

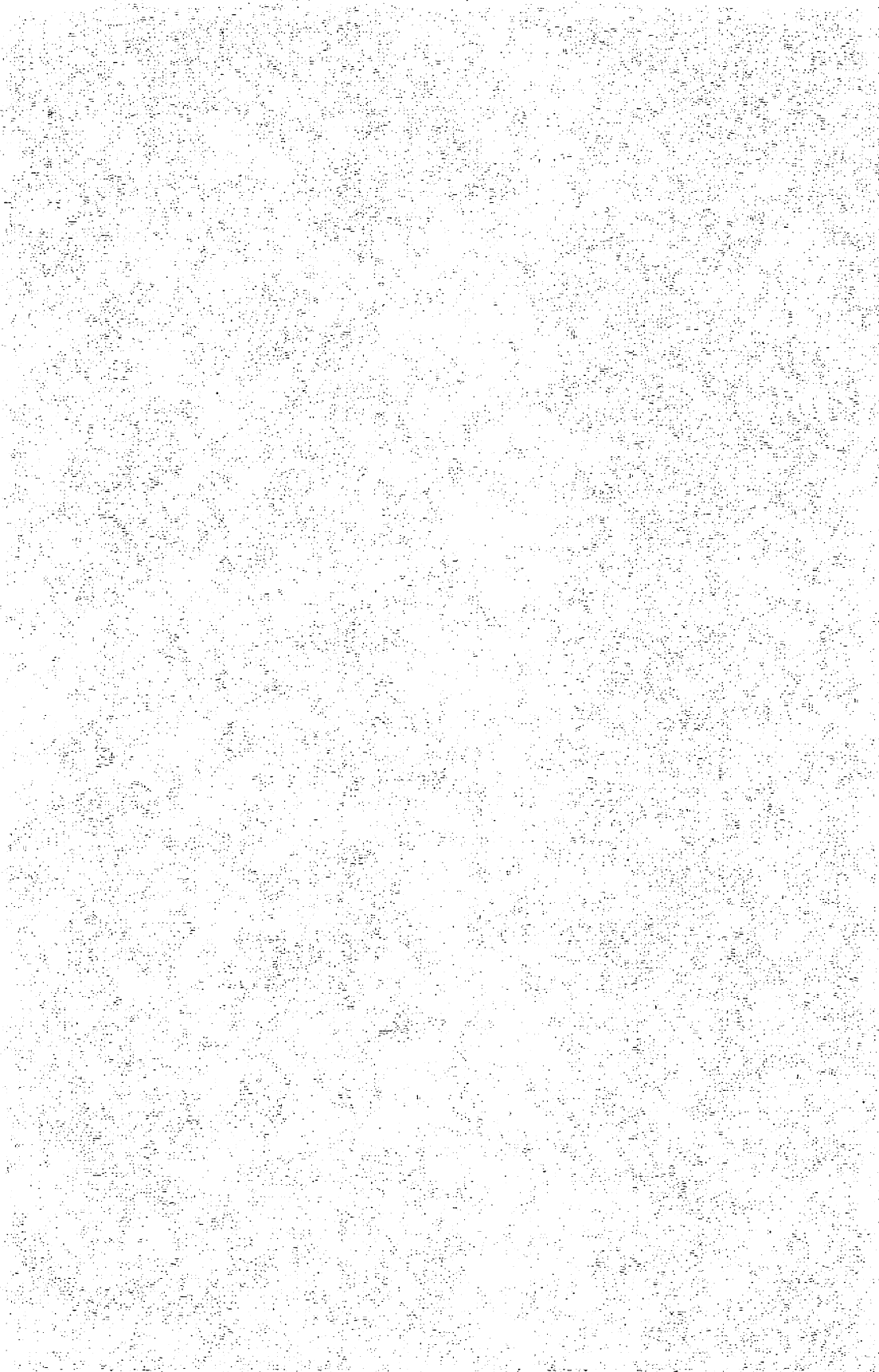
# EXPLORING VOLUNTEER SPACE

THE RECRUITING OF A  
NATION

Ivan H. Scheier



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



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

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

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## DEDICATION

To friends of all these years.

*"We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our  
exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place  
for the first time."*

—T.S. Eliot

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# THE PREFACE AS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Where to begin thanking?

The National Information Center on Volunteering (NICOV) is one good place. NICOV has nurtured me all these years, supported my work, stimulated my ideas, and absorbed blizzards of memoranda. More, it has provided opportunities to admire many thousands of volunteers and their leaders, here and around the world. The National Center for Voluntary Action (NCVA) has been a friend in much the same way.<sup>1</sup>

As any NICOV person knows, I received a social promotion in third-grade penmanship, and actively resent semicolons. The technical term “manuscript preparation” disguises real pain in my case, and calls for considerable gallantry in the face of the illegible, the inarticulate, and the ungrammatical. A grateful sympathy therefore goes to Bobette Reigel Host, editor, and to sometimes paid, sometimes volunteer typists Ruth Miller, Sally Milow, and Nita Kincaid. Indeed, a very nice thing happened on the way to finishing this book. All Sally Milow had to do was type the first draft. Unbeknownst to me, she took an extra initiative — commenting on its content as she typed. I received the completed first draft, accompanied by her comments and an apology for having stepped out of role. The comments were useful; the apology was devastating. Who, besides me, could have signaled that volunteering was unwelcome at a national center for volunteers! Enter Nita Kincaid, initially as secretary to the second draft. My signals must have changed by then, thankfully, because it seemed natural for Nita to read for meaning as she typed for accuracy. Along about Chapter 4 I learned that Nita’s husband, not a NICOV employee, was also getting involved. Jim and Nita Kincaid ended up reviewing the entire manuscript in detail — as volunteers. At last count, they were responsible for 143 indefinite “its” which are definitely out of the book, not to mention scores of other helpful suggestions which reflect their caring about our language. Nita is working on a degree in English, and Jim is a professor of English and department chairperson trying to find time to complete a new book of his own. Apparently he is also one of the fastest two-fingered typists in the West. (He and Nita teamed the typing/review task.)

In sum, I got more than volunteer reviewing. Down the sometimes despairing final months of this book, Sally, Nita, Jim, then Ruthie validated in person what I was struggling to say in print: people will do more than they have to, if they have a chance to, on things they care about. These four people contributed a book within a book.

There were many other efforts above and beyond the call of duty. Jennifer Reynolds contributed an excellent conceptual review of the second draft; Marlene Wilson helped in the same way with samples of early material. Steve Hansen brought a little logic to some later parts, and literally it seems that everybody helped (which again is what this book is all about).

Indeed, for the greatest debt of all, ideas, I cannot remember nearly all my creditors. My excuse is the nature of the book itself. It urges a larger volunteer space, inhabited by more people and ideas. Therefore, a consistent acknowledgement section would spread a book-length honor role, with “thank you” after every name. So, look for your name, or a friend’s throughout. The visible list is long and invisible ink is on every page. I hope many of you will hold it up to the light, in a special way, and see your name somewhere!

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<sup>1</sup>NICOV and NCVA have now merged to form VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement. References in this book to either the Boulder or Washington, D.C. office of this new organization appear as, “VOLUNTEER.”

The ideas presented in this book have been a **grand** larceny in every sense. This excuses forgetfulness but demands some sort of restitution. In hopes of that, many borrowed ideas are returned here. It is the only legacy I have or would wish to offer.

Ivan H. Scheier  
Sugarloaf Star Route, Colorado  
January, 1979



## CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION: MOOD AND MOTIVATION

Every book is nourished in some ground of experience, spirit, expectation, and desire. For this book, the source is people doing more than they have to, because they want to — a vast and caring enterprise called “volunteering,” “neighboring,” “helping out,” “do-goodism,” and other things. More often, it goes nameless. Most varieties of volunteering are incompletely identified, unevenly recognized, and tragically uncultivated.

The further cultivation of volunteering is the theme of this book; intensifying, energizing, and expanding it, working out from today’s career leadership of volunteering. The core is the director, coordinator or administrator of volunteer programs, plus resource people and organizations at local, state, and national levels. These leaders number an estimated 70,000-80,000 people in the United States today. What they preside over is ordinarily called organized volunteering in this book. Typically, these are relatively formal and structured volunteer programs, attached to an agency or organization; for example, volunteers in hospitals, fund-raising campaigns, probation departments, schools, Red Cross, mental health centers, community theaters, and the like.

Organized volunteer programs have decisively contributed to the quality of life in our society. It is difficult to imagine our civilization without them. I salute these volunteers and their leadership, their dedication, skill, and achievements. Without this leadership, there would be no significant volunteer movement for anyone to analyze here. Nevertheless, this leadership seems thin on the line, because the volunteer helping army is far larger than we suppose, and visible leadership, however talented, shrinks drastically in relation.

Therefore, I also need to speak with a whole host of people who quite possibly have never heard the words “director of volunteers” or “volunteer program,” and probably wouldn’t relate this lexicon to themselves, if they did hear it. Yet these people share a similar concern: involving more people voluntarily and productively in help-intending work: doing more than they have to because they want to. They do this in scouting, churches and synagogues, as members of civic clubs, co-ops, neighborhood groups, PTAs and political action groups, on study committees or boards, on archaeological digs, or even less formally in progressively extended families.

Let these leaders use what words they wish to describe their people-involvement purposes, and tolerate my accustomed terminology as they can. Whatever the name these people-involvers choose to call themselves, they represent the vast underground of volunteer leadership, which includes almost everybody at one time or another.

The general audience for this book is everyone who wants to think about what all this people involvement means to neighborhood and nation, how it fits together, and how it might mean more. A vast expansion of volunteer horizons is the goal here: how we may inhabit these horizons and strengthen the leadership for so doing. The argument for this vision is primarily an expression of values and belief systems, and an exploration of their consequences. The recurrent value themes are:

It is better to include than to exclude people and styles of helping.

It is better to be part of the whole than to be separate from it.

There is no necessary conflict between conservatism and dynamic futurism. We can preserve the best of the past, while actively exploring probable futures.

Research can illuminate the origins, context, and consequences of value systems. I see no way it can "prove" absolute superiority of one set of values over another, as values. Thus, there is more image than evidence in this book, more declaration than data, and much intended to appeal to the spirit.

The writing style is personal because the beliefs are. There are even attempts at humor and now that you've been warned, please give me the benefit of the doubt wherever you can. Humor expresses values, too, in a human way. I've often wondered why we volunteer people can't smile at ourselves a little more.

The book is nevertheless more than a treatise on belief systems. Key propositions in it have at least a quasi-evidentiary basis and are somewhat subject to logical analysis; that is, certain implications and consequences flow from adoption of one set of values or another. Among these general implications and consequences are:

Values are energizing, particularly when they harmonize with notes newly sounded in a society.

Inclusive and integrative values are especially promising; elitist and separatist values are more barren. Either set of values has some very practical implications for recruiting volunteers, staff-volunteer relations, fundraising, career mobility for volunteer coordinators, etc.

Ideas are energizing, too — another statement on the interface of values and evidence. Ideas are particularly vital when they project decisive departures in strategy, rather than tinkering with old tactics. In such cases, they are also more risky, of course. Still, I believe the volunteer movement today is suffering a bad case of tired ideas. We may have as much to unlearn as to learn. Selective surgery may be required on present certainties, or at least some treatment for arthritis. I have been increasingly worried about the speed with which fads from other disciplines become our conventional wisdom, soon to assume the aura of sacred truth which can be seriously discussed only at your peril. Ivan Illyich talks about the de-schooling of society; I prefer the unlearning of some basic assumptions about people involvement.

All this requires some disengagement from the urgent practical and present concerns of career volunteer leadership. Yes, sisters and brothers are hurting out there **now**, hurting badly at a survival or near-survival level, personally, professionally, and organizationally. Many publications in our field are designed to deliver immediate tactical help to these people, "where they're at now."<sup>1</sup> There is some of that in this book, too. For example,

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<sup>1</sup>A current publications catalog is available from Volunteer Readership, P.O. Box 1807, Boulder, Colorado 80306.

Chapters 6 and 7 attempt to focus on some practical positive benefits which might derive from applying the concepts proposed in this book. But there is probably not enough practicality to escape the charge of abandoning beleaguered colleagues. Here, I can only try to be absolutely clear about the claim. This book is primarily for thinkers — practitioners or theorists who feel it worthwhile to stand back a bit and reconsider some basic concepts in people involvement.

Further, I urgently hope some of these thinkers will have the desire, experience, and talent to convert these concepts into more practical application. There is precedent for this. Six or seven years ago I presented some basic ideas on what I called “people approach to citizen involvement.” Some off-the-wall “practical” applications were suggested, but essentially there was only a theoretical proposition: “Make the minimum difference in what people want to do, and can do, which has the maximum positive impact on other people.”<sup>2</sup> A number of people were willing to think about all this, and some of them shaped these broad ideas into methods which worked in the real world of volunteer involvement. I believe they substantially succeeded in this, and I rate it a brilliant performance in translation of ideas into practice.

Essentially, this book is a further exploration of the implications in the very same people approach idea. Therefore, I am particularly hopeful that the practical translation process will happen again. But it may take years. As in any exploration or advance, the first step is to suggest that an idea is possible; then we can begin to demonstrate **how** it may be possible. The audience then judges the idea, and if the appraisal is positive, the idea is applied and put into practice.

In any case, I am not sure either/or is the only real choice. I believe we can explore nontraditional volunteer space as we simultaneously secure and develop further our present beachheads in more traditional volunteer program areas. This is particularly so in a field blessed with people of extraordinary integrity and ability. Marlene Wilson is a prime example, an internationally respected author and lecturer, who has produced a book on everybody’s recommended reading list, *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs*.<sup>3</sup> I enthusiastically join the recommenders; the book is rich with insight and spirit for all the beautiful and effective things we can accomplish via volunteer programs. Not incidentally, I see Marlene Wilson not only as the outstanding settler among us, but also a vigorous explorer. This tribute is for its own sake, and I wish there were space to extend it to others. But there is a further point to it: we can continue to develop organized volunteer programs even further and at the same time explore potential variations much further.

I am, to repeat, not criticizing organized volunteering; it is alive and well and growing in America and some other parts of the world. There is nothing wrong with where we are; where we **could** be is just likely to be better. And a main point throughout this book is the mutually reinforcing and supporting interactions possible between settled and outward regions of what I shall call “volunteer space.” My only quarrel is with those who say **all** we can do now is stand pat. This position would have us so totally engaged in defending what we now have that we could not afford the luxury of exploration. All or most of our energies would be invested in perfecting tactics derived from currently accepted strategies for presently known volunteer situations.

To be sure, expansion in our constituency of people, ideas, and institutions can be viewed as additional tasks to drain our resources. It can also be viewed as opportunity to acquire new resources for strengthening us. Everything depends on how intelligently the expansion is conceived and implemented. I believe creative exploration can develop fresh resources and ideas, a few of them almost immediately applicable to our present situations,

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<sup>2</sup>Ivan H. Scheier, *People Approach: Nine New Strategies for Citizen Volunteer Involvement* (Boulder, Colorado: VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, 1977).

<sup>3</sup>Marlene Wilson, *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs* (Boulder, Colorado: Volunteer Management Associates, 1976).

others suggesting promising new leads. At the same time, I sense we are at a point of steadily diminishing returns in deriving variations of aging basic ideas, our own or others!

The decision — to be or not to be inclusive — depends on the attitudes of people who lead volunteers. Here and throughout this book, it is a mistake to see the issues only as an outside imposition. The issues are largely in our own heads: an internal debate between imagination and conservatism, risk and realism.

Speaking of conservation, there is a physical law of that name which states: energy is neither created nor destroyed. I do not believe that law completely applies to people. In human enterprise, energy is **either** destroyed or created. We merely have our choice of violations, the drag of stale ideas, or the power in productive ones. This book is based on the belief that human energy can be created in concrete response to the values of inclusiveness and the integration of people and ideas. I have not claimed it will be easy. I do claim that tolerance of discomfort is the price of progress. First of all, we must pass through a phase in which challenge predominates. Therefore, this book is full of question marks. This may seem scant comfort for a movement with struggle enough now. We are ones who yearn for answers now. But I believe decisive progress comes more from asking better questions than from refining answers to the old ones. We may have reached a point of diminishing returns, the hundredth time around on the old questions, though such exhaustion does not in itself guarantee that the new questions will provoke increasing returns. The risk of dead-ending is great; we can only try to imitate the best questions of a child.

In any case, I do not believe we have the choice to be challenged or not. Our choice is only in the character and quality of the challenges we accept. As this is written, the tax revolt in the United States threatens cutbacks in government services; and a powerful trend progressively emphasizes neighborhood self-help and advocacy volunteering. Both provide potentially positive challenges to organized other-helping volunteering as it exists today. I think somewhere we have the positive experience for a creative response. We also have the potential for a somewhat ossified response.

However, we should avoid newness simply for the sake of novelty. Instead, we must discover the pressure points for maximum energy-release in human involvement at minimum investment of time and effort. This book attempts to do just that, and claims some success in so doing. These claims cannot always be specifically documented. For in examining basic questions and assumptions and in mapping "new" variations in volunteer involvement, this book necessarily stretches to possible futures for volunteer leadership. The futurism is intentional and virtually a value in itself. Gregory Baum said, "A person is constantly called upon to create his own future." So is a movement. With all due respect to our past, we are more than warmed up leftovers of the last century, more than custodians of a history already written.

No one can be sure of what a future place looks like. Equally uncertain is the shape of the road from here to there. I expect curves, at the very least. Indeed, I sometimes suspect the road is full of clover leaves. Some of the future may actually circle behind us in time. I was worried about such apparent "progress backwards," until I encountered the quotation on the frontpiece of this book. It states my current convictions on the point exactly; in the end, I am content with progress which sometimes returns home, to leave again with a little more wisdom.

But I do not see the future of volunteering as either entirely straight-line or cyclical. I also sense the possibility of metamorphosis. Today's caterpillar will be more than a longer caterpillar tomorrow. I anticipate strong butterflies. The heart is the same, but the body is different; it can soar, and it can gobble vultures. For scholars of the twenty-first century, I foresee scholarly fun deciding whether we are the direct ancestors of volunteers in their time, or whether there has been mutation.

In any case, I hope they will be puzzled, and there lies a final caution. Hope is frequently

disguised as prediction, and prediction can impact reality. Connections between hope and future reality are what many of us live for. This goes for social movements, too; indeed, for them, attempting to form such connections is a **responsibility**.

In sum, I strongly believe we can justify standing back to look ahead, even when we have so much to stand for now. There are, nevertheless, some sacrifices, in return for which we must squeeze out every benefit. I have mentioned as one benefit the "creation" and more efficient application of human energy. The sheer value of including people is another — maximizing the in-group and minimizing the out-group for positive participation in community and society.

In that spirit, the book begins by establishing the outer perimeters of "volunteer space," in terms of an elastic, broad, yet meaningful definition. We then describe a number of dimensions in terms of which this space can be organized and understood. A relatively simple sector of this map, one pathway in volunteer space, is the range from continuous-regular to occasional or time-limited participation. Analysis then suggests that organized volunteering currently occupies only a fraction of the total possible volume of volunteer space. I then argue the advantages of expanding our occupancy of that space, and I identify the pitfalls, too. Strategies and methods for inclusive expansion are outlined, as are implications for style of volunteer leadership. The second part of the book applies all these concepts more intensively, dimension by dimension, in volunteer space.

The final two chapters present a summation. First there is an attempt to demonstrate logically that there may be up to 60,000 distinct variations in styles of volunteer involvement ("locations" in volunteer space) among which only perhaps 100 or so have been explored under the organized volunteer flag. A search procedure is suggested and illustrated here, with the computer as a colleague.

In the final chapter we excuse the computer and have a little celebration for people called "Involvement Day." This is a space between sunrise and sunset which offers everybody in town a chance to get involved in doing what comes naturally and helpfully. Thus, the celebration is an attempt to tie the book together in human terms, in one place and on one day. What could happen if our wider volunteer space were taken seriously? Some people in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Glens Falls, New York, have had experience suggesting an optimistic answer to that question. The fanciful part of it is its rarity outside one day in these two towns. This book suggests that involvement day might be an everyday occurrence in a humanized tomorrow.

## CHAPTER TWO

# DEFINING VOLUNTEER SPACE: THE CENTER AND THE PERIMETERS

### Definition as an issue<sup>1</sup>

When we say “volunteer,” the conventional wisdom would have us know what we are talking about; the dictionary doesn’t seem to. Indeed, the unabridged comes closer with flora than with fauna. This is the “volunteer” as an agricultural surprise. Planted last year or never at all, it shows up in **this** year’s field; for example, an isolated corn plant appearing in acres of soy. It was not deliberately seeded; it is uncultivated, unexpected, and probably unwanted. Certainly, the human variety of volunteer sometimes feels this way and so does their leadership. But generally our current concepts of “volunteer” are not particularly well-represented in dictionaries.

It is tempting to blame Webster, but probably unfair. Volunteer leadership today does not seem to have time and influence enough to impact dictionary editors; these editors are part of a long list we may get around to someday. Besides, what would we say? Volunteering is one of those partly poetic concepts, the importance of which is difficult to define precisely — like love, hope, and sunrise. This may be just as well. Definition sets boundaries for a subject area, and maybe we’re not quite ready to be fenced in. In fact, one of the fundamental questions in volunteering today is: do we want to remain with present concepts of who a volunteer is, what he/she can do, and how he/she can do it? Or, do we want to grow beyond that, and how far? In other words, the definition of volunteering today is not a matter for routine academic exercise. It is a central issue for our field and for this book.

My purpose at this point is not to advocate the broader view of volunteering. I want only to present this wider view as an alternative, along with a more limited consensus definition;

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter has benefited greatly from dialogue with Professor John Van Til of Rutgers University and also from reading an excellent 1970 working paper by David Horton Smith, Burt R. Baldwin, and Richard D. Reddy of the Institute of Human Sciences and Department of Sociology, Boston College, entitled, “Types of Voluntary Action: A Definitional Essay.”

that is, the definitions presented will vary from less to more inclusive. The volunteer space metaphor is meant to convey the idea that more people and styles of helping are acceptable as "volunteer" in a more inclusive definition, fewer in a less inclusive one. The range is vast: from a village-like definitional space to one of planetary dimensions, and there are all kinds of suburbs in between.

### **The Center of Volunteer Space**

Let us begin with the center of volunteer space. By this is meant what most volunteer directors/coordinators today would agree refers to volunteers, whatever else they might also add to their definition. I propose "unsalaried service to others, in a structured setting." Usually, but not always, the "traditional" volunteer program has the following characteristics:

1. The program is associated with a service agency or organization.
2. It is relatively well-organized.
3. The program is identified as a "volunteer program" and people within and outside of the program refer to it as such.
4. The program has a director, administrator, or coordinator of volunteer services.
5. This director may utilize resource services provided by local Volunteer Bureaus or Voluntary Action Centers, and state and national resource people and organizations.

The recognition words throughout are "volunteer," "voluntary," "volunteerism," and "voluntarism."

Although this volunteer concept may appear rather narrow, it refers to something of great honor and power. Organized volunteer programs have accomplished much. For certain kinds of people and conditions these programs are the favored path for accomplishment. I wish them well far into the future. A later argument for including other forms of volunteering in an expanded helping matrix does not exclude this one. It intends to build on it.

### **The Suburbs of Volunteer Space**

"Unsalared service to others in a structured setting" is our central or "city limit" definition of volunteering. Today many people who work in that city also live in the suburbs; that is, they also accept, or are beginning to accept, other meanings of volunteering. To the concept of "service," current custom is comfortably adding policy or board volunteering and, somewhat less comfortably, advocacy or issue-oriented volunteering. Among those exploring the family resemblance between traditional volunteering and self-help are VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, the National Self-Help Resource Center, and Dr. Diana Leat of the Volunteer Centre in England.<sup>2</sup>

On another border, the meaning of "unsalaried" is regularly extended today to include work-related reimbursement and support, such as enabling funds and stipends. The recipients are still called volunteers.

These examples merely sample the intermediate extensions of volunteer space many of us live in now, or contemplate moving into. Let us now trace more distant frontiers: the "wilds" few of us occupy now, or even identify.

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<sup>2</sup>Diana Leat, "Towards a Definition of Volunteer Involvement" (paper, Berkhamsted, Herts, England: The Volunteer Centre, 1977). Dr. Leat's excellent paper also examines the relation between traditional volunteering and gift-giving.

## Towards a Planetary Definition of Volunteering

In the lexicon I happen to be comfortable with, an activity is “volunteer” insofar as it involves all four of the following characteristics:

1. The activity is relatively uncoerced (voluntary).
2. The activity is intended to help.
3. The activity is done without primary or immediate thought of financial gain.
4. The activity is work, not play.

I propose this to express the outer boundaries of the volunteer spirit, as I understand it. Of course, this definition is most remarkable for what it does **not** say, raising issues we will probe throughout this book. And we cannot suppose the word “volunteer” is commonly used to describe all or most activities and events within these perimeters. Nor is there any point in insisting that the term “volunteer” be used. As the introductory chapter indicated, helping by any other name is still helping. Let people **call** it what they will, or use no name at all, as long as they **do** it.

## Relatively Uncoerced Activity

Work is uncoerced when people do it because they want to, not because they have to; that is, the work is chosen relatively freely and consciously, among alternatives which include doing other work, or not doing any work at all. This is the voluntary or free will aspect of volunteering. Please also note that voluntary workers in **this sense** may also be fully paid and/or in a job not primarily intended to help; for example, the willing gangster “hit-man.”

Beyond this, I don’t expect to succeed where philosophers have failed fully to define “free will.” I only suspect that there is no such thing as absolute free will in volunteering or anything else. The sheer satisfaction of helping surely prompts many of us; some of us may even experience pressure. Thus, when a corporation indicates that visible social responsibility is one of its important objectives, the ambitious young employee volunteers. A pastor preaches a strong sermon on activating the Judeo-Christian ethic; peer and “conscience” pressure builds in the congregation. A woman beginning career reentry may have no practical alternative to volunteering as a means of building work experience and credit. The judge offers an offender a “choice” between unpaid community service and jail.

No work is done totally without impetus to do the work. I don’t see how, from the outside at least, one could ever prove that an activity were **totally** uncoerced.

There are, nevertheless, discernible degrees of free will in work. At one extreme, there are the physiologically based or reflexive compulsions (water-seeking in a desert), physical force, and strong social sanctions; for example, the slave, the shanghai seaman, the reluctant military draftee, and Shakespeare’s schoolboy, “creeping like snail unwillingly to school.” At the other end are millions of volunteers who without obvious outside pressure, inconvenience themselves in order to help others and do seemingly unattractive jobs that need to be done. This certainly looks like the genuine free-will helping article, otherwise called altruism. How far into the middle ground can we go and still call it uncoerced? There will always be room for individual discretion in that discussion, I think. The term **relatively** uncoerced simply opens up the concept of free will in work for discussion.

## Activity Intended to Help

This characteristic allows us to exclude all spitefully-intended activity or work with no helping significance whatsoever. I recognize that much of human behavior may be



unrelated to helpfulness or actually malicious in intent. Examples throughout this book nevertheless accent the positive; they seek to build awareness of all the help-intending behavior which does exist, frequently unrecognized for what it really is. I see volunteer leadership as protagonists in one of the great struggles of our time. Society is geared up well enough to facilitate hurt-intending or indifferent behavior (for example, population density and damaging competition). We must be the ones to discover and develop effective ways to facilitate help-intending behavior.

On one edge of the help-intending dimension, we can scratch the deliberate murderer from our volunteer roster, even if the murder is not committed for money. Playing *solitaire* is also not volunteering, except perhaps as a form of self-help. Saints qualify, of course, on the high side; so does anyone who works for social or human betterment, as commonly conceived.

When we emphasize **intention** to help, we open up definitional space for people to identify for themselves what they see as help; this also permits them to be vague about it.<sup>3</sup> It is unnecessary, and dangerous, to impose our definition of help on others, excluding them as helpers if we don't happen to agree with their notion.

Few of us would volunteer simultaneously for a group advocating choice in the matter of abortion and an anti-abortion group, or for both opposed parties in a political conflict, nor would we concurrently volunteer to proselytize for two denominations with different views on original sin. We can nevertheless recognize that all such groups are largely dependent on volunteers for advancing their goals. We may further be willing to help both sides involve volunteers, because we respect their "equally" good intentions and because we value healthy dialogue on issues of public concern. The proviso for many of us on this is that the issues be relatively noncontroversial. In any case, this is why "friendly" activity cannot be an essential definer of volunteering. Pro-abortion and anti-abortion volunteers may each be help-intending by their own lights, but they certainly do not ordinarily see **each other** as friendly.

This raises the question of limits. An unpaid member of the Ku Klux Klan may in some sense "intend to help." This does not mean any of us are going to help him recruit volunteers or sign on ourselves. Such "volunteers" can be unacceptably wrong in what they see as right; for example, in advocating violence, racism, and other purposes beyond the common pale. In my judgment, the bottom line is an activity which is considered clearly unethical by all but a tiny fraction of the community. Such activities cannot be considered helping, whatever the intentions of their participants. This criterion still admits esoteric views of helping which are not clearly unethical by commonly accepted standards. The requirement for ethical consensus still bothers me, though; it seems unfair to moral prophets.

The best general statement is: we will accept as "intention to help" the person's own interpretation of what helping is, within the widest possible range of ethically permissible options in our society. This includes alternatives which appear to be opposed or actually are, provided each alternative is an arguable interpretation of ultimately decent goals. Our scope of help-intention can also stretch to include behavior which benefits some people and may harm others. In daylight, an approaching motorist flashes his headlights at you. The intended help is either in the signal that your headlights are on, or that the highway patrol is lurking around the next curve. The first is clearly an instance of volunteering, in my view. The second is debatable; it might help you avoid a traffic ticket, but it doesn't

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<sup>3</sup>But the concept of **intention** insists on awareness. Example: some friends of mine, really into energy and dollar conservation, keep their thermostat way down in the winter. Their townhouse neighbors don't, and some helpful heat seeps through the walls. Their neighbors are not volunteers, because unintended positive spin-offs do not make a volunteer. I'm sure someone's going to ask me what would happen if the neighbors learned what was happening and deliberately lowered their thermostats or added insulation. But I refuse to discuss anti-volunteers. Unfortunately, elimination of the unconscious volunteer (who also cannot really make voluntary choices) also means we can't call infants volunteers when placed in the arms of depressed elderly people. The warm geniuses who had the idea of doing this . . . yes!

help the policeman or the cause of traffic safety.

### Activity Done Without Immediate Financial Gain

This defining characteristic is stated negatively, of course. Smith, Baldwin, and Reddy state the situation more positively: volunteering is a behavior of individuals motivated by the expectation of psychic benefits. I chose **absence** of money to refer to roughly the same thing, because the presence or absence of money is a relatively objective characteristic, and “psychic benefits” is more difficult to grasp. The danger is that work not done for money may still fail to achieve psychic benefits; moreover, psychic benefits are difficult to identify in anyone but oneself.

Not expecting **immediate** financial gain accepts as volunteer a person who hopes to use the work as a stepping-stone to eventual paid work. I suppose we could have all applicants take a lie detector test guarding against the possibility of their ever considering pay for related work, with the failures being denied the honorific “volunteer.” But how many would pass today? And what difference does it make, as long as they perform their volunteer work faithfully and well? Of course if the volunteer is expecting immediate financial gain, there’s been a basic misunderstanding somewhere.

The definition’s disclaimer at the level of gain or profit reflects a development in our relatively recent past. Not so long ago, any money received for any purpose was a crucial contaminant of volunteer purity, “a threat to amateur status,” as they used to say. Today, many of us perceive that people who receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in the course of their volunteer work are still solidly in the volunteer column. The “enabling funds” might be for transportation, babysitting, or other costs to enable the person to do the volunteer work. A stipend, as in the magnificent \$250 received by VISTA volunteers every blessed month, has essentially the same purpose. Though usually involving more money over longer hours of volunteer work than a typical volunteer job, the stipend only allows the volunteer to break even. The work is **made possible** by money; it is not **for** money. The money sustains the person unable to bear financial loss incident to the volunteer work; it does not permit financial gain in the sense of socking it away or exchanging surplus dollars for materials or services not necessary to support performance of the volunteer work.

Enabling funds and stipends are quite well accepted today. Indeed, both will become increasingly important in an era of rising cost of living — if we want volunteering to continue as an affordable enterprise for large numbers of people. To summarize, money **can** change hands in volunteer work; it simply cannot stick to the volunteer’s hands.

This defining characteristic is clear enough for practical use, though some subtleties remain. If a VISTA worker receives free medical care or emergency monies to keep an ancient car running in a rural area, doesn’t that also “enable” other things, too, in addition to volunteer work? Anyone for hair-splitting on that one? Not me. Then again, there may be the practical issue of establishing eligibility conditions for a volunteer to receive enabling funds. But the concept remains clear enough, even when the application gets sticky.

Finally, what about people who make a little profit in their work, but not as much as they **could** make in this or other work, or not as much as others make in the same work? Are they quasi-volunteers? I used that word only once at a conference and immediately regretted it. A senior citizen receiving a dollar an hour for ten-dollar an hour work, retorted by coining the word “quasi-money” and a few other things — I think “quasi-conference” was one of them. But there’s something there, or at least quasi-there. Chapter 15 will dig further into the matter of money and volunteering.

The three defining factors thus far described have two general characteristics in common. First, they are all subject to gradations which are in turn subject to

interpretation. On each continuum the decision to include or exclude varies widely according to one's subjective judgement. Second, all three factors refer generally to why a person volunteers or not: because of the intention to help, but not because of coercion or money.

### Work Activity

The word "work" refers to the nature of the activity itself, rather than to the reasons for engaging in it. Work can be defined by contrasting it with play, and this has special significance for volunteer work, as we shall see. The 1967 *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* contains the following definition of the noun "work": "Exertion or effort directed to produce or accomplish something; labor; toil." In further definitions, terms, such as "productive" or "serious" appear regularly.

The first two non-drama definitions of "play" are: "exercise or action by way of amusement or recreation" and "fun, jest, or trifling as opposed to earnest." Work and play thus share a sense of activity, exercise, action, effort. There is little essential difference, except possibly that work can be invisible as well as visible effort; for example, thinking. (On the other hand, what about a chess **player**?) There is also a sense of purpose in each definition; neither work nor play is random activity, though play seems sometimes to verge on it. The difference comes in work's semantic themes of direction towards accomplishment, productiveness, seriousness. By contrast, play is for amusement, jest, and trifling. It is not in earnest.

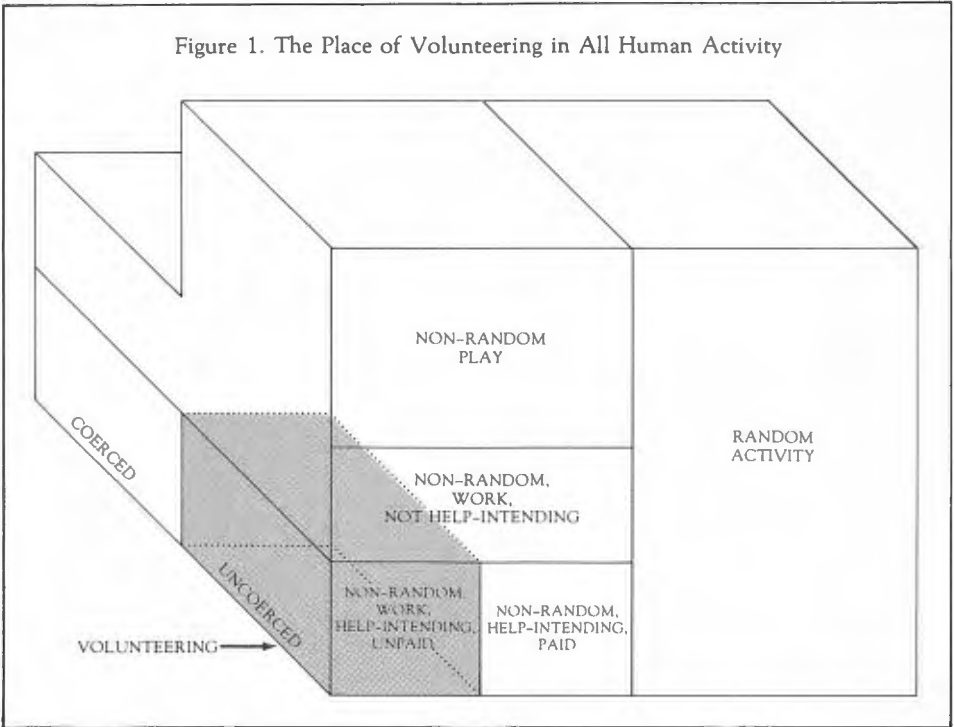
This dividing line is vital for us. Volunteers must be perceived as being at work, not at play. I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of being earnest, and being **seen** as earnest. Our friendliest unconscious detractors probably have play on their minds when they think and talk about volunteering. The stereotyping may not be explicit or conscious, but the sense is of volunteering as a relatively nonserious, even trifling, activity. Certainly no one can deny the importance of play, or what we can learn from it in strengthening people's motivation for work, or how it can be productively combined with volunteer work. Indeed, such themes are further developed positively in this book. Nor am I suggesting people can't have fun doing volunteer work; they can and they should. People can and should enjoy their paid work, too. Therefore, I'm consistently puzzled by friends' sermons about my heavy work schedule and thus my lack of fun in life. My work has been an incredible amount of fun (barring fatigue), but that does not make it play, because my work is serious in intent. To repeat, work can **learn from** play, but it is **not** play.

The "no play" caveat excludes activities for which some people use the word "voluntary." True, a "voluntary association" may be a group that performs enormous amounts of valuable volunteer **work**: the Red Cross, for example, or the 4-H. "Voluntary association" is also used to describe groups whose main purpose is recreation or play; a bowling club, for example. Association for purposes of play is an important area of study, but to the extent that the word "voluntary" is thus used to describe play, not work, it can unfortunately be confused with "volunteering." It is not volunteering, in the present definition, because it is not work. On the other hand, the **unpaid officers** of recreation-oriented voluntary associations may be doing some real work and they are volunteers in that sense.

### Volunteering and Everything Else

Volunteering, then, is considered to be any relatively uncoerced work, intended to help, done without primary or immediate thought of financial gain. Because it is an "outer-perimeter definition," the possibility of volunteering within a family is not necessarily excluded, nor does it rule out helping which is motivated by a strong element of self-interest. In all, the definition digests a huge chunk of human activity. But the definition is not omnivorous; it does not pretend to comprise a meaningless universality

synonymous with all of life. The following figure attempts progressively to put volunteering in its place among all possible human activities. Even this complex figure is drastically oversimplified.



The following key may be used to interpret Figure 1.

We divide all human activity into RANDOM and NON-RANDOM components. Volunteering is in the NON-RANDOM division.

We divide NON-RANDOM activity into WORK and PLAY components. Volunteering is in the WORK division.

We divide WORK into HELP-INTENDING and NOT HELP-INTENDING. Volunteering is in the HELP-INTENDING division.

We divide HELP-INTENDING into PAID and UNPAID components. Volunteering is in the UNPAID division.

Depth in the diagram represents COERCED versus UNCOERCED activity. Volunteering is, of course, UNCOERCED. This depth is extended from front (UNCOERCED) to back (COERCED) only for those human activities that are NON-RANDOM and WORK, since PLAY and RANDOM activity are unlikely to be coerced.

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE DIMENSIONS OF VOLUNTEER SPACE: A MAP OF VOLUNTEER COUNTRY

### Description by Dimension

We are embarked on an aggressive exploration of volunteer space. In Chapter 2 we walked the outer borders of an expanded definition. This chapter begins to map the terrain inside, and Chapter 4 will try to name it, with due respect to all its earlier explorers. Pending the christening, we will describe the space as “volunteer.” The label is provisional and recognizes that many current inhabitants do not choose to refer to themselves as volunteers. A more exact term flowing from our definition could be something like, “the non-profit voluntary help-intender.” Such a title makes imprecision easy to forgive.

A mammoth sector of human activity is encompassed by our definition of “any relatively uncoerced work, intended to help, done without primary or immediate thought of financial gain.” There is no way we can move around in it without a sense of direction. For this journey, the options or dimensions for style of volunteer involvement will serve as the points on our compass. For example, the help-intending person can participate: as an individual or as a member of a group, and also continuously or occasionally. These are two of ten involvement dimensions analyzed in this book and presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1  
Dimensions of Volunteer Involvement

Instances of volunteering can vary or be conditioned in the following ways.

