] Ollie, wouldn't it be better to press the minus key if you wanted to get rid of me?

Hardy looks as if he is going to attack, so Laurel puts down his mop and retreats as Hardy shakes his leg and removes it from the bucket. Hardy takes a moment to compose himself. Laurel meanwhile removes a measuring tape from his pocket and begins to take Hardy's measurements.

**Hardy:** [*Irritated.*] Now, what are you doing?

**Laurel:** [*Calmly.*] I'm getting some statistics.

**Hardy:** [*Shooing him away.*] Not that kind, Stanley. We are interested in the volunteer statistics. You know how we always keep track of our time and the jobs we do? Now, Stanley, those records will be on the computer.

**Laurel:** [*Knowingly.*] That's a big mistake, Ollie.

**Hardy:** And why is that a big mistake, Stanley?

**Laurel:** I always put my records on the phonograph. I don't think they will play if you put them on the computer.

**Hardy:** [*Dismissing him as an idiot.*] Never you mind, Stanley. I think this high tech world may be more than you can manage. Let's hear some of those figures you've been working on that we're going to feed into the computer.

Laurel picks up the paper tape and as he begins to read he walks around Hardy wrapping him in the tape. [*You may want to insert your own volunteer hours here.*]

**Laurel:** [*Slowly.*] 102 hours, 76 hours, 500 hours, 57 hours, 32 hours, 10 hours, 322 hours, 90 hours,

**Hardy:** [*Listening intently and unaware that he is being mummified with*

*paper.*] Volunteers here certainly give a lot of hours, Stanley. Can you give me the totals?

**Laurel:** [*Gets flustered, looks rapidly through paper, and then begins to cry.*] I can't find the totals.

**Hardy:** [*Once again exasperated.*] Stanley, you get too *wrapped up* in your work.

**Laurel:** [*Cheering up a bit as he looks at Hardy.*] You look a bit wrapped up yourself.

**Hardy:** [*Struggling to get free, steps in the bucket in the process.*] A fine mess you got us into.

As Hardy is freeing himself the entire cast marches on stage. Hardy continues to struggle, but finally gives up and joins in the singing.

**Narrator:** And so our Hollywood extravaganza comes to an end. We've taken a look at Hollywood stars, but you, our volunteers are the real stars.

**Entire cast** joins narrator in singing "You Are Our Lucky Stars" (to "You Are My Lucky Star"):

You are our lucky stars  
 You came from near and far  
 You came to work and so we applaud you  
 Laud you  
 We are star struck  
 We'll the universe  
 Without you we would curse  
 You're an illumination  
 You're our favorite constellation  
 You are our lucky stars.

Cast marches off stage.

—The End—



### **Ideas for Personalizing this Skit**

- ★ Identify specific volunteer positions in your organization for the Wizard to cite when handing out recognition certificates to the Tin Man.
- ★ Use a specific volunteer job for the Scarecrow to take on to prove he has a brain.
- ★ Do likewise with the courage given to the Cowardly Lion.
- ★ In Scene II there are opportunities to mention your organization's name and perhaps include some specific activities.
- ★ Add other stars and/or scenes. There may be a movie personality that has particular meaning for your organization or you may have someone who can do a terrific impersonation of someone not now included in the skit.
- ★ In the Laurel and Hardy skit, use something other than the computer/volunteer statistics dilemma. It could be a way of spotlighting a successful fundraising or recruiting effort.



# THE RADIO HOUR

If we haven't given away our ages already with our choice of songs and our writing style, this skit will surely do it. We wrote this skit simply because we were talking about growing up pre-TV. We had a great deal of fun remembering our favorite shows and laughed a lot about some of the absurd things we recalled. Radio not only permitted the use of one's imagination, but full enjoyment of a program practically demanded it. We hope this show triggers your imagination, too. We were also looking for material that would be appropriate for both traditional organizations and all-volunteer organizations and created this skit with that in mind. And, finally, we decided that we needed at least one skit that could be done in segments, so you might use the entire piece or, if your time and resources are limited, do only one part of it. This skit is a bit of pure nostalgia and one of our favorites.

## **Description**

This is an old-fashioned radio variety hour. There are songs and skits by famous radio personalities. The announcer serves as the Master of Ceremonies. The great advantage to this skit is that the players do not have to memorize any dialogue. They hold their scripts in hand as they speak into the microphone. This skit emphasizes the variety of people who come to volunteer.

## **Time**

Approximately 30 minutes. Each section can be rehearsed separately. Ideally, there should be two full rehearsals and a dress rehearsal for the complete cast with piano player or other musicians.

## Cast

There are 14 people with speaking parts in the cast. Cast members should be somewhat familiar with the radio personalities involved.

Announcer—needs to have a strong voice  
 Volontaires—three individuals who can sing well together  
 George Burns and Gracie Allen  
 Chiquita Banana  
 Edgar Bergen, Charlie McCarthy, and Mortimer Snerd  
 Walter Winchell  
 Randy Scott (Young Reporter) and Candy Savage (Young Woman)  
 Kate Smith  
 Sound Effects Person  
 Musical Accompanist

## Music (See Appendix for full references.)

- ★ “Pepsi Cola Hits the Spot,” Pepsi Cola commercial by the Pepsi Cola Company
- ★ “S’ Wonderful” by Ira and George Gershwin
- ★ “Chiquita Banana,” commercial by Leonard Mackenzie, Garth Montgomery, and William Wirges
- ★ Mystery music for Volunteer X
- ★ “God Bless America” by Irving Berlin

## Costume Suggestions

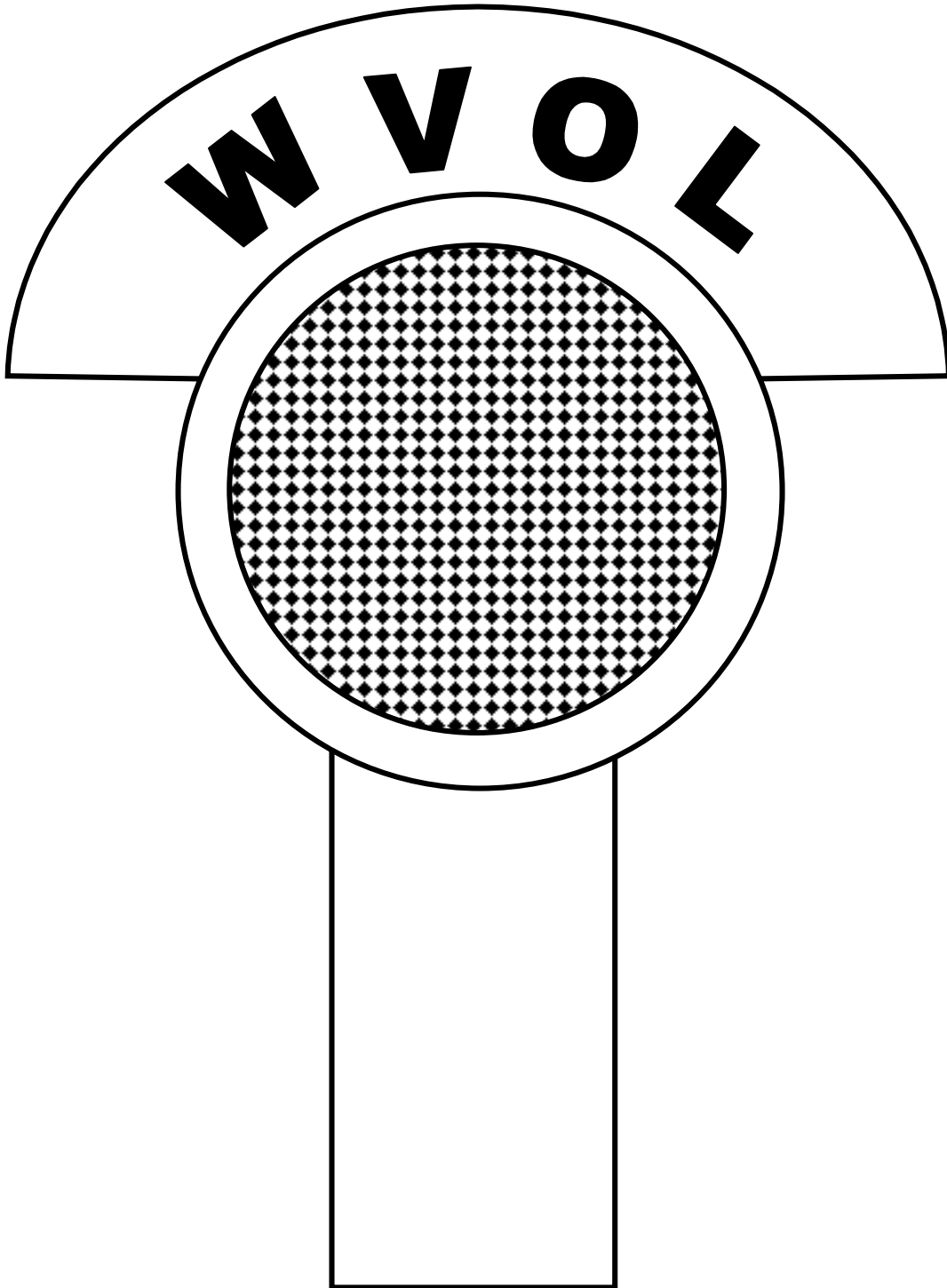
If you are too young to remember 1942 when radio was more than music and talk, check out old photos of these stars to get ideas for costumes.

- ★ Volontaires—dressed alike in forties-style outfits
- ★ George Burns—forties-style suit, carries cigar
- ★ Gracie Allen—forties-style dress
- ★ Chiquita Banana—flamboyant South American-style skirt and blouse and fanciful hat covered with (what else?) bananas
- ★ Charlie McCarthy—tuxedo, top hat, and monocle
- ★ Edgar Berge—tuxedo
- ★ Mortimer Snerd—loud checkered jacket and hunting cap
- ★ Walter Winchell—forties-style suit and fedora hat
- ★ Randy Scott—forties-style suit and hat
- ★ Candy Savage—forties-style dress and hat
- ★ Kate Smith—long black dress with white collar and bow

## Props

- ★ Two real or fake microphones with “WVOL” on them (*graphic provided on the following page*). One is for performers who are standing up and one for performers who are seated. Microphones should resemble early radio mikes.
- ★ Music stand for scripts of seated performers.
- ★ Sound effects table with equipment for the following sounds: fanfare, maracas, storm noises, footsteps, chimes, squeaking door, drum for heartbeats, phone ring, and phone being picked up. The sound effects person can either play this role straight, that is, producing the appropriate sounds at the appropriate times, or for laughs, by producing wrong sounds or producing sounds at the wrong time. If you choose the latter option, be sure that all the players on stage turn to stare at the sound effects person as each “goof” is made.
- ★ Three chairs grouped around one microphone for Edgar Bergen, et. al.





# The Radio Hour

## Scene I

The studio of WVOL, a 500 watt local radio station, broadcasting a weekly variety show. The year is 1942. There is a standing microphone center stage, and another lower one with chairs around it stage left. Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd are sitting limply in their chairs. They are expressionless and do not react until the ventriloquist arrives. Stage right is the sound effects table. Players for each scene, scripts in hand, gather around the microphone when speaking. Others may be seated on chairs at the rear of the stage or come on stage as their scene begins. *(Throughout the skit, wherever blanks appear in the script, insert the names of your cast or your organization.)*

Sound effects person sounds chimes ala old NBC radio (G below middle C; middle C; E above middle C).

**Announcer:** V-B-S, the Volunteer Broadcasting System. Good evening! Welcome to the WVOL Radio Hour, dedicated to those who give of themselves through volunteering. Our special guests this evening are George Burns and Gracie Allen, Edgar Bergen and friends Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd, the mystery players, special guest Kate Smith and, as always, our lovely Volontaires.

Volontaires step to the microphone and sing to the tune of “Pepsi Cola Hits the Spot”:

Volunteering hits the spot  
 Help one person, that’s a lot  
 Twice as much for your efforts, too  
 Volunteering is the work for you.

Volontaires exit.

**Announcer:** Thank you lovely ladies and now let’s join George Burns and Gracie Allen. Gracie is telling George that she has become a volunteer.

George and Gracie come to microphone. Announcer steps to one side.

**George:** So you're volunteering, Gracie?

**Gracie:** Well, yes, I am, George.

**George:** How did that happen, Gracie?

**Gracie:** Well, I was standing in the post office and I saw a sign that said "wanted-reward" and there was a man's picture on it. So I said to the woman next to me, "wouldn't it be nice to be wanted?" She told me that she was always wanted and what she did was very rewarding. I said, "that's nice, what do you do?" She said that she volunteered at \_\_\_\_\_. I asked her if she had her picture up in the post office, too, and she said, "no." But she gave me a brochure with a phone number to call.