1. Continuous .....(Or) .....Occasional
2. As An Individual.....(Or) ..... With A Group
3. Direct .....(Or) .....Indirect
4. Participating Action .....(Or) .....Observation
5. Organized Formal Structure.....(Or) .....Informal, Unstructured
6. Via Work.....(Or) ..... Via Gift-Giving
7. For Others .....(Or) .....For Self
8. Accept System Rules .....(Or) .....Address System Rules
9. From Inside The System .....(Or) .....From Outside The System
10. Lose Money .....(Or) .....Break Even

Ideally, the dimensions presented in Figure 1 have the following characteristics:

1. The dimensions are relatively visible and objective. You can see a volunteer working twenty hours a week or once a year, though you cannot see all of it.
2. They tend to have practical consequences for people involvement. If a person won't participate as an individual, you can perhaps persuade that person to participate as part of a group.
3. Since the options are not entirely either-or, they also have a dimensional quality. The office volunteer may be there every week for twenty hours; others may participate once a year, every year, for United Way. Between them is a vast range of time intensity. And what about volunteering as a team of two? A pair is not an individual, and not quite a group in some definitions.
4. The ten dimensions in volunteer space tend to be relatively independent of each other. They can combine with each other in all possible ways; for example, an individual can participate to any degree continuously or occasionally, and so can a group.
5. Taken together, the ten dimensions approach being comprehensively descriptive. That is, when you have described an instance of involvement as a position on each of the ten options, you have described it quite completely. For example, suppose we designate an instance of help-intending participation as **continuous service** (versus advocacy), **directly** targeted to the needful people by an **individual**, who has a maximum amount of interest in **others** (versus self-interest) and **works** (versus giving gifts) in the context of an **organized** (versus informal) effort, etc.

I hope this book will encourage dialogue for developing further dimensions which describe volunteer space even more completely. When confronted with these dimensions — and given some time to recover — audiences and colleagues have offered suggestions which show promise for further refining, elaborating, and adding to those described here.

This chapter merely outlines the ten dimensions, and in very simple terms, while later, an entire chapter is devoted to each option. We need a preview now simply to rough in the scope of discourse when later we need a name (Chapter 4) and a justification for being interested in wider volunteer space (Chapters 5, 6, and 7).

## Outline of the Ten Dimensions

Figure 1 presents an overview of the ten major options, omitting intermediate points and possible sub-dimensions. The first six dimensions refer largely to the manner in which the volunteer contribution is made or the operating mode. Dimensions 7, 8, and 10 indicate general kinds of motivational prompting which direct the volunteering. Frankly, I'm not sure where Dimension 9 fits. It seems to be an operating mode, but may refer to motivational prompting, too. It might also group with Dimensions 2 and 5 in describing the base of operations for the volunteering.

Finally, some dimensions will strike some people as going clear off the scale of volunteering. Thus, some of us have a hard time accepting substantial self-interest as genuine volunteering. Others may have real problems with gift-giving and any expectation of money. I only ask that you withhold final judgment for now because at least one pole of each dimension is clearly volunteer, and we can't be absolutely sure at this point where the dimension may slip over the border to being volunteer-like or non-volunteer.

Let's begin by taking simplified examples for each pole of each dimension.

1. Volunteers can contribute in a **continuous**, regular fashion (Big Sisters), or on an **occasional** basis (the club's annual Christmas party for poor kids, the semiannual board meeting, the higger at the Special Olympics).
2. Volunteers can contribute as **individuals with or without group support** (Big

Brothers, reading to the blind, free-lance volunteering) or **to any degree as part of a group** (church or youth group projects, the club's annual Christmas party for poor kids).

3. A volunteer can work in **direct** contact with the person to be helped (Big Brothers, volunteer shelter home) or function to any degree **indirectly** in support of the helping operation, without direct client contact (the administrative volunteer in the office, the fund-raising volunteer, a board member).

4. Volunteers may to any degree **act upon** a purpose or problem (rescue squad, citizen police, USO volunteers, Sunday School teachers) or simply **observe** and study it (court watcher, transportation study group). There can be any combination or sequence in these two modes, as when a person or group first studies an issue, then acts to solve it. The same mobile mixture is possible in all the other dimensions.

5. Volunteers can contribute through an **organized** structured effort in a volunteer program which is usually part of an organization (Candy Strippers in a hospital, horseback patrol in Central Park) or to any degree they may work **informally** in an unstructured setting (answering a stranger's question about how to get somewhere, helping a handicapped person across the street if such help is desired).

6. If you want to accomplish some helping purpose, you can **give yourself** or **give money**, or you can do both. When you give yourself, what you give is volunteer work. It can be any kind of work, at any level of responsibility, in virtually any style, as shown by our examples above. The question is, is the giving of money (or its material equivalent) a form of volunteering, or is it off the scale entirely? Let's suppose that, of our own free will, we want to help some people and are not expecting to make money on the deal (consistent with three of our four original defining characteristics). Does it then matter crucially whether we do the work ourselves, purchase the work of others, or provide material support enabling volunteers to do it? I'm not convinced that it always does matter. When the material gift is converted to help-intending work, gift-giving may well qualify as a form of indirect volunteering. (See Dimension 3.) The problem relates to values; what might we lose if everyone purchased the services of others to do the helping and did none of it themselves?

But such an issue doesn't let us off the hook with, say, the Red Cross blood donor. These people are called volunteers and richly deserve that honorific. Yet their contribution is work only insofar as getting to the bloodmobile is work; the major part of it is a very intimate material gift: their own blood. We might consider some organ donors in the same class.

7. Intention to help can be directed primarily **to others** (the volunteer visiting the nursing home or the National Park Service critter-lover) or more towards **helping oneself** or one's group (Alcoholics Anonymous, the volunteer in a food co-op). Between pure and rare altruism and the most extreme selfishness there are all degrees of self-interest. Our incentive systems for volunteers cater to what we think their self-interest may be — within limits, of course.

8. Volunteers may to any degree **accept** "the rules of the game" and agree to work within them as a condition of involvement (volunteer tutor in a school system, volunteer dispute mediator in a court, volunteer in a psychiatric ward, and, generally, the service volunteer). Alternately, volunteers may choose to **target on** or **address the rules or system** as their purpose for participation. The latter includes both board volunteers who address the rules from inside the system, and advocacy or issue-oriented volunteers (political parties, Common Cause, National Rifle Association, National Organization for Women, environmental groups).

9. System-addressing volunteers can take their position either from **inside** that system (policy or board volunteers) or from **outside** it (consumer groups, Gray Panthers, Common Cause). In either case they may choose to work towards preserving the status quo or towards change. The inside-outside distinction is often difficult. For example, the

mayor’s volunteer committee for a transportation system study is, in a sense, both inside city government and outside the transportation system.

10. Any help–intender’s relation to **money** can vary all the way from **losing** some of it, through **breaking even**, to “making” money. The volunteer who pays his/her own work–related expenses is losing money. The person who is reimbursed for these work–related expenses breaks even, and many people would still place this situation under the volunteer label. Does the next nickel received ruin your amateur standing forever? The definition in Chapter 2 seemed to suggest so. But surely there are shadings. If I do \$5.00 worth of work for \$1.65 an hour when I could get five dollars for it, am I totally non–volunteer? And suppose, with no reimbursement at all, I use my volunteer work as a steppingstone to a well–paid job in the future. Does the expectation of future money contaminate my volunteering now? If so, how much, and how distant does the relationship between the volunteer and paid jobs have to be to protect my volunteer status?

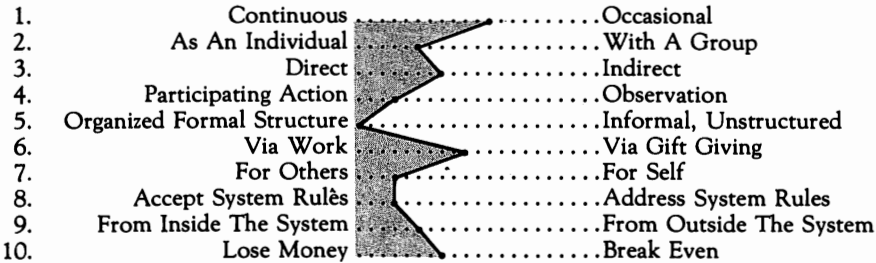
**The Filling of Volunteer Space**

Figure 1 can also be used to estimate the amount of space occupied by work to which the word volunteer is commonly applied. For example, “volunteer” is more readily associated with other–helping than with self–helping; with organized rather than informal efforts; with operations which do not give the volunteer money or even expense reimbursement; and with individual rather than group projects.

In general, the traditional core identification of volunteering tends to the left in each of the ten dimensions in Figure 1. The poles on the right are less fully identified or developed in organized volunteer programs. This is approximately and arbitrarily indicated in Figure 2. For each of ten dimensions, the shaded area indicates the extent to which traditional volunteer programs include and move beyond the commonly accepted involvement dimensions shown on the left side of the figure.

Thus, since volunteer leadership’s awareness currently emphasizes the organized program and tends to disregard informal helping (Dimension 5), that shaded area is far to the left. The shaded area for Dimension 1 moves from continuous towards occasional involvement because even the most conservative concepts usually recognize occasional service as volunteering.

Figure 2  
Occupied Volunteer Space for Traditional Volunteer Programs



The shaded area to the left in Figure 2 represents my rough perception of the proportion of volunteer space identified or occupied by volunteer programs today, in concept and operation. The remaining unshaded area is a rough estimate of the proportion of volunteer space potentially remaining to be identified and developed as such. Obviously, we are less than halfway there today, though modern volunteering seems to be steadily plodding rightward. You may wish to plot **your** notion of occupied volunteer space in the typical volunteer program today. You may also want to do it for the single volunteer effort you

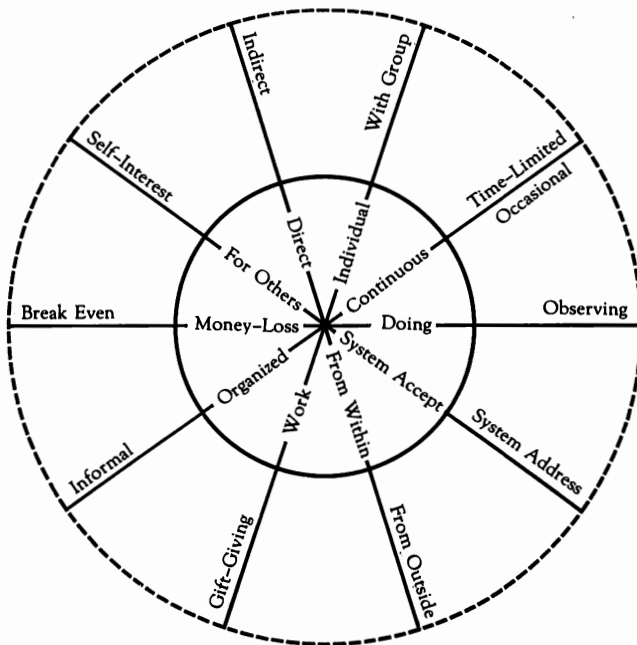


know best. This exercise has, in fact, been used to establish a plan for extending volunteer space in a single volunteer program or organization.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 3 is another way of visualizing growth in volunteer space. The poles most clearly recognized as volunteer form the central core, radiating outward towards less traditionally accepted styles of volunteer involvement. The expansion is not really equal in all ten outward directions, as we shall see later in this book. For example, increasing degrees of self-interest and domination of work by gift-giving soon become questionable as fully fitting the definition of volunteer. Along other dimensions such as continuous to occasional, or individual to with a group, it is not clear that we ever go off the volunteer scale.

I like the image of sunshine and radiance suggested by this figure, though logically, of course, a radius is not necessarily radiant.

Figure 3  
Volunteer Space as a Radiance



### From Flat Surface to Volume

We now need to try to visualize a more complicated reality. Volunteer space is not the series of flat planes so far presented; it is a volume. This is so because, in the main, the ten dimensions can vary independently of one another. For example, a volunteer can work to any degree as an individual or with a group, but this does not restrict the volunteer's ability to work either on a continuous or an occasional basis, while to any degree accepting or addressing the rules of the system. You can visualize this space as a cube, where any volunteer's involvement style can be located at any point within that cubic volume.

<sup>1</sup>The exercise is more difficult for a "non-traditional" effort which is generally located closer to the right poles. But there are several ways of adapting the exercise to such efforts, including starting from the right pole in each case and connecting dots so that the shaded area is to the right in the figure. Your undeveloped volunteer space for you will then be the unshaded area to the left of the diagram.

Courageous readers might try to visualize a ten-dimensional space, with current awareness of “volunteer” an even smaller part of it. I can’t. Ten dimensions leave me weak. Numbers might help a little here, and we return to them in Chapter 17. A “location” in volunteer space is defined as a single distinct set of combinations on all ten dimensions in volunteer space. Thus continuous and direct dimensions (plus our eight other dimensions) linked together form one style of involvement, one variation or location in volunteer space. Continuous, indirect, etc., form another, and so on.

There are approximately 60,000 of these locations in volunteer space. Many of these involvement style options are logically conceivable, and many of these also appear to be meaningful in practical terms. Conservatively, I would say that there were at least 20,000 logically possible and humanly meaningful variations in the way people can be involved as unpaid help-intenders. We have explored maybe 100 of them under the volunteer banner, or about one-half of one percent of all potential locations. That leaves about 19,900 to go. This book is a first foray into this vast uncharted territory.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# ALL THE NAMES OF VOLUNTEERING

Chapters 2 and 3 projected a vast expanse of volunteer space, of which only a tiny island is explored and inhabited, the rest left unexplored under the volunteer flag. If there really are anything close to 20,000 distinct and meaningful variations in volunteer styles, we may be justified in fearing chaos. How does one get a handle on this, even for purposes of discussion? Our Chapter 3 mapping operation helped a little with its ten dimensions, each nailed down by a name at each end. Now we must ask if there is also **one** name for it all, which is to say, one identity all can relate to and rally around. "What's in a name?" is a powerful question, because it is a question about our basic self-image as volunteers or volunteer leaders. Calling all the space "volunteer" is arrogant and unrealistic. On the other hand, losing our name somewhere out there could be a severe shock to pride and honor; we have enough identity problems as it is. This sounds as though our problem is some kind of psychological hang-up. Maybe it is, in part, but it's more than that. The issue gets into the very practical problem of whom we count and whom we can count on. For example, the 1974 ACTION agency census survey of volunteers found significantly more white than non-white volunteers.<sup>1</sup> A 1977 Gallup poll showed precisely the opposite.<sup>2</sup> Both were professionally done surveys, yet I strongly doubt if things actually changed that much in three short years. I believe the real difference was in the phrasing of the questions. The 1974 ACTION survey used the word "volunteer" liberally, with examples concentrated on relatively more visible organized volunteer programs. The 1977 Gallup poll questions obviously referred to kinds of helping most or all of us would call volunteer, but it didn't use either the word "volunteer" or the word "program."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Americans Volunteer — 1974 (Washington, D.C.: ACTION, 1975), p.5.

<sup>2</sup>George Gallup, "One in Four Works as Volunteer," *Denver Post*, 25 August 1977.

<sup>3</sup>This is also why I didn't regale you with statistics showing that more women volunteer than men, more adults than youth, etc. The results you get depend on the words you use in asking the questions.

What's in a name? Plenty. So now, we need a name, or at least we need to talk about descriptive terms. Ordinarily, we don't let infants go long without naming them, and I think this has something to do with our needs for identification and control. These needs are not served by mapping; at any rate, I've never heard of a baby christened in terms of ten alternatives.

We have an even more complex problem, for we have broached several definitions of volunteering, each of progressively more inclusive scope. The most inclusive was any relatively uncoerced work, intended to help, done without primary or immediate thought of financial gain. A more restricted "core" definition was described in Chapter 2 as "unsalaried service to others, in a structured setting." That "city-limit" definition is the one most clearly and comfortably called volunteering. But if we're moving outward from, say, New York City, we can't call the whole continent New York, nor should we call New York, Peoria.

Within the current clearly defined volunteer sector, most people deeply honor the name "volunteer" and they don't want to lose it. Many other people who qualify within a larger definition are unfamiliar with the word and/or don't fancy it for themselves. Like it or not, one person's honor is another's stereotype; "volunteer" carries a heavy freight of connotation, which can vary all over the scale, depending on who you are.

The list of those who don't use the name includes most self-helpers, almost all informal helpers, many unpaid board members, most issue-oriented people, and a lot of men engaged in "civic service" while their wives volunteer. The list also includes some people who do fit the core definition of volunteer.

This leaves an opening for a true story. Many years ago, I spoke at a conference for judges in a rural state. The plea was, "Give volunteers a try in your court, Judge; you'll like it," and so forth.

After the session, a fine old judge approached the podium. He was from a very small town, really just a wide spot in the road. Said the Judge: "Well, Doc, that was a pretty good talk, but the fact is, I really don't need none of them volunteers."

"Judge, that's for you to decide," I said, "but would you mind telling me why you don't need volunteers?"

"Got plenty of help now," said the old Judge. "Why just in my little town, I've got six probation officers working for me."

At this point I checked my hearing aid, found it was working, and replied, "That's amazing, Judge. With all that help maybe you really don't need volunteers. But how do you ever get the budget to hire six probation officers in a town your size?"

"Hell," said the Judge, "I don't pay 'em nuthin'."

I managed to keep my mouth shut. The man **had** volunteers; I really didn't care what he **called** them. I had a similar experience trying to argue a police chief into using volunteers. No soap. Finally, changing the subject, the chief spoke with pride about his "auxiliaries." On cross-examination, not only did these auxiliaries prove to be unpaid; they used their own money to purchase uniforms and weapons!

In both cases, the only reason I would have advocated the word "volunteer" was in hopes the word association would encourage these people to attend our workshops. But I wasn't sure they had all that much to learn from us; not enough, at any rate, to risk saddling them with a word they and their "volunteers" might not relate to. Once again, if all voluntary help-intended space were mandated "volunteer," it would simply imply "they" had more to learn from "us." At this point we don't know that for sure. Maybe some of them do more things right unconsciously than we could ever teach them to do self-consciously. More generally, one taking the other's name, even by consent, implies a kind of dominance.

## Keeping Our Several Names vs. One Name

So, suppose each of us simply keep our preferred name for what we do, or no name at all? The main problem with this alternative seems to be isolation and blockage of communication and working interactions.<sup>4</sup>

I don't think these kinds of questions are hair-splitting; they are rather hair-tearing. Words are powerful symbols. People relate to them; they don't want to lose their special word symbols which support self-images. Suppose you and I have the same skin shade. If you call yourself "black" and I call myself "colored," that can make it harder for us to work together, or even to be together. I think a similar thing holds for the many names of volunteer. It would be easier to work together if we could agree to share some name, probably a new name all of us were comfortable with (though we could also keep our special names at the same time). I think of one soon to be married couple who decided not to substitute the man's last name for the woman's, the woman's last name for the man's, or any possible hyphenations. Together they chose and celebrated a completely new name symbolic of their marriage. The name was "Joy," and I wished them that.

## One Name For All: A Review of Candidates

Joy is already in the English language; it is neither neologism or acronym. Let's begin with married names of that sort which may be large enough to encompass all of us. First, we'll review candidates which appear to be more deliberately and formally designed for this purpose. Among these are "voluntary action," "voluntary sector," "voluntarism," and sometimes "voluntary association." The "voluntary" part of it is right on target in referring to the relatively uncoerced part of our definition. But, to me, all these terms miss the other three defining characteristics in whole or in part. Thus, as already noted, "voluntary association" may be for recreational as well as work purposes. Where such associations are for work purposes, they may have paid staff as well as volunteers. Moreover, the level of analysis seems largely organizational here, while the level of analysis in volunteering is at least **partly** individual. "Voluntary action" may be in the process of a semantic shift towards a term we can all live with. But, as of now, my sense is that it is broader than volunteering and, in some cases, doesn't necessarily mean help-intending or unpaid. Besides, what would we call its participants? Voluntary actors, Voluntary activists? The usage of "voluntary sector" often seems virtually synonymous with "private sector," yet millions of volunteers work in and for the **public** sector, for local, state, and federal government agencies.

The variations on "voluntary" are an enormously important area of study. As the conclusion of Chapter 2 indicated, they overlap the volunteer area in part, which is the first rub. In part, they extend beyond it, and that's the second rub. Using the terms interchangeably adds enormously to the prevailing confusion. I've clocked 50% or more wasted time in meetings where both terms were bandied about as synonyms, without anyone realizing we were talking about apples and oranges. I've also seen bibliographies and requests for proposals with the same hybridization.

Volunteering is one special part of voluntary action; but not all voluntary action is volunteering, and not all volunteering is in the voluntary sector.

## "Good Fences Make Good Neighbors": A Common Touch to the Word?

Robert Frost, who contributed this quote was an extraordinarily relevant poet, using ordinary words. Perhaps we should try that, too, while we think about our word fences.

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<sup>4</sup>The Eskimos make me wonder about this. They have at least a score of separate words for what we call "snow," and I'm sure they communicate very well about their different snows. Perhaps if volunteering were as overwhelming in our culture as snow is in theirs, twenty words would work for us, too.

For whatever else may recommend the variations of “voluntary,” they are not in common parlance. Even though our naming task is already difficult enough, we should probably consider adding another desirable criterion to it: some common touch which as many people as possible can relate to.

## Naming By Job

With that perspective, maybe it will help to return to everyday experience for guidance. The judge in our story represented one option: call the work by the name of the work. Don't use any umbrella term at all to describe the volunteer element in different types of work. What the judge had was six “probation officers,” I suppose because the work they were doing was important to him whether they happened to be paid for it or not. Similarly, a person is a “board member,” companion, tutor, foster parent, Little League coach, blood donor, or one of Nader's Raiders, if that's what they want to do for free.

There is merit in this view because it underlines the dignity of the work itself, not whether it happens to be paid for or not. But if there isn't some difference between doing work for money or not for money, what are we all doing here?<sup>5</sup> Moreover, work titles don't necessarily convey the relatively uncoerced and help-intending facets of volunteering. “Soldier” doesn't tell you whether the person was drafted or not, or in what sense the work may be help-intending.

Therefore, it is doubtful that a mosaic of work titles will do entirely. Some common-element designation is needed in addition. The term volunteer has been suggested for this purpose, either preceding the job title or in parentheses following it; thus, “volunteer probation officer” or “probation officer (volunteer)”. This might suit some needs, though I wonder how other probation officers would feel about “probation officer (paid)”?. That suggests the problem: the money difference becomes too emphatic in the naming system. In any case, repeating the word (volunteer) doesn't help us decide what more generally applicable term we might put in that space. The problem remains: what title would a larger set of people relate to, in or out of parentheses?

## Names People Call Themselves: Phrases and One-Worders

We might find more generally applicable terms by listening to names less traditional volunteers call themselves, when we might call them “volunteer.” We should listen particularly hard when they seem excited about what they are doing. I certainly never heard them call themselves “nonprofit voluntary help-intenders” and never would, in sober state, suggest the same. I do suggest we listen far more closely to how people actually refer to themselves when voluntarily help-intending, then see if something can be made of recurring patterns.

So far, my own informal study picks up phrases like “being a good neighbor,” “helping out,” “doing my part,” “giving a damn,” “pitching in,” “being a sucker,” and other names (or no name at all). These are decent natural terms for what is real to people. As we find more of them, we may discover one or more of generalizable potential, both emotionally and conceptually. We simply have not listened carefully enough yet to be sure of that. My other problem at this point is that these are usually phrases and difficult to render in single noun or participle form (doing my part-ing?).

Are there single words that might serve? “Neighboring” and “caring” have been suggested. I like them both, though there are problems, of course. “Neighboring” converts easily to “neighbor,” but “carer” seems awkward. Besides, “carers” can be paid, too (so can “helpers”), and a person volunteering way across town is not a “neighbor,” spatially speaking. “Involvement” is another possible candidate. But the state of being involved is

<sup>5</sup>Though later, in Chapter 15, we will envisage a future in which money in exchange for work might make less difference in describing that work.

difficult or impossible to render in a single word: I'm an involver? Besides, the word involvement is a little stiff and abstract for some people. Also it doesn't necessarily connote unpaid intention to help; for example, being involved in drug traffic.

Before we end our single-word search, let me register "neighboring" as currently my favorite candidate. The word is simple, is widely understood and appreciated and it isn't too stuffy. I particularly like its connotation of equality (vs. patronizing) among helpers. The word also converts easily from noun to participle form.<sup>6</sup> Neighboring certainly connotes the intention to be helpful, and the explicit support for that connotation reaches all the way back to the Bible. Moreover, it is scarcely conceivable that a person could be paid to be a meaningful neighbor or be forced to be neighborly.<sup>7</sup> The apparent restriction to next-door interactions has already been stretched for a more generic meaning of the word; that is, most people are comfortable with neighboring communities and neighboring nations some distance apart. They probably even understood the intent of the U.S. "good neighbor" policy for Latin America, even if they didn't always understand its results. True, "neighborhood" is a largely geographical/cultural designation today; it does not necessarily imply that neighboring occurs in the neighborhood. But we could be careful about the distinction and hope for the best in a semantic shift towards neighboring as the extent of a meaningful helping network. As of today, the proudly self-designated volunteer in an organized volunteer program might have the most trouble with the word neighbor, because that word also applies to many other people who don't do the special things done by volunteers in organized programs. As far as I'm concerned, these good people can have both words to use, as they wish, with my thanks.

In any case, the returns are not all in, and we need to move on now to two-word possibilities. "Voluntary action" has its adherents, but, as previously noted, "voluntary actor" is awkward, and I doubt if either term would ever become a household word. "Citizen participation" seems general enough, and "citizen participant" isn't too terribly awkward. But what about people who aren't citizens? Various combinations of the above seem to suffer the same kinds of problems; for example, "participating helper." None has yet won any overall popularity contest in or out of the volunteer leadership world.

## Importing New Words

Shall we risk borrowing or coining some new words, then? A first possibility is borrowing from another language. Numerous words now part of English have been larcenized in this manner. A fresh start is the advantage here; all the better if there is some harmony to English roots. For example, some Spanish Americans who might never "volunteer" do help out very nicely under the name "servidores." In India, I've heard that people do good work via "shramidana," and French-Canadians might say "benevole." In no case is the concept quite the same as ours, yet I think it worthwhile to check out the cultures whose language has frequently passed into English, looking for terms they use to describe what we might call volunteering or something close to it, including Spanish, French, German, Italian, and others.

Neologism is another possibility: that is, creating a word which says just what we want it to say. I've perpetrated my share of exotics, but doubt that it will work here. One reason is the need for an acceptance far broader than among volunteer leadership. Such acceptance doesn't seem to come easy with fresh-minted words in the human sphere.<sup>8</sup> The acronym may sometimes fare better here, especially if the acronym coopts a related favorable term

<sup>6</sup>"Neighborly" is a good adverb term here, too and it is certainly an improvement over "volunteerly" or "volunteer-like."

<sup>7</sup>Alas, grim rumors from England have it that some people are being paid to do the things neighbors ordinarily do. It's only an experiment, I hope; otherwise, someday we can expect Graduate Schools of Professional Neighboring!

<sup>8</sup>So far as I'm aware, the Czech writer Karel Capek is the only person who ever coined a neologism, which then passed over into common parlance. The word was "robot," definitely not a candidate in this chapter.

or concept. Keith Leenhouts did criminal justice volunteers a real service with “V.I.P.” to stand for Volunteers in Probation, Prevention, Parole, and Prisons — and also Very Important People. But once again this acronym would not be as effective with people who don’t already feel comfortable with the word volunteer. Nevertheless, the idea is worth playing with, using the component self-descriptive words we have discussed: participant, helper, carer, neighbor, etc. I offer Help-Intending Person (HIP) as a starter, and leave the field to others not subject to uncontrollable fits of alleged humor.

Maybe our best hope lies with certain kinds of youth, minority people, highly motivated common interest groups, musicians, and the like. These have habitually enriched the language with new words or combinations of words, and new meanings from old words. They seem to be able to create a rich language of their own, some of which the rest of us eagerly appropriate later — “up tight,” “laid back,” etc. Bless us, we seem to be too “straight” to do a “heavy” thing like that. Maybe we should ask some musician or youth who actually does volunteer work, or we can just listen to the words they use when they are really “into it.” Perhaps certain phrases or patterns will catch on eventually.

### Rehabilitating a Word

So far, our study committee seems to include listeners, linguists, anthropologists, and musicians, to name a few. But even after their report is filed, we are not quite ready to hie ourselves to the dictionary people. First, we must confront one grass-roots phrase widely applied to us. It is generally coextensive with traditional volunteering, and it has pretty much stuck to us. The phrase is “do-gooder,” and even its variants “do-goodism” and “do-gooding” are reasonably current. Thus, our one experience with organically developed language has been rather too well fertilized. My friend Tom James in Canada says we need to stand and fight on do-goodism. I agree. Part of our image program should be to confront damaging descriptions. So I ask, what would you rather have a person do: **do-good, do-evil, or do-nothing?** I’m in favor of rehabilitating the phrase. A National Do-Gooders Conference would be an interesting way to start. I plan to attend in my flowered hat and brass knuckles.

### An Insufferable Suffix

With sad exceptions like the above, language seems to develop best when we allow it to do so. However, permit me one further comment: whatever our name becomes, including “volunteer,” let’s not add an “ism” to it. I have a violent prejudice against the term “volunteerism,” plus the uncomfortable recollection that I was an early pioneer of the term, and possibly one of its originators. The dictionary defines “ism” as “a distinctive doctrine, theory, system, or practice.” While we have theory, or should have, and while this book is admittedly an effort in that direction, there is something too rigid in the connotation of “ism,” too exclusive, fixed, and academic. “Doctrine” is also static, and it is that aspect of volunteerism I’m attempting to challenge in this book. The only acceptable word in the definition is “practice” because volunteering **is** active; it conveys a sense of doing decent things, not just contemplating them. Theory and doctrine can still deal with volunteering for what it really is: action-oriented.

I rest my case with volunteers. Ask any of them if they are practitioners of volunteerism, or, God forbid, “citizen participationism.” Ask good neighbors if they are involved in “neighborism.” Better yet, don’t ask.

### Images

Really, our image is what these word games are all about, so perhaps we could rely more on visual signals to convey our commonality, letting the words fall where they may. Rare are the patriots who can fully verbalize what the flag means to them, though they know there is meaning there, and they are moved by it. For volunteering we have the example of



the heart and arrow symbol developed by the National Center for Voluntary Action, now the logo of VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement and many affiliated Voluntary Action Centers and there may be other images we need to look at. So, add artists to the study committee.

### **The Sum For Now**

No number of words can disguise the principal outcome of this chapter: referral to committee for further study. Although, with rather tentative courage, “neighboring” was proposed for reference to broader volunteer realms. Among the options for decision is that there can never be a name broad enough to cover the entire possible scope of volunteering as advocated in this book. Obviously, I hope we will find such a name, for a single term would be a tie-line for integration of volunteer space.

Meanwhile, we are faced with a mosaic of somewhat overlapping terms, varying in level of abstraction, popularity, and emotional attachment. My prescription is a large dose of old-fashioned tolerance and translation. That is, our first approach to people who don’t use our terminology should be to put ours aside for a time and learn theirs. Later, we might seek a community of concept underlying their words and ours. If and when they agree on that commonality, they might become more comfortable with our words and we with theirs.

Is this so anxiety-producing? I don’t think it has to be. Again, we have to recall Shakespeare’s question, “What’s in a name?” This time we will have to fall back on his answer: “A rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet.” Until we get the name right, we have, at least, a fragrance.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# IN HARMONY WITH A SOCIETY

### Introduction: The Advocacy for Exploration

Volunteer space includes all the ways people can be involved in help-intending work, without (much) money. For three chapters now, we have been shaping that notion, mapping it a little, trying to get comfortable with it.

The central volunteer ground we hold now is “unsalaried service to others in a structured setting.” We could stay close to these home grounds; they are a significant and comfortable base which we understand. The decision now is whether to hold on or move on: remain where we are and cultivate our known garden of volunteering or move out in the wilds where other flowers bloom, many of them strange to us. This and the following two chapters are an argument for further intensive exploration. This argument is not quite a call to pull up roots and pioneer, for it envisages holding our central identity base of volunteering and adding to it, not forsaking it. The advocacy is more general and value-based in the present chapter; the next two chapters are more pragmatic and specific.

### A Basis in Individual Ethics

There is a spirit of inclusion in our times. Setbacks are many and we frequently falter, but there can be no mistaking the thrust of the recent past. Slowly, painfully, we are struggling to provide minorities, women, the poor, the handicapped, the aged, a fuller and freer participation in the life of community and society. Amidst this mood, volunteering can't afford to remain exclusive — special people doing special things in a special way — or even to project that image. The island mentality will not do, especially when the place sounds like some island in the South Pacific, with balmy breezes and unconnected to the mainland. Perhaps volunteering could go counter-trend, resolutely elite when clubbism is going out of style, but I suspect historians and sociologists would counsel against it. Counter-trend institutions, if they are **behind** the times, risk isolation and archaism.

More than that, there is a powerful value base for inclusiveness in a free society. It originates in respect for the dignity and worth of every individual, and thus we are committed to such a value system. We must esteem and activate the ethic of full and free participation by the widest range and number of people, by recognizing and encouraging each person's helping intention and style. If all modes of participation are made accessible, no person need be an island unless he or she chooses to be one.

For a volunteer leadership which chooses to remain cloistered, the island mentality message has a sharp ironic point. We are the people whose core values should call for free and full participation of all people. How can we consistently exclude anyone, even by semantic oversight? The general point here is that most of our society's values also underlie volunteering. It may be useful to summarize the principal volunteer values here.<sup>1</sup>

1. **Pride in Work — the Dignity of Work.** Volunteering is the work model which goes furthest in removing money as a yardstick of intrinsic work value. Therefore, volunteering and the volunteer attitude represent pride and dignity of work in their purest form today.

2. **The Opportunity to Participate.** Try reading the Bill of Rights all alone on a desert island: the right to participate means little or nothing without the **opportunity** to participate. Volunteering is a principal way our society has of adding practical opportunity to abstract rights.

3. **Freedom of Choice.** Volunteering represents a main vehicle for extending permissible, realistic freedom of choice. Theoretically, you can choose not to volunteer, negotiate and choose among a range of volunteer opportunities, and quit any one of them.

4. **Actualizing the Ethics of Caring.** We are meant to do something in this life besides take care of first person singular, and volunteering represents an essential position vis-a-vis ethics which holds that contemplation needs implementation, and preachment needs practice.

5. **The Worth and Needs of the Individual.** Alienation in our era seems to be based on a belief that important things can only be accomplished by big business, big government, big labor, and maybe big volunteerism, too. So we need to announce again, to all who are concerned about erosion of worth in the individual, volunteering says, "You can!"<sup>2</sup>

One thing strikes me about all these values in volunteering: if they are good for some people, they are better for all people. If the dignity and worth of the individual is a value which volunteering expresses, then it is a value for all people, not just some, and volunteer leadership must act as if it were. If freedom of choice is a value in volunteering, our clear obligation is to identify, ratify, and offer more choices in the way people can participate.

Since the values which undergird volunteering are intrinsically inclusive, there is no place where we can stop trying to involve people and still be true to the principles. I am certainly not saying any single volunteer program can use every kind of person in any way they choose to participate, but we can collectively approach this ideal far more closely than we do today.

Where are all the other people we need if fact is to conform to principle? They are in unexplored (by us) regions of volunteer space; more specifically, these people tend to be

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<sup>1</sup>This discussion of values is drawn from an article by the author entitled "Values of Volunteering," *Voluntary Action Leadership*, Summer issue (Washington, D.C., 1978), pp. 38-39.

<sup>2</sup>One place where the statement is made strongly is the Code of Ethics of the Association for Administration of Volunteer Services (AAVS).

<sup>3</sup>This also means a reach across the border of any nation where people are free or aspire to be, where people care or try to care. For such people will be volunteering, whatever the style of it or name. Contrary to some deplorable slips during an otherwise good U.S. Bicentennial year, Columbus did not discover volunteering, nor is it registered in the U.S. Patent Office. Rather, its registry is in some universe of values; therefore, the literal geographical connection of volunteer space, internationally, is an exhilarating prospect.

clustered toward the right of the ten dimensions described in Chapter 3. Somewhere out there is a style and mode of participation with which everyone will be comfortable, or at least far more people than we have today. Many of these people are in fact participating today, in styles which they find natural. These people need only our recognition for what they do, and our facilitation as requested. Others might choose to participate if we projected a wider range of respected options, some of which would be closer to their natural inclinations in style and purpose.

## Mobilization for Community and Society

We not only owe individual citizens the right to participate in a free society — we also owe our community and society collectively. Our nation and our world have one hundred percent-type problems; these problems cannot be solved with twenty percent participation. Therefore, all forms of potentially positive participation need to be recognized, encouraged, and supported. Nor is it only that we **need** a nation of 200 million volunteers; we **are** one, in a sense, if we could only admit it. For I believe everyone has something to give, if provided the chance to give it.

But here is the irony: if everyone is a volunteer, then volunteer leadership has an identity problem. It is something like the problem a Denver Bronco football fan would have, if suddenly everybody in the world became a Denver Bronco football fan. It's less fun cheering when there is no one to cheer against and no one left to convert to the cause. Besides, some of these new fans might dilute the genuine fervor of the faithful; some of them aren't even from Denver!

It's not quite the same for volunteer leadership, of course. Most of us wouldn't mind a few more fans or cheers.<sup>4</sup> The more precise questions for us would be something like this: is our primary mission to promote one favored model of helping, the volunteer program? Or is our goal to promote the total sum of helping in the world, volunteer programs being one part of that? Either goal is a worthy one. I can only hope, on reflection, we will find ourselves in the grip of the more magnificent obsession. This is a volunteer helping space in which all, not just some, people will feel free to move with our respectful recognition. We cannot confer that wider recognition until we revise our own self-recognition.

## Attracting More People to the Present Model

Is there another alternative? Perhaps we can retain our current volunteer program identity and promote it more vigorously, thereby attracting more people to this involvement model. This is, in fact, one of the things we have been doing. We have been calling across the river to people, many of whom have other helping styles, and we have been saying: "Come across and do it our way; you'll like it." Some have done so, and liked it. Census surveys indicate a significant **percentage** increase in organized adult volunteering in the decade between 1965 and 1974.<sup>5</sup> We are now at the point where about one in four residents of the United States reports himself/herself as volunteering at least once a year.<sup>6</sup> About ten to fifteen percent say they volunteer on a regular basis. Well and good, but even twenty-five percent is a long way from one hundred percent, and I believe there is a ceiling on how many new people we can convince to do it the old way. We can holler louder and louder across the river, Madison Avenue, megaphones and all. Still,

<sup>4</sup>Several years ago I attended a volunteer conference in Japan. At the end of the conference 1800 volunteers and paid staff rose as one to give three resounding cheers for volunteering: BANZAI! BANZAI! BANZAI! I never had a more thrilling moment at a conference, and I wish we did it at conferences here. I did try to cheerlead at a few conferences in the U.S. My success was unexpected, in the sense of producing silent meditation, rather than cheers.

<sup>5</sup>*Americans Volunteer* — 1974 (Washington, D.C.: ACTION, 1975), p.4.

<sup>6</sup>George Gallup, "One in Four Works as Volunteer," *Denver Post*, 25 August 1977.

people will remain who don't fit that frame. They have not been participating in that brand of helping for a long time. They will continue not participating in spite of our best efforts. Getting better at hard-sell of the present product will have diminishing returns; the product line itself must diversify to attract more people.

But isn't the product itself naturally evolving and enlarging? And isn't that enough? To the first part of that question, yes; to the second part, no.

## Evolution in the Right Direction

Yes, there has been a steady if relatively unselfconscious growth in what we accept as belonging to the scope of the word "volunteer." There has been some exploration of newer volunteer space, if you will, this past decade, and especially in the last five years. There are two main reasons for underlining current trends to more inclusiveness in the volunteer concept. First, these trends suggest the inevitability of our moving with the larger inclusive trends in our society. Second, the trends indicate that the further deliberate enlargement advocated in this book is neither abstract nor unrealistic.

But first, a word from our history as a perspective on the past ten years. (Incredibly, a nation of forty million volunteers had no recorded general history of volunteering until very recently. We may all thank Susan Ellis and Katie Noyes for this signal remedy.<sup>7</sup> Others have historical works in preparation or circulation.<sup>8</sup>) An important origin of American volunteering was in the family, especially the frontier family (though cities were sometimes frontiers, too, and still are in some senses). Early on, this family spirit must also have infused the extended family, and close-in institutions such as church and neighborhood groups. But the folks who came over to help raise your barn, eat, drink, and dance with you later, didn't call themselves volunteers.

The first self-conscious image we have of "volunteer" dates from perhaps forty to fifty years ago. It is a white lady in a flowered hat. She is middle-aged, of the middle- or upper-class. She helps others out of warmth and concern, part-time. Often (not always) she works in relatively less skilled ways; she is not usually considered "professional." Her motivation is primarily "pure" altruism; she is not allowed to have needs of her own served by her volunteering. Statistically, she is a minority, a very special fraction of the population. She is nice, well-intentioned, frequently very effective, and she's still around, represented by children who still resemble her. I hope she never goes away; the world would be much poorer without her.

Still, the associated stereotype or caricature was, and is, not so nice. Even the word "nice" is not so nice anymore. The stereotype frequently insinuates "patronizing," "interfering," "unrealistic," "ineffective." Somewhere along here, the term "do-gooder" veered 180 degrees from its literal meaning, and became a sneer.

Our early lady volunteer was soon joined by a gentleman, presumably also in a flowered hat. Probably he was there all the time, but not identified as "volunteer" by himself or others. Then structured volunteer programs began to evolve in the image of paid professional delivery systems, or at least in their shadow. Slowly, volunteer helping became more accessible to the less privileged. More and more people put on the flowered hat; sometimes it began to look more like a helmet (some advocacy and policy volunteers, for example).

We live within a trend of at least ten years which has seen the expansion of the nature and constituency of volunteering. This progressive recognition of more people as

<sup>7</sup>Susan J. Ellis and Katherine H. Noyes, *By the People: A History of Americans as Volunteers* (Philadelphia: Energize, 1978).

<sup>8</sup>For example, Adam Ristad of VOLUNTEER has recently completed a curriculum unit on the history of volunteering for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation high school course on community leadership and volunteering.

volunteers, whatever they call themselves, has induced the inner circle of service program volunteer leadership to include other people, other styles. Among these are the Board member recognized as a volunteer, members of religious congregations, people who help out in food co-ops, unpaid workers in issue-oriented groups, unpaid officers of civic groups, participants in informal helping networks, people at all levels of skill and responsibility, people who used to be called clients, and people who receive some expense reimbursement for their services. More and more, these people or their leadership come to conferences labelled "volunteer," read books and magazines with this word in the title, and generally see themselves as part of the volunteer community. At this point, I can only rest my case on this assertion. Other supportive examples are sprinkled throughout this book, awaiting your judgment on the matter.

## The Case for an Accelerated Evolution

But if you agree, I hope you also agree that future expansion of the volunteer concept projects itself as more realistic, when seen simply as the continuation of a trend. However, in this book I am asking for even more than continuation of the trend for inclusiveness in volunteering; I am asking for deliberate acceleration. This is because some important people are seeing traditional volunteer leadership as irrelevant faster than they are becoming relevant. For example, the powerful current emphasis on neighborhood self-help seems largely to assume traditional volunteering is irrelevant, if not actually antipathetic. Neighborhood people usually don't go to our conferences or approach our Voluntary Action Centers for help; and vice versa. In at least one state I know of, there is eloquent articulation of people helping people as basic volunteers, coupled with honest skepticism about the extent to which volunteer directors can facilitate this mobilization. I can't prove it, but I have a sense life is passing us by. So I'm advocating a deliberate priority campaign rapidly to establish a new volunteer community. I believe we should be more self-aware and deliberate in expanding our volunteer space. This more deliberate, explicit cultivation of inclusion will be more effective in making happen what is more or less happening to us now. I see no reason why any of us should have to be dragged kicking and screaming into the last quarter of this century. I would like to see us walk there ourselves, taking initiatives to integrate with positive values and trends in our society. We need to be more connected to that whole to seek and hold a broader ground of volunteer helping (retaining the beachhead we have now). Or do we consider it alien territory? Affirmation of the vision requires visualizing it as possible, at the very least a loosening of hardened categories. It calls for imaginative reconsideration of who a volunteer may be, what he/she can do, and how he/she can do it.

We are getting there. Today the newer circumferences of volunteer space include many of the magnificent people who were always there, and many other people who were never there before. Part of the reason for the "new" volunteers is that we seem to be circling back to the earlier volunteering of pioneer days, where almost everybody was involved. I hope we have more awareness this time around, and a chance to incorporate the best of all eras. You can't really go home again, but it would be nice to revisit the old place and see what we might learn. In so doing, we will be moving with the best thing happening in our national life today: the involvement of people.

Meanwhile, I believe we are now on a road which steadily leaves elitism behind. At the end of that road volunteer will be everyperson, everyman, everywoman, and everychild. All people will know they have something to give — and to receive. Our job is to help make that happen.

## CHAPTER SIX

# ATTRACTING PEOPLE AND GETTING FULL VALUE FOR OUR MONEY

Our advocacy for further exploration of volunteer space now takes a more practical turn. We begin with a rather miserable consistency in the typical problems confronting traditional volunteer programs today.

Either:

1. We can't get all the volunteers we need.
2. Or we can't get the kind of staff support for volunteers we need.
3. Or we can't get all the program support dollars we need.
4. Or some of these.
5. Or all of these.

Cultivation of a wider volunteer space would address all these problems.

### Recruiting People

Volunteer programs today work within an increasingly competitive market. The percentage of people volunteering grows steadily; the number of organizations wanting their services grows even faster.

This is a healthy situation for the individual volunteer. Now a volunteer can do more shopping around for appropriate involvement opportunities. For the same reason, it can be healthy for volunteer leadership as a whole; it puts us on our mettle to provide a range of meaningful involvement opportunities. Sometimes it doesn't feel quite so healthy for the individual leader or recruiter of volunteers. As modern volunteer recruiting competition grows, some fine old traditional volunteer organizations and programs have recently been **losing** volunteers.

I am assuming very few of us have any major problems with attracting more volunteers,

in a range of traditional roles. The usual provisos are understood, of course: there must be meaningful work for volunteers to do, and they must be willing and able to do it.

Exploring volunteer space can help attract more volunteers, both for individual programs and for volunteering as a whole. The exploration process accomplishes this by being explicitly aware of more options for involvement and being more flexible in fitting them to where people are coming from.

It's simply a variation of the old saw: if you have only one volunteer job opportunity, you are automatically turning off every potential volunteer who doesn't happen to like that job, but might be helping you in other ways. With, say, ten different jobs, you are casting your net far wider and will catch more varieties of fine fish — even an octopus or two. To do this in terms of modes of involvement may be even more effective. Simply remember Figure 1 in Chapter 3. Those dimensions included:

- 1. Continuous .....(Or) .....Occasional
- 2. As an Individual .....(Or) .....With a Group
- 3. Direct .....(Or) .....Indirect
- 4. Participating Action .....(Or) .....Observation

And there are six other dimensions in our total list from Chapter 3. In general, if you are having recruiting problems:

- 1. Identify the option side you're concentrating on now.
- 2. Look at the **other** side and see if that variation in involvement has possibilities for accomplishing some of your helping purposes, similar or additional to the occupied side.
- 3. Look for people to recruit who might be comfortable with that mode of involvement. Overall, you might begin with shaded-unshaded area exercises described in Chapter 3, Figure 2, using the ten dimensions identified there, or any others meaningful to you.

### Overall View

It seems simple, and it is, ordinarily. The crucial aspect is systematic awareness. I've seen highly sophisticated volunteer leaders who had problems recruiting volunteers as individuals, give a loud "aha" when they realized they might get some of the same things or other useful things done by **groups** — and this option is okay, it's respectable. The same for people whose volunteer awareness was locked into continuous service, when it dawned on them that temporary/occasional volunteer service could accomplish some things, too.

From Chapter 8 onward, this book abounds in examples of such options realized. Most of the ten dimensions also have meaningful options between the polar extremes. Between individual and large group, for example, there are volunteer pairs, and groups of all sizes, shapes, and origins, such as volunteer families. Finally, as Chapter 3 noted, there may be as many as 60,000 potentially meaningful combinations, using various poles of the ten dimensions. The book explores a few of these, too. But you can't possibly have tried them all yet, and somewhere in those "locations" you will find variations in helping styles that are comfortable for new kinds of people and still helpful to you.

Volunteer recruiting begins in your head; some mind-expansion must come first. A somewhat subtler variation is "recognition recruiting" (also called "perceptual recruiting").<sup>1</sup> This process accepts in place, people who are doing things to help you or

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<sup>1</sup>Ivan H. Scheiter, *People Approach: Nine Strategies for Citizen Volunteer Involvement* (Boulder, Colorado: VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, 1977).



your clients, but wouldn't qualify on some traditional volunteer counts. Some people, for example, forget to count their own unpaid Board members as volunteers or the people who help informally outside an organized context.

Why bother? First of all, it may help in beating the numbers game, if that is a game you have to play. This game is motivated by the obsession with sheer numbers of volunteers and volunteer hours, so invincibly congenial to funders and top administrators, however we may harp on quality. The numbers game is a deadly Russian roulette played with the quality of citizen participation. The quality of planning and support is necessarily strained when stretched over unreasonably large numbers of volunteers; they are less likely to do a good job, and more likely to get frustrated and drop out. (After which the same people who got you into this revolving door mess are likely to cite the same mess as evidence for the unreliability of volunteers.) Scheier's law, applied to volunteers, states: "you can raise an army in a day, but you can't raise it far." (For "in a day," you may substitute "during the grant period.")

Pending further illumination of sponsors and bosses, recognition recruiting may be a feasible way in which you, too, can play the numbers game. And it is relatively honest, too (or at least any dishonesty is difficult to hide). In other words, if they force you to multiply unrealistically, count everything that moves — and helps. Count Board members, clients who help or self-help; count occasional temporary helpers; count material donors if you can, and count, count, count your way carefully across each of the ten dimensions in Figure 1 of Chapter 3. See if there is anyone who helps the organization or the people it serves in any way you could possibly have forgotten. Count them in place, doing what they do now. These people do help, and that's what matters, isn't it? Take credit for that, too. But always describe accurately what each volunteer is doing.

The rules of your local numbers game may exclude some or all of your recognition-recruited volunteers. In that case:

1. Argue.
2. Include them in a separate appendix to your report.
3. Argue again, this time for putting them in the main text, in the next report, or the next . . .

Another possible benefit of recognition recruiting circles back to where we started here: actual physical recruiting. Once you have succeeded in calling them volunteers, your recognition recruits may have taken the first step towards seeing themselves as volunteer material. As a consequence, they may well be on their way towards accepting more visible formal volunteer roles within your program framework, provided those roles are consonant with their own preferred styles of participation.

But there is also a backfire possibility when recognition for what the people are doing strengthens their resolve to do no more, or even to stop what they are doing now — guilt feelings having been assuaged. Somewhat more likely is that some of your recognition recruits may not want to have the name "volunteer" applied to what they are doing. Fine; let them use whatever name suits them privately. If they particularly don't want the name volunteer publicly applied to them, as in an appendix to your annual report, you can ride with that, too, and, as a last ditch, ask if they will stand still for any other name in the report: patron, good neighbor, saint, supporter, and/or all the other names of volunteering we have previously discussed. If it's still no, then it really is no, but I don't think this will happen often.

Rather, the opposite situation is more likely. Recognition recruits tend to be the people who volunteer in ways which are unconventional (to us). Therefore they are unrepresented and under-recognized in volunteer rollcalls today, not because they don't volunteer as much, but rather because we fail to recognize and support the brands of

volunteering they do engage in. These forms of volunteering are located largely in the help-intending spaces so far neglected in narrower definitions of volunteering. The exploration of volunteer space will validate the involvement of such people on their home grounds, not ours, and will hopefully facilitate and coordinate their efforts with all other forms of helping. In any case, they may appreciate the recognition for what they do, unaccustomed as it is. If they don't — if they want to remain secret volunteers, by all means let them do so in dignity.

To repeat, all this assumes a prior check with your recognition recruits, before putting their names in your report as a helper under any name. Even placement in the appendix doesn't let you off the hook on that, because if you don't ask them, they are not only secret volunteers, they are **involuntary** volunteers.

### Lack of Paid Staff Support for Volunteers

Think here of volunteer programs in agencies or organizations where paid staff are the core of the operation. As a rule, paid staff acceptance and support for volunteers has been less than adequately active and positive. Ever since I can remember, surveys of volunteer directors place this issue near the top of the problem parade. Certain newer approaches to the problem may have promise; certain older habits do not.<sup>2</sup>

We recruit, screen, train, and supervise volunteers just as paid staff are recruited, screened, trained, and supervised. Sometimes, embarrassingly, we do it even better. I've witnessed some instances in which volunteers in an agency receive far better training than its paid staff.

This resemblance is most striking in the jobs we design for volunteers. A listing of five of the ten dimensions in volunteer space will illustrate this point:

- Continuous .....(Or) .....Occasional
- As An Individual.....(Or) .....With a Group
- Organized Formal Structure.....(Or) .....Informal, Unstructured
- Accept System Rules .....(Or) .....Address System Rules
- For Others .....(Or) .....For Self

As noted previously, volunteer jobs in agencies tend to be formed more from the stuff on the leftward poles: continuous individual service for others in a structured setting where certain rules must be observed. In other words, currently occupied volunteer space is leftward, but so is current **paid staff space**.

The resemblance between paid staff jobs and the jobs we design for our volunteers in agencies is striking when we review the left side of our ten dimensions in volunteer space. **Continuous individual service for others in a structured setting** where certain **system rules** must be **accepted**. In other words, currently occupied volunteer space is very similar to current **paid staff space**.

The point is: we are placing volunteers in a workspace which generally looks too much like paid staff workspace. The close resemblance in mode of involvement is enough; the job itself need not be identical. Thus, we are crowding paid staff too much. The epithet "watered-down professional" applied to a volunteer may be unfair, but it reflects some real feelings.

Volunteer leadership has recognized this problem in a sense. We have said volunteers ought to do those things paid staff cannot do. But we seem to have phrased this crucial difference more in terms of job **content** than work style.

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<sup>2</sup>Ivan H. Scheier, *Winning with Staff: A New Look at Staff Support for Volunteers* (Boulder, Colorado: VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, 1978).

We therefore need to check the poles on the right in all ten dimensions in volunteer space, for there we will find styles of involvement which do not resemble traditional paid staff workspace: volunteering as a group, for example, in occasional service, with some significant self-interest in it. These, and other styles at the "newer" poles, tend to be the kinds of things you would never pay for. Of course, some of them may be unacceptable in an agency setting; for example, advocacy (system address) and informality beyond a certain point. But generally, a search through relatively unoccupied poles in volunteer space will help keep us out of the role conflict area. With less propinquity in work style, there will be less threat, less friction. I recommend this approach particularly in beginning a new volunteer program which anticipates some staff resistance. At the very least, volunteer roles should be balanced between those which resemble paid staff and those which don't. Too often this point is neglected, as when we begin a volunteer program in a social work agency by concentrating on the volunteer counselor role. That's asking for problems, I think.

### Attracting Dollars

The heading is misleading. In fact, this prescription for our money problems reexamines the usual assumption that we need more money. Instead, we should consider how much more we might do with existing dollars. Somehow we must break the chain of more volunteers requiring more dollars.

We do not have nearly all the cost data we need. But I suspect the past decade will eventually be seen as one in which the cost of volunteer helping was seriously inflated. Every time we attempt further to intensify our management systems for volunteers, and especially as we formalize them with recruiting, screening, training, etc., we increase the cost per hour of volunteer service. I think the inflation in the cost of volunteer helping has matched overall inflationary trends and it may well have outpaced them. Yet, we were the people who began by saying we could do more with less. Now we seem to be saying, give us more to do the same..

Let us look again to nontraditional volunteer space, and see if some possibility of relief exists there:

- Continuous .....(Or) .....Occasional
- Direct .....(Or) .....Indirect
- Participating Action .....(Or) .....Observation
- Organized Formal Structure.....(Or) .....Informal, Unstructured
- For Others .....(Or) .....For Self
- Lose Money .....(Or) .....Break Even

It might be that a volunteer skillsbank, for example, is more cost effective than many forms of continuous volunteer service, although we don't know for sure. Similarly, the volunteer who observes (blockwatch, firewatch) may be less expensive per volunteer hour, than the volunteer who has a direct service role. The volunteer who assists the paid coordinator or director will help absorb some volunteer program related expenses. And insofar as volunteer work out of legitimate self-interest (other than immediate desire for money) they may require less outside support which costs money. Most obvious of all, to me at least, is that every increment in **organized** support of volunteers means more dollars. Informal helping networks don't cost as much. The one instance where currently occupied volunteer space seems clearly to cost less is the presumed readiness of traditional volunteers to work without expense reimbursement and to actually lose money. But this willingness holds less generally today than ever before. In any case, I believe the dollar-saving prospects are more than offset at the nontraditional poles of other dimensions. In general, volunteers promise to be less expensive when they serve in newer, less traditional roles and modes.

This is not to suggest that all volunteer jobs should be displaced in that direction, only that we initiate a leavening consistent with our helping purposes. Overall we may then be able to demonstrate more helping with less money. To be practical about it, our requests for funds can concentrate more on a decent wage for the volunteer leader, and less on other program support expenses. And it should be easier to sell proposals when we can show more citizen involvement per dollar requested. Does the numbers game rear its ugly head again here? Yes, one of its heads, the real one. It says our social treasury is depleted at the very time compassion is discovering more needs to be served. Therefore, we must insist on more efficiency, more cost effectiveness, for both paid staff and volunteers. Requiring too many of the more expensive volunteers, within a fixed budget, is an unreasonable version of the numbers game. Asking for a reasonable deflation in average expense, per volunteer hour is not unreasonable, if quality of service is preserved.

The critical issues are our ability to demonstrate that a leavening of some less explored variations of volunteer involvement will be less expensive, and will be consonant with our helping purposes. We must take three steps with these variations in helping styles: identify the variation; raise awareness of their values; and match them with people.

The exploration of volunteer space promises relief from our most vexatious volunteer program problems. The prospects are more volunteers, more staff support, and more volunteer value for our dollar. Each of these strengthens volunteer leadership by helping them deal with today's chronic problems.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# STRENGTH FOR LEADERSHIP OF VOLUNTEERS

### The Audience

The primary intended audience for this chapter is the director, coordinator, administrator, or supervisor of volunteers — the career leadership of volunteers. These people know very well who they are, and others have described their characteristics as a group.<sup>1</sup> Professional leaders of volunteers number only about 70,000 to 80,000 in the United States today, according to recent estimates, yet, I would guess at least five million volunteers depend to varying degrees on this career leadership for the meaningfulness of their volunteer service.

There is a more extended circumference of volunteer leadership to which this chapter is also addressed. These people do not call themselves volunteer coordinators, yet a large part of their work may depend on the productive involvement of volunteers. Among this group we might include staff of Red Cross, YMCA, PTA, scouting, 4-H; clergy, staff, and lay leadership in churches and synagogues; civic club officers or staff; some directors of food co-ops or credit unions; neighborhood community organizers; staff on international student exchange programs; United Way executives; and many others. It should be obvious that extended recognition of volunteer space is paralleled by the same recognition for a volunteer **leadership** space.

In any case, the second circumference of volunteer leadership numbers in the hundreds of thousands. The people they impact, or fail to impact, add up to many many millions of volunteers, or people who might have been volunteers. This is a packed house, as far as I am concerned. And the question before this house is simply: as volunteer leadership, will we, **can** we, take active responsibility for developing further regions in volunteer space? What are the pros and cons?

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<sup>1</sup>Ann Gowdy, "1975 Census of the Profession of Volunteer Leadership," (paper, Boulder, Colorado: VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, 1976).

## Comfort, Security, Strength, and Identity

I am one among many eagerly awaiting a new book by Marlene Wilson, a nationally renowned author and lecturer who has already produced a classic in the volunteer leadership field.<sup>2</sup> As I understand it, Marlene is concerned with strengthening the coping skills and attitudes of volunteer leadership, so they can both feel and be more powerful. The two can't be completely separated.

I couldn't agree more on our need for more coping capability. Volunteer leaders are the leverage to lead us into new volunteer territory. The initiatives, the skills, and the courage must be theirs on the frontier, where theory is a far less affordable luxury. Therefore, the comfort, security, and strength of volunteer leadership is a crucial issue for this book because it speaks to willingness to dare. Leadership could be forgiven for having little enough of daring—do today. Far too often, they tend to be marginally accepted leadership of a marginally accepted workforce (volunteers). And so we need the comfort of the lodge, code words all our own. We need to see some of the same familiar faces at conferences, year after year, either to brag or to cry. We need to believe our hard-won skills are relevant, worthwhile. Therefore, it isn't easy to contemplate going back to square one and learning new skills for new people. Indeed, we need the pride of feeling we work with special people doing special things in special ways. Giving everyone a piece of the action risks all that. It dilutes an identity we have worked so hard to achieve and maintain.

Who among us has attended a conference where the issue of our identity didn't somehow stalk the halls or parade from the podium? We struggle to define our career. (What does it mean to be a professional?) In parallel, we struggle to define the role of the volunteer in agency, community, and society. We have barely a toehold on the topic. So, scarcely glimpsing who we are now, how can we ask ourselves to try to become something more and different? To some, it would seem to risk what little identity we have succeeded in achieving.

The problem of role insecurity is real. Surely it affects our functioning. And surely one role of people like me is to help career leadership be more comfortable and confident, while leaders are doing the same for volunteers. What we all genuinely seem to need most is more stroking in place, not more excitement out of place.

However, given our need for security, we simply do not have the choice to be challenged or not; rather, we may choose the quality and level of our challenge (preferably, Toynbee-like, the challenge will be neither too weak nor too overpowering). At first, exploring volunteer space may not stroke us more than we are stroked now. But eventually I believe it will provide stronger support than we have now for the security of our movement. It will do this through an enlarged workforce with more flexible options for its development, a more powerful constituency, and an identity which draws strength from a broader sector in community and society. But to begin, there must be some tolerance of discomfort as the price of positive change. I believe it was Spinoza who said, "All things good are as difficult as they are rare."

The matter of our identity is perhaps most difficult of all. Volunteer leadership as a self-conscious career is only about 15 to 20 years-old, depending upon where you place the onset of critical self-awareness and professional development. There are excellent natural and valid reasons why a young person faces identity problems: the adolescent hasn't had enough chance to test out all the things he/she might be. The development of a clear and meaningful self-concept may depend on how much of this varied "shaping" the adolescent individual is able to do. If you get a chance to try tennis seriously, you know better whether "tennis player" is an appropriate part of your self-concept; if you don't, you have to rely on imagination or outright fantasy. If you are offered a fist fight, you might

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<sup>2</sup>Marlene Wilson, *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs* (Boulder, Colorado: Volunteer Management Associates, 1976).

learn something about boxing and your self-concept. If you try to write a poem, you might still be able to kid yourself, but maybe your friends won't — certainly most editors won't.

Is it possible the volunteer leadership field today is in an analogously adolescent position? If so, our identity problem would not be caused so much by our trying to comprehend too many different types of people and involvement styles; instead, it would come from our failure to "try ourselves out against" enough of them. In other words, have we really "shaped" ourselves enough against advocacy, club membership, self-help, informal networks, etc., to know whether or not these belong to our collective self-concept? I personally do not believe we have; much of this testing remains to be done in such newer regions of volunteer space. If shaping shows that any part of such space does not belong within our identity, so be it.

### **More Practical Issues in Career Effectiveness: Thick and Thin Leadership**

First of all, we should enter into balance the claims of a previous chapter. The exploration of heretofore neglected variations in volunteer involvement options can help address three chronic problems facing volunteer programs: recruiting, staff resistance, and funding. To some extent, this argument also applies to the second circle of leadership, the unidentified "volunteer directors."

However, the recruiting "solution" contains its own dilemma. Volunteer leaders sometimes express this problem as an apparent yearning for work-related schizophrenia: the ability to be two people at once, in five places at once, doing ten things simultaneously. In other words, 70,000 volunteer directors for 40 million volunteers are a thin line nationally, and sometimes the same is true for individual volunteer program efforts. While this is not always so, generally the overwork syndrome is unfeigned. There are too few volunteer directors or coordinators today for the number of volunteers they have or should have. The resources of Voluntary Action Centers and other clearinghouse operations are typically strained for their mission of community mobilization.

What is the answer? In the first place, many of these "new volunteers" will not fit into existing traditional volunteer program molds. Therefore, however less structured volunteering develops, it will not further overload existing career leadership. Thus, when clergy turn on to volunteer leadership concepts, volunteer directors will not have to preach sermons — not regularly anyway.

Nevertheless, we have also predicted volunteers in greater numbers and variety **within** existing volunteer programs and efforts; hence the possibility of further overload on that leadership. But of course, we need not assume that leadership will necessarily reach a plateau as the number of volunteers climbs. More volunteers can represent legitimate pressure for more leadership support, just as a larger army justifies more officers. The ratio of leaders to volunteers need not go down, and it might become more favorable, for two reasons. First, a broader identification with the whole of society could help us capture a higher priority attention in resource allocation. Second, many of the newer kinds of volunteers recruited by recognition, such as self-helpers and informal helping networks, will probably need a less time-consuming kind of leadership, more like connecting than directing, more like catalyzing than controlling. In sum, an inclusionist era of citizen participation will not find us any thinner on the line. On the contrary, we can grow with our grasp of new volunteer space. Eventually, our leadership ranks will be "thicker" in a good sense.

### **Translating Knowledge**

Volunteer leadership must be concerned with the translatability of hard-won skills and knowledge over the larger reaches of volunteer space. This concern applies whether the

new volunteers are actually in your program, across town when you want to coordinate with them, or represented at a national conference where you would like to feel at home.

Recently accepted inclusions in the total volunteer constituency are Board or policy-making volunteers, and to a lesser but still significant extent, issue-oriented volunteers. It is no longer remarkable to find on an agenda for a workshop attended by volunteer service directors such items as advocacy, policy (boards), and client volunteering, the development of skillsbanks (occasional service), and self-help and informal networks as species of citizen participation. Along with the agenda items, you will also find at the workshops the people who are doing these things. Our core volunteer concept knowledge seems to translate and transfer to leadership of volunteers in these outward ranges of volunteer space, and we seem able to learn from them, too. I personally presented each of these perimeter topics several times last year, sometimes several of them in the course of a single conference. I know other trainers have had similar experiences.

The translation phenomenon occurs at the level of organizations as well. Thus in recent years, we find some Voluntary Action Centers assisting in the development of informal helping networks, setting up occasional-service skillsbanks, etc. Though VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement also has origins in agency-related volunteer programs, today it conducts a major project on neighborhood-based self-help and a family volunteer experience project. VOLUNTEER is increasingly asked to provide guidance and training in the methodology of networking and collaboration, and even in such areas as volunteers in the profit-making sector, and volunteer job design concepts applied to the enrichment of paid work.

The point is, we whose origins are in traditional service volunteering can credibly transpose those skills and knowledge to far wider volunteer spaces and we can have this knowledge accepted there. We must only make an effort, be willing to be rejected now and then, and be willing to learn from the present occupants of the other spaces. Even when translation is less than total, cross-fertilization will still be a benefit. Indeed, we are only beginning to discover the different but, not too different, things self-helpers know that we could use; the same could be true of Board and network experts. If we are open enough to learn as we teach, and **interact** as we act, our entire store of ideas and methods will be enormously enriched, and the commonality of knowledge and language will build further roads through a total helping territory.

Meanwhile, I'm not sure anyone can yet itemize all the competencies generic to leadership through all volunteer space. Pending further forays into the area, general competencies probably include the following. First, we have the skills needed to motivate people without money, and keep them motivated. Sub-headings here might include the ability to access what people really want to do and minimally mold these desires to larger group purposes. Also of value is some mastery of a leadership style which is more encouraging than demanding, more enabling than coercive. Ability to communicate with essentially part-time workers is crucial, as is the ability to coordinate a relatively large set of part-time efforts.

Through it all we need understanding of the practical psychology of motivation. Frequently but not always, we also require some understanding of applied sociology, organizational behavior, and cultural anthropology. Other topics volunteer leaders study today, though they have never been unique to the volunteer leadership field, are power, public relations, fund-raising and community resource development, and how to facilitate the learning/training process. The idea of broad translatability of people involvement skills is developed further in several later portions of this book.

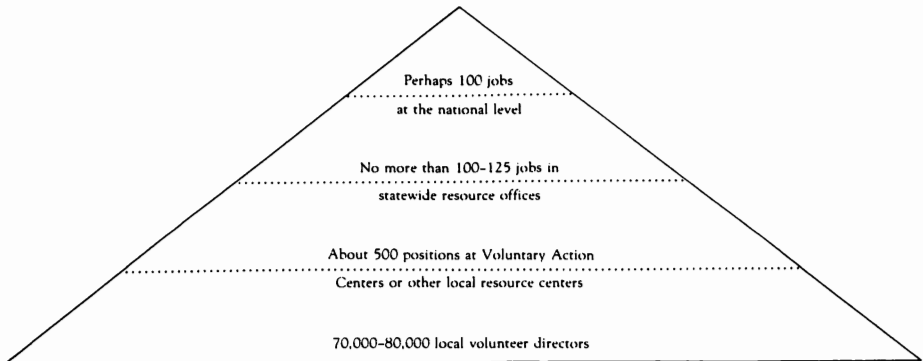
## **Career Mobility**

We have a formidable burnout rate among career leadership, especially among new



directors and coordinators. When asked to speak about this at workshops, I usually prescribe a clear upward mobility track, however individual directors choose to define it in terms of increased status, responsibility/challenge, money, or any or all of these. I then proceed to explain why this upward mobility is virtually impossible.

One somber illustration of this sad situation is the career pyramid. It assumes that a person wants to stay quite strictly in the field of volunteer administration, and it looks something like this:



The actual pyramid is much more forbidding than the diagram indicates. Roughly speaking, the chances of a local volunteer director getting a job in the upper echelons as defined here are about 100 to 1 against, or worse. Local, state, and national offices often do not recruit employees from the ranks of local volunteer directors.

For all practical purposes, the only meaningful mobility is horizontal, or at best, diagonal. One moves over to a related occupation and one hopes this means **up** at the same time. These related occupations are, of course, leadership roles in neighboring parts of volunteer space; from volunteer coordinator to staff in a community action group, for example.

There is obviously an intimate relation between transferability of knowledge across volunteer space and overall upward mobility in leadership careers. As we identify and develop the common ground between service programs, and such efforts as self-help, skillsbanks, advocacy volunteering, board development, and neighborhood mobilization, career scope and maneuverability increases for all leadership persons in the people involvement field.

## Coordinating Helping Tactics and Strategies

The same increased maneuverability will mean something to those who stay in place, wanting to do their caring jobs better and feeling hemmed in by the inability of any single organization or effort to do the total job. For this leader, a more effective communication across wider reaches of volunteer space opens up a rich variety of tactical alternatives. When you are comfortable and credible in a more inclusive sphere of volunteering, there are more arrows in your quiver, more ways to hit any target.

Suppose we wish to attack a set of problems in a neighborhood. The traditional director of volunteers might have the instrumentality of an organized or agency-related service program pertinent to the problem area. This will help, but it is unlikely to solve all the problems. Suppose now, in the same situation, you were a community participation facilitator, with access to wider volunteer space, and that the problem was community

crime prevention. You now have more than one volunteer instrumentality to work with. Theoretically, at least, you can engage and orchestrate a number of positive participation modes related to the problem: volunteer probation officers working in that neighborhood; volunteers with victims; a blockwatch effort (occasional service via observation); various volunteer study, policy-setting, and advocacy groups; ex-offenders or offenders as volunteers; a police athletic league, and so on. Moreover, volunteer service programs might increase the net effect by collaborating with, for example, self-help groups or individuals, with community helping networks, community study groups and boards, in a coordinated attack on the problem. As neighborhood volunteer facilitator, you would be far more effective in weaving the fabric of solutions if all the threads were in your hand. And, as indicated before, there is real evidence that the volunteer director can be helpful, credible, and accepted in this wider volunteer space.

No one ever said it would be easy. First of all, most volunteer directors and related volunteer leadership work for a single agency or organization today. The broader administrative setting and base for coordinating wider volunteer space is not ordinarily there, not officially at any rate. Nevertheless, there is promising precedent. I've occasionally encountered the title "community volunteer coordinator" or its like, in rural areas, and some Voluntary Action Centers and self-help community resource centers are clearly moving in this direction. At the very least, some sort of community involvement committee should be possible, in which each volunteer leader would represent his/her organization as well as the community or neighborhood at large. The North Carolina Governor's Office of Citizen Affairs is actively encouraging this kind of total community coordination, and receiving excellent local response in so doing.<sup>3</sup>

Agency turf will probably be the primary problem in delaying horizontal community-based citizen involvement, as distinct from agency-segregated models. Exploration and development of common themes throughout volunteer space in all agencies and organizations, should help to erode such turfdom, and we will return to that tack later in this book. Thinkers have always said the volunteer was uniquely fit to be a linker, with primary loyalty to the community rather than the agency. Someday we are going to have to reflect that potential in the way we organize volunteers, or else leave them innocent of our organizing efforts.

## Being Powerful

Let us speak of power for a moment and its purposes for us. These purposes include fostering an increasing awareness of the value of volunteering, and upgrading the dignity and support accorded volunteer work and the work of volunteer leaders. Let us further consider that important variety of power which lies in numbers. This in turn brings us to a final advantage of exploring volunteer space. More ultimate than immediate, we have the potential for developing a broader, more varied constituency for volunteering itself, composed of volunteers. It has always struck me as odd that virtually all our efforts to mobilize advocacy for volunteering have been oriented towards organizing career volunteer leadership — a significant but relatively miniscule group, or else advocacy has depended on the work of a very few resource organizations, notably the Washington office of VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement. By contrast, there are about forty million volunteers in the United States, and even a million — or ten thousand — would help. As we promote citizen participation, legislators at the state and national levels will listen more carefully when we have more votes at our back.

Exploring volunteer space should yield a larger and more representative group of volunteers among whom we can organize. Some of the new volunteers will already be

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<sup>3</sup>*Getting Together: A Community Involvement Workbook*, (Raleigh, N.C.: The Governor's Office of Citizen Affairs, 1978).

advocates and policy developers, and perhaps they can be persuaded to advocate for the process by which their advocacy occurs (volunteering) as well as for the purpose of their advocacy.

Among my proposed (and rejected) ideas for this type of advocacy effort appear titles like the Volunteer Guild (1970), the National Organization for Volunteers–America (NOVA, 1975), and the League of Volunteers (LOV, 1977). More recently, my friend Paul Weston suggested a better name — the American Volunteer Association; he also suggested that the association be affiliated with national resource and professional groups in the volunteer leadership field.

Though there are those who insist volunteers will never organize, it has been done, in part. The number of volunteer advocacy organizations already in existence range from relatively small but significant ones such as The Independent Foundation (ex–VISTA and Peace Corps volunteers) and the newly–formed National Association for Volunteer Action to huge pools of volunteers in such groups as the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the Parents of Retarded Children, the Jaycees, the League of Women Voters, and Call for Action, and in political parties. Some of them show significant awareness of volunteering as a cause, beyond the specific causes for their volunteering. The Association of Junior Leagues, for example, is an effective advocacy force for volunteering in general. A system could be devised linking such groups to vote together on issues of general concern for volunteers. (There would almost certainly be a different set of groups choosing to ratify each proposal brought to the coalition.) This linkage system would be a realistic start for an American Volunteer Association. As volunteer space expands, there would be more groups “eligible” to participate in its volunteer advocacy linkage system. Volunteer leadership would significantly benefit from the existence of this constituency, and so would volunteers.

There is another reason for attempting a volunteer coalition. Volunteer directors and other volunteer leaders sometimes speak as if they were **elected** to speak for volunteers. Rarely is this true for volunteer directors (though it’s usually true for club leaders and sometimes it’s true for clergy). But volunteer directors are usually hired by people other than “their” volunteers, though they listen carefully to their volunteers and try to speak for them. A genuine association of volunteers would give us a more authentic process for hearing what they say, being responsive to it, and truly representing it. I also believe that out there in the newer regions of volunteer space are many more volunteer–related people — advocates, policy volunteers, informal or non–program volunteers — who will insist on this responsiveness. Volunteer leaders will be stronger for having listened.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# TIME SPANS AND TENDERNESS

### Introduction

There are at least ten major variations in ways unpaid help-intending people can get involved. We have skimmed over an outline map of these ten dimensions in volunteer space. The next sequence assigns a chapter to each dimension for more intensive familiarization.

### Continuous or Occasional: The Recognized Range

People called “volunteers” participate in a range of time intensity which extends from continuous to occasional.

On the relatively continuous side, some Retired Senior Volunteers Program people might work 20 hours a week or more. The Big Sister may meet her Little Sister twice a week, and the school crossing guard may serve daily during the school year. Somewhere in the middle, a volunteer office worker or a docent at a museum might work once a week. And, on the more occasional side, a volunteer skillsbank person might be called once or twice a month. The all-volunteer board meets twice a year; United Way fundraisers come out for the campaign once a year; many political party volunteers turn out only once every two to four years. For others, it seems to be about once a century; the ultimate in occasionability is *never*, and this takes us clear outside volunteer space.

Of course, one person might have several volunteer roles simultaneously, ranging from continuous to occasional. The main point is, the recognition word “volunteer” is awarded over a wide range of time intensity, though somewhat less readily on the occasional side. For example, Board members who meet annually or biannually are somewhat less likely to be seen as volunteers by others or by themselves. To me, this is a signal that occasional volunteer space may be somewhat less well-understood, appreciated, explored, and exploited.

## The Inclination to Continuity

I think the reasons volunteer leadership may value continuous over occasional service are partly due to prejudice. But there are realistic considerations, too — regularity and duration of service — and the two can't be entirely separated. The advantages of time-intensive service seem clear enough at extremes. Other things being equal your 10-hours-a-week library volunteer is "obviously" a better helping investment for leadership than the person who may or may not materialize once a year to help set up a library display. Volunteer fire-fighters who show up once every five years are maybe better than nothing, but not much better. In some senses they may be worse than nothing, because you can't count on them in a pinch. If we can encourage them to participate more frequently for training and for fires, their services will be more valuable to us.

Ordinarily, we tend to assume less value in the work as we move rightward from traditionally more favored forms of continuous and time-intensive volunteer service to less favored and less well-recognized forms of occasional service. However, we all know of important exceptions. The mountain rescue squad volunteer may be called upon just a few times a year, but during those times the service provided may be extraordinarily intense, demanding, and important; it may save a life or prevent serious injury. The service (not necessarily the training) is of relatively short duration, infrequent, and irregular. It is irregular because urgent need calls it forth, and urgent need cannot ordinarily be scheduled. The same is true of Red Cross volunteers in disaster relief.

Nor are all the illustrations so dramatic. We can return to the library for one of them. While five hundred hours a year of regular volunteer work in the library is certainly vital, so is the work of the advocacy volunteer who appears before the annual budget committee hearing and helps persuade the committee not to make a deep cut in library funding. The total time involvement may be 20 hours or less; the service rendered is, one hopes, irregular; but we can't prove that this service is less important than that of our loyal and reliable volunteer librarian.

Thus, the significance of volunteer work is by no means totally defined by its duration and regularity. Some forms of occasional service volunteering are so vital and skilled that the total value may equal or exceed some forms of more frequent service. This point deserves emphasis because I suspect there is an unconscious preconception to the contrary, which acts as a mental block to more recruiting in occasional volunteer space.

The issue is important enough to excuse the unleashing of a little rhetoric. I believe our society tends to be somewhat hung-up on continuity as a good-in-itself. I believe it was Emerson who overstated this point nicely: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines." If that is true, how big are we volunteer leaders? We value the planning process as an insurance policy on future predictability. Nothing makes us shudder more than the accusation that volunteers are unreliable, inconsistent, do not continue as programmed. This is also why five-year volunteer service certificates are silver and ten-year certificates are gold — and you rarely get anything for ten minutes. For a similar reason, high volunteer turnover rates haunt us, even when there may be some legitimate reasons for the phenomenon. Regularity, the cousin of consistency, even sells laxatives, and as noted, it seems to sell helping pretty well, too. We seem to have some deep-seated aversion to impermanence, unpredictability, and all kinds of discontinuity. I am certainly not supposing the block is complete or always unwarranted either, but the block is there sometimes.