**George:** And so you called the number?

**Gracie:** Well, no. First I went to the photographer and had my picture taken and then I called the number.

**George:** So now you're a volunteer?

**Gracie:** When I called I told them I already had my picture and all I needed was to be wanted.

**George:** Hmm, like in the post office posters?

**Gracie:** Yes, George, and then I asked the person on the phone if there would be a reward, but, George, she said the strangest thing.

**George:** What was that, Gracie?

**Gracie:** She said they really liked "giving people"....

**George:** So you volunteered?

**Gracie:** No, George, I explained that I didn't want them to give me any people. I wanted to give them my picture for a reward.

**George:** And then what happened, Gracie? Did they put you on their

most wanted list?

**Gracie:** They did say that they wanted to recognize me and I asked them how could they recognize me if they didn't have my picture?

**George:** And?

**Gracie:** And I don't understand this, George. They said they couldn't recognize me until the end of April when it's National Volunteer Week and that's when I said I would volunteer once a week so they wouldn't have to put my picture in the post office.

**George:** And then what happened, Gracie?

**Gracie:** What a funny group of people they have there, George. How do they know who their volunteers are if they don't recognize them and then they say they recognize them all at one time?

**George:** Gracie, I think that is called a "Eureka Moment."

**Gracie:** Oh, no, George, it is called....

**George:** *(Interrupting.)* Say "Goodnight," Gracie.

**Gracie:** Goodnight, Gracie.

George and Gracie exit.

**Announcer:** Volunteering may never be the same. Gracie will see to that. And now I want to announce WVOL's new jingle contest. All you need to do is complete the last line of this jingle:

Fanfare is sounded by sound effects person.

**Announcer:** "There was a young woman who went  
To volunteer where she was sent.  
Her talent was noted  
She was swiftly promoted  
Da da da dada da da da."

First prize is a \$35.00 junk bond. Second prize 1530 leftover

certificates that were given to volunteers last year, and third prize 1525 used name tags. Volunteer name tags, of course. Enclose your entry with a label from your latest volunteer job. All entries must be postmarked by midnight. The decision of the judges is final.

The Volontaires will now tickle your ears with their rendition of “S’wonderful.”

Volontaires come to microphone and sing to “S’Wonderful”:

S’wonderful  
 S’marvelous  
 To be a volunteer.  
 S’awful nice  
 Take our advice  
 And be a volunteer.  
 The job may not be glamorous  
 But be assured that you’ll feel  
 Fabulous.  
 ‘Cause s’wonderful  
 S’marvelous  
 To be a volunteer.

S’wonderful  
 S’marvelous  
 Come be a volunteer.  
 There’s work to do  
 There’s more for you  
 When you’re a volunteer.  
 The hours that you choose to spend  
 Are sure to pay a great big dividend.  
 You’ll feel wonderful  
 Marvelous  
 Cause you’re a volunteer.

Volontaires exit. Announcer steps up to microphone.

**Announcer:** And now a short message from Chiquita Banana.

Chiquita comes to microphone. Sound effects person plays maracas.

Chiquita sings to “Chiquita Banana”:

I’m Chiquita Banana  
 and I volunteer  
 Bananas like a sunny pleasant  
 atmosphere  
 When I get involved  
 I feel a glow of pride  
 When I volunteer  
 You see my golden side  
 I’m so happy to be helping  
 It just makes me want to sigh-aye  
 Volunteering is so needed  
 It’s impossible to beat it  
 Just like peeling a banana  
 You can slip into  
 A frame of mind that’s cheering  
 So everyone should go bananas  
 And go for volunteering  
 Si si si si

Chiquita exits.

**Announcer:** Thank you a bunch, Chiquita. And now here is your favorite twosome, Charlie McCarthy and Edgar Bergen. Charlie has something important to discuss with Mr. Bergen.

While announcer is speaking, Edgar Bergen takes the middle chair stage left and places his hand behind Charlie McCarthy’s head. Charlie looks up and is ready for his dialogue. Scripts for this group can be placed on a music stand for them to read or they may memorize their dialogue.

**Bergen:** Well, Charlie, what is the important thing you wanted to discuss with me?

**Charlie:** I decided that I want to make a mark in this world.

**Bergen:** Did you want me to get you something to write with?

**Charlie:** Mr. B, what do you take me for? A dummy? What I mean is I want to help someone who is less fortunate than I am.

- Bergen:** Charlie, what a wonderful thought! There are so many people in the world that need our help. They don't have the -ah-er-support that you have and they can't even speak for themselves.
- Charlie:** I know Bergen. The poor devils. That's why I'm confiding in you. I have the kind of personality that is always reaching out to others.
- Bergen:** I have been noticing that, Charlie.
- Charlie:** Let's see now, what sort of things could I do? Maybe I could be a volunteer fireman.
- Bergen:** That job might prove dangerous for you Charlie. You know that you are highly flammable.
- Charlie:** It just burns me up when you say that about me. I don't think I smell bad at all!
- Bergen:** Maybe you should consider some other type of volunteer job. Your language skills are good. Have you ever considered tutoring?
- Charlie:** I never played a musical instrument in my whole life, Bergen. You should know that.
- Bergen:** Yes, I certainly should know that. Well, Charlie, have you considered working in a shelter to take care of the homeless?
- Charlie:** Wouldn't everyone there laugh at me if they saw where I slept every night? I just fold up in that little black case. I am the one around here who is homeless.
- Bergen:** You poor thing. It sounds like you're the one who needs help, certainly more help than you can give to others.
- Charlie:** But, Bergie, that's what volunteers do. They give to others, but then they receive so much more than they give, you see.
- Bergen:** You are making sense now, Charlie. Let's ask Mortimer Snerd what he thinks.

Bergen places his hand behind Mortimer Snerd's head and Mortimer looks up and is ready to speak.

**Mortimer:** Did I hear my name mentioned? Yuk, yuk, yuk. (*Laughing.*)

**Bergen:** Hello, Mortimer. Charlie here is all set to go out and be a volunteer and we are thinking about what kind of volunteering he can do. What do you think about all of this?

**Mortimer:** Yuk, yuk. I think you're barking up the wrong tree, if you'll pardon the expression.

**Bergen:** Now enough of that kind of talk, Mortimer. Charlie needs some help from us about what kind of volunteer work he should look into.

**Mortimer:** Well, I had an uncle once who was a great volunteer.

**Bergen:** Do tell.

**Mortimer:** Yes, when anyone was giving something away, Uncle Orville always volunteered to take it. Oh, yes, he was a great volunteer. Yuk, yuk, yuk.

**Bergen:** That's not quite what we are referring to, Mortimer. We're talking about helping out your fellow man.

**Mortimer:** Gosh, don't women and children need help, too?

**Charlie:** Whew—I should start by tutoring him!

**Bergen:** Now, now, boys, let's put our heads together and try to come up with something.

**Mortimer:** Putting our heads together? Is that something like knocking on wood? Yuk, yuk. But come to think of it, I think that I would like to do something, too, Charlie. Could we donate blood?

**Charlie:** What a sap—that's the dumbest thing I have ever heard. How could we get to the blood bank?

**Mortimer:** I happen to know that you can bank by mail.



**Charlie:** Bergie, could you get rid of this peghead?

**Bergen:** Don't you think it would be a good idea to start doing good deeds at home? You might start by being nice to Mortimer. After all, he's got feelings, too.

**Charlie:** That blockhead! He's not even a "being."

**Mortimer:** I think everybody should care about all bein's. I like "jelly bein's" best of all!

**Charlie:** This is the last straw. My "do good" thoughts are now "do evil" thoughts. I feel like I could strangle someone.

**Bergen:** Control yourself, Charlie. Where is that caring soul we caught a glimpse of?

**Mortimer:** He's got a knothole for a heart.

**Charlie:** I'm ready to fold. Put me back in my case.

Bergen removes his hands from behind Charlie and Mortimer and they slump in their chairs. Bergen exits and the Announcer returns to the microphone.

**Announcer:** Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd seem ripe for recruiting, if anyone is interested. But now, time for a short news break. Here is Walter Winchell.

Walter Winchell steps to the microphone. (You may skip this part if you do not plan to announce any volunteer statistics at this point.)

**Winchell:** Attention Mr. and Mrs. America and all the ships at sea. Startling statistics released today by \_\_\_\_\_ indicate that \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (← fill in here any volunteer information about your program that you want the audience to hear).

**Announcer:** Exciting news indeed.

Sound effects person begins mystery type music along with other sound effects like a squeaking door and footsteps. Announcer continues to speak over sound effects.

**Announcer:** And now our mystery players present “A Volunteer Called X.”

Randy Scott and Candy Savage step to the microphone.

Sound Effects Person makes sounds of clock chiming, storm, phone ringing and phone being picked up during the following dialogue.

**Randy:** My name is Randy Scott. I cover the night beat for \_\_\_\_\_ (*local paper*). I was in my office at two o'clock one morning full of hope that a story would break. It was raining cats and dogs outside. (*Pause for phone to ring.*) Randy Scott speaking. (*Listens for a moment.*) Take it easy now. Are you sure that one person did all of those things? It's a nice story, sweetheart, but, it isn't really news. (*Pauses.*) You say she disappeared and you want me to help. Well... Ok doll, I'll be right over. I wasn't happy about going out on a night like this, but this dame sounded desperate. I had planned to take time off tonight and join my buddies for some poker. I could feel my full house fading away. I always was a sucker for a tomato in trouble.

Sound Effects Person makes sounds of footsteps, doors being opened and closed, more footsteps, storm noises, knocks on door.

**Candy:** Who's there? (*Sound of chimes and squeaking door opening.*)

**Randy:** Who were you expecting at 3 o'clock in the morning... (*pause for sound effects*), the dry cleaner?...I could see she was surprised when she opened the door and saw me, but then so was I. Somebody might be missing, but this doll wasn't missing a thing. It was all there and in the right places.

**Candy:** Please come in. (*Sound of squeaking door closing.*)

**Randy:** What can I do for you, beautiful?

**Candy:** Oh, thank you so much for coming. Please call me Candy. You see, \_\_\_\_\_ had this very special volunteer. We never knew anything about her (*use either male or female pronouns as appropriate to your circumstance*) personal life, but she was a terrific worker. One day she just didn't show up. In the past she had always let us know when she wasn't coming. I didn't know who I could turn to, so I called your paper.

- Randy:** You sure did the right thing. What's her name?
- Candy:** We never knew her name. She always called herself... *(pause for mystery music)* Volunteer X. She never told us where she came from or where she lived. Although we knew nothing about her, we cared about her a lot. I am so worried. What if something terrible happened to her? I could never forgive myself. I should have taken more interest in her life.
- Randy:** I was beginning to like what I was finding out about this doll. Not only was she a looker, but she had a heart. I wanted to help her...What can I do for you, Candy?
- Candy:** Well, I have called the volunteer center. We get many of our volunteers from them. They had no idea who she was. Oh, Randy, I'm so frightened. *(Starts crying.)*
- Randy:** *(Mystery music plays.)* Please don't cry, Candy. I'll do all I can for you.... What was I getting into? I had no idea how to help this chick, but I knew I had to do it. I'll put a feature in my column about...*(pause for mystery music)* Volunteer X.
- Candy:** I'll hug you for that. I knew I could count on you. Please find her for me.
- Randy:** I was falling fast. I was going to find...*(pause for mystery music)* Volunteer X if it killed me.
- Announcer:** Two days have gone by. Once more Randy and Candy are speaking to each other on the phone. *(Phone rings.)*
- Candy:** Hello.
- Randy:** How are you, babe?
- Candy:** I'm OK, Randy, have you found any clues?
- Randy:** I placed an ad in our want ad section and someone did call. She claimed she was...*(pause for mystery music)* Volunteer X, but she wouldn't tell me anything about herself or where she could be found.

- Candy:** Oh, Randy, what can we do?
- Randy:** I had a trace on the call. The cops are cooperating. They think they know where the call came from and they said that they would investigate the case. They even told me that I could go with them this very afternoon.
- Candy:** Please, Randy, I want to come, too. I'm afraid this might be dangerous for you.
- Randy:** So, the doll was falling for me, too. How sweet it is.... No, Candy, this is no place for the weaker sex. You will have to wait for me at home.
- Announcer:** Later that afternoon, Randy knocks on Candy's door Candy answers and they rush into each other's arms.
- Candy:** I was so worried about you. What happened?
- Randy:** My ticker was pumping so hard I could hardly talk... *(pause for sound effect – loud beating sounds)* We found the house where...*(pause for mystery music)* Volunteer X lived, and spoke to her landlady. The landlady told us that a woman just moved away to another town. She called herself...*(pause for music)* Madame X. She told her landlady that it was time to move on. She did not want any rewards for the good deeds she had done. She said that she did it because it was the right thing to do and that there were many others who would carry on the good work.
- Candy:** We'll all miss her, but at least we know she's safe and, Randy, she did bring us together.
- Randy:** Yes, sweetheart, I learned a lot just hearing about...*(pause for mystery music)* Volunteer X. What do you say you and me go do a little volunteering together?
- Candy:** Oh, Randy!
- Announcer:** Be sure to tune in next week for further adventures in volunteering presented by our mystery players. We have almost reached the end of our program for this week, but our final guest needs no introduction. She is well known to all

radio listeners. Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Kate Smith.