As a final attempt to illustrate ingrained preferences for continuity, let's consider duration. The question is, "how long is volunteer help?" Although continuous service tends to be of longer total duration by its very nature, instances of occasional volunteering can vary widely in duration. In a sense, the United Way volunteer fundraiser serves on only a single "occasion" each year, but that occasion may mean several weeks or more of hard work. This is less likely so in a once-a-year appearance at the meeting of an honorary

Board, or when a famous person volunteers to appear on a 30-second spot announcement promoting your volunteer program.

Continuous participation is likely to involve more time over a given period, but **some** duration is there in all cases. So we need to ask again: how long must a helping occasion last before it is effective or worth our while to identify, organize, and engage? I think most of us have at least a vague lower limit of time in mind. Take the once-a-year volunteers who help with the annual membership mailing. We expect them to stay at least an hour or so. And the babysitting pool volunteer had better not show up and then leave immediately. This much is practical for volunteering as we know it. But the broader question persists: how long does an activity have to last before it qualifies as unpaid help? An hour, a half-hour, ten minutes, a minute, ten seconds, one second? I don't think there is a theoretical limit; sheer time itself cannot shrink help out of existence. A precious skill can be engaged productively in an hour. A very important smile or a touch might take no more than a second. This kind of helping is simply harder to organize and to program, and that bothers us. Perhaps training for the continuous service volunteer should focus more on what we can do about smaller-time help, recognizing that it's not really small-time help at all. We will probe that further in Chapter 12 on informal helping, since much of informal helping is time-limited and occasional, though not all of it.

Once we get by the "help is long" block, we may begin to discover significant help-storage pools that can be tapped by the minute, rather than days or weeks, and we may find that tenderness has no long time limit. I will only suggest that you do not restrict your occasional-involvement of people by assuming any arbitrary lower time limit. A five-minute phone call by an occasional resource person can be very helpful, and worth your while to organize for on-call readiness. So can a one-minute piece of advice, or a helping hand for a few seconds on slippery steps.

There are other reasons to look more closely at occasional volunteer space. First of all, note that time-limited involvement is more likely to be uniquely volunteer, because it is impractical to pay for it (you can set hourly rates, but you can hardly set rates by the second). Second, time-limited involvement is less likely to be seen as competitive with paid work, and hence avoids tensions with people who "have to make a living." Most important of all, lots of people live in occasional volunteer space. True, some of them regularly commute to work in continuous space, but many others do not. We'll find out where they are coming from only by going there.

This doesn't mean the occasional volunteer can do **everything** for us; obviously not. Certain kinds of volunteering virtually demand continuity; for example, the volunteer companion for a fatherless boy. Other kinds of work are preferably done that way. Clearly, we need to keep up our efforts to involve people continuously. I am only asking us also to remember the people who, for whatever reason, are currently at a place in their lives where they are willing to be involved on call, four or five times a years, but not more frequently or continuously. The volunteer leader can take two approaches to these people. The leader can insist that they serve more frequently or intensively than they want to and lose them, or get only grudging work from them (while **they** lose an otherwise attractive opportunity to participate). Alternatively, the volunteer leader can accommodate the work to the person, insofar as possible, and perhaps involve them. Therefore, as volunteer leaders try to move people leftward in this continuous-occasional dimension, the field of volunteering must simultaneously move itself rightward. Volunteer leaders must sensitively recognize the point beyond which a person will not move toward more time intensive involvement, and consequently design useful work which is less time intensive.

### **Some Approaches to Occasional Volunteer Space: Four Case Studies**

I believe the strategies of volunteer involvement are less well developed for occasional volunteer space than for continuous volunteer involvement; therefore, the rest of the

chapter concentrates on tactics for time-limited involvement of people. First, let us illustrate the bare bones of the tactical problems which typically confront us.

**Case 1**

You want to beautify the grounds of a children's institution using volunteers. You had a senior volunteer who did this on a regular basis, but one day he moved away, and you can't find a replacement. Who will put in ten solid hours a week, as he used to? First of all, ask yourself if you might accomplish the same task through combinations of occasional services. Step one would parcel the total tasks into sections, such as:

1. Planning the garden and grounds.
2. Selecting seeds and plants and shrubs.
3. Planting or cultivating them.
4. Tending the grounds through summer and fall.

Logic says you might just get an occasional volunteer for Task 1, another for 2, another for 3, and a set of people to take turns doing Task 4. Logic also says it would be harder to organize and coordinate overall; you might also lose a little in the quality of caring about the total task, because it couldn't belong to a single individual.

**Case 2**

For three years a wonderful woman has been a weekly visitor for an elderly shut-in. The elderly person has come gratefully to depend on her presence. Then the volunteer has a serious illness in her own family; she must cancel or seriously cut back on her service. You can't find a replacement.

Unlike the case of the volunteer gardener, you can't successfully partition such friendliness into a set of discrete activities, such as the volunteer getting into her car, travelling to the elderly person's residence, chatting a while, worrying a little between times, etc. What you might do is take the entire friendly package and section it in time. One volunteer visits one week, another rotates in the next week, and so on. It would be even better if the original regular friendly visitor could at least be part of that rotation in order to keep continuity of contact with the elderly person. We don't always have to lose continuous volunteers entirely if they are unable to keep serving on their former time-intensive level. Occasional service is an option intermediate to all or none, an alternative which might keep the volunteer somewhat involved (much as in the paid work world the military tries to involve the retiring regular in the national guard, or a club president becomes a working past-president).

The occasional option is possible in the above case and is certainly better than nothing. It is nevertheless less preferable than the continuous option for the same reasons as in Case 1: it is harder to coordinate and it may be less valuable to the person served, because it lacks some vital consistency in the person providing the service. Continuity has even more desirability here than in the case of the volunteer gardener. Unlike some people, plants are able to survive without seeing the same face every week.

**Case 3**

A small health food co-op needs volunteer specialists for:

1. Purchasing special kinds of non-perishable health foods, once or twice a month.
2. Keeping the books, once a month for a few hours.

Here the two tasks might be **better** accomplished by two separate volunteers on a more

occasional basis than by one volunteer on a more time intensive basis. This is because each task requires a distinct set of skills. This consideration overbalances any organic relation between the two tasks.

#### Case 4

You need volunteers for the annual mass mailing agony. Essentially, this kind of task can be accomplished **only** by (a group of) occasional service volunteers. The mailing calls for relatively routine, though crucial, volunteer service, occasionally.

Certain variations of this case would involve more specialized and skilled occasional service. For example, the chairperson (volunteer) of your Board might give a major speech supporting your program several times a year — that is, occasionally. You don't need, and the volunteer would not want to give, the speech every day. A small-town juvenile probation department doesn't want a volunteer psychologist every day because there simply isn't enough work for the psychologist to do, except on call, some days. Nor do you ordinarily get fulltime volunteer speechmakers.

It is important to note that part of occasional volunteer space is occupied by a set of valuable people who realistically cannot be found at all in continuous volunteer space. We should search more diligently for these unique occasional human resources.

#### Outlines of an Analytical Process

Consideration of these four case studies suggests the outlines of an approach to occasional volunteer space. The process makes a large assumption: you **begin** on the basis of a thorough need assessment for the people and causes you seek to serve. From this need assessment you further deduce an extensive set of volunteer tasks which will best serve these needs and causes.

The approach would then go something like this:

1. Whenever possible and reasonable, partition volunteer jobs into a set of distinct task elements which might be done either separately by different people or together by a single individual.
2. Consider also whether this total job-package can be dealt to different people over time, another doing it all at another time, etc.
3. Analyze A and B in terms of two overall criteria:
  - a. The intrinsic interrelatedness of task elements or the lack of same in the total task.
  - b. The administrative difficulty in organizing any given set of these task elements, continuously versus occasionally.
4. This analysis should enable you to divide all tasks or task elements into four general categories:
  - a. Essentially **must** be performed by continuously serving volunteers.
  - b. Preferably continuous volunteers, but possibly could be performed by occasional volunteers.
  - c. Preferably occasional volunteers, but possibly could be performed by continuous volunteers.
  - d. Must be performed on an occasional basis.

At this point, you are ready to recruit people.

#### The Optimum Occasional Task: A Second Approach to Strategy

Let's now take a closer look at 4b, 4c, and 4d. Just what is it in the nature of the task itself



which makes it possible, preferable, or essential for it to be organized on an occasional basis? The two major characteristics of an optimally occasional task are:

1. High impact in a relatively brief time period.
2. Relative ease of organization and coordination, requiring a minimum of time and other investment in return for the benefits of time-limited involvement.

The three factors which tend to produce this ideal state for occasional service are:

1. Doable in a reasonably brief time span, overall.
2. Rapidly maturing impact during the time span.
3. A self-directed volunteer capable of successfully performing the task.

### Overall Brevity of Time Investment

Obviously the recruiter in occasional volunteer space cannot consistently offer work requiring high levels of continuous time intensity. Thus, it is a mistake to motivate your nominee for club President by swearing that her work will "only take a little time." (It is an error often made, however.) The exception in some cases is the reasonable expectation of large slices of time at long intervals (the disaster relief volunteer and the chief volunteer planners for the annual Christmas party at the Children's Home).

### Rapidly Maturing Impact Value

To illustrate: whenever volunteer work has the primary goal of forming and sustaining a positive personal relationship, that work is limited in the extent to which it can be occasional. Friendships are not usually formed in a day, and a volunteer cannot usually achieve this goal in occasional service (neither can paid workers, for that matter). On the other hand, the volunteer dentist or volunteer translator may be able to perform their tasks in a relatively short time, not to appear again for a while.

Special skills are a clear example of volunteer work which can impact rapidly. In the past few years, leadership has become increasingly aware of volunteer skillsbanks and volunteer consultant pools as viable forms of volunteering. Their development is perhaps our most notable venture into occasional volunteer space. This is positive; occasional skilled service does attract people who might not be ready to accept more continuous frequent involvement at less visibly skilled levels. This occasional service can also be a first step toward more frequent involvement later.

Useful practical methodologies for recruiting and maintaining skillsbank volunteers are in place and are in the process of further development and dissemination. They need not be recapitulated here, except to note that in January 1979, VOLUNTEER began a national project to further refine the methodology of volunteer skillsbank development and maintenance.<sup>1</sup>

The essential characteristics of skillbank volunteering are the storage of human helping capabilities, with ready accessibility for activation as needed. But expertise and skill, in the narrow sense of those terms, are **not** always essential characteristics. First of all, these terms speak to a "fixed" status, awarded to the work regardless of its actual usefulness in any particular instance. The skilled chess-teaching volunteer consultant probably does less for Appalachia than volunteers who turn out for tough manual work in a weatherproofing project. I am worried that our focus on **skillsbanks** and **expert** volunteer consultants, laudable in itself, will blind us to the fuller potential of stored human helping capability in the occasional mode.

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<sup>1</sup>Sponsored by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation of Flint, Michigan.

This fuller potential may include many things which don't have high status in terms of college degrees or general public image. You don't need a degree to be a volunteer babysitter, but it's highly responsible work, requiring some skills. I don't know of any advanced degree in occasional crisis handholding for confused runaway kids, but it's important. Or look at a "learning exchange" sheet which is simply a help-wanted, help-offered column, volunteer variety. People advertise what they need and what they have to give, with the readership making connections appropriate to themselves. The listing of needs and give-offers includes all levels of expertise and nonexpertise. (I need a ride to Kansas City and will be glad to talk politics on the way and share the driving.) A few years ago, project Link-Up in Mordialloc, Australia, sent students door-to-door asking people what they had to offer others in the way of willing experience and interest, then attempted to connect this where it was needed. Also a few years ago, the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Voluntary Action Center interconnected a community in much the same way, in terms of **group** giving and receiving. (A partial map of these interconnections is given in Chapter 18.) The asks and offers on some bulletin boards and in informal helping networks are not necessarily addressed to the skilled in any technical sense; neither is the help people offer each other in a mutual support or self-help group.

Help is in the eye of the receiver — if it's useful, it's skilled enough. We must avoid language which suggests that only something special and therefore less procurable, like "skill," can be of occasional help to others. Everyone has something to give; our job is to find a way for them to give it, not ways to exclude their giving. I therefore suggest that wider recruiting of occasional service volunteers may best begin in our heads as a mental set which avoids focus on expertise — only in occasional involvement, and which dignifies anything that helps, including skillsbanks. Skillsbanks are fine for some purposes, but a more inviting (literally) general term might be "human resource bank," "helping action pool," or some such. This human resource bank would be composed primarily of occasional services people are **glad** to give, and which might be useful to other people. Such services might be skills in the usual sense of the word, or they might **not** be.

### Self-Directed Volunteers

A possible trouble spot is the time and difficulty of organizing and coordinating occasional work. This is because you usually have a larger set of people whose work is distributed in small pieces of time, often irregularly. We therefore want people who can organize themselves as much as possible. In this sense, occasional service is an especially bad place for the indifferently motivated volunteer (though the shorter time spans may place fewer demands on motivation).

In sum, we are looking for self-directed people. This self-directedness comes in two parts. The occasional volunteers should **know** what they are doing, and they must **like** what they are doing. Whether it is a skill in a skillsbank or help from a human resource pool, you ordinarily don't want to invest a lot of time teaching volunteers what they have to do, or supervising them while they do it. The time investment per return just isn't worth it. So, you are looking for something they already have, a service they are ready and willing to provide.

The second part of self-directedness is desire. The volunteers must be premotivated to do what they are doing, insofar as possible. This is because you can't afford to invest much effort in pumping up their motivation, in return for occasional service. Thus, as a skillsbank stresses defined skills, we as volunteer leaders find ourselves concentrating on what we need, rather than on what people are willing to give. When we do concentrate on occasional service skills, a better term would be skillwill. This term suggests that the

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<sup>2</sup>As always, there are exceptions; for example, the intensive training and support given rescue squad volunteers. Still, the goal of that skill training is to make them self-directed when the need for occasional crisis service occurs.

skillwill is not just what the person can do well — it is also and at the same time what he or she **wants** to do and enjoys doing. For example, teaching tennis to kids is probably still a skill of mine. I worked my way through college partly on that basis, burned out, and ended up hating both tennis and kids. I have recovered on kids, and tennis teaching probably remains a skill of mine today, but **not** a skillwill. You would be poorly advised to involve me on that basis.

A broader term, not necessarily connoting technical expertise, is “glad give.” A glad give is anything a person **wants** to do, **can** do pretty well, and which **might** possibly be of use to other people. The effective human resource bank draws interest from people precisely because it is originally **based** on their interests, not just their capabilities. I therefore suggest that the builder of an effective occasional-involvement pool should begin by developing an inventory of available glad gives, as in the Australian Link-Up project. The second step is to connect these whenever possible to needs. Only the remaining unconnected needs should have to be met on a basis of obligation: “please give” rather than glad give. We will return to this networking theme in Chapter 12, where a process is described for connecting kinds of help which are called forth occasionally and irregularly by identified needs, and which may only take minutes to deliver.

Where does the gladness in giving come from? Every individual naturally has some things he or she likes to do more than other things, all the way down to aversions. This individual set of likes versus dislikes is pretty much a built-in condition of involvement, already there at the time we meet the potential volunteer. Our ability to discover glad gives depends crucially on how we approach people to involve them. If we can begin by asking people what they enjoy doing, we have a better chance to involve them; our prospects are dim if we simply present tasks we need to have accomplished and which they **ought** to feel **obliged** to help us with.

The pattern of likes and dislikes in people is not completely fixed, of course. Situational factors can increase people’s motivation for occasional involvement. Consider such natural disasters as fires, floods, blizzards, hurricanes. The prompting to participate helpfully is powerful when you and your neighbors are actually in the situation. (Of course, extreme survival pressures can cause some people to become less helpful and even brutal.) This call is ordinarily less powerful when you are further from the situation geographically and humanly — the response to a call for aid for flood victims is weaker from Turkey than from New Orleans. Perhaps if we could simulate the nearby natural disaster mood, people would help each other more. In fact, that is part of what people seem to be talking about when they claim rigorous adventure builds character; the people in the group begin to show more (volunteer) caring for one another. Could we design other such situations to build more volunteer spirit within groups?

We can at least show films of a disaster to “bring it closer to home.” The same can be attempted in less dramatic situations; a good film about retarded children can personalize the need for help from potential volunteers, but this seems more difficult to do for steady social disasters, as distinct from quick physical ones. The immediacy effect of TV was credited as one factor influencing the national realization about the war in Vietnam. It probably recruited a large number of peace advocate volunteers for the Vietnam moratorium and similar efforts. Still, I’d be worried about this in general application. Volunteer recruits might tend to go to the group with the biggest budget and the best grip on the media, not necessarily to the most needful cause.

There is only one other possible way I can see for “controlling” situational prompting to more self-directed giving. This is to identify powerful situational promptings in the person’s past life, then build on them. Did the veteran get a major lift from a volunteer while in the veterans hospital? This tells you something about what he might be glad to do today, to “reciprocate”; or the wealthy woman who long ago saw a close friend’s life ruined by conviction for a first criminal offense; or the brilliant person whose second cousin was

retarded. The thing is that many of these people don't need any help with motivation for particular causes. They may only need a triggering reminder because they will have already explored the matter for themselves and perhaps taken appropriate volunteer action. Our challenge is to remind them and help them link motive to action. In any case, the historically structured need to serve is somewhere there when we meet the person, so for us it is still mainly a matter of identification rather than situational manipulation.

In my view, there are only two kinds of situational factors we can really control in any meaningful sense. The first is the nature of the job offered to volunteers. The second is the nature of the system used to access or call upon the services of people.

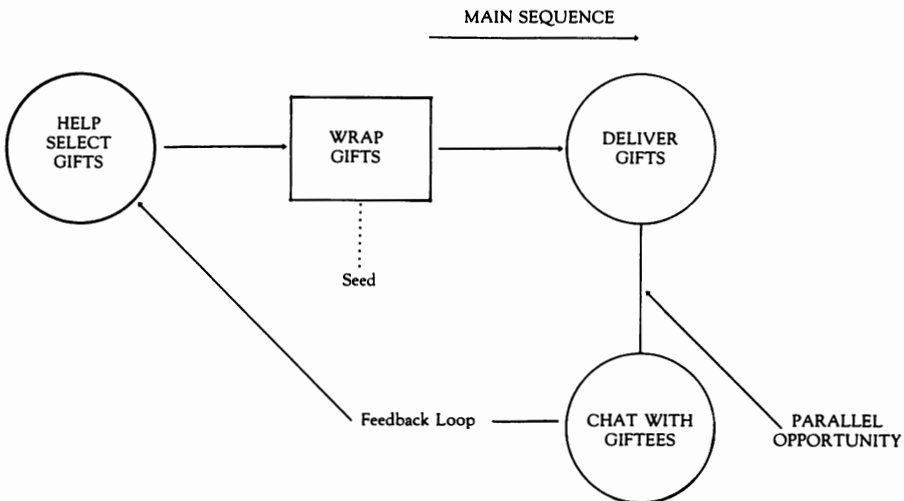
### Organic Gardening

A volunteer job design is essentially a work situation composed of task elements and their relation to one another. Volunteer leaders have wide scope of choice here.

Let's take the example of "wrapping gifts" as a task element we need volunteers to do on an occasional basis. Some people like to do it, and some "situational factors" like Christmas put even more people in the mood to do it. But for many other people, both situational and natural prompting for wrapping gifts is somewhat underwhelming. The process which might help us is called "organic gardening" for volunteer jobs because it takes a seed (wrapping gifts) which is less attractive in itself and helps it flower into a more attractive job.

The process is best accomplished by the volunteer leader in a group with volunteers, potential volunteers, staff, and, if possible, clients. There are three main principles, starting with gift-wrapping or any other occasional service as the seed.

1. Main Sequence: Link elements over time to show evolving purpose.
2. Feedback Loops: The end of a work process **feeds back** into an improved repetition of the work cycle (more than sheer repetition).
3. Parallel Opportunity: Seize opportunity to do a different but meaningful thing during a task element.



Application of the first two principles helps the job situation give the volunteer a sense of completion in the work. The third principle can do this, too, but is mainly designed to

provide the added interest of variety in the work. A very simplified application of these three principles to wrapping gifts would give you this work situation:

Far more complex job diagrams are usually produced by volunteer leaders who use the three organic gardening principles. (Sometimes the total layout has to be segmented again into naturally interrelated sectors of work.) Moreover, the three principles can be applied to the work situational enhancement of any volunteer work which is or could be occasional; such as a Board member sequence that includes preparing a report on a Board task force, attending the Board meeting, and doing follow-up work on the task force for the next Board meeting.

The application of the process is not perfect for our present purposes. For one thing, the flowering of gift-wrapping, while ordinarily making it an interesting task, also makes it a longer one. In this sense, the process may be a way of luring people from the occasional towards a more time-consuming mode of service, which is fine since that is a legitimate objective for volunteer leadership. On the other hand, each of the four task elements in the diagram is, in itself, an occasional task. If you have four volunteers in all, each could conceivably do only one of the tasks for two hours a month, or each could less frequently do all four interconnected tasks for the same two hours. The second alternative might be more motivating and effective, while still qualifying as occasional service volunteering.

There is another way of looking at organic gardening in terms of our present frame of reference. The process takes occasional task elements and links them with other occasional task elements in a way which makes each element more meaningful because of the total work context. The development of this meaningful work context thus becomes a "situational factor" which increases motivation for performing each of the occasional task elements.

## Redundancy

A second situational factor we can control is the system used to access occasional volunteer service. This system becomes especially important as a back-up when the full gladness of the giving isn't there.

We need to begin with the concept of expectation level: the extent to which the volunteer is expected to perform when called upon. We tend to have high expectations of the continuous volunteer, by definition, while we may or may not expect as much from the occasionally involved volunteer. For example, during a riot we vitally need the police auxiliary volunteer to be there — the level of expectation is high. By contrast, a member of a large congregation can easily opt not to answer an appeal for service to church or synagogue. Low expectations are frequently more appropriate for involving people on an occasional basis, especially when the volunteers are not highly motivated to give. Of course, whenever possible the volunteer leader should try to engage a helping storage based on "glad gives" rather than "please gives." Then, when the call comes, people are more likely to serve on the basis of inside motivation, without requiring so much outside expectation.

Beyond that, redundancy is the main way of accommodating low expectation levels. Redundancy can, first of all, be in terms of time delay. The needs selected for occasional low-expectation service can be those which can be deferred until someone is willing to serve, although these can still be important needs in the long run. Thus, it may not matter so much if the volunteer housepainters paint this month or next month, though it's important that it gets done sometime. It does matter if the volunteer hotline person doesn't show up for work and there isn't any back-up.

Secondly, redundancy builds in depth at every occasional volunteer position, and more depth as expectation level is lower. Rotating your calls for help among five people is almost as good as continually calling on one high-expectation person, even though five people are

not as easy to organize, and the load may still fall unevenly on some people. You can involve some of the people some of the time, when you can't involve any individual person all of the time. Rotation also places less burden on any one volunteer.

One variation on this kind of redundancy, especially where rarefied technical skills are unnecessary, is to try registering several glad gives for each person in the human resource bank. When the need call comes, the person who cannot give one needed service may be able to contribute another relevant service. Overall, there is also more variety, and hence interest, for the volunteer, and the volunteer can range through all levels of expertise. We must not imagine ourselves piano-players, where each key awaits our striking to sound its one and only note.

In any case, we come back to self-directedness as a particularly desirable characteristic in the occasional service volunteer, and natural motivation for the task remains an important factor in that self-directedness. Where that gladness in the giving is for any reason distinctly less than ideal, redundancy in the involvement system can be a useful trade-off. Basically, it comes down to setting up flexibility for the task if the volunteer can't do it today, tomorrow, or next week will be okay, or someone else can do it today. The problem with redundancy is it takes more to set up and maintain, and therefore loses some of the output-over-investment advantages of self-directed work. However, at this point it may be well to remind the volunteer leader about volunteers: they can help you organize and administer an occasional service system, redundancy and all.

This section covered four main points in the shaping of tasks for optimum occasional volunteering:

1. Focus not only on skill/expertise, but also on any other capability or experience that is helpful, the impact of which can mature within a limited time period.
2. Insofar as possible, concentrate on naturally motivated tasks rather than obligated offerings; skillwills and glad gives, rather than grim gives.
3. Insofar as possible, design volunteer jobs to enhance volunteer motivation for occasional tasks by linking them meaningfully with other occasional tasks in a total work context.
4. As necessary, build redundancy into the system.

## **Interactions**

We will encounter occasional volunteering again, crosscutting other dimensions in volunteer space. For example, occasionality is frequently a characteristic of group volunteering (Chapter 10) and of informal volunteering (Chapter 12). These encounters should make occasional volunteering even more credible as a way of helping.

## CHAPTER NINE

# HOW CLOSE IN TOUCH?

Volunteering varies from direct to more indirect engagement with a problem. Involvement is direct insofar as the volunteer is in immediate contact either with (1) the person(s) needing help and/or (2) the situation needing attention. Examples are the Little League coach, the Sunday school teacher, the youth group painting houses in a low-income neighborhood, rescue squad volunteers, the advocacy group presenting their case at a city council meeting, the prison visitor, the individual who helps a blind person find the restroom in a public building, counseling or companion volunteers, and second-grade students who entertain in nursing homes.

Volunteering is indirect insofar as it is **not** in immediate contact with the needful person or situation; for example, the volunteer who raises funds for multiple sclerosis, and most gift-giving to charitable organizations. The gifts or money can be converted to direct help, but a volunteer fundraiser may never have significant contact with MS children as part of this volunteer job. Other examples of relatively indirect volunteering are the administrative assistance volunteer, and, in a sense, the Board or committee volunteer. There is something a little fuzzy here, and certainly subject to interpretation. The volunteer on the Boys Club Board may not work directly with the boys, but he or she does work directly on Board matters. For now, the direct-indirect distinctions can be left as a matter of degree for purposes of making our first main point: traditional volunteer leadership has tended to concentrate on more direct forms of volunteer involvement. There are good reasons for this. When we can't seem to get all the people we need to work on an overall problem, it seems reasonable to focus on people whose relation to the problem solution is obvious and immediate. Indirect involvement might seem more like frills, and also less dramatic and harder to recruit for. We are pretty good at involving volunteers directly, and we're getting better at it. I don't propose we should let up on recruiting people for direct volunteering, but it is well-covered in classical texts and manuals, and little more will be said about it here.

The focus here is on what more we might do to involve people in useful indirect modes — that is, the occupancy and cultivation of indirect volunteer space. On the surface, this is hardly a radical recommendation. The past few years have seen increasing emphasis on relatively indirect involvements such as training for Board effectiveness and fundraising by volunteers, office and administrative volunteers, volunteers as executives of clubs, the volunteer researcher. The trend is growing for useful indirect engagement of people who may be less attracted to more direct forms of participation, or less suited for it. Nevertheless, I think we may find a few surprises when we turn the microscope on indirect involvement.

A first surprise, to me at least, is, once you have made the distinction between direct and indirect service, it might be best to forget it as fast as you can — at least for the purposes of motivating volunteers. Consider the case of the hunger march fundraising or the Board volunteer. The quality and dedication of service depends largely on the volunteers seeing their services as **directly**, not distantly, related to the problem. Though they may be “only” supporting the front-line troops, the volunteer leader must help them see themselves as a crucial part of the front line. This is a fairly well-accepted canon of indirect volunteer involvement. The Board members of the Boys Club should visit the place now and then and meet the boys. The United Way fundraising volunteers should have a chance to see where their money goes, and even see what happens when there isn’t enough of it. And the volunteers who cook breakfasts to raise money for equipment for the volunteer fire department should get to see the new fire truck, at least, and maybe even get to ride in it some low fire danger day; this includes all volunteer “kids,” ages 4 to 104. Also, for every issue-oriented volunteer in direct contact with the target person or group, say the city council, there are volunteer counterparts who work less directly to prepare the ground with research, fundraising, and other ammunition. Shouldn’t we do everything possible to help the volunteer researchers **feel** that sense of intimate linkage?

When we help people see technically indirect service as “really” direct, I don’t mean we should encourage them to see it as an end-in-itself. Here, the Board member might begin to see Roberts Rules of Order as more important than Robert down at the Boys Club. The issue of alternate pancake recipes could come to dominate the issue of fire protection. Quite the contrary, indirect service must be seen as an integral part of the overall ultimate end, not as an end-in-itself. We must emphasize the linkage of all kinds of problem-relevant tasks, their interdependence in achieving the ultimate goals of volunteering.

Once again, this is merely a reminder for most of us. The next step is more of a departure. We should **deliberately** design volunteer work in the first place so that indirect support and direct contact are integrated in the job itself, insofar as possible. We should build linkages within the job itself; these tielines should not have to be laid on by education or management from the outside.

There are, of course, many naturally occurring examples of this mixture within a single volunteer job. The volunteer tutor works directly with a student, and he or she also spends time indirectly supporting that work (preparing lessons, getting teaching materials, writing reports, etc.). The same is true for the Sunday school teacher, and even the volunteer visitors who provide their own transportation to the site, and perhaps write their own reports, or in other ways provide support to themselves in their volunteer work. Ordinarily this seems to be a healthy mixture; the person more easily sees the support and contact elements of the task as a whole. And the indirect support rendered to oneself is more likely to be relevant because you don’t have to explain what is needed to anyone else. The situation gets bad only when the indirect part becomes too burdensome, and subtracts too much time and energy from the immediate problem-contact part of the work. This can be handled by a better balancing of indirect and direct task elements in design of volunteer work. I’m not sure we home in enough on that particular aspect of volunteer job design at present.



We need to build a better balance of directness into primarily indirect jobs, as well as the other way around. But how can we do this deliberately? Our main concern here is to integrate directness into primarily indirect volunteer jobs, in order to attract more people to the indirect work which has to be done.

The success of the integration will depend on the sensitivity and skill of the volunteer leader, with the usual attention to individual differences among volunteers. But we also have a more systematic process for doing this: our organic gardening in volunteer job development, as described in Chapter 8. The three principles of volunteer job expansion/enrichment described there can guide the grafting of direct-contact task elements onto a primarily indirect involvement or vice versa. You may recall that the organic gardening example began with wrapping gifts (indirect) and eventually got to direct contact with the giftees via two of the three principles: main sequence and parallel opportunity.

There is a limit, of course. We must be fully aware of why some people will always prefer more indirect work. The nature of such work may be more intrinsically congenial for them — many people naturally enjoy office work, boards and committees, fundraising, finding or providing needed materials and facilities. Also, some people may be concerned about a general problem area, but uneasy about being directly involved with it. Studying the problem of crime, and developing resolutions or legislation to deal with it, is very important work; is also less threatening for some of us than personally visiting prisoners.

At the same time, for other kinds of people we must be alert to add enough direct elements to counteract what may be unattractive to them in more indirect forms of involvement. Frequently, not always, indirect service lacks the drama and glamour of front-line work; it may also seem too distant from the “real” problem.

### **Another Definition of Indirect Involvement**

Indirect volunteer involvement, as defined so far, means support for people who are in immediate contact with the (ultimate) problem; indirect volunteer work at some distance from the immediate problem. In a volunteer program working with drug abusers, the volunteer group counselors are in direct contact with the people who have the problem; the volunteer office workers are less so. But the latter are in direct physical contact with the office work they do. Thus, the other sense of the direct-indirect distinction is the extent to which the person is physically present at or distant from the work site. In this sense, a drug counselor working by phone or mail is volunteering “indirectly,” while a Board member who attends meetings rather than operating by conference call or written communications, is a “directly” serving volunteer. The difference in this way of defining the dimension is in the **manner** of connecting to the work; physical distance rather than goal or task distance. Here, volunteer work is indirect insofar as it occurs at some physical remove from the problem addressed, however close it is otherwise to the final purposes in problem solution.

Let's explore some very practical implications of this. Physical transportation of volunteers to their work site is steadily becoming a more onerous and expensive enterprise. More and more, this problem is turning off traditional and nontraditional volunteers. Our main approach to the problem thus far is a scramble for more transportation resources in order to bring volunteers to their work, and any volunteer leader will tell you that this isn't easy. On top of the time and worry invested in trying to solve the transportation problem, somebody is going to have to bear some extra expense purchasing or renting a van, buying the insurance (assuming you can get it), providing extra funds for mileage reimbursement, busfare, etc.<sup>1</sup> For many volunteer programs today

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<sup>1</sup>And we haven't even mentioned babysitting expenses for the traveling volunteer.

transportation is a real pain in the buck, and in other ways, too. For one thing, our best transportation support efforts still lose some volunteers if, for example, volunteers wonder about the safety of the neighborhood.

We have to keep trying, though there's nothing much we can do for many volunteer work situations (we can't move the hospital to the candy stripper; she has to come to the hospital). But I think there is much more to be mined in geographically indirect volunteer space. For instance, instead of bringing volunteers to the work, what more can we do to bring the work to the volunteers? We can take work which is impossibly or unattractively indirect in the sense of physical distance, and convert it to more attractively accessible work.

There are two ways to do this. First of all, we can literally and physically bring the work to the person, or at least design the work so it can be done closer to home. For example, materials for the sewing or toy repair volunteer project might be brought to the volunteer's home, or to an easily reachable neighborhood center. (This does require a vehicle and gasoline, but may be less expensive if the delivery route is well-organized.) The same is true of some kinds of office work. The person who can't travel across town to type at your office just might be able to type at home, although he or she wouldn't be able to do the office filing at home. Sometimes it is inconvenient, expensive, or literally impossible to bring the work to the volunteers, but I'm not sure we have been as creative as we could be in imagining all the possible scenarios.

More imagination might discover opportunities to include a multitude of people otherwise left out in the cold of nonhelping because they don't have mobility to travel physically to the work, or not easily. This includes the elderly shut-in, the physically handicapped, the mother of preschool children, and anyone who has to make the hard choice between eating and gasoline. In California, for example, there is a beautiful example of this principle for self-help volunteering. Elderly people can find it very difficult to get out to a food store and when they get there they find the food packaged in quantities inappropriate for their needs. So, a voluntary transportation and wholesale buying effort brings appropriate quantities and types of food to locations conveniently accessible to elderly people: apartment houses or condominiums where they live, or neighborhood centers. The elderly people who live nearby participate as close-to-home volunteers in ordering and selling and general management of these very local food shops. The work — and the food — has been brought to the people who are concerned about it.

Bringing the work to the people is one tactic. The other approach is to be alert to alternatives which enable people to impact at a distance (indirectly) without having to move themselves physically to do so. In so doing, we make it easier instead of harder for them to be volunteers. Here the approach might be called electronically facilitated volunteering — the use of phone, radio, or TV as a medium for volunteering. This region of volunteer space boasts hotlines, crisis lines, expert advice, and support networks, all of them by phone, and I am sure we have not explored all the helping potential in Alexander Graham Bell's device. There could be more telephone tutoring, for example, a volunteer variation of the Dial-A-Teacher program which recently began in a midwestern city. Indeed, in our age of exotically-priced gasoline, the telephone people could add another slogan for the yellow pages: "let your fingers do the volunteering." Is anyone interested in approaching the telephone company on such a project? (Hint: they often have in-house volunteer programs of their own.) There are many ways in which the yellow pages might give more prominence to volunteer opportunities, especially telephone assisted ones. And what about special day rates for the sunny side of life — volunteering?

The telephone isn't all of it. Radio volunteers read to the blind; there are also many volunteer programmers and announcers in public radio stations across the country; the Australian bush doctor or nurse regularly gives crucial medical assistance by radio over

vast distances.<sup>2</sup> I suppose they are paid, but for a job like that they have to be partly volunteer, in attitude if nothing else.

There has always been plenty of helping over ham radio. Today citizen band (CB) radio is a more widespread example of how people will help when electronics offer them a more accessible opportunity to help. A lot of volunteer help goes on over this network: companionship on a lonely road, directions, some matchmaking, some warnings traffic officers object to, and crisis help called for and received over the CB emergency band. (I know of one high school student who volunteers to assist in monitoring this emergency frequency.) In sum, another electronic channel has opened up new means for volunteer helping networks. True, the same medium can be used for less helpful communication — objectionable language, for example. But this challenge is always there when contact between people is opened up; the contact can be capitalized on for help-intending behavior, or it can lapse into harm. Helping facilitators have some responsibility to maximize the former and minimize the latter.

Finally, volunteers communicate across the reaches of public television. Volunteers sometimes conduct courses for prison inmates by television, and volunteers raise vast sums for worthy causes in television marathons.

The technology underlying electronically-facilitated volunteering is becoming more accessible and sophisticated just when gasoline is getting scarcer, cars more expensive, and passenger trains bankrupt. For example, interact radio and TV have been around a long time. The radio or TV audience can press a button and talk back to or talk with the presenter in the studio. Some day not too distant, interact is going to be far more widely available. Similarly, electronic technology is dealing with the restrictions of communication to two people only; telephone conference calls are quite routine and will soon be more so. (A friend told me he once was in a conference call with 50 participants, but I stopped him right there.) I do know that satellites can make that sort of thing a snap. As a finale, imagine being in on this presently feasible event: the conference TV hookup in stereo and interact. What more do you need for real communication with real helping potential? Do you need to smell the people? Not likely. Then, do you have to touch them? Yes, perhaps, and that's the rub.

You cannot touch by TV yet, and that's part of a more general concern about electronic volunteering: some dilution of effect because people aren't totally or literally in touch with one another. However, many people aren't ready to be touched yet. Thus, the partial contact of the telephone protects the privacy needed by some hotline or crisis line clients. If full physical contact were offered them, their privacy might be violated; if they reject that violation, all help might be refused them. Thus, electronic volunteering may sometimes be the only helping mode which is both ethical and potentially effective.

Even where this is not so, telephone or electronic technology may be the most practical means for getting help accomplished. Suppose your meager mileage budget supports five volunteers visiting a total of ten shut-ins every week. Is there really any choice between this stunted program and extending yourself a little bit to involve enough volunteers for telephone support to 100 shut-ins every week? Indeed, I'm not sure a friendly telephone call every day isn't worth as much as a single visit in person once every lonely week. So much the better if we can have both the inexpensive extra phone support plus the occasional in-person contact.

Volunteer leadership is responding to the increased helping power inherent in electronic communication with telephone hotline volunteers, for example, or volunteers working by

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<sup>2</sup>Incidentally, the people who live in the bush have numbered vials of pharmaceuticals which make it easier to follow the radio doctor's directions. Is there a more general possibility here: better preparation of receiving people to benefit from electronic volunteering? For example, the somewhat deaf receiver of phone support needs an amplified phone.

phone in information and referral services, but we need to progress beyond these developments. And we should feel encouraged about how “real” electronically-facilitated help can be. When we are on the phone, listening to the radio, watching television, we receive only partial sensory input and we translate this input to full reality. This translation from partial to full reality is increasingly valid for our society. How many hours do kids watch TV?

### **Imagination Permitted Here**

I have not yet mentioned volunteering via the written word, because the case for its reality is harder to make. But “pen pal” volunteering is valuable and should be looked at as a feasible form of involvement in some situations. Thus, the less mobile person, including the prisoner, may not only like to receive friendly letters; they may also want to write them. Although a letter leaves much to the imagination, maybe helping sometimes depends partly on permission to fantasize. For example, I get daily help understanding the news from a team of fine radio broadcasters. Recently, a special dispensation got me a private viewing of them at work (the studio is not open to the public). I discovered that the lady with the vibrant voice doodles while describing the fall of Rome. The rich baritone gentleman tends to bite his fingernails. They are still my heroes and always will be, but I wish I hadn’t gone.

So add this to your reasons for sometimes preferring communications of less than full physical presence: permitting the play of imagination in the receiver may be helpful — maybe we should in some cases deliberately and positively encourage it.

### **Outline of a Process for Approaching Indirect Volunteer Space**

1. Start with a complete need assessment.
2. Translate the needs to a total set of task elements which will meet these needs.
3. Sort these tasks or task elements into relatively more direct and indirect types.
4. Whenever you perceive that people will gladly give any of these tasks or task elements, subtract them from the total list.
5. For the remainder:
  - a. Try to spice up both indirect and direct task elements by linking them meaningfully together, via organic gardening.
  - b. Make indirect task elements more direct, by bringing the work to the volunteer, physically, electronically, or through the written word.