Kate Smith comes to microphone and sings “God Bless Our Volunteers” (to the tune of “God Bless America”):

God bless our volunteers  
 Those whom we trust  
 They stand beside us  
 And guide us  
 They’re a light  
 Shining bright  
 Just for us.  
 From the country  
 And the city  
 And the suburbs  
 They arrive.  
 God bless our volunteers  
 They help us survive.  
 God bless our volunteers  
 They help us to thrive.

**Announcer:** Thank you miss smith. This has been the WVOL Radio Hour. Thank you for joining us. We will be back again next week. In the Meantime give the gift that keeps on giving—volunteer! Good night.

Entire cast joins in reprising “S’Wonderful.” (Edgar Bergen sits with McCarthy and Snerd):

S’wonderful  
 S’marvelous  
 To be a volunteer.  
 S’awful nice  
 Take our advice  
 And be a volunteer.  
 The job may not be glamorous  
 But be assured that you’ll feel fabulous.  
 ‘Cause s’wonderful  
 S’marvelous  
 To be a volunteer.

—The End—



## Ideas for Personalizing this Skit

- ★ Use prizes in the jingle contest that have a particular meaning to your organization. For example, first prize could be a job no one wants to do or leftover items from a less than successful fund raiser, etc.
- ★ Mystery players' names can be changed to those of someone in the organization. You could also reverse the roles and have a woman be the crime reporter and a man the person who needs assistance.
- ★ Use your own commercials.
- ★ Add other scenes with other famous radio personalities of the period, such as Fibber Magee and Molly, Jack Benny, Duffy's Tavern, etc.

## SEND IN THE CLONES

We had written a skit for a national group based on the popular movie *E.T.* and liked the result so much that we wanted to work with the material again. We tried in vain to find a theme that would fit volunteers, but just couldn't come up with one. Our discussion then ranged from extra-terrestrials to science fiction to robots to clones. "Aha," we said, "What if in the future, instead of real volunteers there were robots who were clones of volunteers!" We suspected that the inevitable glitches of a mechanized system would occur and that gave us the beginnings of a skit.

We then had to think about what characteristics are true of all volunteers and why these have to come from "real" people rather than robots. We decided we would never want to live in a world where volunteering became standardized and routine. We feel strongly that volunteers should be allowed to make decisions and that there is a certain unpredictability about the whole field of volunteerism which makes it such a vital and creative force in our society.

### **Description**

This lighthearted look at the future emphasizes the human values involved in volunteering. The message in this skit applies to both agency-related volunteer programs and to all-volunteer organizations.

### **Time**

The running time of this skit is approximately 30 minutes. Ideally there should be two full rehearsals and a dress rehearsal with the complete cast and piano player or other musicians. Groups can rehearse songs in advance of full cast rehearsals.

## Cast

This play can be done with a minimum of ten people.

Laboratory Director  
 Three Laboratory Staff  
 Three or more V.I.P.s (Volunteers in Person)  
 Three or more Clones  
 Musical Accompanist

**Music** (See Appendix for full references.)

- ★ “Stouthearted Men” by Oscar Hammerstein II and Sigmund Romberg from the operetta *The New Moon*
- ★ “Ghostbusters” by Ray Parker, Jr. from the movie *Ghostbusters*
- ★ “Matchmaker” by Jerry Bock and Sheldon Harnick from *Fiddler on the Roof*
- ★ “You’re the Top” by Cole Porter from *Anything Goes*
- ★ “Heart” by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross from *Damn Yankees*

## Costume Suggestions

- ★ Laboratory Director and Staff—white lab coats
- ★ Laboratory Director—large badge saying “Chief”\*
- ★ Clones—white paper coveralls or scrub suits often available at uniform supply stores. In any event they should be dressed alike in somewhat bland costumes.
- ★ V.I.P.s—regular clothing or volunteer uniforms if appropriate

## Props

- ★ Clipboards and pencils for laboratory staff and director
- ★ Three or more large boxes with signs on them designating the type of clone in the box
- ★ Protest signs for V.I.P.s reading “NO MORE CLONES,” “VOLUNTEERS ARE PEOPLE FIRST,” “VOLUNTEERS, YES: CLONES, NO,” etc. (*Graphics provided on the following pages.*)





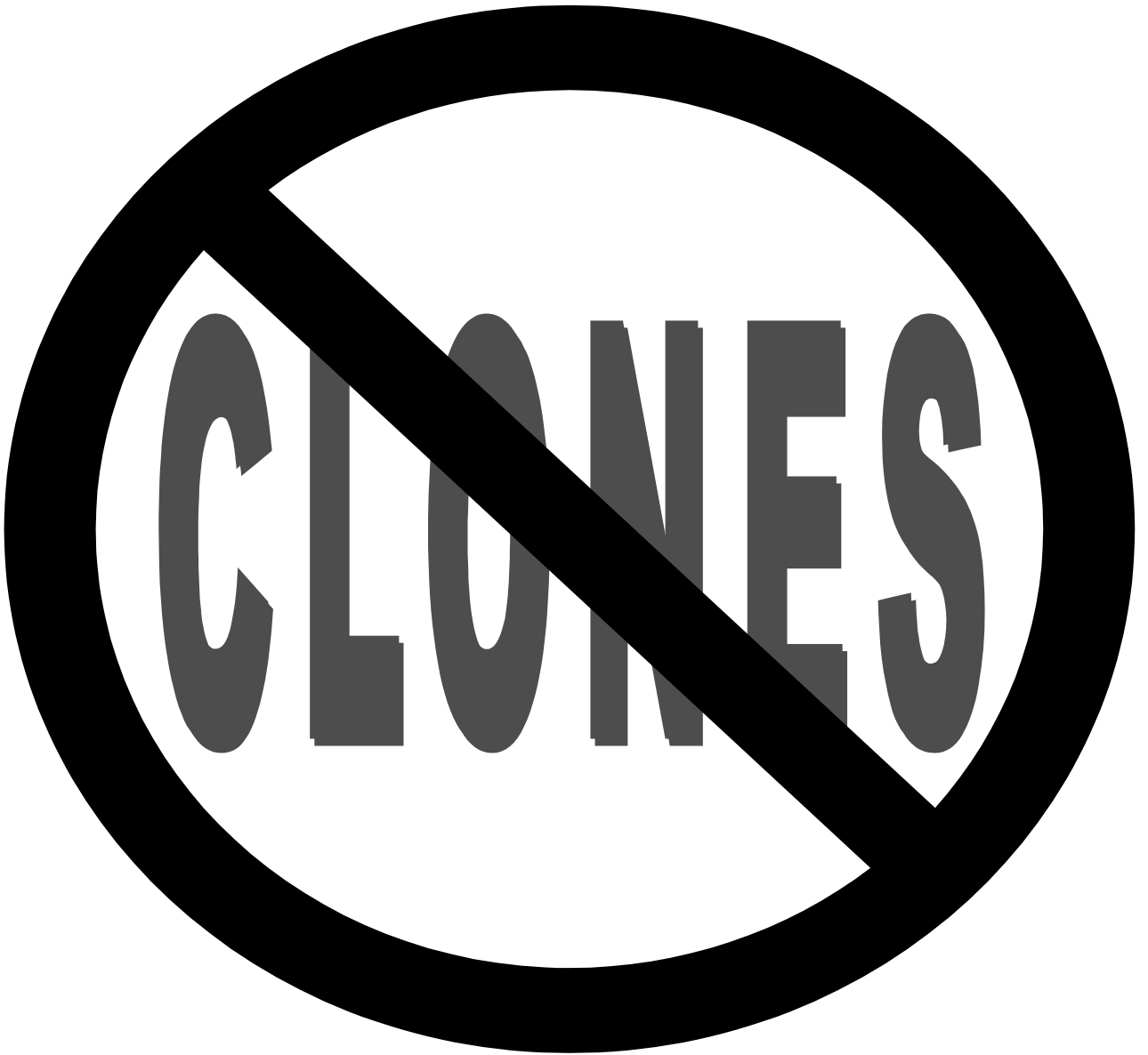
**NO MORE CLONES**

**VOLUNTEERS**

**ARE PEOPLE FIRST**

**VOLUNTEERS!**

**CLONES NO!**



## Send in the Clones

Three or four large boxes are scattered around the stage. Signs on the containers indicate the type of volunteer they contain, i.e. clerical, escort, docent, tour guide, board member, etc. Three laboratory staff members holding clipboards and looking official enter and begin looking into the containers and checking things off on their clipboards. The laboratory director enters looking somewhat harried.

**Director:** We have to look good today. We're expecting some V. I. P.'s to inspect the progress of our latest project and, I hope, place their orders for our volunteer clones. How far along are we?

**1st Staffer:** Everything's going very well.

**Director:** Will we have any of our product ready to go?

**2nd Staffer:** We have a batch maturing in a few minutes.

**Director:** Good. Good. Let's check out how this newest model is doing. I'll go down my checklist to see if everything's in order. Responsibility?

As s/he is speaking the Director takes out a pencil and looks at his/her clipboard. The staff members do likewise. After each characteristic is called off by the Director, the staff answer in unison, marking their clipboards in an exaggerated manner.

**Staff:** Check.

**Director:** Punctuality?

**Staff:** Check.

**Director:** Dependability?

**Staff:** Check.

**Director:** Skills?

**Staff:** Check.

- Director:** Energy?
- Staff:** Check.
- Director:** Enthusiasm?
- 1st Staffer:** Well, sir, we're working on it, but every time we get an enthusiastic clone, it stops being dependable.
- Director:** I don't want a repeat of what happened last year when the clones went berserk and held the board of directors hostage. I think we can do without enthusiasm!
- Staff:** Check.
- Director:** Just for my own information, are any of this new group of clones "Board Eligible"?
- 2nd Staffer:** Not possible—this batch does not have a fundraising gene!
- Director:** Do you think they're ready? I'd like to preview them before our guests arrive.
- 3rd Staffer:** I'll get them.

Clones march slowly in singing dirge-like with no expression. Clones march in place during song. Clones sing "We Are the Clones" (to "Stouthearted Men"):

We are the clones  
 We have synthetic bones  
 See the light, we are right for today.  
 We are the clones  
 We are technical drones  
 We're the best you can own, don't delay.  
 Shoulder to shoulder  
 We'll never get older  
 We're ready to start right away.  
 We will always do the work  
 Without a moan or groan  
 We are not alone  
 We stick together clone to clone.

**Director:** Now let's see if they pass the volunteer test. Why do you want to be volunteers?

Clones answer in unison and in a monotone. One clone is "stuck" and echoes the last two words. The 2nd Staff member must hit this clone on the shoulder to stop the repetition.

**Clones:** Because we love people.

**Stuck Clone:** Love people, love people, love pe...

Director frowns at Staff, but continues with the test.

**Director:** How much time can you give?

**Clones:** As much as needed.

**Director:** *(Nodding his/her approval.)* Have you ever volunteered before?

**Clones:** We were born to volunteer.

**Stuck Clone:** Volunteer, volunteer, volun...

**1st Staffer:** *(Looking off stage right.)* Boss, I think we've got problems.

**Director:** *(Misunderstanding.)* Yes, I can see that!

**1st Staffer:** *(Pointing offstage.)* No look - I see people coming with signs. It looks like some kind of demonstration.

**Director:** Good grief! Just what we don't need, especially with those V.I.P.s due to arrive any minute.

**2nd Staffer:** Boss, I think these folks are the V.I.P.S. look at those signs.

V.I.P.s enter, chanting and carrying signs. They parade once around the stage and then come stage center to sing. The Director and Staff huddle together trying to plan, the Clones merely stare and do not react.

V.I.P.s sing "Clonebuster" (to "Ghostbusters"):

If there's something weird  
 In the things you see  
 Who you gonna call?  
 Clonebusters!  
 We ain't 'fraid of no clone  
 We ain't 'fraid of no clone  
 If your volunteers tend to look the same  
 Who you gonna call?  
 Clonebusters  
 And you're having doubts  
 As to why they came  
 Who you gonna call?  
 Clonebusters!  
 We ain't 'fraid of no clones  
 We ain't 'fraid of no clones  
 Who you gonna call?  
 Clonebusters!  
 We're the V.I.P.s  
 And we're here to please  
 We're clonebusters  
 We ain't 'fraid of no clones  
 They're only just machines  
 We ain't 'fraid of no clones  
 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Director:** Stop. Stop. How did you get in here?

**1st Volunteer:** Easy. We just told the guard we were V.I.P.S.

**Director:** V.I.P.S?

**2nd Volunteer:** Yes, "Volunteers In Person."

**3rd Staffer:** *(To Director:)* "Volunteers In Person"? Who are they?

**Director:** Oh, these are the folks who used to volunteer years ago, before we came in and improved things.

**3rd Staffer:** *(Goes over to V.I.P.s and peers at them.)* You mean they are "real people"? And they actually volunteered?

Other Staff members begin to poke at and observe the volunteers very closely, making

notes on their clip boards. Volunteers try to shoo them away.

**Director:** Yes, most of them are over 150 years old! They seem to be a long living bunch. There used to be a theory that volunteering enriched people's lives. But that was before the scientific advancement that we have now. We know that it just wouldn't work to have real people volunteering today.

Volunteers are incensed and begin to speak at one time.

**1st Volunteer:** Hold on! You don't know everything.

**2nd Volunteer:** What do you know?!

**3rd Volunteer:** That's not true. How can you say that?!

**1st Staffer:** *(Loudly, quieting the volunteers.)* It's true. There's no demand for "real people."

**2nd Staffer:** *(Agreeing enthusiastically.)* Everyone I've talked to recently is really pleased with our product.

**3rd Staffer:** *(Joining the other two.)* The phone rings all the time with people placing orders.

Staff come stage center to sing. The volunteers look on in disbelief, the Director is trying to think what to do next and the Clones just stare.

Staff sings "Clonemaker" (to "Matchmaker"—Pretending to hold phones to their ears):

Clonemaker, clonemaker  
 Make me a clone  
 I'll trust your pick of chromosomes.  
 Clonemaker, clonemaker  
 Here's what I mean  
 You know how to splice a gene.  
 Clonemaker, clonemaker,  
 You have the seed  
 Some D.N.A. is all you'll need.  
 Put it together with enzymes and such  
 Cause you've got that magic touch.



**Solo:** We're set to take any order  
With science we can do anything.  
And if you want to reorder  
Just pick up the phone and give us a ring.

**Staff:** Clonemaker, Clonemaker,  
Make me a match  
I'm sure you'll find there's not a catch  
I need a new volunteer that's high tech  
Without one I'll just be a wreck.

**1st V.I.P.:** You don't know the first thing about volunteers. And your clones don't know anything about volunteering.

**Director:** What do you mean?

**1st V.I.P.:** It's impossible to program volunteers for every eventuality. Volunteers have to be able to think for themselves. Otherwise you get some strange things happening.

Now it's the Staff's turn to be upset and they begin to speak at one time. The Director is beginning to look uncomfortable and the Clones just stare.

**1st Staffer:** Like what?

**2nd Staffer:** Give us an example.

**3rd Staffer:** Who says so?

As each example is given, the other V.I.P.s mutter their agreement, saying things like "That's right," "You tell 'em," etc.

**1st V.I.P.:** Well, there were the Boy Scout clones who forced older people to cross the street.

**3rd V.I.P.:** My grandmother was lost for three days!

**1st V.I.P.:** And how about the hospital escorts who thought "X-ray" was the local pornographic movie?

**2nd V.I.P.:** And the hospital auxiliary clones who put shirts on all the sandwiches in the snack bar because someone told them you

couldn't get a "decent" lunch there?

**3rd V.I.P.:** *(The V.I.P.s are really on a roll now.)* And the hot line clones who put all the phones in the freezer?

**2nd V.I.P.:** And the museum volunteer clones who called everybody "Mummy"?

The Staff members look more and more uncomfortable during the above dialogue. They appear apologetic as they sing the last chorus of "Clonemaker":

**Staff sings:** It's true that clonemaking is rather new  
 Not fully tried, tested and true  
 Up to this minute we thought it was good  
 We may have misunderstood.  
 We're honest workers, we're not fakes  
 But, gee whiz, we can make a mistake.  
 We're not at all sentimental  
 We're just terrified.  
 Maybe there's something you  
 Volunteers know  
 Clonemaking could be filled with woe.  
 Clones may be more limited than we thought  
 When help is what's sought  
 It can't be bought  
 Real volunteers  
 They care a lot  
 They give it all they've got.

**1st Staff:** I wonder what it was like when volunteers had to be found instead of made?

**2nd V.I.P.:** Real volunteers had a chance to discover things for themselves—to develop their own skills.

**1st V.I.P.:** Real volunteers spoke out for their organization—they made suggestions—they recruited others...

**3rd V.I.P.:** Real volunteers weren't programmed—they were flexible...and innovative....

**1st V.I.P.:** And motivated...

- 3rd V.I.P.:** It wasn't just a job—they cared.
- Director:** Wait a minute. Let's settle this once and for all. Here's a situation that's likely to happen. Suppose someone complains about a volunteer. How would you help this person out?
- 1st V.I.P.:** We would talk with the person to discover what was wrong. Then we might schedule a meeting to discuss the issues and see how we could improve things...
- 2nd V.I.P.:** We would be sure to get back to the person who complained to explain what we were doing to improve things...
- 3rd V.I.P.:** Real volunteers are always interested in making things better...
- 1st V.I.P.:** We would try to be fair to everyone involved...
- Clones:** *(Interrupting and in unison:)* Too complicated.
- Director:** *(Looking pleased and speaking to clones:)* What would you do to help this person out?
- Clones:** *(In unison and in sing-song robot-like voices.)* We would say "door or window."
- Director:** *(Completely puzzled.)* I beg your pardon?
- Clones:** Door or window. Can we help you out the door or window?
- The Director scowls at the Staff who look sheepish. The V.I.P.s look pleased.
- 1st V.I.P.:** "Helping out" doesn't mean leaving—it means giving someone a hand, supporting them.
- Clones:** Ok, we will support them as they go out the door or the window.
- Director:** Hold on—I have to say from a **scientific** point of view, the V.I.P.s' solution seems terribly complicated, but these clones don't have a handle on how to help people.
- Clones:** *(Interrupting.)* If people have handles we will use their handles to support them out the door or the window.

**Director:** *(Losing patience.)* BE QUIET! *(To staff members:)* This product seems to be missing an important ingredient that the V.I.P.s have. These clones don't seem to care and furthermore they don't have any common sense.

Clones sing (with no expression) "We're the Flops" (to "You're the Top"):

We're the flops  
 We're an Edsel nightmare  
 We're the flops  
 Cause we really can't care  
 We're the old spruce goose,  
 A screw that's loose, a noose  
 We're an also ranner, a new coke planner  
 We're chamberlain  
 We're the flops  
 We're a Wendell Wilkie  
 We're the flops  
 We're a drink that's milky  
 We're an old dry well  
 A monastic cell, we're hell  
 You can see we're at the bottom  
 We're the flops

**3rd V.I.P.:** Hold on—you're only flops as volunteers.

**Clones:** But what can we be? How can we help people out?

V.I.P.'s look at each other puzzled.

**1st V.I.P.:** *(Hesitantly.)* Well, you could....be.....bouncers!

**Clones:** Is that helping people out?

**1st V.I.P.:** *(Pleased.)* OH, YES, INDEED!

**Clones:** *(Showing some sign of animation.)* Oh, good—doors or windows? Doors or windows?

**Director:** *(Holding his/her head.)* Where did we go wrong?

V.I.P.'s sing "Heart" (to song by same name):

You've gotta have heart  
All you really need is heart  
Volunteers believe that everyone wins  
They pitch right in and start  
You've gotta have hope  
Mustn't sit around and mope  
Nothing's half as bad as it may appear  
Volunteers really cope  
Doing nothing is a zero  
You can even up the score  
You may never be a hero  
But you know what life is for  
Get out and do it, but to do it...

Everyone joins in:

You've gotta have heart  
Miles and miles and miles of heart  
You don't need to be a genius, of course,  
Just keep that old horse before the cart  
First you've got to have heart

**—The End—**



### **Ideas for Personalizing this Skit**

- ★ V.I.P.s can wear volunteer uniforms from your organization.
- ★ Signs carried by V.I.P.s can reflect specific volunteer skills that clones do not possess and which are important to your organization.
- ★ Use specific qualities you look for in volunteer recruits for the Director's check list.
- ★ Use examples of foul-ups (real or potential) from your organization for the clones.
- ★ Change song lyrics to reflect your organization.
- ★ Use names of real people for Director, Staff and Volunteers.



# THE VOLUNTEER ACADEMY AWARDS

The Academy Awards occur close to the time of National Volunteer Week, so the connection in hindsight seems inevitable. The hoopla surrounding the Awards is almost inescapable. You hear about the ceremony on radio and TV and read about nominations in newspapers and magazines. The Academy Awards represent the pinnacle of recognition for those involved in movie making. We realized that this would lend itself to the recognition of volunteers. Why not cash in on the glamour and glitz, the excitement and prestige of this night and use it with volunteers?

This skit was originally written for the volunteers at a women's shelter. Revising it brought home to us yet again the real difficulties in writing "generic" material. This is not a skit that will work well for every organization. We included it because we felt it provided an opportunity to recognize many different categories of volunteers.

## **Description**

This is a take-off on the Academy Awards. It includes specific material for such volunteer categories as hotline worker, information and referral worker, clerical worker, and board of directors. Categories can be added or changed as appropriate for your organization. This skit also involves people in the organization playing themselves as they give out the volunteer awards. Introductions of presenters can be expanded for each person. This skit could be used by clients to recognize volunteers.

## **Time**

Running time of skit is approximately 30 minutes. Actual length will depend on the number of awards handed out. Sections can be rehearsed separately, but there should ideally be at least three full rehearsals for the complete cast with the musical accompanist, one of which should be a dress rehearsal.

## **Cast**

Total cast size can vary depending on the number of presenters and the size of the chorus. Chorus parts could also be performed by different groups, for example, a quartet or trio could sing "I and R" or "Our Board."

Master of Ceremonies  
 Hotline Worker  
 All-Star Song and Dance Troupe  
 Actual supervisors/captains of volunteer groups as presenters  
 Musical Accompanist

**Music** (See Appendix for full references.)

- ★ “There’s No Business Like Show Business” by Irving Berlin from *Annie Get Your Gun*
- ★ “Mack the Knife” by Bertold Brecht and Kurt Weill from *The Threepenny Opera*
- ★ “It’s Only a Paper Moon” by Billy Rose, E.Y. Harburg, and Harold Arlen
- ★ “Big Spender” by Dorothy Fields and Cy Coleman from *Sweet Charity*
- ★ “Windy” by Ruthann Friedman
- ★ “Thanks for the Memory” by Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger

**Costume Suggestions**

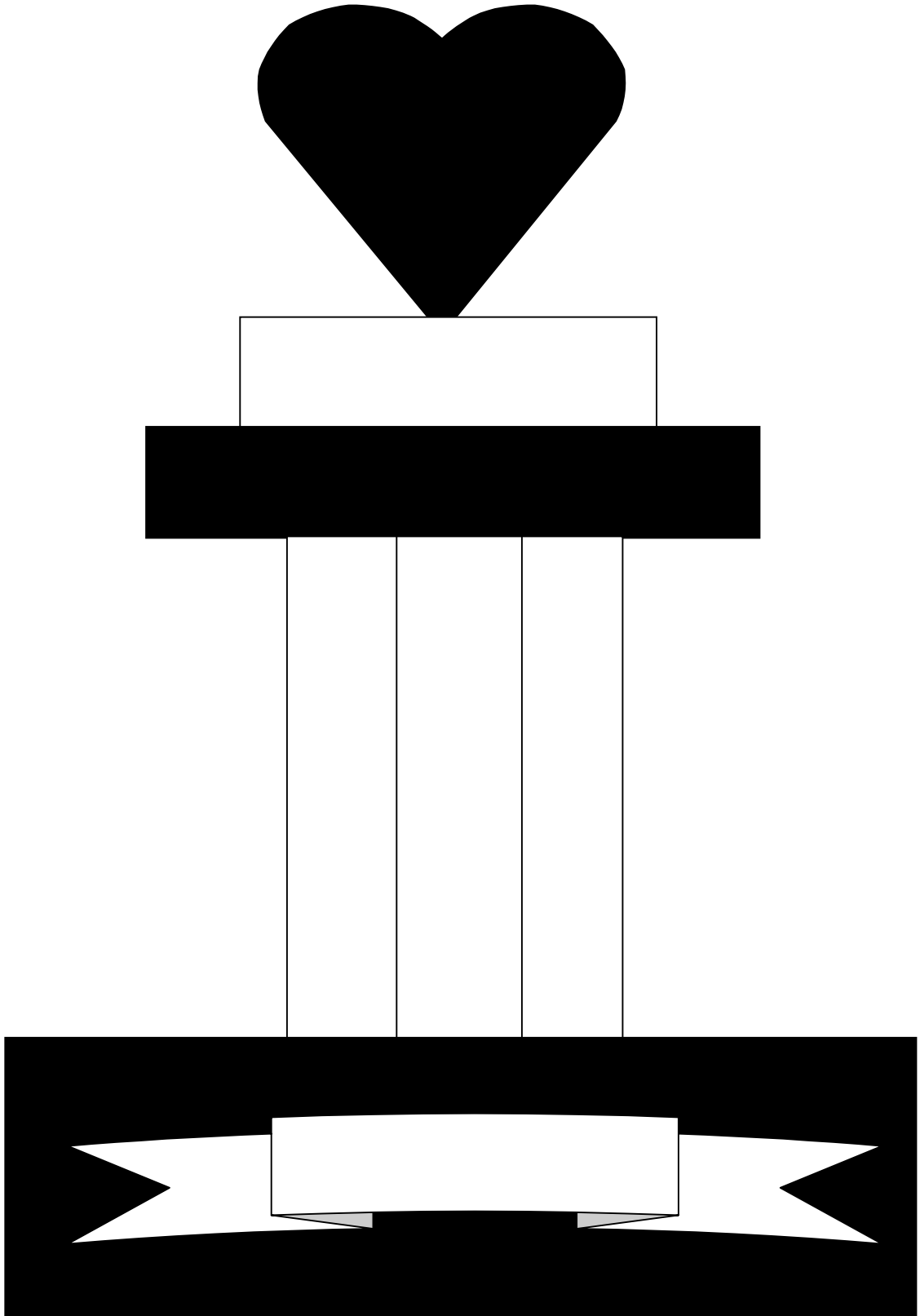
- ★ Master of Ceremonies and Presenters—formal clothing
- ★ All-Star Song and Dance Troupe-Chorus line outfits (see “Behind the Scenes” in the introduction to this book): black slacks, tuxedo shirts, top hats and canes

**Props**

- ★ Podium
- ★ Small table for awards\*
- ★ Large plants
- ★ Table and chair
- ★ Telephone, pencil, and papers on table
- ★ Phone bell
- ★ Microphone on podium (optional)
- ★ Cane

\*We expect that you will use whatever actual awards or gifts you wish to distribute to volunteers. However, on the following page is a prototype statuette (a “Volly”?) that you might want to use in some way, perhaps as a banner on your podium.





## The Volunteer Academy Awards

Podium with microphone to one side of the stage. Near it a small table holding the awards. Large plants strategically placed. A curtain or screen with the name of the award or the organization may be placed at the back of the stage. Center stage are a chair and table with phone, papers and pencil. The Volunteer Coordinator or Awards Committee Chair enters holding award. (*Throughout the skit, wherever blanks appear in the script, insert the names of your cast or your organization.*)

**Awards Chair:** Hi there everyone, do you see this (*holding up award*)? This is the \_\_\_\_\_ Award. People will do anything to get one, even become a volunteer. \_\_\_\_\_ (*Organization Name*) brings you the first annual Volunteer Academy Award show. Ladies and gentlemen, your host for this evening, none other than \_\_\_\_\_.

M.C. Enters.

**M.C.:** This evening we present the coveted Volunteer Academy Awards to our volunteers for their tireless efforts and their dedication to the goals of \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ Award is named for \_\_\_\_\_, who is the founder of this organization. We celebrate our volunteers now with our All-Star song and dance troupe.

Chorus enters and sings “There’s No Business Like Your Business” (to “There’s No Business Like Show Business”):

There’s no business  
Like your business  
Like no business we know  
Volunteers are very special people  
Volunteers are every shape and size  
Shout it out from every roof and steeple  
We’ve got the people  
Who take the prize  
We’ve stopped moaning and quit groaning  
We know just what to do  
Even on the days when we are close to tears

And feeling stranded with all our fears  
 Next knock at our door will be a volunteer  
 Hooray for volunteers!

This is a good place for an easy chorus line type of dance-lifting hats, walking around canes, kicks, etc.

There's no business  
 Like your business  
 Like no business we know  
 Jack of all trades is your job description  
 Everything the traffic will allow  
 Busy, busy, busy-it's no fiction  
 That your addiction  
 Is showing "how"  
 You are people  
 Who show people  
 How best to get things done  
 You do the impossible in fact you must  
 You leave us standing here in your dust  
 Volunteers can do it and in that we trust  
 Hooray for volunteers!

Chorus exits.

**M.C.:** *(Gushing.)* That was marvelous, darlings. Your star quality shines through. Now \_\_\_\_\_, our board president, would like to say something about the volunteers.

**President:** It is a privilege for me to be here at the Volunteer Academy Awards. I am happy that volunteers are being honored this evening because everyone knows that our volunteers are very special people who deserve recognition. They deserve much, much more than we can possibly give them *(starts to get carried away)*. We'd like to give them some token of our appreciation that is commensurate with their efforts. If only we could hire a ship to take them around the world, or a plane to fly them to the Bahamas, maybe a bus to Disney World, or how about....

At this point the M.C. pulls the Board President off with a cane.

**M.C.:** S/he gets carried away when s/he talks about volunteers. And

now on with the awards. Our first presenter is \_\_\_\_\_, who will present the awards to the hotline volunteers.

**Presenter:** This Volunteer Academy Award is given to the hottest hotline workers for the best performance in a crisis. Before I present the awards, here is a sample of the calls our skilled phone workers receive.

Hotline worker enters and takes a seat behind the table center stage. The phone rings.

**Hotline Worker:** *(Picking up phone.)* Hello \_\_\_\_\_ (Organization name)... *(Pauses to listen after asking each question.)* You say your name is Smith? *(Writes on form on table.)* Spell the name please.... How old are you? ...What is your income? ...Does that include your stocks and bonds and the insurance in your family? ...What is your zip code?...Thank you so much for calling. *(Hangs up phone.)* Oooh! I forgot to ask her why she was calling!

*(The phone rings again.)* Hello, \_\_\_\_\_ (Organization name)....You're looking for your wife? Sorry we can't help you find her....You think she went to a shelter because you hit her? Why are you looking for her?...You don't want her to come to any harm! I see...*(rolls eyes and says to self)* Am I crazy or what? *(Hangs up.)*

*(Phone rings.)* Hello, \_\_\_\_\_ (Organization name)... What do you mean you will be late? Do you realize how many people are counting on you? We will not be able to do our work if you don't get here. Everything will come to a stop. I don't know if I can face the rest of the volunteers with this news! They have been counting on you. *(Hangs up phone, gets up and calls off stage as s/he exits.)* The pizza is going to be late.

**Presenter:** And that doesn't *begin* to tell you about our hotline workers. May I have the envelope please? *(Takes envelope, opens it and calls out names of recipients. They come forward and are handed their recognition awards from the table.)*

**M.C.:** Now we present the award for special effects in information and referral which will be presented by \_\_\_\_\_. But first our All-Star troupe will tell you about this award.

Chorus enters and sings “I and R” (to “Mack the Knife”):

What you need is I and R now  
 There’s no question - you’ll go far  
 Who needs money? Who needs riches?  
 When you’ve got your I and R?  
 You can do it if you want to  
 Be an information czar  
 All the world is at your doorstep  
 If you’ve got your I and R  
 Now you’ve learned all the resources  
 From the mundane to bizarre  
 You can hack it-so be proud now  
 You have mastered I and R.

Chorus exits.

**Presenter:** May I have the envelope please? The winners for special effects in information and referral are \_\_\_\_\_ (*calls names as above*).

**M.C.:** And now, \_\_\_\_\_ will present the awards for the best performance in a supporting role. These volunteers keep our files in order and our office organized. They know all about duplicate, triplicate, collating, and sorting.

Chorus enters and sings “We’ve Got Mountains of Paper Work” (to “It’s Only a Paper Moon”):

We’ve got mountains of paper work  
 Piled as high as our eyes can see  
 Yet we know that it will be done  
 With great economy  
 It’s a form and statistic world  
 To be filled out and filed you see  
 But we know that our volunteers  
 Can do it speedily  
 Without your help  
 We’d be hanging by a thread  
 Without your help  
 We’d be so far behind  
 Never getting ahead  
 So for handling the paperwork  
 And for doing it with a smile  
 This award isn’t make believe  
 It’s one that you can file!

**Presenter:** May I have the envelope, please? You'll be pleased to note that these awards have been arranged in alphabetical order. *(Calls names.)*

**M.C.:** And now the award for Lifetime Achievement, presented this year by\_\_\_\_\_. Who does everything possible that can be done around here? Who fills in when needed, never gets angry, and always has a smile and a good word? Yes folks, there really is such a person. It's \_\_\_\_\_and you thought I was introducing myself! Will \_\_\_\_\_ please come to the stage. Our All-Star song and dance troupe wants to serenade you.

*Chorus enters and sings "Volunteer of Distinction" (to "Big Spender"):*

The minute you walked in the door  
 We could tell you were a man (gal) of distinction  
 A real time spender  
 Dedicated, so sincere  
 Isn't it nice to know  
 That we're so glad that you're here?  
 Now let us get right to the point  
 S/he's a worker who steps in without a fuss  
 S/he's our hero  
 Spending lots of time with us  
 S/he's our hero  
 Spending lots of time with us.

*This is another chance for the chorus to do some simple dance steps before reprising the end of the song.*

Now let us get right to the point  
 S/he's a worker who steps in without a fuss  
 S/he's our hero  
 Spending lots of time with us  
 S/he's our hero  
 Spending lots of time with us.

*Chorus exits.*

*Presenter presents award as above.*

**M.C.:** \_\_\_\_\_, our fearless leader, will present the awards for best direction. After this musical number by, who else, our All-Star song and dance troupe!

Chorus sings “Our Board” (to “Windy”):

Who sets the policy for procedures  
 Who keeps us running on well oiled wheels  
 Who comes to meetings and works to all hours  
 Everyone knows it's our board  
 Who gathers funds all over the city.  
 Smilin' at everybody they see  
 Who's reaching out to decision makers  
 Everyone knows its our board  
 And our board's seen stormy days  
 Buty they know that effort pays  
 'Cause our board's by far the best  
 Above the rest  
 Above the rest  
 Above the rest  
 Above the rest  
 Who keeps an eye on what's in the future  
 Guiding us with a strategic plan  
 Who keeps us solvent even through hard times  
 Everyone knows it's our board

**Presenter:** I am pleased to give the Volunteer Academy Award for the best direction to the members of our board. (*Presents awards.*)

**M.C.:** That concludes our volunteer academy awards ceremony for this year. And now for our Grand Finale.

Entire cast sings “Thanks for the Volunteers” (to “Thanks for the Memory”):

Thanks to our volunteers  
 For advocates who care  
 And speakers with a flair  
 Important calls and free for alls  
 We know that you are there  
 We thank you so much

Thanks to our volunteers  
You really save the day  
And we are here to say  
The jobs you did, we cannot kid  
Are worth more than you're paid  
We thank you so much  
Many's the time that we need you  
And many's the time that we'll heed you  
We took a poll and  
We agreed you  
Are just the best  
Above the rest, so  
Thanks to our volunteers  
We love you short and tall  
We love you one and all  
A finer bunch, we have a hunch  
You really could not call  
Awfully glad we found you  
Hallelujah and Amen  
We thank you so much

Everyone exits.

—The End—





## Ideas for Personalizing this Skit

This skit really lends itself to personalization. Actually it *needs* to be personalized.

- ★ The name of the award should reflect some important person in your organization's history.
- ★ The person in charge of volunteers can have a role in this skit as the presenter or the M.C.
- ★ This skit has opportunities for important individuals in your organization to take part, for example, the president of your board or advisory council, various volunteer leaders, etc.
- ★ Use your own job descriptions for the awards. For example, hotline workers could be anyone who answers the phone. Also you can change the dialogue to suit your volunteer positions.
- ★ Use the word "Council" in place of the words "Our Board" in the song if it is more appropriate.



## YOU JUST NEED A VOLUNTEER

The impetus for writing this short generic skit was that we wanted to do a workshop together at the national Association for Volunteer Administration conference. We began thinking about what we could submit as a workshop proposal that would be different, fun and something we would have some expertise about. We had been writing skits for local volunteer recognition events for several years, so we decided to do a program about volunteer recognition including a skit which could be used by any agency.

In the process of writing this skit, we realized how difficult it was to write a piece that would be usable for all types of volunteer organizations. Gone were all the easy references to specific people and places and traditions. Instead we had to struggle with very basic ideas that could be true for any number of different organizations.