### **Conclusion**

We will meet the indirect variety of involvement again in this book, because it sometimes crosscuts other dimensions. For example, if gift-giving (versus work) is a form of volunteering at all, it is an indirect form of it; the money or other gift must be converted to something else before it helps directly (Chapter 15). Visiting prisoners as part of a group, rather than as an individual, may help the individual bear the emotional weight of the experience or help shield him or her from some of it (Chapter 10), and thus has some indirect distancing elements. Observing a problem, as distinct from acting on it, is arguably a more indirect mode of involvement, though no less important for that fact (Chapter 11).

Indeed, people are probably always at some point along the direct-indirect dimension. We are either supportively behind the scenes, on the scene, or off the scene, for every act in life. This range of involvement misses being volunteering only to the extent that these are not always conscious choices. Beyond some minimum threshold of indirect involvement,

volunteering becomes simply a form of good citizenship (though there is really nothing simple about it), and large areas in the reaches of newer volunteer space (indirect volunteering, advocacy groups) are good citizenship. Further development of these spaces is a way in which traditional volunteer leadership can make firmer contact with the mainstream of American aspiration, although I would certainly not claim this responsibility is ours alone. I do think we can help raise awareness of the "indirect involvement equals good citizenship" equation, and help others apply the principles of indirect volunteer involvement.

## CHAPTER TEN

# THE COMPANY OF HELP

### Introduction

All along, I have resisted the temptation to call this an anatomy of volunteer helping. Locations in the organisms are simply not all that clear. This is certainly true of the involvement option on this chapter's agenda. A volunteer can be involved as an individual or with a group.

It would be nice if this were only a matter of numbers: one helper or more than one at a time. But there are various kinds of membership in a group, and help always has some company. Even the great martyrs and prophets were never truly alone. By "group" I mean two or more people who communicate and work together in terms of some shared identity and purpose. Beyond that, groups may be of any size; they may be temporary or enduring, informal or formally organized, to virtually any degree.

### Some Simplified Examples

The lineup for individual volunteer participation includes the den mother, the candy striper in a hospital, the free-lance or gadfly volunteer, the person who sends a friendly word over CB radio, the neighbor who helps with the shopping when you're sick, the driver who holds back to let you in line during a traffic jam, and the one-to-one volunteer counselor.

At the group end of the spectrum, relatively clear examples include a church-sponsored project to tutor juvenile delinquents, a high school class covering the phones for a fundraising marathon, and the golden age club's musicale, playing to rave reviews from nursing home to day-care center.

### Illustrations of Ambiguity

Obviously, groups and individuals differ numerically. However, the initial decision to volunteer or not to volunteer may be a primarily individual one at either group or

individual pole. The member of the senior's club can decline to participate in the chorus, but if the club is a closely knit one, she may feel more group pressure to participate than the day-care center volunteer does. But if your child **attends** the day care center, there can be some real group pressure to participate there, too, up to and including mandatory involvement.

Though the **decision** to volunteer may be largely an individual one, once that decision is made, the **context** of work almost always involves some significant interaction with other people. Even the Lone Ranger has his horse. The group volunteer should be getting some extra strength through membership in the company of similarly situated people: the school class, the senior's club, or the church. His or her support may come from other places, too, for example, an organization which the volunteer group is helping. But this can be equally true of the volunteer as an individual. The Board member may volunteer alone, but as a result of that decision, he or she will interact in some way with other Board members and one hopes receive some staff support. Candy strippers receive some support from other volunteers and staff, and give some in return. Once again, **the decision to volunteer or not** may be largely individual, but once on the job, there is almost always some significant interplay with other people, suggesting group participation of some sort.

There is some group context even for the most lonesome volunteer. True, free-lance gadfly volunteers tend to work unaffiliated with any organization or group, independent of support or direction. While this can be a handicap sometimes, the relative freedom from organizational accountability and bureaucracy can be an enormous asset. The gadfly at the city council meeting can be effective precisely because he or she is mainly beholden to his or her own conscience. Still, the origins and base of free-lance volunteers are individual, free-lancers do have to interact with organizations and groups, and they must receive outside emotional support from somewhere, I would think.

In any case, organizational support for volunteering is a subject deferred for later discussion, mainly in Chapter 12. The point for now is, **both** individual and group volunteers may receive equally strong support from somewhere within the context of their work, but the source of this support may differ in origin.

Does "redundancy" in the work system differ between individual and group volunteering? Redundancy means if one person in a group doesn't show up to do the work, another one can replace him or her. If one church member doesn't show up for the church-sponsored tutoring, another might be able to fill in. If enough volunteers painting murals are there to do the work, they can often carry on in spite of a few individual absentees. On the other hand, if the crucial trumpet player doesn't show up for the musical revue, you can scratch Sousa from the program.

The same degrees of interchangeability or substitutability run through volunteer work as individuals; if the individual Board member doesn't show up, you can still proceed with the meeting, provided enough other Board people have decided to show up and you have a quorum. If the candy striper doesn't show up for work one day, you can usually juggle things around to cover the total workload somehow, especially if she has given you advance notice. But if the volunteer counselor doesn't show up to meet her girl, we're getting close to disaster. The conclusion: interchangeability of work roles doesn't necessarily distinguish group from individual volunteering.

Beyond actual numbers, the following may be considered distinguishing characteristics for group volunteering.

1. Support for individual volunteering may come relatively more from affiliation or identification with the volunteering group;
2. membership in the group may be a condition of participation; and
3. the group itself may be willing and able to provide more of the program level support

needed for its own volunteering. The church project may take considerable responsibility for organizing and scheduling facilities, and for getting teaching materials needed for its own tutoring work. The candy striper cannot ordinarily do this to the same degree.

We will examine these characteristics more closely later in this chapter as we discuss the special potential of group volunteering.

At first glance, the potential for further cultivation of volunteer space seems greatest at the group pole. True, we have become increasingly aware of group volunteering, but I think we need to become more sophisticated in all the different things this involvement mode can mean: the special advantages, disadvantages, and strategies of group recruiting, reasonable ways to account for groups, etc. Nevertheless, we can also look at the individual end of the spectrum for aspects the current awareness might have neglected — there are some sleepers here, too.

### **As Individuals**

A famous recruiting poster has Uncle Sam pointing his finger right at you. Volunteer leadership often focuses recruiting efforts toward individuals, and these efforts are certainly becoming increasingly effective. I would add only this brief reminder: for further opportunities in recruiting individuals, look carefully in relatively less occupied regions of volunteer space.

1. Occasional time-limited as well as continuous service (Chapter 8).
2. Indirect as well as direct service (Chapter 9).
3. Activities which are oriented to observation as the form of service, rather than direct action (Chapter 11).
4. Service which has a higher level of self-interest behind it (and greater variety in the forms of acceptable self-interest), rather than only the more altruistic motivations (Chapter 14).
5. Policy and advocacy volunteering as well as purely service roles, or creative mixtures of the three (Chapter 16).
6. And any other new space dimension in volunteering discussed anywhere in this book.

Mainly as a speculative enterprise and also to make the above guidelines seem conservative by comparison, consider that volunteering as an individual may not be the ultimate end of the pole. Within-person volunteering is at least conceivable as a form of legitimate self-interest in helping; perhaps the super-ego assists the ego, or your strong self, voluntarily and without pay, tries to help a weaker you. Have you ever tried to stop smoking, for example? While it is uncertain that the basic concepts of volunteer leadership can ever be widely applied to intrapersonal volunteering, volunteer leaders sometimes do find subjects like transactional analysis relevant to their work. Presumably the application is primarily on an interpersonal level, but t.a. has an intrapersonal level of analysis, too. The same might be true of conflict resolution. I would like to see some attempt to relate such psychologies to "intrapersonal" volunteer experience and behavior.

### **The Group as Volunteer**

A simplified definition of a volunteer group is: two or more people who in some significant sense do the volunteer work together. Some would define a group as "three or more," in which case we can consider a pair as part way between individual and group. Some of the other huge holes in the definition will be patched later; for now, this is enough to get us started.



Most volunteer leaders are fully aware of group volunteering as a recruiting option. In addition to recruiting the kinds of groups we have already discussed, volunteer leaders frequently value group occasional service projects, on a one-time basis. Further cultivation of the group model has the same potential benefit as any other exploration of newer volunteer space: opening up channels of involvement for people who might not otherwise be prompted to participate. The following discussion outlines some special incentives for group participation.

1. Group volunteering puts less pressure on the individual; other group members can fill in sometimes or help buffer the emotional impact of some kinds of work. Visiting prisoners with a group of fellow Jaycees illustrates this. If you can't show up one time, most of the rest of the people can, and you may be shielded somewhat from the shock of the prison situation when accompanied by other Jaycees.

2. Group volunteering can add the affiliative motive to the intrinsic attractiveness of the task at hand, or help compensate for the task's unattractiveness. The church tutoring project volunteer has at least two reasons for signing up: concern for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents, and concern for the meaning and work of the volunteer's church. The latter may even counter-balance a reluctance to interact with juvenile delinquents in person.

3. Group recruiting can bring in relatively large sets of people at one time, and this may be more efficient than recruiting people one at a time. The cultivation of church or synagogue interest might be relatively time-consuming, but once you have it, you get 5, 10, 20 or more tutors all at once. The church or synagogue may have to recruit them individually; ordinarily, you don't have to.

4. A related time and energy saving device for the volunteer leader is the potential ability of some groups to help organize their own work or even contribute some material back-up for the work. The church tutoring project may not only do most of its own recruiting, scheduling, supervision, and other organizing; it may also supply the needed tutoring materials and donate the church basement as the tutoring site. I have also known some church volunteer tutors to ask for additional divine support — around exam time.

There are four disadvantages to group volunteering.

1. Exclusiveness. In some cases, only the defined members of the group can participate and others are excluded: "Church members or Jaycees only need apply."

I don't see overwhelming force in this point. In the first place, many groups have open-ended membership, including groups formed solely or primarily for the purpose of accomplishing the task at hand. Consider the advocacy volunteer group formed to push for more playgrounds in certain parts of the city. From the most-affected neighborhoods they will want just about anybody who cares to join. Beyond that, they will probably be delighted to welcome the additional skills and objectivity brought by recruits from neighborhoods which wouldn't directly benefit from the playgrounds.

Cohesive membership groups need not always be allowed an exclusive on a project. Other groups or individuals can also be involved in this or similar tasks, though perhaps not at the same time or place. This was true of our church tutoring project example. They had no objections whatsoever to nonchurch affiliated tutors also pitching in; they just wanted to get the job done in the best way possible.

On the other hand, some groups will naturally press for exclusive responsibility, wanting their name on the project as one form of reasonable return for their effort. Such groups could include the college sorority melodrama on behalf of the children's home fund. The sorority might reasonably want their label on the project, and nobody else's. Here, you will be pondering trade-offs; if you happen to be short of melodrama volunteers, the sorority offer begins to look very good. Besides, the sorority's monopoly

on melodrama usually doesn't prevent recruiting other fundraising volunteers at the same time, from poetry-reading through car-washing. Alternatively, if the town's only judo association wants an exclusive on a volunteer project teaching the art to low-income kids, you can consider your arm twisted, especially if they have a monopoly on the capability — so why not go along, always assuming you would like the kids to learn judo?

2. More serious by far is the possibility that a cohesive group will have purposes at variance with your own as sponsor. An evangelical church may see their group tutoring project as a way of teaching their religion while also teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic. This may or may not be consonant with the goals and regulations of the sponsoring organization. On this one, there is no substitute for clear and complete knowledge of one another's purposes, on the table, prior to group involvement, and that does take time.

The positive side of groups having purposes of their own relates to the concept of "glad gives" — things people can do and want to do. In other words, look for organizations whose intrinsic mission and purpose are most naturally in accord with the needs you want to meet. Does Kiwanis have a special current interest in the visually handicapped or youth leadership development? Is the Junior League especially interested in older people these days or in child abuse? Such interests are good to know, because they sometimes coincide with your helping interest. Finding out takes time and effort, of course, but volunteer researchers can help a lot. Ordinarily, the effort is worthwhile to prevent conflict later and to ensure both motivation and relevant expertise in your volunteer group. However, the group's special interest in the area may have convinced them that their way of doing it is the only way, and their way might not be your way. That, too, must be identified and negotiated out beforehand. You can also seek groups which combine highly developed motivation with unsolidified strategies in a project area.

3. There is a saying: God so loved the world that He didn't send a committee. You might sometimes feel the same way about your work committee or your volunteer group. You can get that certain feeling when conflict or inefficiency within the group gives you that old it's-easier-to-do-it-myself obsession. Once again, your preservice screening of the group should look for the ominous in its past history. If you missed it there, you can always fire a volunteer later, group as well as individual. Sometimes you will have to be very subtle about it, say for a group like the millionaire's club. Then again, who would want to fire them completely?

4. Some volunteer leaders may be reluctant to recruit groups because they seem harder to count and record. I confess to being underwhelmed by this objection, but perhaps I'm missing something. I think group volunteer recordkeeping can be readily handled, mainly by tracking the total number of person-hours contributed by the group. In this framework, it matters less whether five members of the group contributed ten hours each last month, or ten members contributed five hours each. The total person-hours are still fifty, and that is the common coinage of volunteer program reporting. To capture the special group flavor (and prestige) you can also report the number and identity of each group which has contributed over a minimum number of hours in a given time period.<sup>1</sup> You may further record the number of individuals in each group who contributed more than the minimum amount of time. Figure 1 outlines the elements of such a group volunteer report, integrated with individual volunteering. For purposes of simplification, it omits type of work performed, but this can be added in the usual way.

Perhaps the concern is far more for retrievability than for the form of group volunteer statistics. If so, some responsibility for self-reporting should be built into the group volunteer job description negotiated with leadership of the volunteer group.

<sup>1</sup>Some people maintain that, in computing dollar value of volunteer time, group-contributed hours will tend to have less dollar value per hour than individually-contributed hours. I confess I can't see why this is necessarily so.

Figure 1

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MONTHLY STATISTICAL REPORT

Total number of volunteers working as individuals	115
Total number of volunteers working in groups	<u>82</u>
Grand Total: Persons	197
Total person-hours contributed by individuals	847
Total person-hours contributed by groups	<u>490</u>
Grand Total: Hours	1337

## SECTION ON GROUP VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION

Group I.D.*	Total Hours	Number of Persons** in Group
Lutheran Church	120	10
American Legion	180	40
Jaycees	90	10
Friends of Norway	80	16
Other groups combined	<u>20</u>	<u>6</u>
	490	82

\* Groups are identified only if they have contributed 10 or more hours during the month.

\*\* The sum of individuals in the group who have contributed at least one hour during the month.

Thus far, it appears that the relatively cohesive group has typical advantages and disadvantages. The group can usually mobilize itself more effectively for group involvement, saving you this step. It can also more readily tap into affiliative motivation for involvement. Potential disadvantages include a higher probability of excluding nonmembers, and conflict between group purposes and yours. Less cohesive groups tend to have advantages where cohesive groups have disadvantages, and vice versa. The volunteer leader applies the sensitivity and judgment to engage each type of group where it will serve most effectively and appropriately.

### Searching in Group Volunteer Space

To summarize, groups come in all sizes, shapes, and consistencies. This chapter also suggests the outlines of a search procedure for recruiting in the diversity of group space.

1. Begin with the usual needs assessment in relation to your goals and objectives.
2. Convert needs into tasks and task elements which will address these needs.
3. Analyze each of these tasks in terms of the group volunteering advantages and disadvantages (discussed in the previous section) in relation to "group recruits" you have identified and can reasonably expect to reach.
4. Focus your group recruiting on those tasks for which groups seem best adapted and for which "glad giving" groups are most likely to be available.

The fifth point isn't a method at all, but rather a call to creative amnesia: try to forget

where you and others have looked many times before in group space, and look in some fresh places. Let me suggest a few hidey-holes.

In the first place, groups can be very large, provided the people in the group are doing something together, in some sense, even if they are only doing it temporarily or occasionally. Granted, the group character tends to be attenuated as the group gets larger, harder to detect and deflect towards your helping purposes. But the concept of a very large group may still be meaningful. For example, I'm told that in the town where the Perkins School for the Blind is located, virtually everyone is especially sensitive and helpful to blind people when they are walking about town. The volunteering is individual, but there must also be a strong community-wide ambience to support this volunteering, and in this I see the flavor of group behavior.

Let's now look at the smaller group. Cohesive groups can originate around common situations, beliefs, or purposes which impinge upon otherwise unrelated people. But groups can also be formed by factors which are, in part, biological, and certainly more intimate. This quickly brings to mind the family as a potential volunteer group — the nuclear family or any part of it. In somewhat broader terms, people who live together can volunteer together, sometimes. We do not yet know enough about the kinds of services families are best suited to give, nor do we know whether volunteering together will always strengthen the family unit. However, VOLUNTEER currently operates a demonstration project to involve family units in the volunteer experience, and it will be interesting to see the effects of the project for both nuclear and extended families (where, some say, volunteering began). In both cases, there is volunteering within the group as well as from the group to others; the relationship between the two is also worth looking at.

You might find a second secret place in group volunteer space by completely forgetting that a group has to be large. Indeed, in my view, the simplest instance of a group is a pair — the simplest not only for purposes of discussion and analysis, but also simplest to work with effectively as a leader of volunteers. The paid work people may be a bit ahead of us in developing the job-sharing model: two people jointly do a job. I believe this promising model has enormous translation potential as the volunteer pair in ultra small group volunteering. The existing instances include husband-wife or woman-man friend teams in volunteer counseling, tutoring, foster parenting. Door-to-door volunteer advocates for a religious faith also frequently work in pairs.

There is much more in this model for us to identify, understand, and exploit in this nearby sector of group volunteer space. The pair has most of the advantages described for group volunteering and relatively few disadvantages. Moreover, the relative manageability of a pair permits deliberate development of benefits-over-debits. For example, you can select or construct pairs for special features which must be emphasized in pair volunteering — maximum communication, cohesion, compatibility, and mutual support between the two. Try that with a set of ten people! It is also easier to select for absence of group purposes which may conflict with your organization's. With a volunteer pair, deliberate strengthening of the group is even more feasible via orientation and training, to cultivate stronger mutual support and affiliation within the pair, and to build task-consonant motives. The advantage of having less pressure on any one individual is still there, too — it may be even easier for a pair partner to arrange for a substitution than to cast about for a replacement in a larger, more complex group.

Selection and training of volunteer pairs is not the whole of it. Design of the volunteer-pair task is not quite the same as design of jobs for individual volunteers. For purposes of analysis, let's begin by constructing the simplest imaginable pair-task model. There are two volunteers, X and Y, working together as an XY pair, and three elements in the task to be performed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>I suppose a task composed of only one element is theoretically conceivable, though I would hate to have to recruit volunteers for it.

In order to illustrate with an anecdote from the literature, let us first identify the people involved as:

X = a girl

Y = a boy

The task elements are:

1 = climbing a hill,

2 = drawing water from a well at the top of the hill,

3 = bringing it back down.

To begin with:

Jack and Jill went up the hill

To fetch a pail of water.

## Analysis

They didn't get paid for it, and they didn't absolutely have to do it (although some interpretations suggest that mother had strong advisory input). So we'll consider them a volunteer pair.

A first principle of volunteer-pair job design is: look for a task which is easier to do together than alone. Either of the two children, it is assumed, would have difficulty carrying the pail of water down the hill unassisted.<sup>3</sup> A task for an individual volunteer can legitimately be designed as easier to do alone than with another. A volunteer-pair job should build in motivation for cooperation by identifying work that can clearly be accomplished more easily and effectively through pooled support and/or by engaging unique abilities of either party, hopefully in a complementary fashion. Volunteer counseling by pairs might illustrate the latter because what one person misses, the other might pick up.

The story, adapted from the original, continues:

If Jack is go'in

To cry and moan

He's not a useful brother.

Should Jack drop out

Jill's still about —

You just recruit another.

## Analysis

Both verses speak to the possibility of the pair breaking up. The first verse suggests that Jack is still willing to do the work, but not with Jill. In that case, especially having been up the hill together, and knowing the way, they could each now go up the hill alone. Presumably the pail of water would be smaller. The principle here is: where possible, the volunteer-pair job should be designed so it can at least temporarily be readjusted to be performed by either member of the pair. A volunteer counseling team or fundraising team can get by with one person temporarily, and maybe even longer, though the situation or task might have to be slimmed down or redesigned for the period when only one volunteer is working. The case is more difficult for, say, a volunteer referee pair at a football game. If one doesn't show up, you can hardly change the rules of the game to make refereeing easier; you have to find an adequate replacement, cancel the game, or suffer inferior calls.

This brings us to the last verse. Jack's problem now goes beyond preferring not to work with Jill anymore; he wants to quit altogether. Here the volunteer leader has flexible

<sup>3</sup>Some reports indicate that this particular task was too demanding even for both together and that one child, at least, was seriously injured.

options not ordinarily available in individual volunteering: Jill can continue getting water in smaller pails until you recruit another person to work with her. (Alternatively, she can work with an intact pair during the interim period.) All these choices are also open for Jack.

Thus, properly designed volunteer-pair jobs and work situations provide flexibility beyond the individual volunteer model. Another part of that flexibility is more insurance of continuity in the work. For example, college-age people have done excellent volunteer work as companion-models for youth in high school or junior high school. But if relative permanency in the relationship is desired, you're faced with college seniors graduating and moving away, or any college student getting too busy at certain times. One volunteer effort I know of dealt with this problem by assigning a college junior-senior pair as a companion volunteer team for each youth. When the senior graduated, the junior-become-senior was paired with a new junior. If either couldn't make an appointment for any good reason, the other usually could.

Our advocacy of volunteer pairs should point out one other aspect of pair-counseling (not to be confused with peer counseling). While compatible with each other, each person in the pair can also be complementary. The youth they work with has a choice of whom to communicate with or whom to model; the choice may vary depending on the youth's situation, which is all to the good.

A volunteer job-sharing pair is really a prime example of a constructed group — constructed by you, as distinct from a group established by other forces, such as family, church, club affiliation, etc. Several special advantages have been mentioned for pairs as constructed group volunteers. Pairs also share more general advantages with larger groups; among these advantages are that volunteer-pair tasks might attract a range of people who are not ready or willing to volunteer as individuals. Indeed, I suspect that some tasks we currently assume are best done by individual volunteers might, upon examination, prove to be more easily recruited for and better performed by pairs.

Finally, similar principles might be applied to establishing volunteer trios, quartets (Sweet Adeline volunteers?), and quintets. These larger groups will tend to take on a life of their own; the volunteer leader will be less likely to be able to control their nature and development. That is okay, too; there is much of value in a group which we can identify, accept, and engage to good purpose. This is never more so than for the largest group of all: the human family.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# FROM OBSERVATION TO ACTION

Shall we join the volunteer astronomers for a look at the sky? Taken together in their thousands, they command a sweep of heaven wider than the paid professionals they help. Locating comets is an example of this help: “amateur” astronomers have identified and tracked many we would have otherwise missed. Since none of them have yet reported **changing** the course of a comet, this is as pure an example of observational volunteering as we will ever find. It is unpaid, uncoerced, purposeful (help-intending), and it doesn’t act upon the phenomena observed.

I can’t think of an equally pure example of volunteering as action because any action is inseparable from observation and conditioned by it. The warning, “look before you leap,” could be better phrased, “look before you even walk.” A volunteer removing oil from a bird’s feathers after an ecological disaster couldn’t act unless he or she saw the bird first, sensed what the problem was, and received continuous visual feedback while helping the bird. The volunteer firefighter works effectively only through the guidance of all senses: seeing, hearing, touching, feeling, smelling, and certainly the hot-cold sense. True, people deprived of some of their senses can still do marvelous things. A blind volunteer on a program planning committee for blind people may be **more** effective because he or she can’t see; the blind **can** lead the blind (and the sighted, as well), but this is because other observational capacities are functioning well.

But generally the volunteer who predominantly **does** things is reasonably easy to recognize. **Action** is the core of the enterprise, and the observation part is supportive. The action-oriented volunteer appears everywhere else in this book; their overt help-intending action can be engaged to any extent continuously or occasionally, directly or indirectly, alone or with a group, etc. Therefore, this chapter concentrates on the volunteer as observer, a form of indirect participation in which what you see is what you give. I also believe observation is a relatively neglected area of volunteer space, in two senses. First, it is especially attractive and feasible for many people who cannot participate in the overt behavior mode, or prefer not to; here are the shy, the shut-in, all those who

simply like to use their eyes to see and ears to hear. Second, there is a range of helpful accomplishments observation can uniquely facilitate, and I don't think we have thought of all of these yet.

Let's begin by listing some occupants of observational volunteer space, though all of these people **do** some things, too. Varieties include the court-watcher, fire-watcher, and virtually any group of volunteers monitoring an organization or process, volunteer committees studying any problem of significance to the community, PTA or PTO people visiting a classroom, flying saucer watchers (**they** see it as helpful, remember), and, lest we forget, the volunteer air raid wardens of World War II.<sup>1</sup>

There are plenty of less organized individual instances, too. You don't see a sickly neighbor for a few days. Worried, you phone a medical unit; they arrive and provide urgently needed assistance. Or, during a drought, you are especially watchful to report possible fires in the woods. Or you study two candidates in order to decide which way to vote. (I claim that voting is the basic act of volunteer advocacy in a free society. Persistent rumors to the contrary, it is not ordinarily paid for.)

These examples emphasize the visual, but there can be other senses involved, too. The blockwatch volunteer listens as well as looks for signs of incipient crime. My friend Ruth Wedden developed a wonderful program in Florida some years back called "Listeners." Volunteers visited youngsters in detention, awaiting sentence, and **heard** them out. They were trained not to talk or do anything, only listen — not an easy task, incidentally. Of course, there was more than a mere sense of hearing involved; there was overall perception and sensitivity. The same is true of sensing that a shut-in neighbor needs medical help. Your interpretation of what you don't see and hear may be just as important as what you do see and hear. Observation, as used here, always implies that kind of interpretation. I would even extend this interpretation to include thinking, mental work; for example, the volunteer in a public interest research group is located near the observer-thinker dimension. Observation is usually more than sheer passive recording; the sensing often leads to interpretation, cogitation, and then to action.

Every observational volunteer enterprise has some connection to action in two senses. First, you have to do something as a preliminary to observation; aim the telescope, or aim your eyes, or turn your head to hear better, etc. However, in observational volunteering this is the means to the end, not the end in itself. Second, there is always some potential connection to action following observation, ranging from direct and certain to indirect and uncertain action. The patterning is:

OBSERVATION	RECOMMENDATION OR REFERRAL	ACTION
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Representing a more tenuous tieline, our volunteer astronomer sees an unusual event or feature on the moon (observation) and tells a professional astronomer about it (referral-recommendation). She checks it out and confirms it (action, of a sort). Conceivably — and here the sequence verges on fantasy — this information might guide the overt action of a future moon landing, and this, in turn, will put another dent in the moon.

At the high probability extreme, we have the Little League coach. While **watching** batting practice he detects a flaw in some youngster's batting style. There is a good probability he will make a recommendation about it promptly, and there is a real chance this recommendation will eventually make an overt difference in the nature of things, such as baseball scores.

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<sup>1</sup>This listing calls to mind the seeing eye dog and a warning: my friends have determined that this footnote may be dangerous to your mental health. There is a sense in which animals might be volunteers. Dog-lovers, does your pet ever do anything nice for you above and beyond the call of the food stipend? And what of kittens who allow autistic children to cuddle them? This is really far out volunteer space, and I promise not to mention it again.



Here are a few more illustrations of sequences:

OBSERVATION	RECOMMENDATION OR REFERRAL	ACTION
Pollution study committee	Special fast lanes for car poolers	City Council: Sorry, no money
Firewatch volunteer	FIRE!	Firefighters hurry to the scene
Advisory board	Fire the project director	Project director gets a reprimand

Where the connection between observation and action is integral and certain, observation is a relatively clear example of indirect (supportive) volunteering (Chapter 9), but observation can also be more direct, as more an end in itself — a volunteer astronomer, again.

We need to trace one more aspect of the intimacy between observation and action before isolating the former for purposes of analysis. A single individual volunteer may convert from primarily action to primarily observation in the course of his or her work. The volunteer counselors flick in and out of a diagnostic mode to guide their action. The meals on wheels volunteer is primarily a doer, but she may **observe** something badly wrong in the household as she hurries in to deliver the meal, then do something about it, or promptly refer it to someone who can do something. This kind of thing has happened in meals on wheels, and it has saved some lives. The point is, we must be sensitive to the need to alert and train for observation even the busiest volunteer doer. In the remainder of this chapter, however, we will be discussing core observation tasks.

## In Search of Observation

We must first speak of possible mental blocks — unconscious barriers which may make us insensitive to observation as a volunteer mode. In the first place observation is often a quiet process, with few overt signs that it is going on; that is, though a person may be seeing something important, nothing **seems** to be happening. We must therefore be careful not to discount the invisible.

The second barrier also relates to invisibility. We must not equate looking with onlooking. Observation can be participation even if it doesn't make a physical/visible change in what is being observed. Our volunteer astronomer did not make a dent in the moon, or deflect a comet, but he did **participate** in the enrichment of astronomical knowledge.

Now that we have that settled, here is an outline of an approach to exploration of observational volunteer space. It addresses two related questions. How can we discover a further range of observational tasks which will be helpful in solving social problems? How can we connect this observation to action in a way which is motivating for the volunteer and effective in accomplishing the overall helping goal?

## Finding Useful Observational Tasks

There are three main steps in selecting observational volunteer tasks.

Look for a problem area: which is of vital concern to neighborhood, agency, community, or nation; which can be assisted decisively by more intensive and extensive observation; and for which an observational workforce potentially exists.

This may sound simple, but it isn't. Creativity never is. There may also be administrative restrictions substantially beyond the control of a conceptualizer locked into an organizational setting where overall mission and goals are already in place. Such fixity

certainly narrows the scope of search for urgent needs, though you can still be creative within that range. But the process will work best where choice of need is more open-ended; for example, a local service club chooses a project, a resource organization selects a model project for development and later export to the interested. Now let's follow the three steps with examples.

### 1. Select the problem areas important to the community.

Forget about what is feasible for the moment, and ask yourself what is really bothering the people these days; what are the gut priorities for the people in nation and neighborhood? Your answers might include:

- Public safety
- Energy costs and conservation
- Environmental protection
- Transportation
- Inflation

### 2. Can observation help to deal with these priorities, or is that portion of problem solution covered well enough now?

Again, begin by forgetting. In this case creatively ignore what people can do to solve the problem and concentrate on what they can see and otherwise perceive, and also what isn't being seen well enough now. Examples:

**Public safety.** Can a few police cover all the watching we need in neighborhoods to identify and possibly prevent incipient crime? Of course they can't. From this "obvious" insight has arisen a whole host of neighborhood volunteer crime prevention programs such as Blockwatch and Whistlestop.

**Energy conservation.** Are there enough paid eyes to see all the ways each house could save energy? Of course there aren't. When groups such as 4-H, VISTA, and the White House realized this, we began to train energy audit and energy detective volunteers.

Nor is diagnostic observation of existing energy waste the only needed task. How about evaluation of attempted solutions as well? The company which sold me my solar collector sent me a follow-up feedback form asking me how well it was working and how the product might be improved, and I responded to their request. But I wouldn't have minded some skilled and objective volunteer help with the feedback. I spent enough money on the rig to make bias either way a real possibility. The same kind of outside volunteer observation — not from the people who sold you the product — would be helpful in evaluating insulation, wind generators, waterwheels, wood stoves, and all the rest — a kind of energy-oriented consumerism, the kind of product-testing that volunteers do in Consumers Union.

Finally, who is going to watch the nuclear reactor, in addition to the people who are operating it? And do we need somebody to watch the people who are watching the nuclear reactor (beyond the police, of course)? Maybe the main point here is how quickly watcher-watching can get ridiculous. So watch it.

**Transportation.** An energy conservation variation would begin with the problem of car pooling. Could a little more looking help out here? Shut-ins or students could watch traffic flow, count the percentage of cars with only one passenger, and compile and publish the daily percentage. The car pool monitor volunteers might also be readily visible to passing motorists, for the embarrassment of some and the encouragement of others.

Volunteers could also help observe patterns of promptness in public transportation or other traffic flow patterns of interest in their community. In some communities I suspect that isn't being done adequately now; more of it would contribute to a better understanding of transportation problems, before we (literally) ride off in all directions trying to solve them.

All these examples underline important implications of observational volunteering; it can sometimes document advocacy for positive change and otherwise intensify that advocacy.

My friend John Chromy<sup>2</sup> has suggested another observational gap, this time in our overall approach to the problem of railroad safety. Derailments occur, in part, because paid people alone cannot adequately inspect vast stretches of track, especially in rural areas. Volunteers might do that in areas near their homes, then report potential problems to repair crews. They might also do so because there is still a special drama in the railroad, and also because they might get a free ride now and then, but this is admittedly a somewhat difficult one to implement. What about volunteer expenses, for instance, or insurance, or taking jobs away from paid people, even though there aren't enough of them now? An easier observational volunteer enterprise is related to road conditions. I am intimately acquainted with every pothole on Sugarloaf Road; unfortunately, I don't have to go out of my way to observe those specimens daily — only avoid them. With just a little encouragement from, say, a community observation facilitator, my neighbors and I might report said potholes more insistently and — who knows — corrective action might materialize.

### 3. Are there people who will do this, as volunteers?

This is where the rubber meets the road, as they say, for this is the issue of feasibility. First of all, job design must be sensitive to physical ease of participation for the volunteer. The observational mode is particularly promising in this respect. Often, you can watch from your own front room, or within a block or two of home, school, or place of employment.

Second, if you have done your work well in needs assessment, the observational task will be targeted on a problem which vitally concerns a lot of people. Volunteer motivation will be built in, at least in a general sense, if the subject is important to the community.

Third, the volunteer observation must be designed as part of a work system with a strong connection between observation and follow-through action. I call this the look-and-trigger effect, and it's important enough to lay out in some detail.

a. There must be a clear channel between observation and remedial action. The connection can occur either through referral or recommendation. The volunteer firewatcher sees smoke and has a phone for calling firefighters who can do something about it (referral). The study committee has channels for presenting recommended action to people who might implement these recommendations.

b. There must be reasonably high probability that some action will actually be taken on the observer volunteer's referral or recommendation. The committee's morale will be devastated if recommendations are chronically ignored.

c. The follow-through must occur promptly. The fire-watcher gets discouraged, to put it mildly, if fire-fighters have a habit of arriving in time to photograph the ruins. The study committee which finds their recommendations apparently tabled for eternity has a right to feel ripped off.

d. The observer volunteers must have clear and reasonably prompt feedback on follow-through action. If the fire-watcher doesn't actually see fire-fighters arrive, he or she must be told they arrived, and, in either case, thanked for a crucial service. It is not enough that the study committee's recommendations are acted upon reasonably rapidly and often. We must be sure they **know** this happened and that the importance of their rôle in helping it happen is appreciated. Such feedback is even more important when the recommendation is turned down or the referral for action is rejected. Here, your volunteer observers must have an especially prompt and reasonable explanation.

<sup>2</sup>Director of the Barbados region Peace Corps and VOLUNTEER Board member.

Volunteer observers must be given assurances on all these four points, beforehand, and regularly thereafter. These assurances must be backed by realistic planning which validates these assurances. One feature of this planning may be of interest for other kinds of volunteering, too. It is not enough to prepare a volunteer observer job description restricted to the observing task alone. We must also design a “work **system** description” which specifies the relationship between the observer’s role and all earlier and later events in the goal-oriented work sequence.

Certain other steps will sometimes be desirable in preparing and maintaining observer volunteers. These steps more closely resemble what you would also do for acting-on volunteers.

- e. Develop pre-service orientation of volunteers to the importance of the problem and their role in helping solve it.
- f. Include training in how to observe accurately in relation to the problem or issue situation.
- g. Establish a mutual awareness and support network among the volunteer observers.
- h. Be sure to provide a recognition program, certificates of service, media coverage, etc.

Recruiting, selection, training, supervision, and recognition must take cognizance of a special caution when developing observational volunteering efforts. An example is the blockwatch volunteer program in which neighborhood people look out for suspicious characters or happenings. These volunteers are thus directing potential fault or blame at specific individuals, and the danger is that they will be seen, and see themselves, as “informers.” While this type of sacrifice is sometimes necessary for the public good, abuse of observation in this manner must be carefully guarded against. On the other hand, many observer situations need not involve the “informer” problem. No one minds you “telling on” a fire, or any clearly dangerous or threatening event or person.

**A Choice Within a Choice**

This chapter omitted an entire variation on volunteering in the observational mode. We talked about people volunteering to observe. What about all the people who volunteer to be observed, as in unpaid voluntary subjects in a research study. Even when you take time to respond to a survey or poll, you are volunteering data for an observer.

These observed volunteers ought to be more explicitly included in the volunteer family. If this volunteer mode were given more prominence and respectability, it might begin to attract some more people to volunteer in other ways.

**Conclusion and Connection**

We have not seen the last of observational volunteering in this book. For example, if and as volunteers choose advocacy or policy as their role, rather than system-accepting service, one of their major options is monitoring. Through monitoring, observer volunteers can express their concern with how well a system operates and how it can be improved both as a system and for any individual who has a stake in it.

There are also a variety of interactions possible with dimensions considered thus far in this book. To illustrate this, let’s list all forms of them.

CONTINUOUS .....	OCCASIONAL
AS AN INDIVIDUAL .....	WITH A GROUP
DIRECT .....	INDIRECT
PARTICIPATING ACTION .....	OBSERVATION

Now consider an unpaid, relatively uncoerced person who is at all four of the less explored poles to the right. This volunteer participates occasionally, with a group, indirectly, as an observer. Let us further suppose that this group has some help-intending community service or other charitable purpose; in other words, it functions as a volunteer group, at least partly.

Participation at the four rightward poles could be quite meaningful in ways the last four chapters have described. Analysis also shows ways in which it could be relatively meaningless; for example, if it is **very** occasional, **so** indirect that it is barely related to group helping purposes, **such** a distant and disinterested observation that it is more on-*looking* than *looking*, and unconnected to action on behalf of the group. This is a pretty good description of an inactive member of a club, lodge, chapter, congregation, association, committee, or board. The inactive member, on the rolls without taking an active roll, is the curse of our society, to hear club leaders tell it. Meanwhile, back at the club, a small band of the faithful carries the ball. This Atlas group may also see each other elsewhere as core groups of other committees, clubs, lodges, etc.

Club leaders could use help activating more of their membership. This book claims volunteer leaders could provide it, once they see membership as new volunteer space: indirect, occasional, observational, with a group. To be sure, club members can also serve directly, continuously, as individuals, and with a high proportion of overt action in their contributions, but this tends to be rare. The point of this review is that we may be able to activate more members more easily, by leaving them in place at what is for them more accessible and congenial new space volunteer poles. Volunteer leadership must only be willing to stretch its awareness and appreciate the possible translations from more to less traditional volunteer space. (The suggestion isn't all that far-fetched — though identified as a resource person from the more traditional regions of volunteer leadership, I've had several recent consultation requests on membership activation.)

The challenge is not unlike an earlier one: increasing awareness and skills in indirect volunteer involvement will ultimately make us experts in good citizenship. In these and other instances, the successful exploration of volunteer space will make us more relevant to more people.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# THE SECRET VOLUNTEER

HELP! Please save old pop tabs for a little 4-year-old girl who is on a kidney machine and cannot live without it. Each pop tab will buy her 60 seconds on the machine. Thank you.

Guy  
Your Custodian

There is a small box for the tabs behind this notice on the pop vending machine in our building. I chatted with Guy about this notice. For four years he has been collecting the pop tabs and carting them to the place where they can help the little girl. He says she is old enough now to be ready for a kidney transplant, and the operation will happen soon. He has frankly enjoyed the pop tab effort over the years, and every now and then I see him checking the pop tab box, rather eagerly. He has never mentioned the word “volunteer” to describe what he’s doing — nor have I — and there is certainly no volunteer **program** going on here. But, in fact, Guy fits my description of an informal volunteer very well — a secret volunteer, if you will, because he probably isn’t visibly listed on anyone’s volunteer honor role (except mine). Equally well, Guy gives the rest of us an easy opportunity to be informal pop tab volunteers. At least, it was an easy opportunity until recently, when soft drink manufacturers went to non-removable tabs on pop cans. At that point, certain beer drinkers came to Guy’s assistance, at somewhat greater inconvenience to themselves, since beer is not sold or consumed within our building, of course. Guy noted that those beer volunteers (**my** phrase) contributed buckets of metal tabs.

So, come to the helping party in formal attire if you wish, but casual dress is okay, too. Volunteering can be formal or informal.