In addition, because we wanted people to be able to perform this skit as part of a 90 minute workshop, we needed to keep it very simple indeed. We would have to carry all the props with us and there would be no time for people to learn dialogue.

What we finally decided upon was a fable format with a narrator reading the story. After struggling with some futile attempts to adapt myths and fairy tales, we decided upon a “generic” fable. This skit has the classic references of all fables—a dilemma, a solution suggested by an unknown or little respected source, the success of that solution and the moral of the story.

This skit is meant to be a universal story and for this reason we have not made any suggestions for personalizing it. This skit is not about your C.E.O. or staff, but is a cautionary tale about how a mythical organization reacted to volunteers. The moral is the one that your organization no doubt already knows, i.e., what the executive director learns by the end of the skit. Of course, feel free to make any changes that suit your situation.

As we said earlier, we wrote this skit as part of a workshop proposal. It seemed a long shot at the time, but our idea was accepted and we did do a workshop in which participants actually staged this skit for each other. The skit was subsequently published in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*, complete with a black and white generic label, and we were on our way to writing this book.

## Description

This short skit recognizes volunteer contributions by portraying how a C.E.O. comes to discover the value of volunteers. This skit is especially good for a community-wide recognition event in which a number of agencies are participating, because the premise is generic.

The skit is read by a narrator and pantomimed by the rest of the cast. There is no script to be memorized. The skit includes four songs and some simple dance steps. The cast may have the words for the songs on paper, but it is a more polished performance if these are memorized. Costumes are minimal. Cast will need to practice timing their movements to the script.

## Time

Running time of skit is about 20 minutes. Two one hour rehearsals with musical accompanist should be sufficient.

## Cast

The minimum number of cast members for this play is nine.

Narrator  
 Executive Director-has solo singing part  
 Main Volunteer-has solo singing part  
 Three or more staff members  
 Three or more volunteers  
 Musical Accompanist

**Music** (See Appendix for full references.)

- ★ “My Kind of Town” by Sammy Calm and James Van Heusen from *Robin and the Seven Hoods*
- ★ “You’re Just In Love” by Irving Berlin from *Call Me Madam*
- ★ “Cabaret” by Fred Ebb and John Kander from *Cabaret*
- ★ “That’s Entertainment” by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz from *That’s Entertainment*

## Costume Suggestions

Hats are needed for each cast member. The hats for volunteers should be similar, i.e., all derbies, all top hats, etc. Likewise, hats for staff members should be similar. Executive Director should have a distinctive hat. Each player is additionally identified by a sign (graphics provided on the following page) attached to his/her hat. Paper hats can be purchased or cast members can furnish their own.

## Props

None needed.

**VOLUNTEER**

**STAFF**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



## You Just Need a Volunteer

Stage is empty except for a banner or large plants placed to soften the bareness. Narrator enters and stands to one side of the stage. The Narrator may use a microphone if desired.

**Narrator:** This is a story about an agency that is having problems. It's not a new story. It's not an old story. It's a generic story. It goes this way...

Executive Director and three Staff Members enter and pace in a circle.

**Narrator:** Once upon a time in the land of anywhere, there was an agency dedicated to good deeds. Everyone in the agency wanted to do good deeds, but something kept getting in the way. No one could figure out what it was.

Executive Director and Staff Members come to center stage and sing "This Agency" (to "My Kind of Town"):

Once we were great  
 This agency  
 Carried its weight  
 This agency  
 Has the best people too  
 People who want to come through  
 Each day we pray  
 This agency  
 Finds a new way  
 This agency  
 Can't find its records  
 This agency  
 Can't serve more people  
 This agency  
 Can't get more funding  
 This agency  
 Needs smiling faces  
 This agency  
 Can't go on working this way  
 We're calling "May Day"

Executive Director and Staff look at each other in dismay.

**Narrator:** The executive director was desperate and did not know where to turn. *(Main Volunteer enters.)* Suddenly there appeared before him (her) a person wearing an unfamiliar hat. “Who are you?” Said the executive director. *(The Executive Director and Staff peer at the newcomer and point to his/her hat.)* The person in the unfamiliar hat replied: “Let’s just say that today I am wearing my volunteer hat.” *(Executive Director and Staff look puzzled.)* The Executive Director had no idea what a volunteer was, let alone what one did. “Look,” said the executive director, “I am very busy and I do not have time to sit and chat with you.”

Executive Director and Volunteer come to center stage and sing. The staff looks on, interested.

**Executive Director and Volunteer** sing “You Just Need a Volunteer” (to “You’re Just In Love”):

**Exec. Director:** I need helpers, but there’s no one there  
 Work is stopping cause our staff’s so bare  
 All day long I want to tear my hair  
 I wonder why, I wonder why  
 I keep tossing in my sleep at night  
 And what’s more I’ve lost my appetite  
 For the one who said I’d never cry  
 My eyes are never dry, I wonder why

**Volunteer:** You don’t need analyzing  
 It is not so surprising  
 That you feel like you need advice  
 Your heart goes pitter, patter  
 I know just what’s the matter  
 Because I’ve been there once or twice  
 Put your head on my shoulder  
 You need someone who’s older  
 I can say you should have no fear  
 Trust me now, here’s all it takes  
 To remove those damn headaches  
 You just need a volunteer.

Executive Director and Volunteer reprise song as a duet.

**Narrator:** The executive director was still not convinced. “Who was this upstart that thought s/he could solve such serious problems?” But, because s/he could see no other way to solve this dilemma, s/he decided to put the volunteer to a test. “You see,” s/he said, “we are in the business of doing good deeds. But how can we do good deeds when our staff is overworked, our files are a mess, and not enough people know about our service?” The Volunteer looked overwhelmed. “Aha,” thought the executive director, “this volunteer talks a good game, but it will take a lot more than a volunteer hat to solve my problems.”

Executive Director exits, motioning to staff members to come along. All look satisfied that the Volunteer has taken on more than s/he can handle. Volunteer looks puzzled, then motions offstage and other Volunteers enter, carrying their hats. During narration, Volunteers form a huddle and put on their hats.

**Narrator:** And indeed it did take more than a volunteer hat to solve the problems. The Volunteer talked to her (his) friends. S/he told them all about the agency that was dedicated to good deeds and they immediately put their volunteer hats on and started to work.

Volunteers sing “Come Be a Volunteer” (to “Cabaret”):

What good is sitting alone in your room  
 Your skills are very dear  
 Come be a volunteer, old chum  
 Come be a volunteer  
 Put down the knitting, the book and the broom  
 We need you, have no fear  
 Come be a volunteer, old chum  
 Come be a volunteer  
 Come join our band  
 Come lend a hand  
 Someone in need is out there waiting  
 You can start them celebrating  
 No use permitting some prophet of doom  
 To say that there's no help here  
 Come be a volunteer, old chum  
 Really a volunteer, old chum  
 Come be a volunteer

Volunteers skip in a circle, looking pleased.



**Narrator:** In no time at all, the volunteers had organized the files, started a Speakers Bureau, appeared on television and radio, raised funds, and assisted the staff where needed. Soon everyone in the land was talking about the agency that performs good deeds. People came from near and far to learn their secret.

The Executive Director enters and tries to shield the volunteers from the audience's view. They gather around him/her.

**Narrator:** But now it was the executive director's turn to be put to a test by the volunteers. "Do you remember how desperate you were before we came?" They asked. "What have you learned about volunteers?" The executive director scratched his (her) head. "This is what I learned. I can rely on others to help, if I honestly tell them what I need. When people wear volunteer hats, they will go beyond the call of duty, if they are given important work to do. At first, I did not recognize a volunteer, but now that I know what they do, I will go out of my way to recognize them. And all our staff feel the same way."

Staff enter and join hands with the volunteers and they dance around the Executive Director. **Entire Cast** sings "That's Volunteering" (to "That's Entertainment"):

The work that you never will shirk  
 Or the smile that cheers folks for a while  
 Or the aid when the back rent gets paid;  
 That's volunteering  
 The fight that you make for a right  
 Or the tears that you dry up with cheers  
 Or the care when the cupboard is bare  
 That's volunteering  
 The spot could be hot  
 And you're sweating like mad  
 The place has no grace  
 And you think you've been had  
 You could feel awfully bad  
 When the cause that you cherish  
 Is making you feel quite bearish  
 But the kind of excitement you find  
 When you're part of a gift from the heart  
 It's a thrill when your dreams you fulfill

We all need to give  
You've given your all  
By volunteering.

**Narrator:** And so, in the manner of all good stories, they lived happily ever after.

**—The End—**

# MUG SHOTS

One day we were discussing the kind of gifts that are usually given for volunteer recognition and how one comes, after a while, to have a sizable collection of certain items. We decided that there might be an idea for a skit about too many recognition mugs, or certificates or whatever. What would it take, we wondered, to make the same old recognition gift turn into something special? In thinking back on the process we remembered also that we talked about volunteers being “genie-like” in their ability to bring magic to helping organizations. What we can’t remember is which came first, “the genie or the mug?” But in any event, as so often happens with our free form conversations, the two ideas merged as the basis for this skit!

We were also struggling with a request from our editor to include more skits specifically for all-volunteer organizations. Our original focus in these skits had been traditional agencies with paid staff and boards of directors and volunteers. It was a challenge to begin to think about what issues all-volunteer groups struggle with that are different from organizations in which there are paid staff people to help with the work.

“Mug Shots” reflects some of our own experiences in all-volunteer organizations and the dilemmas we have encountered as members. Sometimes it truly seems that a genie would be helpful, but only, as you will learn from this skit, one who has officially graduated from Genie School!

## **Description**

This skit, for an all-volunteer membership organization, deals with wishes coming true. The skit is written to take place after volunteer awards are handed out. It deals with mugs given as recognition gifts but, with some inventiveness, other recognition awards might be used.

The nice thing about this skit is that only five people need to do much rehearsing. Other cast members need minimal rehearsal time.

## **Time**

Running time of skit is about 30 minutes. There should be two full rehearsals and one dress rehearsal for the entire cast including the piano player or other musicians.

## Cast

All roles can be played by either men or women.

Genie  
 Volunteer  
 Master of Ceremonies—short part, could be same person who has handed out awards  
 Board Member  
 Old Committee Member  
 New Committee Member  
 Three Back-up Genies to sing ala “MoTown”  
 Chorus  
 Musical Accompanist

Music (See Appendix for full references.)

- ★ “Hernando’s Hideaway” by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross from *The Pajama Game*
- ★ “Beauty School Dropout” by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey from *Grease*
- ★ “MacNamara’s Band” by John J. Stamford and Shaumus O’Connor
- ★ “My Favorite Things” by Oscar Hammerstein II and Richard Rodgers from *Sound of Music*
- ★ “I Got Rhythm” by Ira and George Gershwin from *Girl Crazy*

## Costume Suggestions

- ★ Genie-turban, harem pants and bracelets
- ★ Three Back-up Genies—similar outfits to Genie
- ★ All others—street clothes.

## Props

- ★ Table with cover which reaches to floor
- ★ Sufficient mugs to cover the top of the table. Can be all the same or different.
- ★ Current recognition mug, with dry ice in it, for volunteer to carry
- ★ Chair placed at table
- ★ Four chairs for the committee meeting
- ★ Extra chairs for the “chair wish” scene
- ★ A length of board (see instructions in skit for size)

# Mug Shots

## Prologue

The organization should perform this skit after recognition awards have been given.  
*(Throughout the skit, wherever blanks appear in the script, insert the names of your cast or your organization.)*

**M.C.** On your way out today, please sign the disclaimer form at the door. We are not responsible for what might occur when you take your mug home. This might sound like an extraordinary request, but you will understand when you watch this cautionary tale.

Chorus enters and sings “Recognition Giveaway” (to “Hernando’s Hideaway”):

We know you’ll think us very weird  
 But there is nothing to be feared  
 Just wait until the air is cleared  
 At recognition give-away, Olé!  
 All you’ll see are mugs and such  
 They don’t look like they’re very much  
 Be careful what it is you touch  
 At recognition give-away, Olé!  
 At committee meetings  
 Or wherever you may go  
 You may meet a person  
 And it’s no one that you know  
 But if you will listen  
 To our cautionary tale  
 You’ll be prepared  
 You won’t be scared  
 Your heart won’t fail  
 It seems to us it’s only fair  
 That we warn you to take some care  
 So our advice is just beware  
 Of recognition give-aways, Olé!

## Scene I

Table draped to floor filled with mugs. Genie hiding behind table so s/he cannot be seen by audience. A pitcher of water is also on the table. Volunteer enters carrying current recognition mug containing dry ice.

**Volunteer:**     *(Sighs.)* Another volunteer recognition, another mug. I really love working with \_\_\_\_\_ but I do wish they could be more original. Might as well give this one a try.

Volunteer sits down at table and pours water into mug. Genie pops out from behind table. Volunteer screams and jumps to feet. Genie looks at volunteer screaming and screams, too.