## First Examples

The formal part of the helping process is visible and fairly easy to describe. A structured volunteer effort will frequently be called a "program," will have a director/administrator/coordinator of volunteers, and is usually (not always) associated with an organization. This structure is usually both supportive and directive in intent; the volunteer is supported and guided by training, incentives, supervision. The volunteer job description is a crucial instrument for this boundary-setting and accountability to the agency; it says, this ye shall do, and this ye had better not do. Recruiting and screening also tend to be selective and controlling functions; they attempt to identify people who will do what you want them to do, and not do what you don't want them to do.

The clearest examples of organized volunteer programs are usually found in agency or organizational settings, including hospitals, probation departments, welfare offices, the Veterans Administration, and school volunteer programs. Other organized volunteer efforts may lack some of the visible trappings of volunteer programs, but they are still first cousins. This includes volunteers raising funds for United Way or working in the YMCA, Salvation Army, 4-H, Travelers Aid, Scouting, and for political parties. They may not have someone called a volunteer director or be quite so consciously recruited, screened, trained, supervised, evaluated, etc. But they clearly work for an organization, under its guidance, and with a sense of participating in achieving its purposes.

This supportive directive mode is the core of organized volunteering. It has accomplished much and in many situations it is the most feasible way of achieving positive results for agency, clients, and volunteers. I am not proposing to abandon it; rather, I would maintain and further develop this stronghold, while also moving out to settle less structured regions in volunteer space.

Formality-informality is a continuous dimension. Intermediate examples include someone circulating petitions on behalf of a loosely organized advocacy group, volunteer master gardeners working with Adult Extension Services, or parents helping out with a school event. There is probably some supportive-directive structure behind the volunteering, but it is not as formal as, say, the candy striper in a hospital. Volunteering at the rightward poles of previously discussed dimensions — occasional, indirect, observational — tends to function at such intermediate levels of structure, though there are numerous exceptions. For example, the skillsbank volunteer is part of a work system which operates on behalf of an organization. But he or she is only involved occasionally, can sometimes refuse service when asked, and is ordinarily less intensively supervised on the job because such volunteers are usually doing what they are already known to be able to do.

Towards the informal end of the spectrum we have the natural helper in a neighborhood and the free-lance gadfly volunteer, both of whom work in a more continuous fashion. More informal volunteering is the most secret place of all and probably the most densely populated. Guy the custodian is one example; here is another. One Sunday morning I was waiting for a bus, and an elderly gentleman came along all dressed up except for one item. To the man next to me he said, "I have palsy and can't tie my tie properly, so I can go to church. Could you give me a hand with it?" Of course the man did so, and probably felt good about it the rest of the day, as did the rest of us standing there. Other informal-occasional examples include a helpful response to a stranger who asks directions in the street, writing a letter to the editor warning about a dangerous intersection when you are not formally affiliated with an advocacy group, pointing out to a passerby that he just dropped his gloves, picking up a hitchhiker, or just a comforting smile at the right time and place. All this is purposeful activity with intent to help, relatively uncoerced, not for money, and thus, volunteering in the broadest sense of our definition. Such everyday events add enormously to the total sum of helping in the world, yet they are not done on behalf of an organization, or guided by any supervisor. Nevertheless, they are usually not

completely “spontaneous”; in most of the above examples, a needful situation clearly called forth (recruited) the informal help. We will return to this point later in this chapter.

## A Debate on Exploring Informal Volunteer Space

In this chapter, I appeal to volunteer leadership for a more careful exploration of informal volunteering. One consideration in this appeal is that the formal–informal option is really a gradation, as are the other involvement options discussed in this book. There is no clear cut-off point at which one can say: stop, here the behavior becomes too informal to permit any application of our organized volunteering knowledge; at this precise point the involvement style becomes just a bit too distant from organizational sponsorship; it edges over slightly too far into the unstructured, the unprogrammed, the unsupervised. Therefore, since semantics won’t help, we must actually test our generic knowledge as far as it will go toward informality in helping style. As noted elsewhere, the generic core of that knowledge is how to motivate people without money, toward helping. A more positive reason for the call to explore informal volunteer space is that this is probably where most helping occurs, or certainly much of it. The “recruiting” potential is massive, not only for more people, but for a more balanced representation of all people.

Today we are rediscovering informal, unorganized volunteer activity. Economist Harold Wolozin estimated that there is at least as much significant informal unorganized helping as there is of the organized variety.<sup>1</sup> David Horton Smith believes informal participation more than doubles the sum of helping in society, and I agree. Though I don’t see how you can prove it at present, I believe most of the helping that goes on in the world is informal, unorganized, unregistered, and scarcely noticed. I further believe **all people** participate in this kind of helping at some time, in their own way, in terms of what they feel like doing. Not everyone is attracted to formal volunteer service, and programmed helping is only the visible tip of a very warm iceberg.

Also, informal volunteering is generally less expensive in support time, money and materials needed for its engagement. Finally, it gives promise of avoiding or ameliorating problems endemic to formal agency–related volunteer programs; among them are financial anemia, staff–volunteer conflict, and organizational suppression of the full scope of contribution volunteers are capable of making.

There are counter–arguments, too, especially from the perspective of volunteer leadership today. First, you can’t easily take credit for informal volunteering and, second, you can’t control it. Your annual report might mention informal volunteering which happened to be going in the same direction as your volunteer program, but that doesn’t help justify your volunteer program. Nor is the supervision of volunteers simply a matter of satisfying the needs of volunteer leadership and organizations for security and control. At this point we simply aren’t aware of how we can influence or facilitate informal helping in any significant way, nor are we sure we should even try. The latter is a wilderness preservation kind of argument — informal helping is beautiful in its unspoiled state and let’s not track through it any more than we have to. In other words, this argument says, let’s leave well enough alone — **severely** alone. The only exception some would admit, might be an effort to recruit informal helpers to more formal helping modes. The serious issue we must deal with here is whether formal facilitation of informal helping is possible, or whether such facilitation is a contradiction in terms.

Volunteer leadership may also feel that exploration of informal volunteer space is *passé*, a retrograde step. This book has already conceded some truth in this argument; so much of what we are doing is rediscovery rather than discovery. We always knew organized volunteer programs were one good way of helping, but not the only way. Some of us even

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Wolozin, *The Value of Volunteer Services in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: ACTION, 1975), p.8.



remember unprogrammed neighboring as the common ground from which we all came: the roots of registered helping. But usage hardens, and we act sometimes as if we believe you can't help without a membership card. Viability has become synonymous with the visibility programs can confer. Helping has become one more speciality needing to be organized, and the world has become segregated into designated helpers (volunteers and paid) and the great undesigned.

The arguments for leaving informal helping alone have merit. Still there is too much helping potential here to ignore. In any case, I won't concede our right to curiosity, so we will begin by describing some types of informal volunteers, and how we might help them help.

## The Relatively Continuous Informal Volunteer

For some people, informal volunteering is a steady state, not just a set of incidents sprinkled through daily living. Two inhabitants of relatively continuous informal space are the free-lance volunteer and the natural helper.

### 1. The Free-Lance Volunteer

The free-lance (advocacy variety) volunteer may personally be very well organized, though not formally affiliated with an organization. The trade-off is, these volunteers lack the ongoing formal support of organizations and therefore are not accountable to organizations; free-lance volunteers can be catalysts or even gadflies. They are thus particularly valuable in espousing innovative bold projects which, for various reasons, the organizational establishment won't or can't support. They can take risks, and are able to operate free of organizational restraints. This does not mean they can operate without system **contacts**; they need to know how the system operates and must have a wide range of contacts within it. It doesn't hurt if some of these contacts are powerful, agree with what the volunteers are trying to do, and will allocate organizational resources to help it along. But this support is negotiated on a point-by-point basis; it is not taken for granted in return for accountability. For this reason, free-lance volunteers are usually prepared to provide their own support, bear the expenses, and take primary responsibility for follow-through on projects.

Free-lance volunteers represent a precious heritage in the history of helping, uniquely effective for some important purposes. In an era where organized bigness is increasingly seen as necessary for accomplishing anything, I desperately hope they are not a vanishing breed. How important are these volunteers? Consider the recent advances in securing space for volunteer experience on applications for paid employment in government and industry. Much credit for that accomplishment goes to a free-lance volunteer, Ruth March. Every fortunate community has a few; any free society needs a lot of them. They are intensely individual, not-for-profit, voluntary, help-intenders doing real work. Thus, they meet every test our definition imposes on the term volunteer. Beyond that, they come closest to the dictionary definition of "volunteer plant": uncultivated and frequently treated as unwelcome surprises. Why? Many of us work within an agency or organizational setting, and freelance volunteers are not part of our brood. We have no responsibility for them and we usually take none. Indeed, unaccustomed as they are to respecting agency turf for its own sake, they are fortunate if they aren't treated as pests. Looking outward from an organizational base, the volunteer leader naturally sees freelances as both uncountable and unaccountable (they can rock the boat!). Indeed, it is almost a contradiction in terms to conceive of supervising a self-supervising person. Moreover, volunteer leaders ordinarily represent an agency or organization with relatively limited mission, purposes, objectives. The freelance volunteer's mission, purposes, objectives rarely coincide consistently with any single agency, and may be far broader and more subject to change.

Improved communication is an obvious suggestion for us if we wish to achieve more productive interaction between organizations and freelance volunteers. (Henceforth, "us"

and “we” mean the volunteer leader, the director of volunteers, and others who do that kind of job under any other name.) I suspect some freelance versus agency friction occurs because the freelance volunteer’s point of agency contact is an administrator or executive who doesn’t understand volunteers as well as we volunteer leaders do. Therefore, we must begin by raising our own awareness of the fact that the freelance is essentially one of ours, a kind of volunteer. Then we can make that fact known to the agency’s administration and offer our services at least as consultant in relations with freelance volunteers. (Yes, it may take some courage.)

Sometimes free-lance volunteers happen to be going an organization’s way, or would be glad to, if only all parties knew about potential parallels. To formalize and reinforce communication, representation of free-lance volunteers should be deliberately built into our plans for selecting policy and advisory Boards and community and neighborhood councils. Conversely, free-lance volunteers should take the initiative to drop in to see us more often and use us as their informal advisory Board. When they do drop in, we must make them feel welcome. Of course, an organization that wants a tame Board will never involve a free-lance volunteer, except by accident. (A tame Board is essentially a set of volunteer staff picked to accomplish several organizational purposes like fundraising and door-opening. Challenging the organizational *status quo* is not part of the job description.)

To repeat, improved communication will help to identify more occasions when free-lance volunteer and agency happen to have a common cause and can join forces to mutual advantage without infringing on either party’s freedom of action.

When this doesn’t happen, the agency should respect and not resent the free-lance volunteer’s independence. When it does happen, the agency should express appreciation informally and stop there, for this is a case where formal recognition of a volunteer may be undesirable. It could appear to be — or worse, actually be — a form of behavior modification or co-optation. Besides, do you really want your recognition certificate on her wall when she decides she has to confront you on another issue next year? (She might not want your certificate, either.) Your alliance is temporary and conditional, and it should be respected as such.

Such alliances will probably be more frequent as the organization concerned has a broader and more flexible mission; examples might be Voluntary Action Centers, Community Resource Centers (described later), or the Community Involvement Committees being established in North Carolina. In a sense, many volunteers who come to a VAC are free-lancing up to that time; that is, they are scanning a range of ways in which they might be involved. At that point the VAC should help focus and facilitate this free-lancing.

So much for common causes via communication. For the natural next step, I seem to have painted myself into a corner with no further recourse but to suggest “education” for both organizational people and free-lance volunteers. I hate to do that; a generalized suggestion of education abdicates responsibility to anonymous teachers, somehow able to attract unnamed students for an undeveloped course. However, the education suggestion may not be so bad this time. There are approximately 1500 volunteer leadership workshops a year in North America at local, state, regional, and national levels. At least 60 colleges and universities have a course of some sort on leadership of volunteers, though rarely a full curriculum. So, to get specific on responsibilities for the present educational recommendation: have **you** ever attended a workshop, conference, or course, a significant part of which was devoted to better understanding and support of the free-lance volunteer? If not, will you consider finding out who plans these workshops, conferences, or courses, and talk to them about putting **free-lance volunteering** on the program for the very next workshop?

For this section on free-lance volunteering, I first chose Ruth March as a prime example, then asked her free-lance help on some basic concepts. Being of a somewhat free-lance

persuasion myself, I did not accept some advice, was grateful for all of it, and caution you against considering any part of the previous section as necessarily representing her views. I hope to persuade Ruth to prepare her own guidelines for free-lance volunteering. By contrast, this section was written more from the perspective of the volunteer leader looking outward from an organizational base.

Finally, I realize that this version of free-lancing concentrates on its advocacy aspects. There is also a lot of service supporting advocacy, and sometimes service can be the dominant mode in free-lancing, in which case, free-lancing comes closer to natural helping.

## The Natural Helper

The "natural helper" is a second cousin of the free-lance volunteer. They have in common the fact that they operate informally, continuously, and individually outside an organizational framework. The common problem with both is how we can support or catalyze the work without overly controlling it.

The distinction between the two is mainly a matter of emphasis and is somewhat arbitrary:

### The NATURAL HELPER

#### Tends To Be:

- More service oriented
- A helper of individuals
- More fixed in geographical or other target area

### The FREE-LANCE VOLUNTEER

#### Tends To Be:

- More issue oriented
- More concerned with systems
- More mobile and flexible in target area

The natural helper in a neighborhood might be the proprietor of a candy store, a homemaker, a mail carrier, a barber — anybody accessible to people in the neighborhood. The only constant is that people characteristically seek help from this person and receive it voluntarily, no fee asked. The natural helper is thus a volunteer, but what does "natural" mean? I **don't** think it should mean unskilled; the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker may be giving very skilled and knowledgeable help.

Does "natural" mean untrained? I think most would agree that it usually does, but I balk a little even here. Ever since I can remember, a friend of mine has been quietly and unofficially available to members of his church for volunteer counseling assistance. He happens to have a degree in this field; does that make the help unnatural? (Without further argument on that, note that my friend's work illustrates another definition of neighborhood: people you care about, wherever they live in town.) So much for the definitional expansion. The rest of this discussion will stay within a more conventional understanding of natural helping in a neighborhood.

Is the natural helper simply someone to be grateful for and taken for granted; or is there something we can do to catalyze, without contamination, the work of this secret volunteer? I think there are things we can do. Ordinarily, such efforts should not seek to visibly affiliate the person with our agency or organization. There is the danger of damaging the person's credibility by association with a negative or alien agency image in the neighborhood. A related point is, the effectiveness of the natural helper can further be hindered by officializing it, not to mention regulating it. And — bitter pill though it may be — natural helpers simply may not significantly value your recognition on any basis.

Relatively clandestine operations are recommended, quiet contact which accepts the person's assessment of need and asks only if there are resources needed which he or she cannot command. Our job then is to locate these resources, open doors to them, or knock down some doors, if necessary. We can at least provide information leading to needed

resources, or we might actually provide the resources. In either case, the support would ideally have three characteristics:

1. Selected as to nature and style of delivery by the natural helper.
2. Probably not involving visible formal affiliation with us.
3. Generally catalyzing, releasing, and implementary, rather than directive.

Similar principles would apply in shaping the support we offer free-lance volunteers or ad hoc natural helping groups.

As noted earlier in this chapter, an organization is freer to provide support as it is broader in helping mission and administrative base, accountable more to neighborhood and community than to any more special interest organization or agency. With such an organization we are more likely to help people in their way and in their style, instead of our way and our style.

Two kinds of community resource operations are close to fitting this role now, but they are not there entirely. An information and referral (I&R) service is frequently associated with United Way and/or a local Voluntary Action Center. Essentially, I&R staff and volunteers respond to individuals who phone in asking about location of a wide range of needed services and their eligibility for these services. So, the phone callers are closer to natural helpees than helpers. Still, a person might also call I&R in the role of natural helper, in order to identify resources which can be engaged on behalf of others. Maybe all we need is a more deliberate extension of I&R to increase its visibility as a resource for individual natural helpers, as well as people needing help; perhaps we can add to I&R directories some referral resources especially appropriate for natural helpers.

The Community Resource Center (CRC) is more for groups than individuals, more oriented to self-help than other-helping, and more issue than service oriented. Basically, the CRC provides information, resource location, and coalition building support to any concerned group of whatever purpose, provided that purpose is legal. In this willingness to deal with people, "where they're at," CRCs seem generally to have more flexibility than I&Rs and are less locked into formal service delivery systems. If CRCs chose to orient their services towards individuals as well as groups, they might be particularly relevant to the free-lance (advocacy) volunteer, and sometimes the natural helper as well.<sup>2</sup>

But suppose you are viewing the natural helper from a base which is a single operating agency, rather than a general resource organization? Here the strategies are similar to those previously described for working with free-lance volunteers: communication to identify the times natural helper and agency are naturally going the same way, and education.

I further believe it is sometimes feasible and ethical for a program to take credit for catalyzing natural helping. We can record what we did to support natural helpers, what we gave, plus our estimate of how we helped them help. But we must be cautious about reporting such things openly; any public reporting needs to be discussed first with the natural helper.

The above suggestions indicate there is no necessary contradiction in formal facilitation of relatively informal volunteering. At stake is our willingness not only to loosen the extent of our control over people, but also to alter the nature of our support for them. The goal is a support structure which catalyzes and releases helping reactions and helps helpers do what they want to do, rather than shaping them to what the agency or organization wants done. The distinction will be even clearer in the next section on occasional-informal volunteering.

I trust I have conveyed sincere respect here for the free-lance volunteer and the natural helper. Nevertheless, either role might be a side door through which elitism slips in again.

<sup>2</sup>Susan A. Davis, *Community Resource Centers: The Notebook* (Washington, D.C.: The National Self-Help Resource Center, Inc., no date).

If these people become visible as another regiment in the army of designated helpers, the temptation for other people might be to suppose these volunteers have it well in hand — and then do nothing.

### The Informal–Occasional Helper

One way of focusing on the totality of informal helping is to alter our timescale from continuous to occasional and time-limited expressions. Indeed, much of informal helping is more momentary and situational than the free-lance volunteer's work or the neighborhood helper's. You ask a New Yorker for directions and get them, no fee asked (they seem to love it). Your neighbor's back is acting up again; you cut his lawn. A friend is sick; you bring over a bowl of soup and watch the kids awhile. An airport offers more than continuously-serving volunteers such as Travelers Aid, USO, and such. There is also the stranger who mentions that your coat collar is turned up and maybe you want to fix it (an informal observer volunteer, no less). A young white guy reading *Playboy* in the waiting area rushes to comfort a black child who has suddenly and firmly decided he does **not** want to go on the airplane. The person sitting next to you is glad to watch your luggage when you want to go for coffee. A woman stops to chat with a little girl who looks somewhat bewildered. A piece of luggage gets stuck in the baggage-delivering machine, and a volunteer leaps up to try to fix it (cheers).<sup>3</sup> (I spend plenty of time in airports and am an expert on transient volunteering.) Then, as I said before, there is just the smile, a touch, a gesture.

Helping “programs” thus come full circle back to everyday ethics. The sum of them vastly nourishes the quality of life. The encouragement of them may be a richly promising investment in volunteering, largely unexploited today. Let me begin by confessing that I am a Boy Scout dropout, second-class; but it was the knot-tying and tree-naming that discouraged me, not the good deed part. The seeking out of ordinary opportunities for informal helping was a great idea in my view, and I strongly favor adult good deed recognition programs, communitywide. The good deeds are happening all the time; we just need a network of volunteer observers to look for them, validate them, then ask the persons involved if they mind being recognized, and, if that's okay, convey the good news to the media and/or local authorities for recognition follow-through. Or what about a “Candid Camera” kind of program which deliberately constructs and puts people in help-stimulating rather than funny, awkward situations? (Scene: my elderly gentlemen needing his tie tied for church walks up the street.)

I'm ready for some sort of precedent. Some years ago, NICOV was fortunate to have in its employ one of the great free-lance volunteers of all time (and she still is), Gwen Winterberger. Gwen noticed nice things others missed. One of the things she noticed was a mildly retarded gentleman who passed by our building every afternoon with a rickety grocery cart picking up bottles and cans. Since we were near a college campus, the beautification was detectable. Gwen also discovered that the man was contributing the material to the local recycling center (also largely volunteer-run, of course). She promptly recommended him to the city manager as volunteer of the year. (He didn't win, but from somewhere a new cart materialized for his use.)

So much for encouragement before the fact, and recognition after it (which would then act as future encouragement for others). I also think active facilitation of informal-occasional volunteering is feasible. For this let's look at networks. A network can be defined as a relatively systematic way of connecting people so they can help one

<sup>3</sup>I concede counterexamples in all cases, as when one returns to find one's luggage lifted. I'm simply accenting the positive instances which do occur. I know as well as anyone that streets and airports can be massively indifferent places. Indeed, so much of our society seems *designed* to encourage indifference or the “negative networking” of rudeness and aggression. The traffic jam is one example; another example is the “efficiency expert” design of airplane cabin attendant jobs so that the employee doesn't have time to be considerate, even if he or she has the inclination. Population density and time efficiency may be the greatest enemies kindness ever had.

another, usually informally. There is a level of organization here, but it is not an organization. The organized process is only for relating people's resources to people's needs; it catalyzes and connects helping, rather than "creating" and controlling it. Over the past six years, NICOV has developed some network systems for facilitating unprogrammed helping — or rather we have shamelessly larcenized an idea as old as the hills, given it a new name and theory, and perhaps helped a bit by articulating the process self-consciously. The process is called Minimax or resource exchange process, and it is summarized in what follows and amplified elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> By way of introduction, six years experience with the process has shown that it can catalyze without contaminating informal helping relationships.

## The Resource Exchange Process

These are guidelines for facilitating networks in small-group situations: a workshop, a club or church meeting, a livingroom, or a bar after a football game. The process gives participants a direct experience of helping and being helped. Either direction of the process is natural and can even be fun (helping need not be sacrificial). The basic assumptions of the process are:

1. Everyone has something useful to give.
2. Everyone has something useful to receive from others.
3. The positive connections between giving and receiving are readily at hand, if we only look for them systematically.

The facilitator begins by defining:

Glad Give (or Skillwill): "Something I can do pretty well, enjoy doing, and which might be of some use to another in the group."

Needs: "Something someone else might help me with, an ordinary yet important thing." (Avoid overly private or personal things, at least at first.)

Please note: as distinct from some kinds of program volunteering, the facilitator does not tell anybody what they need, or what they should be giving.

The equipment for the process is very sophisticated: a pencil and enough paper so each person can tear up eight or ten strips each large enough to hold a phrase or two. For convenience, we'll call them cards from now on. (Some people do use blank cards.)

Usually, you want about seven or eight people sitting around in a circle. If possible, avoid loading a group with people who know each other too well. Each participant then marks all eight strips of paper with his or her initials. Four of the cards are then marked G (for glad give), and on each of them participants also put their telephone numbers. The other four cards are marked N, for need. The instructions (please, not verbatim) would then go something like this:

Now take the four G cards. G stands for glad give, which is something (a) you like to do or enjoy doing; (b) you can do fairly well; and (c) which might be of practical help to someone else, now or in the future. (Give examples of glad gives at this point: I'm a good tennis player, really like to play, and could teach someone how to play; or, I like to play around with words and am fairly good with language; or, I have some excellent vegetarian recipes and would love to share them; or, I'm nuts about washing dishes.)

Now think about yourself and come up with your two most marketable glad gives. Put

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<sup>4</sup>The theory of Minimax is discussed in *People Approach: Nine New Strategies for Citizen Involvement* by Ivan Scheier, 1977. The Minimax process is presented as a game, with cards and workshop instruction sheets, in *MiniMax: The Exchange Game* by Putnam Barber, Rick Lynch and Robin Webber, 1977, and the concept has been adapted to fit the church or religious setting in *The Neighboring Notebook* by David Lewis, 1978. All three publications are available from Volunteer Readership, VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, P.O. Box 1807, Boulder, Colorado 80306.

one of them on one G card and another on another G card. A phrase or two on each is fine. Leave the other G cards blank. They will be your wild cards.

Now take your N or need cards. Think of your two most important, ordinary needs with which you might get some help. You don't need to reveal your innermost secrets or get too personal, but even so the need you're willing to announce can be important. For example: I need some help learning how to drive a car; or, play the guitar; or, take care of plants; or, I would really like to have someone to jog with every morning before work.

Now fill in one N card with one of your needs and another N card with another need. Leave the other two N cards blank. They are your wild cards.

Before beginning the process, you should run through the following instructions:

The object of the exercise is to make as many matches as possible between glad gives and needs. People can go around bidding their glad gives first, or their needs, or any way. The important thing is to keep the matching process moving (avoid long-winded discussions), and keep everybody involved as much as you can.

If a glad give is reasonably close to somebody else's need, these two people negotiate it out. If my affinity for washing dishes does **not** perfectly match your need for housework, one of us will have to give a little on this or no soap. If you hear a glad give you can use and haven't written it down on one of your two need cards, you can write it down on one of your blank wild cards for need. The same is true if you hear a need for which you have a glad give not yet written down; fill in one of your wild glad give cards.

When matches are made, the person whose need was filled picks up the matching glad give card and keeps it. Remember the G card has the giver's phone number on it, for further contact if necessary. If you want to be even more rigorous about it, a volunteer monitor can be appointed to check on delivery or the process facilitator can do this. Sometimes the glad give to need transaction can occur immediately, or almost so.

Obviously, the process is meant to establish a "for real" helping network, though sometimes it is used simply for demonstrations and as an ice-breaker.

In the some 500 instances of this process I've witnessed, a small circle will exhaust all the matches it can make in about 30 to 45 minutes, and have some fun doing it, or at least be resistive if the facilitator tries to stop them before they are finished. The self-motivating part of it is also significant; the network is largely self-building and self-sustaining; the facilitator doesn't have to intervene to provide incentives, supervision, etc.

The other astonishing part of it is that small groups will typically make 60 to 80 percent of all possible matches in this 30 to 45 minute period. This is certainly a testimonial to the flexibility and power of informal/occasional helping if we can only provide a systematic process for connecting what people are willing to give with what people need.

From this small-circle seed, the informal helping network can be further expanded. First of all, suppose you have a number of small circles in the room, say at a church or synagogue meeting. (I've facilitated the process with up to 150 people at a time.)

### The Ambassador Cycle

After you perceive that the matches have been about exhausted within each small circle, ask each group to:

1. Appoint one person as their ambassador.
2. Allow that person to receive all written (not blank) glad give cards still unused in that group. Someone else in the group volunteers to continue to "play" the ambassador's need cards.
3. The ambassador now moves to other groups to market his or her group's remaining

glad gives. Two groups can simply exchange ambassadors, or ambassadors may circulate from group to group clockwise or counter-clockwise or any other way. But every other person in the group stays put. If an ambassador exhausts all the "glad gives," he or she returns home.

This rather lovely chaos can take about 20 to 30 minutes. What it does is to establish a network between the small circle networks. But the overall network is still confined to physically present people. The next cycle extends the helping connections outside the room.

## The Auction Cycle

Bring all groups back together, and extend the concept of glad give from something you are **personally** committed to deliver to:

Information Leading To (ILT): "I can't personally help you with fundraising, but here's the address of the Grantsmanship Center, and what they do, etc."

Volunteer Another (VA): "I can't or won't teach you karate, but I know someone else who might be glad to do it."

ILT and VA are related, of course. At this point anyone can call out a need never matched with an in-room G, in hopes of attracting a VA or ILT from anyone else in the room. The range of potential helping connections becomes amazing here. I have witnessed the following scene, and some others nearly as incredible.

Auction need: My professor isn't too friendly to volunteering, and assigned me a paper on volunteering in communist countries.

Response: Information Leading To (ILT): I believe Kenn Allen, Executive Vice President of VOLUNTEER, was in Communist China in 1979.

Another ILT: Wasn't he going to write an article trying to relate our concept of volunteering to some helping happenings in China?

Next ILT: I believe he's done this. In fact, I have a copy of the article here. **Please** return it.

At the same network-building session, I saw someone successfully auction off a need for free furniture for a children's shelter home.

## Mapping

You can further proceed to locate physically on a map the glad gives, VAs, ILTs, and needs in a geographic region, adding glad gives and needs for organizations as well as individuals. You can also include some organizations actually located outside the region when their activities impact or are impacted by people in that region. We began doing this at the California Volunteer Network Conference last year; it seems to have exciting possibilities.

## Variations

The expanding circle is simply one illustration of a fairly well-developed strategy that works to catalyze informal occasional volunteer helping without overly controlling it. But circles of six to eight are not sacred; there is ample precedent for other methods of connecting informal helping to need. Bulletin boards are an obvious example in offices, apartment houses, schools, and supermarkets, or anywhere people pass by. However, bulletin boards often also emphasize monetary gives and needs. I'd like to see at least one "people board" established exclusively for the moneyless side of help-wanted, help-given. (The California Volunteer Network had a sharing tree from which people hung their glad gives and needs — a rich idea for a family Christmas tree, too.)



Newsletters for churches, clubs and schools sometimes offer help-connecting encouragement, but they **could** do regular glad give and need columns. A few years ago, several parts of the country had newsletters called *Learning Exchange* devoted to this kind of thing. In fact, I happened to pick up a copy seven years ago in the student union of Melbourne University, Australia, and this was when I first started thinking seriously about a resource exchange process.

Babysitting pools are another example, and citizen band (CB) networks often have Minimax or resource exchange features. The process is, of course, what friends and healthy families do for each other unselfconsciously, and for these people the argument is perhaps strongest for leaving well enough alone. But suppose the help-connecting **isn't** going well. I think there the resource exchange process will be a tool for building more positive relationships between people in families, neighborhoods, Boards, classrooms, peer groups, or for the further extension of extended families. Instead of unearthing and analyzing "problems" in our relationships with one another, the resource exchange process focuses on developing the positive win-win potential for mutual support between people.

What has all this to do with volunteer leadership? Several years ago the Voluntary Action Center of Kalamazoo, Michigan, connected a community using resource exchange principles (a partial map of the helping pathways appears in Chapter 18). The Riverside, California, Volunteer Center has considered developing a "people board." Leadership of individual volunteer program efforts have used resource exchange principles to build mutual support networks among their service and Board volunteers, between volunteers and staff, and within client/patient groups, building on their strengths and for their self-respect. People outside the volunteer leadership world have gone even further in this vein of volunteer networking.<sup>5</sup>

The issue is one addressed throughout this book — the breadth of our own vision of volunteer helping and our responsibility for promoting this helping. For I claim that most of the helping in the world is of the more informal variety, and that much more of it would occur if we could actively apply organized volunteer program knowledge to the facilitation of informal helping. I claim this translation is largely possible; the question is largely one of our courage to attempt it, and to meet society more on its own grounds of everyday ethics in family, school, workplace, neighborhood, and community.

No one claims the decision is easy, or that others can make it for us. I do hope we will be influenced by powerful pressures originating outside the volunteer leadership world. For example, as I write, national priorities have strongly reemphasized neighborhood-based helping and self-helping, much of which is far less formal than organized volunteer programs. For various possible reasons, government and other decision-makers are **not** generally turning to organized volunteer program leadership for help in mobilizing neighborhood voluntary action. If that assessment sticks, the grievous loss for us is a vast new area in which we could be relevant, in which we could build a new constituency and clientele for our services. We have only to extend our knowledge from formal toward informal volunteering and other newer volunteer space. Although I believe we can do that now, if we don't, we will once again allow ourselves to be pigeonholed, isolated from the mainstream of national life. More than that, the country will suffer from our lack of imagination and courage to give help, when we could give it.

We have not finished with less formal volunteering in this book. It runs through much of unexplored volunteer space, and almost all of living.

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<sup>5</sup>For example, see *Natural Helping Networks: A Strategy for Prevention* by Alice H. Collins and Diane L. Pancoast (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Social Workers, Inc., 1976). See also the Barter Project, associated with VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, 1214 16th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# ON VISIBLE LOVE

“Work is love made visible,” said the poet, Kahlil Gibran. For us, volunteer work is better described as “help-intending made visible.” This help-intending doesn’t always look like love immediately — someone once told me that the meanest man he ever knew was also the most effective fundraiser for charitable causes. Nor does the volunteer advocate always seem so lovely, viewed from the other side of the argument. The volunteer probation officer may sometimes be most effective when firmly setting behavior limits for the offender, at the cost of being short-term friendly. The volunteer evaluator had better not be uncritically loving with the organization evaluated.

Of course, the love of volunteers is often tangible in such things as the tears of a teenager on the occasion of a first smile from a nursing home patient, or on the face of a Senior Partner watching his Junior Partner shoot the rapids with skill and courage. But the love is not always **immediately** visible in the work of volunteers. Sometimes I wish poets were more accurate, but then they wouldn’t be poets, I suppose.

Help-intending can be made visible in two ways: through work (giving of yourself) and gift-giving (giving money and things). Our definition of volunteer **seems** to rule out donations of money or materials, for it insists that volunteering is work — effort with a serious purpose. At first glance, doing and donating seem intrinsically different. Our task now is to see if gift-giving is a solid barrier beyond which the volunteer attitude and spirit cannot pass.

### Work

Effort with a serious purpose comes in all shapes and sizes. So far, we have seen that volunteer work can range from:

Continuous	to	Occasional
As an Individual	to	With a Group
Direct	to	Indirect
Participating Action	to	Observation
Organized Formal Structure	to	Informal, Unstructured

Later in this book, we will examine volunteer work modes which vary in other ways; for example, in degree of self-interest, in their relation to money, and in their relation to the *status quo*. Thus the work side of the work/gift-giving option involves only those matters which are discussed elsewhere in this book, in terms of variations in style of volunteer involvement. The new part of the discussion is the extent to which work, in all its varieties, may grade over into gift-giving and still resemble volunteering. But before moving on to gift-giving, I would like to reemphasize the general point in Chapter 2 about volunteering as work, which is to say, as serious effort with a purpose.

Today's standard of seriousness in work tends to depend heavily upon what one is paid to do, and on how much one is paid. So, like it or not, a comparison of paid and volunteer work is almost inevitable at this point. True, volunteer work is not always taken as seriously as paid work, yet the range in skill and responsibility is parallel. I grant you, volunteers are not always as well represented in the upper ranges of responsibility and, of course, they rarely work full time, but they are there, somewhere, all the way from the ground to the stratosphere of serious endeavor. The volunteer chairperson of a real Board can have immense responsibility and influence. Human resource bank (skillsbank) volunteers may be accountants, lawyers, engineers. Volunteers in Technical Assistance (VITA) can call upon a resource bank of thousands nationally for every imaginable technical expertise of use to developing countries. I am not a betting man, but for a number of years I've offered the following wager to all comers: describe anything anyone is doing for money anywhere, and I will find you a volunteer also doing it somewhere. Give me three weeks, and it will cost you five bucks when you lose. I've never lost that bet and (IRS please note) never actually collected my winnings either. The closest call so far was "Chippewa translator." In any case, it's scarcely a sporting bet anymore in an era when a more or less casual browse through VOLUNTEER's mailing list turns up "The Association of American Volunteer Physicians" (350 members)!

My conclusion is, volunteering ranges as widely as paid work in variety, responsibility, and skill. Therefore, though volunteer work is not done for financial gain and is rarely full time, it is serious, responsible. We must never concede otherwise; to do so acquiesces in the segregation of volunteering from the mainstream of work in our society. I would go even further: volunteering is best seen not as a kind of work, but as one way of engaging people in any kind of work. Money is the other way to engage people in work, and there are all sorts of combinations of the two. Even more radically, I'll claim later in this book that volunteering is an **attitude** towards work; we may have this attitude in any degree toward any kind of work, even if we are paid for it (Chapter 15).

## Gift-Giving

In our society there is a constant flow of money and things between people and organizations. Gift-giving is one type of transfer; business and governmental transactions account for other parts of the flow. What moves is money — or the operating symbols of money, such as checks and credit cards — and things. The things include facilities and materials such as food, clothing, toys, flowers, and other "goods." Most of these things have a clear equivalent in dollars; we know exactly what they are worth in money. But this is not always so; for example, what is the cash value of a paper flower a child makes and gives to you?

As noted, business, industry, and government transactions and purchases share with gift-giving this general characteristic of transfer of money and things. I believe the special qualities which distinguish gift-giving from the other three kinds of transactions are the same qualities which make gift-giving resemble volunteering in some respects. Therefore, let's compare the two on each of volunteering's four main defining characteristics from Chapter 2.

	Relatively Uncoerced	Help-Intending	Not for Profit	Work
Volunteering	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gift-Giving	Yes	Yes	Yes (?)	?

**Relatively Uncoerced.** If you are robbed of money or your watch, you have not given the robber a gift, because these things have been taken from you by force. The same is true of any money or things from which you are unwillingly separated by extortion, conspiracy, or any trickery. It is true that sometimes "gifts" may be so rigorously expected or obligatory as to seem virtually coerced. For example, a gift to the newlyweds is virtually incumbent on whomever attends the wedding; on the other hand, ignoring a wedding invitation is sometimes a voluntary choice. There are certainly degrees of obligation in the prompting of giving gifts, but in this, gift-giving is no different than volunteering, as we have seen in Chapter 2. Therefore, just as work becomes more volunteer-like when less coerced, transfers of money and things become more volunteer-like when given under less obligation.

**Help-Intending.** Sending a bomb through the mail is a felony, not a gift. Things transferred become gifts only as they are intended to help, to be useful or satisfying to the recipient. Business and governmental transactions may also be designed to be of service to recipients. But in gift-giving, there is less in the way of explicit self-interest and expectation of equivalent return in dollar value, votes, or whatever. The self-interest in gift-giving is a matter of degree, just as is the self-interest in volunteering. The gift-giver may have some generalized expectation of return, in heaven or when his or her children get married, but, again, it is less explicit, direct, and calculated than in business. For this reason, a bribe is not a gift. The bottom line is somewhat fuzzier on contributions to a political campaign. At one extreme, an anonymous donation offered because you truly believe in the cause, qualifies as a gift. At the other extreme, a large contribution for which political favors are fully expected in return is not a gift; it is, shall we say, a purchase. The line between gift and purchase is not always so clear. What is clear is that some transfers of money or materials can be unselfish or uncalculated enough to meet the test of help-intention. Henceforth, only contributions which qualify in this way will be called gifts, and by this definition, gifts share the help-intending characteristic of volunteering.

**Not for Profit.** As we have just seen, a gift is relatively unselfish and not calculated to return as much or more than is given. Therefore, a gift differs from a sale explicitly designed for financial profit.

One sticky point here is charitable tax deductions. Is fifty dollars donated to United Way still a gift, if you get all or most of it back in tax savings? In such cases, charitable tax deductions have the effect of "de-volunteerizing" gift-giving. On the other hand, many donations — such as old clothes for Goodwill or the Salvation Army — are not made with tax deductibility in mind. Even when they are, you are not **supposed** to make a profit on tax deductions, but only break even. We have already indicated that people who break even in their work because they are reimbursed for work-related expenses, are still comfortably in the volunteer column. (Chapter 15 deals with this matter again, in more depth.) Therefore, gift-giving can share another defining characteristic of volunteering: not directly or immediately for financial gain.

Thus far, both gift-giving and volunteering are relatively uncoerced, help-intending, and not for financial gain. We might then claim that gift-giving is at least "three-fourths volunteer." For somewhat similar reasons, Dr. Diana Leat perceived a "family resemblance" between volunteer work and gift-giving.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Diana Leat, "Towards a Definition of Volunteer Involvement" (paper, Berkhamsted, Herts, England: The Volunteer Centre, 1977).

The main problem is the other quarter, the fourth defining characteristic of volunteering as work; that is, as a kind of serious activity effort or behavior. An activity visibly differs from a thing; the act of delivering a meal to a shut-in is not the same as the meal itself. The most we can expect is a close interdependence between helping work and helpful things. Thus, though your tennis swing is not the same thing as your tennis racket, the two are connected in some way, one hopes, and even interdependent.

Where helping activity and things are interdependent, gift-giving edges up beyond "three-quarters volunteer" toward ninety percent volunteer. (I never claim gift-giving ever quite reaches the one-hundred percent mark.)

The case for interdependence will be presented in three main parts.

1. **Economic Equivalence.** Volunteer work is increasingly accepted as having a market value in dollars, just as most gifts have a dollar value.

2. **Gift Production.** Many gifts would not exist unless volunteer work produced them, or in some other way facilitated the giving.

3. **Intimacy of Association.** Just as some gifts could not occur but for the volunteer work behind them, much of volunteer work would be meaningless if separated from associated gifts. Thus, what does a Meals-on-Wheels volunteer do if there are no meals to deliver? And if everyone were absolutely bankrupt, what would be the sense of being a fundraising volunteer? The work is incomplete and meaningless without the things or gifts which are the object of the work.

## 1. Economic Equivalence

In a real sense, volunteer work is a gift, "a gift of time." Indeed, *A Gift of Time* is the title of an excellent film on volunteering produced by the Association of Junior Leagues.<sup>2</sup> But a gift of time (effort) doesn't relate solidly enough to gifts of money or things if the time is valueless in the material sense. In fact, the economic tangibility of volunteer time is demonstrated by two related recent developments in the U.S. The first is still somewhat controversial: the use of the "dollar value" of volunteer time as one way to justify volunteer efforts.<sup>3</sup> Suppose twenty volunteers worked ten hours each last month, and you estimate you would have had to pay them an average of five dollars an hour for their services, if they hadn't volunteered. They have thus "contributed" a thousand dollars worth of time to your organization. They didn't literally give you the cash, but in a sense they saved you the cash (assuming you had it and would have spent it on such services if volunteers hadn't provided them — a very large assumption).

Second, the convertibility of cash to work will be even closer if legislative efforts for tax deductions or credits for volunteer service ever come to pass. The law will then have ratified an essential economic equivalence between giving money and giving work as a condition of tax benefits.

## 2. Gift Production

Some years ago a group of children used to hike up to my cabin fairly regularly. After conversation and coke ran out (approximately five minutes) the children would start making drawings for me. These art works, however multitudinous, were expected to be on display for the next visit. The efforts of these girls and boys were help-intending, relatively uncoerced, and — expectations of future soft drinks notwithstanding — not for profit.

<sup>2</sup>Available from Association Films, 600 Grand Avenue, Ridgefield, N.J. 07657.

<sup>3</sup>Harold Wolozin, *The Value of Volunteer Services in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: ACTION, 1975), p.4.

The dollar value of the materials used was negligible. Thus, the drawings were simply physical vessels for preserving the products of volunteer work; that is, there was nothing “in” these drawings, except for that volunteer work. For the life of me, I cannot see any meaningful separation between volunteering and gift-giving in this case. Incidentally, it would not have mattered if the gifts had not pleased me, though in fact they did. The intention to help was there.

My young friends’ immediate help-intending work was targeted on producing things, which in turn impacted on me. The things were simply the medium of the helping message, the vessels of the volunteer effort. Moreover, the relation between givers and receiver was still personal and direct, much more so than in some instances of volunteering as effort without a material intermediary. Though there is this material intermediary in the helping process, I think volunteering and gift-giving are essentially one and the same thing here. The same is true when givers do not literally and fully create the gift; for example, when a gardener grows some flowers and gives them to you.

Gift-giving becomes less volunteer-like when the relation between giver and thing given is less personal and direct. An extreme example would be if I pay someone else to buy a gift for you with my money — a tenuous connection to volunteering at best.

Somewhere in between the two extremes would be giving a possession of yours to someone else. Though you may not actually have made the article, it can still be a very personal part of your life. Indeed, I’ve always liked giving a friend something of mine which they have admired, rather than going out and buying them something shiny new, without any personal vibes; this process is more volunteer-like. (On the other hand, some might say it is also cheap.)

The personal connection between giver and gift may not be entirely lost, even when the gift is money. Most of us — or our families — put a lot of personal effort into earning money; ordinarily there are other things we could do with our dollars besides donating them to others. In this case, instead of directly giving the thing to someone, we give the receiver the wherewithal to acquire a choice of things up to the value of the money given. As noted, the process is more direct than previous variations, but the process may be more donee-centered; that is, the receiver has some choice of things for which to exchange the money.

Another variation in the relation between a volunteer and a gift is the case where the volunteer neither makes nor owns what is given, but instead persuades others to provide the gift. This is the volunteer who begs or borrows facilities or materials needed for helping purposes, and this is certainly the volunteer fundraiser. We will return to volunteers as fundraisers and materialraisers in another context later in this chapter. Let the following suffice for now. It is true that the volunteer facilitator of gifts by others is one further step removed from a personal connection with the actual gift. Nevertheless, he or she does make the gift possible; there would be much less money and materials actually given if volunteers weren’t out there persuading and pleading.

So much for the directness of relation between giver and gift as a condition of gift-giving being like volunteering. What about the relation between giver and **receiver**? We have already seen that the volunteer fundraiser is further removed from the gift than the person who actually makes or owns what is given. The volunteer gift-facilitator is usually also more distant from the person who ultimately receives the gift. Indeed, it seems to me that much or most of giving today is impersonal in this sense. For example, when we donate money to a university, cookies for a charitable bake sale, or books to a library, we will rarely or never see the people who ultimately benefit from our gift. However, such directness does not necessarily prevent gift-giving from being volunteer-like, for Chapter 9 noted that volunteer **work** can also be very indirect in its relation to the ultimate problem or persons we seek to help. An American Civil Liberties Union volunteer

attorney working on prisoners' rights will probably spend far more time in law books than in prison, where the problem actually occurs. The lawyer's volunteer work is no less important because of that kind of indirectness.

### 3. Intimacy of Association

I believe gift-giving is especially close to volunteering in cases where donation and doing are inseparable in a total caring enterprise. In such situations, the work does not **produce** the gifts, as in the previous discussion, but rather, the gift-giving and the activity are so interdependent that one is meaningless without the other.

Such integration means that the helping work is completed by helpful things and vice versa. For example, a volunteer regularly visits a depressed or autistic child. One day, the child in a rare flash of interest admires a scarf the volunteer is wearing. She thinks it over, and gives the scarf to the child. Can you really separate gift from kindness in the work? Can you ever do that when breaking bread is part of being together? The volunteer Friend has a coke with his kid (he buys, or maybe sometimes the kid buys). Is hot soup for skid-row people quite as nurturing without the touch of human hands? I doubt it, and I think Meals on Wheels is more than meals and more than wheels, because of the loving work which makes it possible.

Again, volunteer beautification work is impossible without trees to plant and flower seeds to water. Ghetto children painting murals of pride on neighborhood walls can't do it without paint and brushes; nor can the paint and brushes do it without the kids. Nor do the materials have to be any more expensive than the work is. Suppose you faint and awaken to see a Good Samaritan offering you comfort and a glass of water. Can it possibly matter that the gift of water accompanying the compassion didn't cost a penny?

I don't think it does matter, as long as the thing given integrates with the total process of caring and doesn't dominate it. However, if the volunteer Friend bankrolls the kid to the tune of twenty dollars a week, the connection between gift-giving and volunteering is definitely disrupted. On the other hand, if a volunteer receives enabling fund reimbursement for a gift proportionately integrated with caring work, the back-up organization only happens to be providing the resources for the gift.

Now for a true story. The story involves informal helping, like the fainting example, and illustrates several ways in which volunteer work is incomplete without volunteered things. Once upon a time, a charming, creative person owned a bookshop. This person was also a perfectly appalling businessman. He warmly welcomed people into his shop to read books and discuss them, and didn't pay much attention to whether anyone was actually buying them. If people appeared really to covet a book, he tended to give it to them. All told, he was an excessively volunteer businessman. Recognizing this, some other people volunteered in another direction. These people tended to buy books they didn't need, and bookstore stock certificates they suspected had mainly artistic value. (They were right.)

Nevertheless, this alleged businessman continued to accelerate downhill. Finally, wholesale book suppliers would no longer extend credit to the shop for purchase of new books. The remaining hope of commercial salvation became the sale of secondhand books. The owner, however, was embarrassed about accepting donations of free secondhand books for resale. Whereupon a friend of mine hit upon a subtle helping strategy. While some of us distracted the owner with literary discussion in one corner of the shop — all the while trying to prevent him from **giving** us the book under discussion — my friend furtively inserted secondhand book gifts on the shelves in another corner of the shop. It was a marvelous kind of reverse robbery and my friend never got caught at it either. And once again, his effort wouldn't have helped without the books, and the books wouldn't have helped without his effort.

More than that, things are often immanent with love, and so is the sacrifice of things.

The most beautiful Christmas story I ever read was O. Henry's "*The Gift of the Magi*." I think it is a volunteer story, too, in the sense of what we have been groping towards here. We see a young couple, living in New York, very poor, and very much in love. Being in love, each wants desperately to give the other something very special for Christmas. The lady's beautiful long hair deserves a precious hairclasp to set it off. The young man's most valuable possession is a family heirloom watch, but he has no chain or fob for it. On Christmas morning, the young man gives his wife a beautiful set of tortoise-shell combs, and she gives him a platinum fob for his watch. But he has pawned his watch to buy the combs, and she has cut off her hair and sold it, to buy the chain. As I said, they were much in love.

The connection between volunteer effort and volunteered gifts is even more striking when the gift is literally of oneself. Churchill's "blood, sweat, and tears" could have been said of volunteers. Tears of compassion are that kind of gift. The volunteer fighting forest fires gives sweat, and maybe gets smoke in his or her lungs. Is the Red Cross blood donor a volunteer? I think so — the effort can't be separated from the blood. The same is true of the organ donor and of brave volunteers who, through all history, have given arms, legs, and lives for a cause.

The linkage between work and gift-giving can be so intimate as to defy dissection. A lesser linkage, though still vital, was previously discussed in this chapter: volunteer work which aims at acquisition of gifts for good purposes. Without the volunteer fundraiser, most private enterprise in helping would collapse. Here we have in their millions the fundraiser for United Way, National Black United Fund, the Cancer Society, MS; we have Girl Scouts selling cookies; movie stars on TV marathons; the volunteer grantwriter; the volunteer in the thrift shop. Nor does it end there. Volunteers solicit food, foster homes, clothes, toys, books, and whatever is needed for completion of a work-plus-gift package of caring. Related are outreach volunteers who see to it that the indigent and isolated get the full benefits due them: Social Security, food stamps, and other social services. In all these cases, the whole point of the volunteer work is to acquire or release materials or money for helping purposes. Work and things are inseparable because the work is meaningless without the things.

But once the volunteer has raised money or materials, the intimacy of association can fade between volunteer work and things. True, some of the money and materials raised by volunteers can be directly integrated with the process of caring work. However, much of it will need to be **converted** into helping effort, sometimes a more distant connection. By this I mean the money raised by volunteer effort may be used to purchase other helping time targeted more directly on the problem; for example, the time of medical researchers, social workers, nurses, neighborhood organizers. The money can also be used to defray expenses incident to involving volunteers to work with the people who have the problem. Donations (materials, facilities) can be converted into support of volunteering and also into the support of paid helping efforts. One hopes that the balance of conversion will be appropriate between the two; the problem is a tendency for money to drive out volunteers. Once an organization has a little money to spare, purchasing the services of people seems frequently more convenient than persuading them to serve without the incentive of money. This convenience can override more valid considerations in deciding which jobs are best paid for, and which should be volunteer.<sup>4</sup>

It is particularly ironic to see success of fundraising volunteers actually eliminating other volunteers in an organization, unjustifiably or unthinkingly. When this happens, I think fundraising volunteers should put their foot down. This could be an issue for the League of Volunteers alluded to in Chapters 7 and 16, and/or a coalition among volunteer

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<sup>4</sup>For example, such considerations might include the extent to which the job must be filled by a fulltime person. Volunteers aren't ordinarily available for fulltime work.



organizations. I, for one, would never agree to raise funds for a fund-allocating organization unless I had this clear clause in my work contract: one important condition for award of monies will be the fullest feasible use of volunteers by the organization which is to receive the funds, or clear and immediate plans for reaching this goal. I call this the “matching citizen participation” principle of fund allocation. Naturally, “volunteer” would be construed in the widest meaningful sense of citizen participation, as described throughout this book.

What we have really been talking about, in the broadest sense, is a gap in communication between the volunteer who acquires funds or materials for an organization and the volunteer who helps deliver the services provided by that organization. The matching citizen participation principle of fund allocation is one way of bridging this gap. Another more direct way of bridging the gap would be to recruit for service roles, people who donate money and materials. At first glance, this doesn't look easy, for the giver is almost completely segregated from the occasion of helping, and often doesn't know what is ultimately done with his or her money or materials. The contributor to United Way will probably never be on the scene to see how the money is used; and you will never see the light in the eyes of the child who receives that secondhand toy you gave (made like new by volunteers, of course). Films help, but sometimes the fully personal connection is lost. Maybe it's impractical even to hope for it. Still, couldn't United Way and similar organizations at least have a box to check for preferred volunteer participation along with the money part of the donor form? If any do, I will stand delightedly corrected.

The volunteer recruiting potential happens to be better than average among gift-givers. Several years ago, a study by the Institute for Social Research at Michigan University indicated a positive correlation between amount of gift-giving and amount of volunteering.<sup>5</sup> People don't ordinarily consider one a substitute for the other. People who give gifts are **givers**, moving across borders of time, money, and materials in their giving. Volunteer leadership must simply provide more integrated total gift packages for them.

There is some precedent for providing such packages. The Junior League puts its people where its money is. Churches and synagogues sometimes do this too, though they could probably do more of it. Some corporations orient their cash contributions to where their employees are volunteering, although it isn't automatic — the corporation gives special consideration to the employee's fund request. This is similar to the matching citizen participation fund allocation principle previously described: the donee organization comes to deserve the gift of money, in part because this organization involves volunteers or seriously plans to do so. In the above examples, the donor organization gives its people right along with its money, and may even make the integrated gift of work and money a condition of the donation.

I'm particularly impressed with the linkage model used by PARTNERS, successfully tested in practice. They offer business and industry a balanced package of gift-giving which includes money, positions as policy volunteers on their Board, and a wide range of opportunities for employees to give occasional or continuous volunteer service to PARTNERS and/or material donations.<sup>6</sup> The same model could be adapted for involving other kinds of gift-givers: unions, churches, civic clubs, and individual donors.

The work-gift linkage models described above tend to begin with the donor of money and materials, or the person who facilitates such donations. The model then tries to move these people toward volunteering which is more directly associated with the ultimate problem the organization is working on. Logically, we could also begin with volunteers

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<sup>5</sup>Institute for Social Research, *A Survey of Giving Behavior and Attitudes: Report to Respondents* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan, 1975), p.8.

<sup>6</sup>For more information about this unique model, contact PARTNERS, 1260 W. Bayaud Ave., Denver, Colorado 80223.

whose service effort concentrates on “the problem” and try to persuade them to give money and materials as well. When such volunteers are naturally inclined to add the gift of things to their gift of time, well and good, but I would strongly recommend against pushing them to do so, for fear of embarrassing or excluding some good people who feel for any reason that they have “only” their time to give.

## Conclusions and Implications

Gift-giving shares at least three of the four main defining characteristics of volunteering. That is, both behaviors are relatively uncoerced, help-intending, and not designed to produce financial profit.

Gift-giving differs from volunteering in regard to the fourth main characteristic: work; money or materials are not work, in any literal sense. Nevertheless there are instances in which volunteer work and gift-giving are interdependent, and, in fact, so intimately associated that they are inseparable for all practical help-intending purposes.

Speaking approximately, then, gift-giving is at least three-quarters, and often more, volunteer-like. At a minimum, there is substantial conceptual overlap between volunteering and gift-giving, and at a maximum, when things and work are fully integrated in a total caring package, the two are virtually identical. There must be millions of people out there who are only or primarily gift-givers. Who cares if they qualify as part-way into volunteer space or simply nearer the border than nongivers? The point is, they are relatively close, and volunteer leaders have ways of encouraging their further immigration. In this way we return to a main theme of this book, the recruiting of a nation.

Throughout this discussion, I have implicitly taken the argument one step further than simply describing a close connection between things given and time given because I don't think we deal with gift-giving and volunteering in a manner which sufficiently capitalizes on the closeness of their relationship. The two are first cousins, maybe siblings, and we tend to treat them as 32nd cousins, as shown by the segregation between fundraising volunteers and other volunteers. Among other things, a leadership person who is responsible for fundraising is not ordinarily responsible for volunteers in general, too. A director or coordinator of volunteers often is not responsible at the same time for donations of money and materials, except perhaps as these donations contribute to his or her volunteer program. Directors of volunteers who also coordinate fundraising sometimes seem to consider the latter a dilution of their primary professional role, a distraction from that role. Nevertheless, throughout this chapter I have urged that active efforts be made to integrate gift-giving and volunteering more closely, with some suggestions on how this integration can be achieved. The following is a summary of these suggestions, with a few additions.

In general, I recommend more intensive study of the optimum interfaces between gift-giving and volunteering. This chapter represents only a beginning at this task. More understanding should lead to more practical applications. More specific suggestions include the following points.

1. Volunteer fundraisers should insist that a fair and appropriate proportion of the money they raise be used to support the work of other volunteers.
2. People whose help-intending is focused on donation of money or things should be more actively recruited for additional contributions of volunteer time.
3. Paragraph 2 suggests a sequential process. We must also refine and more actively disseminate involvement models which **concurrently** integrate gift-giving with volunteer work. The PARTNERS model was described as one among several possibilities for this integration.
4. For volunteers working in areas other than gift-giving (for example, tutors),

volunteer leadership should more actively enhance caring work by associated gift-giving. Volunteers need more positive training on the appropriate integration of material gifts with their client contact work. What training is offered now is mainly gift **avoidance** training, I think. For example, we urge volunteers to be careful **not** to give money to their client-companions, and **not** to make a habit of giving them presents. We need more emphasis on the conditions under which a gift positively enhances the total caring process. Not incidentally, the training should also include conditions under which a volunteer should accept a gift from the person he or she is working with.

5. The productive integration of gift-giving and volunteer work requires a corresponding integration in leadership roles. Certainly, people whose principal leadership responsibility is securing gifts of money or materials should have more training in volunteer leadership. Some volunteer leadership people may also benefit from more training in the acquisition of materials and money for good causes — not just for their volunteer program, but also for their organization in general. Indeed, as previously noted, many volunteer directors today are also responsible for donations of materials to their organization. Sometimes we hear complaints about this “dual” role, because coordinating donations is seen as less professional and/or distracts from the central purpose of people involvement. But if this chapter is right about the connection between gift-giving and volunteering being closer than previously supposed, and right about our failure to capitalize fully enough on that connection, then the dual role is not a distraction at all, and not even separate. Instead, we could be moving toward a larger and more powerfully effective role for today’s volunteer leaders. The name of that role might be community resource developer: the “resources” would be understood as both human and material, both work and gifts, seen as a unified helping package.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# ME FIRST TO MARTYRDOM

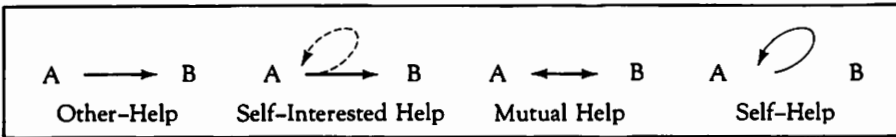
It is one of the most beautiful compensations in life  
that no man can sincerely try to help another without  
helping himself.

— *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

### Locations on a Dimension

Help yourself — don't be embarrassed — or help another. The choice is yours; you can do both or anything in between. If A and B were the only two people in the world, a diagram of the dimension would look something like Figure 1.

Figure 1  
Degrees Of Orientation To Others Versus Self In Helping



Other-help refers to the absolutely pure altruist who probably exists only in heaven. Self-interested help is more like what you generally find in the real world, and so is mutual help. You do get something out of helping another person, even if it is "only" the satisfaction of doing it; and they might also be helping you at the same time. "Pure" self-help may also be pure nonsense, because it means that the person is impacting **only** himself or herself with no intentional or unintentional effect on anyone else in the whole wide world — definitely a closet case.

So let's run through our usual list of qualifications. Most people move through all the Figure 1 modes to some extent in any given day; any piece of behavior has elements of all the four locations or modes. The family which volunteers its home for a foreign student is doing something for the student and probably having a good experience for themselves at the same time. The other-help and self-help extremes probably never exist in undiluted form, but between them there are all kinds of variations and gradations. The sequence of modes in Figure 1 shows that as we move from left to right in the diagram, it becomes progressively more daring to call it volunteering. That is the first question for this chapter: where does volunteering end and something else begin?

The second question is more complex. Whatever we call all these kinds of behavior — volunteering, volunteer-like, non-volunteer, or even anti-volunteer — is it better to see them as a whole for overall purposes of helping, or is it better to keep them strictly segregated? The self-help "me-firsters" may not be volunteers, but maybe we can still "twist" or reorient rabid self-interest toward positive impact on others. And maybe we can't. But we won't know until we try, and we won't try if we rule out the self-oriented character as untouchable, even invisible.

We will now visit each of the four modes or locations in Figure 1. To save time, assume unless otherwise advised, that each mode involves relatively uncoerced work, not directly or immediately for financial gain, and intended to help. In other words, the entire dimension is volunteer in every respect except for the crucial issue of the target of help: towards oneself or towards another.

### Other-Directed Help

A → helps → B. The theoretical ideal is completely one-way help from A to B. Maybe there is no such thing as a perfect altruist in this sense, but some people are close enough for unqualified admiration. In a range including Joan Mondale and Joan of Arc, this is the classic image of the volunteer — the giver. It can be the Salvation Army volunteer, the volunteer working at a shelter house for abused women; it was the people who went to help the lepers of Molokai, the clergy who gave up their seats in a lifeboat in World War II so others could be saved. Or it could be your "ordinary" volunteer tutor working with a dyslexic child, or a teenager weatherproofing a poor person's house. These selfless types do tend to take on the tough ones and ask little or nothing for themselves. What more do we need to say, except thanks?

Does anything else truly qualify as volunteer help? On that issue, some people will have objected to our definition of volunteering as "help-intending" and will insist on adding, "intended to help others." Many people who identify themselves as volunteers in census surveys would support this addition; the other-directed theme tends to dominate the reasons they give for volunteering. For those of you who believe this way, my respects, but please consider the benefits of help which are not completely other-oriented. You need not call these other modes "volunteering," though I think you will have difficulty deciding just where volunteering ends and the others begin.

I value, as you do, the ethical basis of other-helping: that we are meant to care for others in this world, not just for ourselves. I will only argue for a volunteering which is based on a broader "other": that we are meant to do our best to enrich quality of life by increasing the total sum of helping in the world, whether it be other-directed or self-directed. And I cannot believe it is indecent to be good to yourself.

There are several interrelated concerns with a model of volunteering which is conceived of as entirely other-directed. Let's begin with recruiting and the relative scarcity of totally other-directed volunteers. Assuming that some absolutely pure altruists do exist, the world's supply of such people must be limited indeed. Therefore, when we screen out people who don't meet or closely approach this ideal, we're cutting ourselves off from a lot

of "ordinary" folks who might help us help. When you deliberately reduce your helping power by a rigid insistence on altruists only, are you being altruistic?<sup>1</sup> The one exception to this might be if your volunteer program is explicitly designed to teach or model altruism or some other moral code; in such cases, it is legitimate to select people who closely approach living by this moral code.

In A → helps → B, pure A's are hard to find. So, too, it seems, are B's; it has been recently recognized that there is a scarcity in the number of people able and willing to accept one-way help. Allowing oneself to be helped one-way may be a more demanding kind of behavior than previously supposed. It can produce dependency when accepted, and saddle us with a patronizing image when attempted. Behind the one-way helping image lie potential problems of ownership of people and thwarting self-reliant growth via "helping" them (or over-helping them).

The main point is that a pious insistence on purity of other-helping motivation as a condition of volunteering, cramps our recruiting at both ends: people willing to give in this way, and people willing to accept in this way. It discourages participation by ordinary folk who cannot possibly meet these rigorous criteria, and don't feel guilty about not doing so. If we in any way signal our perception of such people as the great unwashed, they will wash their hands of us. Surely, we can't believe that volunteers will sign up if there is nothing in it for them.

Another general area of discomfort is caused by our tendency to classify people on the basis of their presumed helping capabilities. I believe the one-way, other-directed model has done much to freeze people in "designated helper" and "designated helpee" classes, a kind of feudalism in helping. In this fiefdom there were the forever helpers and the forever helpless. They did not mix, except when relating in their fixed roles. To conceive of a helpee helping was like to seeing peasant as king, Cinderella as princess — it happened only in fairy tales. Equally difficult was seeing any registered helper as someone who could use help. It was — and is — a most peculiar attitude in a free society where, as I see it, full participation means everyone should be free to help and be helped. On the latter point, this hardening of the helping categories can disadvantage some designated other-helpers, too. When they really need help, they might find it very difficult to break out of role and ask for it, or accept it.

I wonder how much damage has been done in this way. We probably need a general propaganda drive with the message: helping and being helped are equally okay for everyone. I visualize teaching strong men to cry and sissies to comfort them. But the question is, how can this be done? (Though the resource exchange process described in Chapter 12 seems to make a lot of people comfortable switching back and forth between helping others and being helped by others).

Finally, an overall concern is the sheer unlikelihood of an exclusively one-way helping relationship. It just doesn't happen that way, not very often anyhow, and any leadership perception which assumes it must happen that way is bound to distort the helping process. Later sections on mutuality of helping enlarge this concept.

Despite the preceding discussion, it is important to note that other-directed volunteering does exist substantially if not "purely," and it is a precious thing. The remainder of this section will stay within other-oriented space, and explore how we may move more people into this mode of involvement. The key statements of faith here are:

All people have something to give  
and  
our job is to give them a chance to give it.

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<sup>1</sup>I have not even mentioned the difficulties and dangers of godlike diagnoses: who decides if a person is altruistic enough for acceptance, and how is that decision made?

For volunteer leadership the second statement means a search through the widest possible range of participation styles, in the expectation that somewhere we will find a mode congenial to every person. This is also the central message of this book. Applied to the recruiting of more other–helpers, it means exploration of occasional modes of volunteering when a continuous mode is uncongenial; indirect work if direct activity is unattractive; being involved as a member of a group if individual participation is too demanding; and so on through all locations in volunteer space. I'm confident more people will "do unto others" helpfully when they realize all the options available within this calling, and I believe we can successfully design and discover these options. It is evident that many people not formerly involved in other–helping can be involved if we accept their style of doing it; frequently that style is a new space volunteer style.

The other challenge rings out in the statement, *everyone* has something to give. Lots of people don't really believe that, and all of us have further wrestling to do with stereotyped notions of who can be a helper and who cannot. We're making progress, though. Today we have a lot of other–helpers in forms and shapes scarcely thinkable twenty years ago. We have second–grade volunteers visiting nursing homes. Sixty to one hundred years later, these same second–graders might still be volunteering with the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), or those marvelous radicals, the Gray Panthers. Such developments reflect a human insight, amounting to genius: re-perception of stereotyped problem–havers as problem–solvers; the supposedly helpless as helpers; the drains on our resources as themselves resources. This new look in volunteer space has released enormous additional helping power in two ways: instead of "us" investing efforts helping "them," they help us now, and enrich their own lives while doing so.

Perhaps the most dramatic leap has been in client volunteering. Include here maximum security prisoners crocheting caps for elderly people; elderly people helping retarded children; retarded people picking up bottles, some of which may have been dropped by alcoholics; and a resident alcoholic woman running a day–care center. All this is hardly innovative anymore, though widespread implementation is an achievement of our relatively recent past. Client volunteering is probably the most exciting thing happening in organized volunteering today, and it should help lay the ghost of "patronizing" in our image. It is also a significant breakthrough for including more people in volunteer space. Ordinarily, the human service agency client has many of the characteristics lacking in the more traditional volunteer work force — a lower family income, less education, and fewer social and economic privileges.

Client volunteering offers an additional dividend we can apply to that old devil, "staff resistance." Most good treatment or service professionals want to identify client strengths and work from them, and client volunteering can do just this. The volunteer director or coordinator who assists this growth process by helping clients find meaningful volunteer work is contributing directly to the work of a staff person as an ally in the treatment process. It is disappointing that so many volunteer coordinators concentrate heavily or exclusively on bringing "outsiders" into the agency/facility as volunteers. Why not also take more responsibility for placing insiders (clients) as volunteers? The blended involvement role might make (all) volunteers more attractive to agency staff.

Implementing client volunteering does, of course, present some problems. Anything innovative is likely to. The model is nevertheless strongly endorsed here, with this note: a well–developed body of practical knowledge about client volunteering has emerged in recent years. Ignorance is no excuse for foot–dragging.

Perhaps the greatest problems are, as usual, in our heads — or the heads of our agencies. There is, of course, our unconscious tendency to need "those people" to be dependent on us. If you get by that problem, you might encounter some deep–rooted class consciousness. Should client volunteering be permitted on the honor rolls and in the records with traditional volunteer helpers? Of course they should, and volunteer

leadership must build the necessary awareness. Should the mother of a delinquent child be permitted to help other delinquent kids? Simply put that fact in with other screening questions: her "first-hand" experience might be a real plus, and I've seen this kind of thing work well in several cases. Indeed, that compassionate genius, Judge Bud Holmes, has on occasion appointed a father as volunteer probation officer to his own delinquent son. We used to get some pretty surprised, and effective, volunteers in the Boulder County juvenile court.

The creative imagination will discover other variations of helpee-to-helper transposition. "Transitional" volunteering by mental patients is one fairly obvious example about which we do know something today; enough to do it if we want to. Other kinds of transpositions are not so obvious. There are certainly some assumptions we need to scrutinize before we go much further. For example, does a person who has experienced a problem have a special capability for helping others solve that same problem? In what circumstances will this be the case? Should this person sometimes be paired with another volunteer who has *not* experienced the problem? If so, what kind of resources should this other person bring to the match? Is the client volunteer someone who *now* has the problem or someone who has successfully surmounted it? In the latter case, what does "successfully" mean?

Volunteer leaders are going to be seeking answers to these questions. For example, VOLUNTEER has consulted with the CanSurmount volunteer program, in which people who have had personal experience with cancer counsel informally with cancer patients. According to patients and families, the volunteers' prior experience with cancer is the single most important factor in the patient-volunteer relationship. The empathy and level of communication that naturally evolve in these relationships seem to be significantly due to the common experience of patient and volunteer.

### Transition to Self-Help: Is It Volunteering?

Soon we will visit three locations outside of other-helping space: self-interested helping, mutual helping, and self-help. First, let's consider senses in which any form of self-help can be considered volunteering. Our four defining characteristics of volunteering were: relatively uncoerced, help-intending, work, not for immediate financial gain.

1. Self-help is obviously as much a matter of work as is other-directed helping.
2. Self-help is as uncoerced as voluntary as other-help; you can't force people to help themselves any more than you can force them to help others.
3. Self-help is help-intending; the question is how the help is directed, toward oneself or toward another — a crucial question for this chapter, of course.
4. Self-help is not for financial gain.

The not-for-profit characteristic can be confusing.

People are not volunteers when they are directly and immediately paid for trying to help themselves. The smoker who is paid to stop may get better lungs, but he isn't a volunteer. I think the same applies to "bad" children who are paid whenever they exhibit "good" behavior.

But what do we say about the private trash collectors banded together to fight a city ordinance making trash collecting a tax-supported public service? They certainly stand to get hit hard in the pocketbook if they lose, but they aren't paid directly for their advocacy activity itself. Do they remain volunteers only if they lose? If they win, must we lift their volunteer status retroactively? Their activity can be considered at least volunteer-like (though I'm sure trash collectors couldn't care less) because the financial gain part of it is there but somewhat deferred.



In this, are the trash collectors so different from the other-helping volunteer who happens to use the work as a steppingstone to a paid job, or a better paying job? In any case, much of self-help is not directly linked to making money as the primary, immediate, or only goal. Examples here are efforts to save a marriage, save a park, improve the status of women, cease compulsive drug abuse, and cut diseased trees on your property. In such cases, the money incentive may be indirect, and only a part of the whole purpose, as well as deferred in time (not for immediate profit). Therefore, the above instances (including the trash collectors) are volunteer-like, and we can conclude that self-help is clearly volunteer in the sense of being relatively uncoerced work; and usually at least volunteer-like in our third defining characteristic, not for immediate financial gain.

A further defining characteristic of volunteering, that it is help-intending, will be the main issue in this chapter. Specifically, must help-intending be other-oriented to qualify as being volunteer? How much so? Who are the referees, and what about their motives? I've seen some absurd examples of such refereeing, on the basis of questionable criteria. Once during a site visit to a school volunteer program, I was told that parents helping out in their own child's classroom were not classed as volunteers because of the self-interest involved. This particular interview ended soon after I asked what the classification would be if only their niece were in the classroom, and/or the teacher happened to be a second cousin of the adult helper. I did receive assurances that if the help-intending person walked into the next classroom where she had no relatives whatsoever, she would become a volunteer. I intend to write this up as a case study entitled, "Ten Steps to Volunteering." This is the sort of paralyzed nonsense we will be grappling with from now on in this chapter. The point for now is the extreme difficulty of deciding exactly when a helping behavior becomes so self-directed that it must be disqualified as volunteer.

I have saved till last what is perhaps the most cogent point linking other-interest and self-interest. Suppose you are a volunteer reading to the blind, a USO volunteer, a volunteer for a symphony orchestra, or a volunteer coach or a volunteer hugger at the Special Olympics. Suppose further that you are a dedicated volunteer in one of these richly human enterprises — that the work is not so much a duty as a part of you. The goal has become an internalized part of what you need to do for yourself as well as others. In other words, the line between other-interest and self-interest becomes blurred precisely when we have the very best kind of volunteers: dedicated, committed, and even fanatic. We should deliberately cultivate the translation of other-interest towards internalized self-interest, and we should be grateful when the two blend in dedication. If we object to people who make a cause their own and work for this cause as if it were in their own self-interest, we are objecting to the very commitment we should be seeking.

Before leaving the general subject of self-interest and volunteering, let's return to the example of the parent who cannot be considered a volunteer because his or her own child is in the classroom — or in the day care center, or on the hockey team the parent is coaching. Similarly, the boy who takes out the garbage for his own family is not a volunteer, but if he takes out somebody else's garbage, he is. The girl who teaches her younger sister to play tennis is not a volunteer; she qualifies as volunteer only when she teaches somebody else's little sister. Mixtures are even more confusing. A youth-serving organization recently asked me if parents who, uncompensated, drive their children to camp could be counted as volunteers. I ran through the above kinds of arguments for them and they still couldn't decide. It then developed that most of these parents also drove other children, not their own, to camp, in the same car, at the same time. Theoretically, then, they could be non-volunteers to their own child but at the same time volunteers to adjacent children in the car!

The general rule is, unpaid help-intending within a family cannot qualify as volunteering. The rule is by no means applied without exception, and it is frequently unconscious or semi-conscious. Nevertheless, this exclusionary principle eradicates from our awareness a vast amount of helping behavior as volunteering. We are prevented from

recognizing this behavior as volunteering, and understanding and further facilitating it as such.

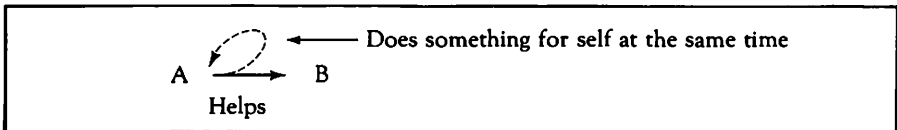
Economists have stated that volunteering cannot exist within a family, although I confess I cannot understand why not — at least not by my own criteria of what volunteering is or is not. Taking out the garbage is help-intending work no matter who you do it for. And the work can be equally unpaid in or out of the family. Is the rationale based on the greater obligation to do “good deeds” for one’s own kith and kin? Even if this is the case, we still have a huge scope of choice within our own families; we can be better or worse as parents, aunts, uncles, sons and daughters, sisters and brothers. The major part of that difference, I maintain, is the extent to which people do more than they have to because they want to for other family members; that is, they volunteer within their own families.

Is the rationale for not recognizing family volunteering based on the self-interest in within-family helping? But some families don’t succeed in functioning as mutual or self-interested units. In cases where families do succeed in functioning as self-help groups, I’ll ask you to anticipate a later section of this chapter. Self-help groups may be “selfish” as far as the group as a whole is concerned, but such groups could rarely succeed without a great deal of other-helping between members of the self-help group. Clear recognition of the possibility and probability of volunteering within a family would open up a vast new area of self-interested volunteer space for recognition, understanding, and further cultivation.

This general discussion of self-interested helping now moves on to the three more specific varieties of self-helping described in the introduction to this chapter: self-interested helping, mutual helping, and self-help.

### On the Respectability of Self-Interest

This is the second stop as we move to the right in the dimension described in Figure 1.



While helping B, A receives some satisfaction for the work, some self-help in that sense. This reward may be no more than the satisfaction of helping, but may include other factors more under the control of volunteer leadership, such as work recommendations or academic credit, certificates, banquets, opportunities for personal growth, and — coming full circle — the meaningfulness of the work itself. Some “fringe benefits” for volunteers are being advocated legislatively including tax benefits or tax credits for volunteer work and mandatory consideration of volunteer work experience in paid employment applications. Other benefits are more defensive, concerned that the volunteer’s self-interest will not actually be damaged. Examples here are insurance coverage and work-related expense reimbursement (enabling funds).

These “motivational paychecks” are recognized as crucial by most volunteer leaders today. In so doing, we confirm the importance of self-interest in all other-helping. In fact, we should have no difficulty seeing self-help as an integral part of other-help. Our emphasis on motivating volunteers actively recognizes that you can’t ordinarily involve people in other-help unless they are in some sense self-helping at the same time.

In my view, virtually every active volunteer receives some sort of self-interested motivational return. Such returns no longer reside in unexplored volunteer space because some self-interest is widely recognized as an **inseparable** part of most volunteering.

Virtually everyone today recognizes that the volunteer must "get something out of it," and such returns are okay. Beyond that, what volunteers get out of their work cannot be separated from what they give. Can you really isolate the volunteer's self-satisfaction in helping, or love of the work, from the helping work itself? They are the integrated whole which is volunteer.

The question now is, are there some types of self-interested motives which are not acceptable as a part of volunteering, because they are unethical or otherwise inconsistent with values underlying volunteering? One volunteer raises \$5,000 for a runaway shelter, partly because in the back of her mind is the thought that her sister's boy is starting to roam too much. Another unpaid person raises the same amount, largely because he thinks the visibility and contacts will help in his business. A third raises \$10,000 partly because he is a mean s.o.b. who likes to put the arm on people.

The first example is clearly a volunteer. Are the second and third disqualified because of questionable motivation? Again, who is the referee, and on what basis is "foul" called? Such refereeing is far less likely to occur today than formerly.

In the beginning there was pure altruism, at least in appearance. An action could not be good unless its motivation passed strict tests of selflessness. Otherwise, the product could be contaminated by motive. This was the original Puritan Screen-Out. Potentially good volunteers — often the more modest, humble types — were led to believe that if their motives were unworthy, their services were, too. It must have been an extraordinarily effective turn-off, and probably still is in some quarters. There may even have been a masochistic element in it, what I call the iodine theory of helping: it has to hurt before it helps. Give me the mercurochrome theory any time; better yet, I'd like to be tickled by the helping.

We have advanced to a stage where we regard positive results as more important than purity of motive; getting the job done is more important than psychoanalysis of volunteers, individually or collectively. Referring back to our three fundraisers, what is most important is that each raised substantial sums of money for a good cause; why they did it is less important. If you reject the services of the volunteer fundraiser who wishes to cultivate business contacts, you risk losing some or all of that \$5,000 for a worthy cause, and you may not have a right to do that.

The principle is: **positive results are more important than pure motivations.** There is a limit, of course, and that limit is where inappropriate motivation is likely to infect results. For companion work with children, we should not accept someone with a history of child molesting. The embezzler is a poor prospect as a volunteer fundraiser. This setting of limits is a matter for good traditional screening procedures, to flash a red light when the end does not justify the motivational means. Before we reach such extreme cases, there are probably a wide range of acceptable self-interested motives for volunteering which we have not fully explored yet. Not only are these motives acceptable as part of volunteering; capitalizing on them will allow us to involve through self-interest a far wider range of people. The volunteer with some legitimate self-interest can be doubly motivated, in both other-directed and self-directed helping. Thus, there are legitimate reasons for being aware of people's motives — to understand better how we may attract and support them in their volunteer work. However, it is important to avoid concentrating on motives to the extent that we become judgmental, and thus screen people out.

Recent times have seen increasing acceptance of self-interested motivations for volunteering. The excitement has been slow, steady, and virtually unconscious — promising development in our movement, and profound in its implications. The catalog of acceptable and respectable self-interested reasons for volunteering includes today:

- meeting people — socially and/or for business purposes.
- change of pace, relief from boredom.
- learning more about an area of interest, for example, health care or prisons.