**Volunteer:**     Good heavens you startled me. Who on earth are you?

**Genie:**           And you startled me. I am your volunteer Genie.

**Volunteer:**     My volunteer genie! I don't understand. What are you doing in my house? How did you get here?

**Genie:**           You brought me in with your recognition mug. Every year some lucky volunteer gets a special mug. *(Points to table with mugs.)* It looks like you have had many chances! This year I am the lucky volunteer genie who gets to grant you three wishes.

**Volunteer:**     I do not believe this.

**Genie:**           *(Boldly, like a sweepstakes winner announcer.)* Yes, because you are a Volunteer at \_\_\_\_\_, you became eligible to win the grand genie prize. You did not have to send a 3 x 5 piece of paper along with your name and address. You did not need to pick up an official entry form. You did not need to send a proof of purchase. No, all you had to do was be a volunteer. All entries were judged by an independent genie judge. *(Running out of breath.)* This contest is void to non-volunteers.

**Volunteer:**     *(Puzzled.)* Back up a moment—what is a “volunteer genie”?

**Genie:**           I became a volunteer genie when I saw an ad in the *Genie-ology Journal*. The ad read: “Wanted, volunteer genie to grant three

wishes to a volunteer with a deserving volunteer organization.” I said to myself, “Why not, nobody rubs lamps anymore. This might just be the experience I need to get back into school.”

**Volunteer:** *(Interrupting)* Back into school? What do you mean?

**Genie** sings “Genie School Dropout” (to “Beauty School Dropout”):  
Three back-up genie singers arrive on stage humming and “do-wopping” appropriately and doing “Motown” moves. Volunteer looks suitably astonished throughout.

My story's sad to tell  
A genie ne'er do well  
A tale that's sure to make your eyes go damp  
My future's so unclear now  
What's left of my career now  
Can't even get a trade-in for my lamp  
Genie school dropout  
No graduation day for me  
Genie school dropout  
I flunked turban 103  
So I'm taking time to volunteer  
And try to clean my act up  
If I can't become a genie  
I just know that I will crack up  
Gotta get to it  
You know this means so much to me  
I'm gonna do it  
A genie-ology degree  
When they hand me my diploma  
Then they'll know that I'm no fool  
I'll show them all when I  
Go back to genie school  
Genie school drop out  
Don't like living in a lamp  
Genie school dropout  
That's why they said I'm just a tramp  
Old time genies spend a lot of time  
Engaging in their slumber  
But not me, I'll grant your wishes  
When you call my toll free number  
Not gonna sweat it  
This volunteering gig's the thing

This time I'll get it  
 Gonna grab the golden ring  
 So this volunteer will make you cheer  
 By granting wishes three  
 Then I'll be back to school  
 To pick up my degree.

**Volunteer:** Why did you choose \_\_\_\_\_ (*name of organization*)?

**Genie:** I answered the ad and they gave me the names of three organizations, \_\_\_\_\_ (*name of your organization,*) Ghostbusters, and the Wishful Thinking Foundation.

**Volunteer:** How did you decide on us?

**Genie:** Well, I got sick and tired of "Who ya gonna call," and the Wishful Thinking Foundation already does what I do, so I chose you.

**Volunteer:** This sounds too good to be true.

**Genie:** There is one condition, however. Your wishes must involve \_\_\_\_\_ (*name of your organization*). I can only grant wishes that involve volunteering.

**Volunteer:** You mean you are not able to make me the richest woman (man) in the world?

**Genie:** You got it.

**Volunteer:** This is incredible and I cannot possibly deal with this by myself. We never make any decisions without having a Committee Meeting.

**Genie:** You don't? What if you need a decision made quickly?

**Volunteer:** First we talk about it, then we form a committee. The committee sends a report to the vice president, the vice president then takes the information to the Executive Committee. They approve it for the board and by that time the problem is usually gone.

Chorus enters and marches around the stage singing.



Chorus sings “Our Merry Little Band” (to “MacNamara’s Band”):

We have a committee  
 The best in the city  
 Don’t ever ask us why  
 The chairs all pound their gavels  
 The members all vote “aye”  
 The president calls for another report  
 The meetings are something grand  
 And Robert’s rules keep order in  
 Our merry little band

**Genie:** And I thought being a *genie* was complicated. Just remember that I too am a volunteer I am only available on Monday and Wednesday except, of course, during January and August when I am on vacation and a couple of weeks in the Fall when I visit my family. Then I have to take off to attend the Genie Convention. Now understand, *(beginning to rattle on)* that when I commit to something....

**Volunteer:** *(Interrupting)* Okay, okay, I get the picture. Are you going to disappear now?

**Genie:** Don’t be ridiculous. I am going to walk out the door.

Genie Exits.

## Scene II

Volunteer and three members of a committee are sitting in a semi-circle on stage drinking from mugs. They look inside their mugs periodically with some apprehension. Committee Member #1 is a board member, Committee Member #2 is a new member of the organization, and Committee Member #3 is a long time member of the organization. The Volunteer is explaining what happened and we join the group in the middle of this conversation.

**M.C.:** It’s the next day and the volunteer has convened a committee meeting and has just finished explaining her dilemma.

M.C. exits.

**Volunteer:** And that is why I have called this meeting.

**Board Member:** I have been to many meetings in my time, but this is ridiculous.

**New Member:** Genies in recognition mugs! It's more than I can swallow.

**Old Member:** In my day this organization had better things to talk about.

**Volunteer:** *(Reasonably.)* What is the harm in discussing what we would like to happen? We can decide three wishes and if they don't come true, it's no big deal. If they do come true, it will be our miracle.

**Board Member:** As a board member, I think this must go through channels. I have never heard of a committee reaching a conclusion at their very first meeting!

**Old Member:** I have been a member of this organization for over 30 years and I believe that if we came to a conclusion at the first meeting, all the fun would go out of this group. Meetings, refreshments, talk, reports—that is what belonging to an organization is all about.

**New Member:** As a new member, I am not sure that I should even be giving an opinion. I certainly do not believe in genies, but we are all here, so why not have fun with it and give it the old college try?

**Volunteer:** Remember our wish list.

All four sing "Favorite Things" (to "My Favorite Things"):

Storage rooms filling with in-kind donations  
 Board members willing to go on rotation  
 Funds that are given without any strings  
 This is our wish list of favorite things  
 Picnics and parties all free to our members  
 Auditors saying "OK" in December  
 Members who go making speeches that ring  
 This is our wish list of favorite things  
 Volunteers asking if they can chair meetings  
 Presidents coming in person with greetings  
 Committees that function on just a shoestring  
 This is our wish list of favorite things

When the year ends  
 When the bills come  
 And we're feeling sad  
 We'll simply keep wishing for favorite things  
 And then we won't feel so bad.

**Volunteer:** Now I know what I have to do, but the volunteer genie will not be in until next Wednesday.

### Scene III

Volunteer is sitting at table pouring water into mug with dry ice in it. Genie is hidden under the table and appears as mist forms. Volunteer screams. Genie screams.

**Volunteer:** I will never get used to this.

**Genie:** Neither will I. Well, have you decided on your three wishes?

**Volunteer:** Yes, believe it or not, we have our three wishes and we sincerely hope that you have the power to grant them to us.

**Genie:** You think *you* want them to come true. This is my last chance for a genie-ology degree.

Back-up genies again appear as before. Volunteer looks on nervously. Genie sings reprise of "Genie School Dropout":

Genie school drop out  
 Don't like living in a lamp  
 Genie school dropout  
 That's why they said I'm just a tramp  
 Old time genies spend a lot of time  
 Engaging in their slumber  
 But not me, I'll grant your wishes  
 When you call my toll free number  
 Not gonna sweat it  
 This volunteering gig's the thing  
 This time I'll get it  
 Gonna grab the golden ring  
 So this volunteer will make you cheer

By granting wishes three  
Then I'll be back to school  
To pick up my degree.

**Genie:** Name your wishes.

**Volunteer:** You are certainly making me nervous, but anyway, here goes. It seems we have a lot of people in this organization who are willing to serve on committees. However, they all say, "I'll work, but I won't chair a committee." Therefore, our first wish is for more Chairs.

**Genie:** Your wish is granted.

Backup singers begin bringing extra chairs on stage. They continue to pile up chairs until they are told to leave by the Volunteer. Volunteer jumps to feet.

**Volunteer:** What are these people doing?

**Genie:** Is this not what you wished for? I distinctly heard you say you wanted more chairs.

**Volunteer:** *(Upset.)* Chairs! Chairs! I did not wish for *chairs!* *(To Back-up Genies:)* Stop that and get out of here.

**Genie:** Then what did you say?

**Volunteer:** I did say I wanted more chairs, but this *(pointing to chairs)* is not what I had in mind.

Back-up genies leave.

**Genie:** *(Huffily.)* I am a genie, not a mind reader

**Volunteer:** *(Trying to pull her/himself together)* All right, all right. I still have two wishes coming to me, or do I?

**Genie:** *(Sighing.)* Yes, of course, you do.

**Volunteer:** I will just have to be more careful in how I say things. Now let me explain this second wish to you. Another one of our problems is

that our board of directors is too small (big). What we need is a larger (smaller) board.

**Genie:** Let me get this straight. How big is your board now?

**Volunteer:** Our board is \_\_\_\_\_. *(Gives number of board members.)*

**Genie:** So you want a board that is bigger/ smaller than \_\_\_\_\_? *(Gives number of board members.)*

**Volunteer:** *(Confidently.)* Exactly, our second wish is that we have a larger (smaller) board.

**Genie:** Your wish is granted.

Back up genies return carrying the appropriately sized board and place it at the Volunteer's feet and then exit.

**Volunteer:** *(Distraught.)* Good heavens, what is this?

**Genie:** *(Looks at audience.)* We all know what this is. It's a larger (smaller) board.

**Volunteer:** *(Holding his/her head.)* This is terrible. No wonder you are a genie school dropout.

**Genie:** I can see that this gig won't look so good on my resume!

**Volunteer:** All I know is that I wish this had never happened.

**Genie:** You wish this had never happened?

**Volunteer:** Yes, I wish this had never happened.

**Genie:** Your wish is granted.

## Scene IV

Three backup genies return to stage and begin removing chairs. Volunteer stares blankly into space while this is happening. Genie takes last chair and exits with it while backup genies remove board. Volunteer absently picks up original recognition mug and follows them off stage. She immediately returns on stage carrying the mug. The stage appears as it did in Scene I.

**Volunteer:** *(Sighs.)* Another volunteer recognition. Another mug. I really love working with \_\_\_\_\_ *(name of organization)*, but I do wish they could be more original. Might as well give this one a try.  
*(Pours water in and drinks from mug.)*

**Entire Cast** returns for grand finale and sings “We Found Magic” (to “I Got Rhythm”):

We found magic  
Volunteering  
It's like magic  
Who could ask for anything more  
We found genies  
In our coffee  
It's like magic  
Who could ask for anything more  
Old man boredom  
We don't mind him  
We won't find him  
Round our door  
Cause we found magic  
Volunteering  
It's like magic  
Who could ask for anything more  
Who could ask for anything more

—The End—



## Ideas for Personalizing this Skit

- ★ This skit already has built into it opportunities for using your organization's name and number of board members.
- ★ Genie could be someone in the organization.
- ★ Personalize the volunteer recognition gift. For example, it could be a certificate and the volunteer could rub his/her hand over it which would cause the genie to appear.
- ★ Use your own bureaucratic systems or mention specific names when the volunteer is explaining to the genie how decisions are made.
- ★ Use references to past activities or mention individual names during the committee meeting.
- ★ Change song "Favorite Things" to reflect some specific activities of your organization.



# SONGS THAT CAN STAND ALONE

The following are songs from our skits which we feel can stand alone for very short recognition programs or sing-a-longs, or can be used in your own original skits. Some are ideal for paid staff to sing to volunteers during an event, others are great for volunteers to sing together.

We have repeated the words here for your use to copy as “song sheets” to distribute to your group. See the Appendix following for full references to the music.



**“Come Be a Volunteer”**  
(sung to “Cabaret”)

What good is sitting alone in your room  
Your skills are very dear  
Come be a volunteer, old chum  
Come be a volunteer  
Put down the knitting, the book and the broom  
We need you, have no fear  
Come be a volunteer, old chum  
Come be a volunteer  
Come join our band  
Come lend a hand  
Someone in need is out there waiting  
You can start them celebrating  
No use permitting some prophet of doom  
To say that there’s no help here  
Come be a volunteer, old chum  
Really a volunteer, old chum  
Come be a volunteer

**“God Bless Our Volunteers”**  
(sung to “God Bless America”)

God bless our volunteers

Those whom we trust

They stand beside us

And guide us

They’re a light

Shining bright

Just for us

From the country

And the city

And the suburbs

They arrive

God bless our volunteers

They help us survive

God bless our volunteers

They help us to thrive.

**“Hooray for Volunteers”**  
(sung to “Hooray for Hollywood”)

Hooray for volunteers  
Those extra super special volunteers  
We couldn't cope without your smiling faces  
And feel this place is  
Great because you are here  
Those tough jobs we wish  
We could accomplish  
You take on and do with the best of cheer  
Hooray for volunteers  
With you on board our troubles disappear  
And any one of you will always come through  
Each time we need you  
To help us get the job done  
We think the world of you  
And of the job you do  
Hooray for volunteers

**“Just the Way You Are”**  
(sung to “Just the Way You Are”)

Don't go changing  
To try to please us  
Just cause you want to volunteer  
Mmm mmm  
Don't imagine  
That you won't suit us  
We're all so glad that you came here  
We surely need you  
To cure our troubles  
We never could have come this far  
Mmm mmm  
You'll take our bad times  
And make them good times  
We'll take you just the way you are.

**“New Volunteers”**  
(sung to “The Theme from *New York, New York*”)

Start spreading the news  
We're looking for you  
We'll go to any length to get  
New volunteers.  
We'll go to the north  
East, south and west, too.  
We'll use up all our strength to get  
New volunteers  
We know our staff will need more help  
They're in too deep  
Some volunteers here with us  
Would help a heap  
Our agency needs  
Would make you feel blue  
We need to make a start to get  
New volunteers  
We hope to find you there  
We're looking everywhere  
Please do come through  
New volunteers.

**“S’Wonderful”**  
(sung to S’Wonderful)

S’wonderful  
S’marvelous  
To be a volunteer  
S’awful nice  
Take our advice  
And be a volunteer  
The job may not be glamorous  
But be assured that you’ll feel fabulous  
‘cause s’wonderful  
S’marvelous  
To be a volunteer  
S’wonderful  
S’marvelous  
Come be a volunteer  
There’s work to do  
There’s more for you  
When you’re a volunteer  
The hours that you choose to spend  
Are sure to pay a great big dividend  
You’ll feel wonderful  
Marvelous  
‘Cause you’re a volunteer

**Thanks to the Volunteers”**  
(sung to “Thanks for the Memory”)

Thanks to our volunteers  
For advocates who care  
And speakers with a flair  
Important calls and free for alls  
We know that you are there  
We thank you so much  
Thanks to our volunteers  
You really save the day  
And we are here to say  
The jobs you did, we cannot kid  
Are worth more than you’re paid  
We thank you so much  
Many’s the time that we need you  
And many’s the time that we’ll heed you  
We took a poll and  
We agreed you  
Are just the best  
Above the rest, so  
Thanks to our volunteers  
We love you short and tall  
We love you one and all  
A finer bunch, we have a hunch  
You really could not call  
Awfully glad we found you  
Hallelujah and Amen  
We thank you so much

**“That’s Volunteering”**  
(sung to “That’s Entertainment”)

The work that you never will shirk  
Or the smile that cheers folks for a while  
Or the aid when the back rent gets paid;  
That’s volunteering  
The fight that you make for a right  
Or the tears that you dry up with cheers  
Or the care when the cupboard is bare  
That’s volunteering  
The spot could be hot  
And you’re sweating like mad  
The place has no grace  
You could feel awfully bad  
When the cause that you cherish  
Is making you feel quite bearish  
But the kind of excitement you find  
When you’re part of a gift from the heart  
It’s a thrill when your dreams you fulfill  
We all need to give  
You’ve given your all  
By volunteering.



**“There’s a Volunteer Rainbow”**  
(sung to “Over the Rainbow”)

There’s a volunteer rainbow, wait and see  
Catch a volunteer rainbow  
Be all that you can be  
There’s a volunteer rainbow, just for you  
With a volunteer rainbow  
Skies will be always blue  
So when you wish upon a star  
Remember that your dreams  
Aren’t far behind you  
Your troubles melt when you are here  
It happens when you volunteer  
That’s where we’ll find you  
There’s a volunteer rainbow, wait and see  
Catch a volunteer rainbow  
Be all that you can be.

**“There’s No Business Like Your Business”**  
(sung to “There’s No Business Like Show Business”)

There’s no business  
Like your business  
Like no business we know  
Volunteers are very special people  
Volunteers are every shape and size  
Shout it out from every roof and steeple  
We’ve got the people  
Who take the prize  
We’ve stopped moaning and quit groaning  
We know just what to do  
Even on the days when we are close to tears  
And feeling stranded with all our fears  
Next knock at our door will be a volunteer  
Hooray for volunteers.

**“V-O-LU-N-T-E-E-R-S”**  
 (sung to “M-O-T-H-E-R (A Word that Means the World to Me)”)

Note:

Because there are more letters in the word “volunteer” than in the word “mother,” it is necessary to repeat the melody of the first four lines of the song, as in “M-O-T-H-M-O-T-H-E-R.”

V-is cause they’re very special people  
 O-is for the others in their care  
 L-is for the listening ear they lend us  
 U- is for the umpteen hats they wear  
 N- is for the nifty notes they write us  
 T-is for the teamwork that we share  
 E-is for the extra efforts given  
 E-is for “esprit de corps” that’s rare  
 R- means that we really, really need them  
 S-is strength and strong is what they are  
 Put them all together, volunteers  
 With you we know we’ll all go far

**“When We See a Guy”**  
(sung to “Guys And Dolls”)

When we see a guy  
With a gleam in his eye  
It’s a cinch we can get him to volunteer  
When we spot a Jane  
Walkin’ round in the rain  
Chances are she’s fair game  
To sign up with us  
At least for a year  
When they answer “fine—  
Yes, I’ll give you some time  
Like a day or an hour  
Might even give two”  
Call it great, it seems funny  
But it’s better than gettin’ money  
We’re so glad that you’ve come here to  
Volunteer

**“You Are Our Lucky Stars”**  
(sung to “You Are My Lucky Star”)

You are our lucky stars  
You came from near and far  
You came to work and so we applaud you  
Laud you  
We are star struck  
We’ll tell the universe  
Without you we would curse  
You’re an illumination  
You’re our favorite constellation  
You are our lucky stars.

**“Heart”**  
(sung to “Heart”)

You've gotta have heart  
All you really need is heart  
Volunteers believe that everyone wins  
They pitch right in and start  
You've gotta have hope  
Mustn't sit around and mope  
Nothing's half as bad as it may appear  
Volunteers really cope  
Doing nothing is a zero  
You can even up the score  
You may never be a hero  
But you know what life is for  
Get out and do it, but to do it  
You've gotta have heart  
Miles and miles and miles of heart  
You don't need to be a genius, of course,  
Just keep that old horse before the cart  
First you've got have heart

# APPENDIX

## Alphabetical Listing of Songs by Original Title, with Full Credits

A legal note: The songs we have parodied in our skits are considered “intellectual property” and are protected by copyright law. However, they may be performed without royalty or copyright infringement provided that they are performed for a nonprofit organization for charitable use, there is no direct or indirect admission charge for the performance, there is no commercial advantage, and there is no fee to the performers. Please check with your own legal counsel should you have further questions.

“Beauty School Dropout.” Words and music by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey. Edwin H. Morris Company, 1972. From the musical *Grease*.

“Big Spender.” Words by Dorothy Fields and music by Cy Coleman. Notable Music Company, Inc./Lida Enterprises, Inc., 1965. From the musical *Sweet Charity*.

“Cabaret.” Words by Fred Ebb and music by John Kander. The Times Square Music Publications Company, 1966. From the musical *Cabaret*.

“Chiquita Banana.” Words and music by Leonard Mackenzie, Garth Montgomery and William Wirges. Shawnee Press, Inc., 1946. Radio commercial.

“Ghostbusters.” Words and music by Ray Parker, Jr. Golden Torch Music Corporation (ASCAP) and Raydiola Music (ASCAP), 1984. From the movie *Ghostbusters*.

“God Bless America.” Words and music by Irving Berlin. Irving Berlin Music Corporation, 1939.

“Guys and Dolls.” Words and music by Frank Loesser. Frank Music Corporation, 1949. From the musical *Guys and Dolls*.

“Heart.” Words and music by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross. Frank Music Company, 1955. From the musical *Damn Yankees*.

“Hernando’s Hideaway.” Words and music by Richard Adler and Jerry Ross. Richard Adler Music and J and J Ross Company, 1954. From the musical *The Pajama Game*.

- “Honey Bun.” Words by Oscar Hammerstein II and music by Richard Rodgers. Williamson Music Company, 1949. From the musical *South Pacific*.
- “Hooray for Hollywood.” Words by Johnny Mercer and music by Richard A. Whiting. Harms, Inc., 1937. From the movie *Hollywood Hotel*.
- “I Got Rhythm.” Words by Ira Gershwin and music by George Gershwin. New World Music Corporation, 1930. From the musical *Girl Crazy*.
- “It's Only a Paper Moon.” Words by Billy Rose and E.Y. Harburg and music by Harold Arlen. Harms, Inc. and Anne-Rachel Music Corporation, 1933.
- “Just the Way You Are.” Words and music by Billy Joel. Impulsive Music and April Music, Inc., 1978.
- “Mack the Knife.” Words by Bertold Brecht and music by Kurt Weill. English words by Marc Blitzstein. Universal Editions, 1928; Harms, Inc., 1956.
- “MacNamara's Band.” Words by John J. Samford and music by Shaumus O' Connor. Jerry Vogel Music Company, Inc., 1940.
- “Matchmaker.” Words by Sheldon Harnick and music by Jerry Bock. The Times Square Publishing Company, Inc., 1940.
- “M-O-T-H-E-R (A Word That Means the World to Me).” Words by Howard Johnson and music by Theodore F. Morse. Leo Feist, Inc., 1915.
- “My Favorite Things.” Words by Oscar Hammerstein II and music by Richard Rodgers. Williamson Music, Inc., 1959. From the musical *The Sound of Music*.
- “My Kind of Town.” Words by Sammy Cahn and music by James Van Heusen. Sergeant Music Company/Glorste, Inc./Van Heusen Music Corporation, 1964. From the movie *Robin and the Seven Hoods*.
- “Over the Rainbow.” Words by E.Y. Harburg and music by Harold Arlen. Leo Feist, Inc., 1939. From the movie *The Wizard of Oz*.
- “Pepsi Cola Hits the Spot” Words by Pepsi Cola Company and music taken from a traditional Old English tune, “Bonnie Annie.” Pepsi Cola Company, 1940. Radio Commercial.
- “Put on a Happy Face.” Words by Lee Adams and music by Chuck Strouse. Edwin H. Morris Company, 1960. From the musical *Bye, Bye, Birdie*.
- “Stouthearted Men.” Words by Oscar Hammerstein II and music by Sigmund Romberg. Harms, Inc., 1928. From the operetta *The New Moon*.



- “S'Wonderful.” Words by Ira Gershwin and music by George Gershwin. New World Music Corporation, 1927.
- “Thanks for the Memory.” Words and music by Leo Robin and Ralph Rainger. Paramount Music Corporation, 1937. From the movie *Big Broadcast of 1938*.
- “That's Entertainment.” Words by Howard Dietz and music by Arthur Schwartz. Chappell and Company, Inc., 1953. From the movie *The Band Wagon*.
- “Theme from *New York, New York*.” Words by Frank Ebb and music by John Kander. United Artists Corporation, 1977. From the movie *New York, New York*.
- “There's No Business Like Show Business.” Words and music by Irving Berlin. Irving Berlin Music Corporation, 1946. From the musical *Annie Get Your Gun*.
- “We're off to See the Wizard.” Words by E.Y. Harburg and music by Harold Arlen. Leo Feist, Inc., 1939. From the movie *The Wizard of Oz*.
- “Windy.” Words and music by Ruthann Friedman, Irving Music, Inc., 1967.
- “You Are My Lucky Star.” Words by Arthur Freed and music by Nacio Herb Brown. Robbins Music Corporation, 1935. From the movie *Broadway Melody of 1936*.
- “You're Just in Love.” Words and music by Irving Berlin. Irving Berlin Music Corporation, 1950. From the musical *Call Me Madam*.
- “You're the Top.” Words and music by Cole Porter. Harms, Inc., 1934. From the musical *Anything Goes*.

We used the following reference books to find the song citations:

*Fifty Famous Favorites*. Hugo Frey, editor. Robbins Music Corp., 1942.

*Great Songs of Madison Avenue*. Peter and Craig Norback. Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Company, 1976.

*Popular Music 1900-1919*. Barbara Cohen-Stratynner, editor. Gale Research Company, 1988.

*Popular Music 1980-1984*. Bruce Pollock, editor. Gale Research Company, 1986.