- caring deeply and personally about an issue.
- a second career.
- career exploration or reexploration.
- career credibility building, gaining work experience, sharpening skills and self-confidence, earning work recommendations, transfer of volunteer experience to resumé.

I would go as far as to suggest we begin a deliberate search and registry of self-interested reasons which connect smoothly with volunteer work (will not infect results) and will engage more people in it. I am not sure this list can be compiled simply by asking volunteers why they volunteer in the first place, and why they are volunteering now; or asking ex-volunteers why they volunteered and why they stopped; or even asking non-volunteers why they might volunteer. Though the last-named might get us some more fresh insights, the real yield could be in asking "new" types of volunteers. I would be fascinated with what a second-grader might say, for instance. The cartoons they draw to express their ideas about volunteering are astonishing enough (see Chapter 18). Also, beyond service volunteers, we should debrief policy and advocacy volunteers. This group might give such "new" and legitimate self-interested reasons as:

- I want some power/influence to shape the course of events toward what I believe in.
- I want improved conditions in this neighborhood, from which I will benefit, along with others.
- I'm fascinated by the sheer process/technique of Board or advocacy work.
- I really don't know.

Whatever reasons are given, it is crucial to accept and respect them; if you don't, you may have recruiting problems. For example, if you do not accept the neighborhood self-interest reason, according to a recent Gallup poll, you may be committing recruiting suicide. In that poll, about two-thirds of urban residents said they would volunteer for work in their own neighborhoods.<sup>2</sup>

The "I don't know" reason is also interesting, and might come from service volunteers as well as from policy or advocacy types. Frankly, I think ambiguity of motive is fully acceptable as long as consistently good results are produced by the volunteer. It may be helpful for people to understand clearly why they are volunteering, but it isn't absolutely necessary if the job is done well. Volunteer leadership is in the business of producing help, not analyzing psyches.

Beyond this, I hope we will increasingly see the satisfaction of self-interest in terms of intrinsic rewards in the total work situation, particularly the volunteer job itself, rather than rewards extrinsic to the work situation. Give me a fascinating job over a silver certificate anytime, because the reason you want me there is to do that job well, not to win certificates. Chapter 15 will explore this intrinsic notion further.

## Mutual Helping

- I babysit your kids; you babysit mine.
- Friendship — we do nice things for each other, without a program.
- You fix my faucet; I fix your car.
- A man and a woman kiss each other.
- You help me learn to drive; I tutor you in French.
- You give me directions; I smile and say thank you.
- You talk; I listen. (The listening supports you, and I might learn something.)

<sup>2</sup>George Gallup, "Survey Reveals Vast Resource of Citizen Volunteer Energy" (press release, Princeton, N.J.: The Gallup Organization, November 30, 1978).

I watch my neighbor's dog while she is on vacation;  
 several days later cookies appear on my doorstep.  
 We are doubles partners in bridge.  
 We are good neighbors.

In  $A \leftarrow \text{helps} \rightarrow B$  each person helps the other. Such help need not be perfectly simultaneous; you might help me before or after I help you, though a lapse of a year might cause mutuality to become somewhat strained. Mutual help is in one sense a variation of our previous self-interested volunteer model. The volunteer gets something out of it, but in this case, he or she gets something directly back from the person helped, rather than from other incentives in the work situation.

Mutual helping is a combination of A helping B and B helping A; if each of these elements is volunteering, then their combination is volunteering. I think what bothers some people is that all this sounds too much like barter or horsetrading. I'll concede that if you help another person only as part of a careful calculation, ready to stop as soon as your help for them gets an inch ahead of theirs for you, the help-intending part of it is indeed somewhat forced, and might be considered barter (not martyr). However, even in this case, you are providing some help "voluntarily" whenever you do help the other person. And we have accepted some self-interest as an integral part of volunteering, with the additional realization that it is extremely difficult to pinpoint precisely where there is too much self-interest to qualify as volunteering.

I agree that as the calculation becomes more careful in the relationship, it is less volunteer and, at most, volunteer-like. Much of mutual helping is not endangered by this structure, friendship being a good example of help freely given and received, and not measured out.

Whether volunteer or volunteer-like, the mutual help model has real advantages, and should be further integrated with other voluntary helping models. The first advantage is almost logistical, an efficiency consideration. Insofar as A and B are helping each other, we don't have to bring in C and D to help either of them. C and D are free to do other-helping things. Insofar as young people are successfully peer counseling each other as pairs or in guided group interaction, our precious supply of skilled other-helping counselors can be engaged more fully elsewhere. Such pair or peer helping in education resembles the old one-room schoolhouse model, recently rediscovered and renamed by educators.

Second, however mutual helping may offend our notions of the right way to help,  $A \leftrightarrow B$  is probably a healthier and more natural way to accomplish help. It is better balanced, emotionally and otherwise, and it harmonizes better with our common ideal: a respect for the dignity of all people. It is better to have "ordinary" people volunteering to help each other wherever possible than to bring in "superior" types from outside the situation. In addition to greater dignity, help gets a headstart in terms of natural understanding and communication among people who are living inside the problem situation; for example, students in the same classroom. Incidentally, this living inside status may make the mutual help less calculated and more spontaneous, hence more volunteer-like.

Volunteer leadership should look harder for mutual-volunteer potential among problem sharers before it brings in outside help. Again, some of the things which signal this potential are: sharing the same situation, having relevant glad gives and needs, and a potential for responding to a process which promises dignity and self-respect.

The potential for this response is there. Some years ago NICOV researched characteristics relating to success of about 170 one-to-one matches between volunteers and clients.<sup>3</sup> It was a fairly expensive way to find out how complex human relationships

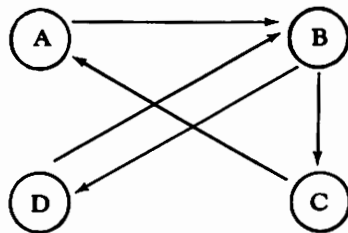
<sup>3</sup>Ivan H. Scheier, Timothy F. Fautsko, and Dian Callaghan, *Matching Volunteers to Clients* (Boulder, Colorado: VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, 1973).

are. Generally, the correlations were statistically insignificant, but there were some arresting trends. One trend related client choice in the type of volunteer to be matched with, to the eventual success of the match. In general, clients (most of whom were disadvantaged) tended to prefer volunteers who were in some way disadvantaged; this was one of the few statistically significant correlations between personal characteristics and success in helping relationships. A reasonable interpretation of this matching data is that clients wanted a volunteer similar enough in life conditions so that the clients might possibly help as well as be helped by that person. I've witnessed anecdotal instances of the same sort of thing. Take the case of Tom the tutor and Don the dropout (names changed for the purpose of alliteration). It was, on the whole, a successful relationship, even when Tom pressed Don to do things he really didn't want to do, such as going back to school. I asked Don about it and got this kind of answer: "Heck, Tom's too dumb to know how bad school really is, but he's sure going to feel bad if I don't go back." I believe Don went back partly because he was deliberately trying to help poor innocent Tom, who had helped him. He certainly didn't do it because he expected to be valedictorian of his class.

### Mutuality Applications in a Formal Volunteer Program Setting

The mutuality lesson for formal volunteer-to-client program matching is: **don't** just look for a volunteer's capability for helping a client. Look for two people who have maximum potential for helping each other. By the way, this mutual helping involves much more than "common interests," it also includes the active glad gives and needs described in Chapter 12. Today, the volunteer leader must look for a volunteer-client match which maximizes a resource exchange network of two people, which involves even more than the volunteer's glad gives related to the client's needs. Indeed, we need to match the client's glad gives with that particular volunteer's needs. In other words, we match to maximize mutuality in helping. This makes the volunteer at least a little client-like and the client at least a little volunteer-like.

Volunteer directors can do this themselves or they can review the glad give and need pool of potential matches (from volunteer and client registration forms), or it can be done in the context of a face-to-face resource exchange process as described in Chapter 12, involving at least several unmatched volunteers and clients. Then the facilitator looks at the helping interaction patterns (glad give to need) to discover the maximum mutuality interactions between volunteers and clients. For example, suppose A, B, C, D are people, and  $A \rightarrow B$  means that A provides a glad give to match B's need. Then, a simplified pattern of helping interactions might look like this (based on registration forms or actual resource exchange process, face to face):



On the basis of this evidence, B and D would be the best bets for a mutually helpful match. Take the usual precautions against exploitation; that is, all giving and receiving on anyone's part, and glad gives offered which the person doesn't have any real intention of delivering. And if some of the better mutuality matches are between two clients or between two volunteers, use your imagination; the same would be true for sets of any three who have a relevant helping network going among themselves.

Mutuality matching is more possible than most people suppose. It's prevented largely by a biased view of clients as always helpless and volunteers as never needing anything these clients can give. Let the volunteer registration form and interview process be expanded to include "what could you use help with," as well as glad gives; the client registration form should likewise be amplified to include glad gives.

Mutuality matching might also provide an imaginative volunteer recruiting lure. You can say to volunteers, if you will agree to try to help as a primary responsibility, we'll try, at the same time, to match you with someone who can help you in some ways. Once again, this incentive could be in addition to many recruiting lures which by contrast are fixed, not flexible — a certificate whether you need one or not, and a banquet betimes.

### Extensions

The implications of mutuality go beyond matching screening, and incentive, beyond pairs, and beyond formal volunteer programs. Within formal volunteer programs, training could be geared to the help-interactive sets; volunteers and clients would be trained together to help each other. At the same time, volunteers and clients could be trained as a mutual support team for all possible helping interactions among them. I have heard rumors — alas unconfirmed — about this kind of commonsense actually being implemented: training together the people who will actually be working together, notably volunteers and clients. Not to do so is as unrealistic as training each member of a football team separately, when in fact, what they really have to learn is how to give and receive help from one another.

In a more free-flowing, less programmed situation, maybe we could recruit, screen, train, and support helping sets in a community or neighborhood afresh, without any preconception as to who is client or volunteer. The pairing part of such a process resembles a dating and mating bureau, but it is far broader and more flexible. For one thing, it comprises woman-woman, man-man, and child-child matches as well as woman-man; nor does it assume permanency of relationship as a purpose or that sex will rear its whatever head.

If we can do this kind of basic volunteer recruitment, dyadically for each other in a neighborhood or community, we can do it in triads, quartets, up to and including the "recruitment" and facilitation of helping networks (Chapter 12).

The recruiting of helping dyads is a relatively straightforward way to begin further development of this form of volunteering. We might begin with an inventory of glad gives and needs in a neighborhood, apartment building, classroom, church, or synagogue — much as Project Link-Up did in Mordialloc, Australia.<sup>4</sup> We would then identify promising combinations of people in terms of glad give to need matches, and we would put these people in touch with one another. This is a whole new dimension of volunteering: recruiting, matching, training, and otherwise facilitating pairs or other small sets of people to help each other as volunteers. Of course, the idea is not new in other conceptual frameworks; for example, as networking, peer counseling, or in some psychological theories about how people can get along better with one another. Volunteering needs to extend contact to these other frameworks, to compare and cross-fertilize.

### Self-Help

In examining self-help we join the (alleged) me-firsters to inquire concerning our possible cousinship, respectable or otherwise. At first glance, the self-helping person

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<sup>4</sup>Ivan H. Scheier, *People Approach: Nine New Strategies for Citizen Volunteer Involvement* (Boulder, Colorado: VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, 1977), pp. 63-66.

seems respectable enough. Examples of self-help groups come easily to mind: Alcoholics Anonymous, Parents Without Partners, food co-ops, neighborhood self-help groups, and Blockwatch. Again, the general issues are: can we extend our present base of volunteer service program knowledge to comprise self-service? And are the other-help and self-help models capable of any integration?

The potential for inclusion is enormous. Self-help volunteering can include anyone, and does include many kinds of people who usually turn off to other-helping. I would further argue that self-help is a healthy helping model, firmly based on the sturdy virtues of self-reliance and independence in our society.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the self-help model is efficient. To the extent that people are willing and able to help themselves, other people don't have to help them and can concentrate on the needs of others elsewhere. Moreover, in self-help situations, communication between the "volunteer" and "client" is usually good, since they are the same person. For the same reason, the volunteer's motivation is ordinarily immediate and strong; outside incentives may be less necessary (although the whole area of motivating people for volunteer self-help would be a fascinating field to explore).

But is self-help volunteering? This question may not be as crucial as the back-up question: whatever it is, is it useful for more traditional volunteering to connect with it?

To recap previous discussion on the first question, most self-help meets every test of our general definition of volunteering. Though self-help motivation can be powerful, one is usually not **forced** to help oneself; it is usually a voluntary act.<sup>6</sup> Self-help is work, and usually it is not performed for immediate and direct financial gain, though again it may sometimes be, as in the case of a tax revolt group (helping themselves). Finally, self-help is intended to help — oneself. As noted before, some of us stick at that point because we feel **other-orientation** is the essence of volunteering; it is okay to satisfy a volunteer's motivations as long as the purpose is to maintain and enhance helping of others, and self-interest is acceptable, insofar as it merely reinforces a primary other-directedness. But, as previously noted, how then do we decide which component is primary, or when self-interest dominates too much for it to be volunteering? I would maintain that this, too, is a matter of degree, for which a precise cut-off point is difficult to determine.

Indeed, even helping which is explicitly self-directed will ordinarily have some "leakage" of other-helping. This is clearest in the case of self-help groups where the individual members within the group often help each **other** as a means of implementing self-help. Examples would again include Alcoholics Anonymous or a neighborhood group fighting a zoning ordinance. As a group they might be seen as selfish or self-centered; but focus your microscope one notch higher, and you will see individuals within the group supporting each other for achieving a common "selfish" purpose.

There is even some leakage in individual self-help, though it may not always be deliberate. If you succeed in a lonely battle to stop smoking, chances are your friends appreciate it because you have done something for them in the process of self-help. If a woman becomes a better tennis player, her doubles partner will benefit. The connection is ordinarily somewhat conscious and deliberate; it is often easier to self-help when you have the (volunteer) support of others in so doing. And part of that support may well be that you **know** you will please or help them if you succeed. Any individual self-help has other-helping implications when other people care about the self-helping person and appreciate what he/she is doing for himself/herself, and especially when part of the self-helper's motivation is knowing that these other people care.

There may also be a chronological connection, when original self-interest evolves

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<sup>5</sup>I understand that some California people are beginning to use the terms "self-reliants" for self-helping people and groups.

<sup>6</sup>Helmet laws for motorcyclists are an exception, as is any law designed to protect individuals from themselves — whether they like it or not.



toward other-direction. Thus do some reformed smokers become messianic, and some ex-cons effective in urging others away from crime. I was prompted to get a solar collector and a wood-burning stove primarily out of pocketbook self-interest. Now I've become actively involved in trying to help others see the light.

There is, once again, a more abstract but equally important aspect to other-helping leakage in self-help. To the extent people help themselves, others in society do not have to help them, and these others can then be deployed for service to those who genuinely cannot help themselves. As budget cuts and the tax revolt thin the ranks of paid other-helpers, we will need to depend more on people's voluntary self-help capabilities. However, we must guard against those who expect self-help to be an immediate cure-all; the capability for self-help must first be nurtured.

Self-help in its purest form differs theoretically from volunteering as other-help. However, in its practical occurrence, self-help frequently connects with and has implications for other-help, and the two may be virtually inseparable.

### Conclusions on a Concept

We may conclude that the name volunteer applies to a wide range of self-interested and mutual benefit help-intending behavior. Moreover, it is difficult to locate the precise point at which self-interest becomes too selfish and mutuality too calculated to qualify as volunteer. Beyond the pale, self-interested helping may still be volunteer-like in relation to the help-intending defining characteristic. It will also usually qualify in the not-for-profit characteristic (if not too immediate or direct); and does qualify in the relatively uncoerced work characteristic.

Even for the least qualified types of behavior, it may not matter whether self-help is truly volunteering or not, because its nature, intensity, and quality profoundly affect volunteering. Therefore, volunteering must connect with self-help. In order to effectively deploy other-directed volunteers it is important to at least communicate well with self-helpers, and coordinate with them if possible. Models and methods need to be developed for better connection of self-help and other-help volunteering. An earlier effort in that direction was called "Self-Help and Helping" (SHAH) and this chapter closes with an update on this process.<sup>7</sup> However, much more needs to be done with this and other tieline models.

## SELF-HELP AND HELPING (SHAH)

### Introduction

SHAH attempts to integrate self-help and other-help models of volunteering, with responsibility for program design and direction given to the self-helpers. In terms of this chapter it suggests one way of overall coordination of:

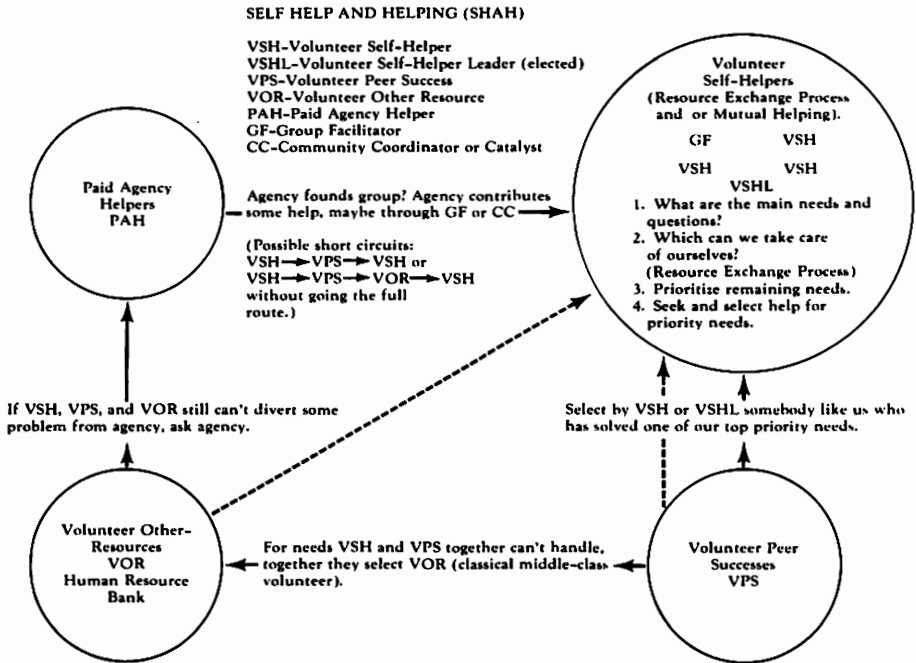
Volunteer Self-Helpers	VSH or A
Mutuality of Helping	VSH ↔ VSH
And Other-Helpers	A → B

The other-helpers include both paid and unpaid people.

In terms of the dimensions described elsewhere in this book, SHAH coordinates group and individual volunteering, continuous and occasional, and aspects of service, policy, and advocacy. SHAH is a consciousness-raising device on possibilities, plus a flexible process format; it has not yet reached the point of being a specific methodology.

<sup>7</sup>Ivan H. Scheier, *People Approach: Nine New Strategies for Citizen Volunteer Involvement* (Boulder, Colorado: VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement, 1977), pp. 80-87.

Figure 2  
Outline of the SHAH Process



### 1. Formation of the Self-Help Group

Volunteer self-helpers (VSH) can be any type of person or group. For example, they can be a group of young people who need jobs, a neighborhood group in a trailer park who want playgrounds for their kids, Parents Without Partners, or a group of artists who want to start a gallery. One question often raised is, how do the groups form in the first place? Perhaps an agency has formed or can form self-helpers into client groups; perhaps they are naturally existing groups, such as a neighborhood common-interest group or a formally constituted club or organization. Maybe the process can be made attractive enough to lure people into a group. Or perhaps a community organizer or coordinator can identify major issues and problems in a community, and catalyze group formation. There is some precedent for this in the Countryside Council Program of Minnesota where a community coordinator acts as a facilitator or catalyst and is answerable to the community rather than to any special-interest group or agency. This person can be a volunteer or a paid agency person, but must have a facilitative rather than a directive style.

Probably the most frequent way self-help groups are formed stems from the stimulation provided by a visible, credible priority need shared by the potential self-helpers. If public services or crime in a neighborhood are bad enough, people will get together to try to do something about it, and they will need little or no prompting to do so. The outsider coming in to catalyze may be more in the position of touching a spark to tinder. Moreover, individuals within a group do not need to have any other common primary problems to function together on the identified problem.

Let's now move through Figure 2, which outlines the SHAH process.

## 2. Volunteer Self-Helpers - Upper Right Circle

This involves the resource exchange process among self-helpers, previously described in Chapter 12. As noted there, anywhere from eight to ten to 150 people can be involved at one time. The young people who want paid jobs, first connect glad gives and needs within their self-help network to see how much they can do for themselves on that score and/or how well they can develop their own action plan to do something about it.

## 3. Volunteer Peer Successes - Lower Right Circle

Let's say the priority self-help problem remains to find jobs. First, volunteer peer successes (VPS) are selected by volunteer self-helpers. These are people who have experienced the problem the self-helpers are dealing with and who have had some success in dealing with this problem. In our previous terminology VPS are self-interested helpers because they are self-help alumni who have been through the problem, sympathize with people who have it, and might be glad to share their expertise. In other words, the volunteer peer success people are valuable to the self-helpers because they naturally understand the problem situation, are likely to be trusted, and have extremely relevant information to share. For getting jobs, their reality-tested advice could include how to work the system, when to cut your hair, when to smile and shake hands, and good leads to people who are particularly open to giving youth a chance for jobs.

Volunteer peer successes in the SHAH mode will often be precisely the kind of indigenous people we can't recruit from the top for jobs we define as significant. They often can be recruited by the volunteer self-helper because they are their friends and peers. The recruiting is personal and for an immediately understandable purpose — a problem they have previously suffered and succeeded in solving.

Screening? Peer success volunteers have succeeded in solving the problem; their "recruiter," the self-helper, now has the problem and a direct understanding of what it takes to tackle it. Who could be in a better position to judge?

## 4. Volunteer Other Resources - The Lower Left Circle

Volunteer peer success people might not actually have the jobs our self-helpers need. At this point (lower-left circle), the classical other-helping volunteers are involved as volunteer-other resources (VOR), selected by the self-helper/peer success volunteer team. This team would select the help they need from a human resource bank of volunteers (job-finders, volunteer employers, etc.), possibly formed by the local Voluntary Action Center or Volunteer Bureau, or a national organization like Volunteers in Technical Assistance, or possibly already existing as a community voluntary group. In addition to having relevant skills experiences, these other-helping resource volunteers might also be valuable for their connections, clout, and knowledge of where help is to be found. Many of them might be the kind of middle-class people often associated with formal volunteer programs, but here they would fill the role of on-call, occasional, special service resource people doing what they can do well and what they want to do (glad gives). As indicated in Chapter 8, such occasional service is congenial to many middle-class people who might refuse a longer commitment to continuing service not in their natural aptitude area. They also have the added motivation of **knowing** that their services are needed, because "clients" have specifically requested the services.

The peer success/other-resources combination is a potent one in helping solve self-helper problems. Both have key portions of the needed relevant knowledge. In addition, peer successes have especially good natural communication and empathy with the self-helpers, while the other-helping resource people bring unique skills, experiences, contacts, and power to the total team — which includes all three types of volunteers.

There might still remain parts of the problem which the entire VSH/VPS/VOR team can't handle. In such cases, the team would go to the paid agency helpers.

## 5. Paid Agency Helpers – Upper Left Circle

If doors need to be opened, other-helping resource volunteers can help the rest of the team with this kind of advocacy. In the job-finding example we began with, the total volunteer team might have succeeded in setting up good jobs for teenagers, but there might be a legal wrinkle; for example, an ordinance forbidding youth employment around certain kinds of machines. Perhaps there might be some other specialized professional skill not yet available which is needed by the team. If the paid agency can't or won't help, other-helping resource volunteers might know some other agency or group who would or should, or they might help form such an agency (advocacy again).

Continual cycling of SHAH in a community might provide a cumulative readout on the relevance of paid agency help. If paid agencies remain irrelevant to the needs which the VSH/VPS/VOR team cannot filter out at the community volunteer level, these agencies or their staff will have to be renewed, reoriented, retrained, or recycled. The same may be said for continuing realignment of the community other-helping volunteer resource bank (VOR) to SHAH-expressed needs. Repeated SHAH cycling thus functions as a community-assessment process, balancing needs and resources.

Finally, the paid agency may complete or continue the cycle by helping to form new groups of volunteer self-helpers, contributing community coordinators or group facilitators to the process. Or the agency might reorient itself and recruit new human resource bank volunteers in response to emerging needs for which present paid or volunteer resources are irrelevant or insufficient.

The line from paid agency (upper-left) to clients who are now self-helpers (upper-right) does not mean the agency decides what is good for them, and then imposes the help upon them. In SHAH, the VSH/VPS/VOR team decides what is needed from the agency.

## General Comments on the Self-Help and Helping (SHAH) Process

SHAH conceives helping as a circular process, not as a vertical one. To the extent that any group initiates and dominates the process, it is the volunteer self-helpers. These self-helpers are the traditional client or service consumer groups, though they can also be middle-class or upper-class groups. Anyone can have a problem, and anyone can choose to deal with it on his or her own, or with community colleagues, before putting the monkey on an agency's back.

The circular process of SHAH is **clockwise**, initiated by self-helpers (clients). This process is basically different from formal professional models of helping, in which primary controls of helping tend to go in all directions outward from the paid agency to clients, with "ownership" of the volunteer program by the agency.

To the extent that client initiative designs SHAH, it is a need filtration, agency-diversion process. It attempts to ensure that the maximum amount of self-help, help from peers, and informal non-agency help is applied to the service and reduction of need before the problem is passed on to more formal agency or outside help. Possibly, a full SHAH process might divert as much as ninety percent of paid helping agencies' present business. This would leave them more free to concentrate on things which only they can do, while becoming more relevant in other things they ought to be able to do for clients or consumers.

When implementing SHAH, it is important to adapt and be flexible. The self-help and helping process is not a rigid method; it is a series of potential options. As but an example,

dotted lines on the diagram indicate how SHAH can be short-circuited at any point in the process, without going the whole route from self-helper to agency, and, of course, reversed. Self-helpers, peer successes, and other-helping resource volunteers can range from essentially unorganized collections of individuals to quite highly organized groups.

Finally, you may be able to use some parts of SHAH and not others, and you may be able only to approximate any part of it. (Most of the applications of the resource exchange process discussed in Chapter 12 involve partial applications of SHAH as well.) Yet, for some of us who work in traditional helping agency structures, consideration of SHAH may only raise our consciousness of tomorrow's dream and make us resolve to approximate it wherever possible today.

Of course, SHAH is not the only, or even the simplest way to coordinate self-oriented and other-oriented volunteering. For example, a community might have a number of volunteer groups working in the general area of crime prevention and control. Some of these might lean more towards self-help; for instance, a neighborhood anti-crime organization, or an ex-offender self-help group. Other efforts might be more oriented to helping others; here we might have a volunteer probation officer program, and a local service club's community education program on home security. Wouldn't the total crime prevention scene be more effectively addressed if all these volunteer groups at least shared information and ideas?

### **A Call for Contact**

This chapter has been a venture outward from traditional other-helping volunteer concepts to see how they may stretch to cover self-interested helping and self-help. What we need is a counter-venture from self-help group leaders, community organizers, and other credible inhabitants of the self-help area, who also know at least a little about other-directed volunteering. Among these groups are the National Self-Help Resource Center, with its associated Community Resource Centers; the Center for Community Change; and the National Association of Neighborhoods. ACTION, the federal volunteer agency, is also getting into the self-help area in a big way. Maybe the best common meeting ground would be such mixture models as food co-ops, CB networks, credit unions, and poetry groups.

Meanwhile, I will be wondering what Saul Alinsky would have said about SHAH and the rest of this chapter. I'm afraid I can guess, though at least a few of his students seem ready to listen.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# A FEW WORDS ON THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL

### Introduction: Money and the Value of Work

The self-interested person can go after many things in his or her work. Usually near the top of the shopping list will be the powerful, magical symbol of all self-interest: color it green and call it money.

Let us begin with a crashing simplicity: money is important. It is so important that its absence is used as a primary defining characteristic, as in poverty or volunteering. More than that, money remains the dominant measure of work value in our society. Huck Finn reflected this attitude when he said, "He didn't charge nuthin' for his preaching and it was worth it!" In a similar vein, the athlete whose contract calls for three million dollars is worth more than the one with a mere million. Like it or not, plumbers are worth twice their weight in professors. And if you make \$20,000 a year, and I only make \$10,000, the implicit powerful message is: your work is "worth" more than my work, ergo you are worth more than I am.

Where does that leave the "amateurs" who work "for nothing"? It leaves us with sad and frequent self-descriptions such as: "I'm just a volunteer." It doesn't matter so much that volunteering represents a special quality of caring about work. What does matter is that it survives or thrives as an exception in a society where how much you make largely determines the value of what you do, and "I'm not paid to do that" is a powerful reason for refusing to do work. Rhetoric aside, practical behavior speaks plainly at all levels of consciousness. What it says is: "Moneyless is worthless," and this attitude accounts for a large part of the volunteer's image problem today.

A rather vicious variation of the "unpaid equals unworthy" stereotype is the expectation that volunteers will stretch money mainly in the less important areas of work. Thus, agency-related programs too frequently saddle volunteers with the auxiliary or subsidiary aspects of available work. On the other hand, there is steadily increasing acceptance of volunteers as people capable of responsible jobs.

Volunteer responses tend to parallel those of most maligned groups. We suffer in silence or malign right back by turning the bigotry upside down. A certain snootiness about unpaid work, simply because it is unpaid, is not unknown among volunteer leadership. There is more to it than reverse snobbery, of course. Among other things, we stand squarely with all people concerned about the dominance of materialistic values in our society. It seems that there are more of these people today than ever before. However, we have to identify, clarify, and enunciate the nonmaterialistic values represented by volunteering far more intensively than we have thus far. Having done this, we need to reach out and make alliance with others who share these values.

### The Integration of Unpaid and Monied Workspace: A Trend

Help may be on the way for positive upgrading of the image of unpaid work. First of all, in a society where chronic unemployment has become a way of life, it is increasingly difficult to pretend that unpaid work is unimportant. For those who cannot secure paid work, significant unpaid or minimally paid work will have to be found as the only alternative to desperation, drastic idleness, or damaging work (crime). Volunteer space is in fact moving more and more toward the acceptance of enabling funds grading into stipends in return for work, further extending into all forms of partly paid work. This paid-unpaid continuum is reinforced by an increasing acceptance and cultivation of volunteer involvement capable of developing into paid employment — that is, an apprenticeship for paid work. On the other side of the ledger, volunteer opportunities after retirement from paid work are becoming increasingly a normal part of a person's overall life passage. In other words, there is an increasing mobility between the paid and unpaid work sectors, and this mobility should blunt the force of the stereotype, "unpaid equals unworthy."

The tax revolt should help finish the job, if volunteer leadership is capable of responding appropriately. What the tax revolt may be saying is, we can't or won't allow ourselves to be taxed enough to pay for all the government services we've been accustomed to; the social treasury can't stand it anymore. Therefore, unless we want to accept diminished services, we must take up the slack somehow with volunteers. This means that society must take volunteer work more seriously, even if it is unpaid. Unpaid work, by virtue of necessity, becomes respectable.

People accustomed to valuing work according to the pay received for it will be learning to respect unpaid work more. At the same time, volunteer leadership should be getting more comfortable about money. For example, there is nothing wrong with volunteers wanting to have a sufficient supply of money from sources other than volunteering.

Institutionally speaking, volunteering is also related to money, like it or not. Virtually any **organized** volunteer effort requires some funding support.<sup>1</sup> Lack of such support has been one of the top two or three problems of volunteer leadership these past few years, and fundraising has been one of the most avidly pursued skills. It is a trifle contradictory to deplore money and scramble for it at the same time. We first have to set our own house in order, and that includes exploring volunteer spaces which are less expensive to maintain: informal, occasional, self-helping, neighborhood-based, etc.

This brings us to the point of this chapter: whether or not we decide to take the anti-materialistic approach, there is another direction we must move in more intensively at the same time. This other direction would have us recognize that we live in a society in which money is important and valuable in the fullest sense, a situation which is likely to

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<sup>1</sup>For organized volunteer programs the total cost of the volunteer resource network in the U.S. is at least one billion dollars annually. This includes the budgets of all 350-400 Voluntary Action Centers or Volunteer Bureaus, about 30 state offices of volunteering, a number of national volunteer organizations, the salaries of 70,000 directors or coordinators of volunteers, and some other local volunteer program costs.

continue in the foreseeable future. Thus, if material things are not important, low income people shouldn't suffer; the point is they do suffer now, and we should never be in the ridiculous position of appearing to deny it. The argument continues: volunteering does have a relationship to money, and this relationship can be further cultivated positively, both for productivity and humanity. At first glance, this may appear self-contradictory. The individual volunteer does not ordinarily work directly for money, and that blunt truth seems to have blocked further exploration of "monied space" in volunteering. But the fact is that work not done for money can nevertheless have as profound an impact on the economy as if it were for money.

Harold Wolozin's recent work on what might be called "the gross national volunteer product" is illustrative.<sup>2</sup> Essentially, in his definition, volunteer work has market value; that is, if volunteers didn't happen to do it for free, it would have to be paid for. Wolozin estimates the total dollar value of both organized and informal volunteer work in 1974 at about 70 billion dollars. This would add about ten percent to the 1974 dollar value of the service component of the Gross National Product. Economically, a volunteer strike (or holiday) would therefore be no laughing matter. In fact, every time a volunteer drops out or a person fails to become involved for lack of imagination on our part, there is a small volunteer strike. The increased recruiting and motivating potential in further exploration of volunteer space will therefore have an economic impact, too.

The increasing acceptance of the dollar value of volunteer work is another sign of the fading distinction between monied and unpaid workspace. The dollar value of volunteer work (Wolozin sets the average at about \$5 an hour) is even being used as in-kind matching contributions for purposes of grant proposals or generally for considering volunteers as economic assets. So, though unpaid, volunteers have become as real as tables, typewriters, chairs, and watercolors.

## Helping It Happen

Thus far, the weakening of the money barrier in workspace is something which is more or less just happening. This chapter considers ways in which we can better understand what's happening, and make the promising parts of it happen more. The productive-humane relationship possible between volunteering and money concerns:

1. volunteers as individuals,
2. the kinds of organizations volunteers can be related to, and
3. the relationship between volunteering as an institution and the profitmaking sector as an institution.

## The Volunteer as Individual

We have already noted a situation in which "unpaid," as a rigid defining criterion of "volunteer," has been progressively liberalized and stretched. The strictly defined dimension would have been unpaid versus paid . . . with the slightest taint of money ruining one's amateur status. Thus, the classically defined volunteer is to the left, entirely innocent of money, with everyone else a clear non-volunteer outside the pale. The slow expansion into money-associated volunteer space has already been indicated. We have described the increasing acceptance of enabling funds as appropriate for volunteers in at least some circumstances; that is, volunteers are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incident to their work. The definition of volunteer thereby extends from "no money" to "no financial profit." We've come a long way from an absolute two-point position in our thinking, but our approach is still somewhat piecemeal.

<sup>2</sup>Harold Wolozin, *The Value of Volunteer Services in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: ACTION, 1975), p.4.



To put it another way, volunteering represents one range of possibilities in the overall relationship of work to money. We need to look at that overall relationship so we can better visualize the total context of volunteering as one way of getting work done. Figure 1 outlines the overall relationship.

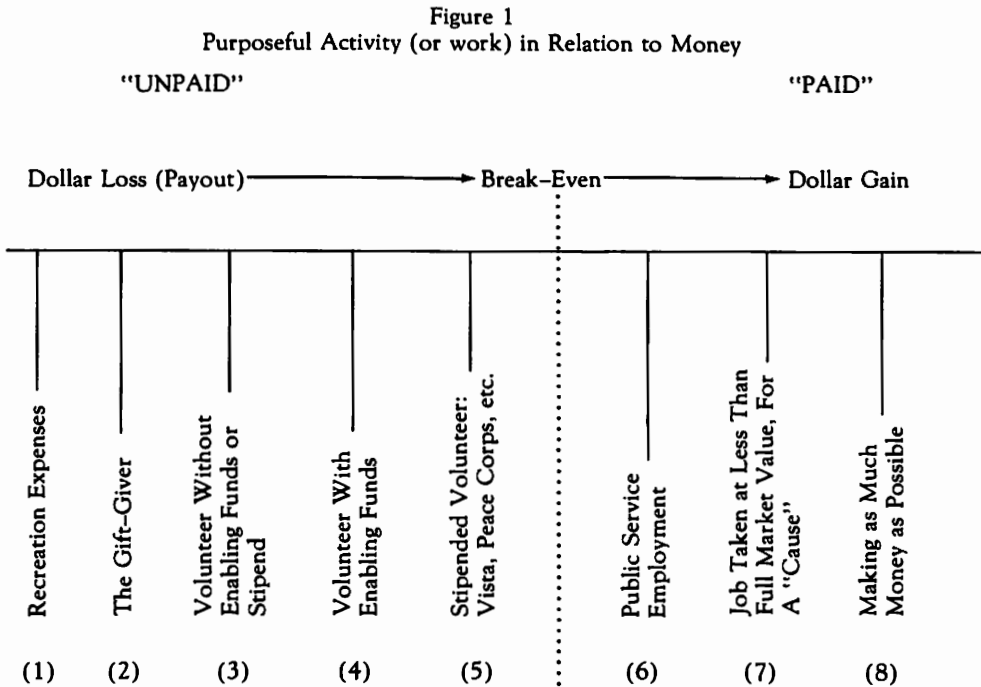


Figure 1 indicates that: 1) the relation of work to money is a gradient or continuum, with landmarks at every major point of the continuum (these points may have always been there and are simply becoming better recognized as volunteer-related in recent times). And 2) the gradient stretches not only from unpaid to "fully" paid. Logically, it reaches further to the left of "unpaid" to "dollar loss" in relation to purposeful activity. Let us consider each point in Figure 1 as numbered.

**Position 1: Recreation**

Recreation or amusement at the far left refers to paying out, sometimes dearly, for the privilege of doing work, though whether this can be considered work or not is an issue. Actually, much recreation can indeed entail effort with a serious purpose and is in that sense "work." Perhaps it is not considered work because it is fun or merely self-help, or not help-intending at all. For our present discussion, it is enough to agree that recreation is a purposeful activity of some sort. For example, when I used to ski, the activity had definite, sometimes even grim, purpose for me. I wanted to get down the hill (a) on my feet if possible, (b) looking good, and (c) fast. The same is true for all sports people and all hobbyists. And not only do they lose money, or make a "negative profit," but they often help others make a tidy profit. They do this whenever they purchase equipment, rent or lease facilities, etc. We are talking about people so powerfully motivated by the "work" that they are willing to pay for the privilege of doing it — a kind of super-volunteering. Basically, the implications for volunteer leadership are these:

1. We have at least as much to learn from recreation experts as from representatives of the paid work world. The former know enough about motivating people, so they can facilitate the kind of super-volunteering described above; the latter have to pay people to work for them (“negative” volunteering?). Recreation experts should appear as trainers far more frequently at our workshops. We should read their books, particularly their motivational theories and approaches, and weave this knowledge into our own theory and strategy. Presently, we may be trying to learn too much from the wrong people, the paidwork leadership. Moreover, in competition for the time paidwork leaders are slowly “giving up” — that is, leisure time — the recreation people are winning by far. We have much to learn from them.

2. “If you can’t beat them, join them!” We can visualize development of the “package tours,” placing people in a fun situation and extending it to some kind of helping work, utilizing the judo principle: move with what’s moving. We could extend a camping trip to include, for example, tagging fish, working on camping areas, and fixing up trails. Another example of recreation-based volunteering might be community theatre volunteers incorporating theatre-painting with play-reading. Or people can go beyond simply pursuing a hobby to teaching it to others. We simply need to identify the things they enjoy doing and do relatively well in terms of recreation, and then find something there to integrate with helping work in a natural context, properly balanced with fun, not eliminating it.

We could capitalize more deliberately on fun as a thematic base for volunteering. For example, an organization called the World Exploration Society gives people an opportunity to participate in exciting things like archaeological digs and other explorations all over the world. People apparently flock to do this as “earthwatch” volunteers, even though they are also asked to pay something for the privilege of doing it. Once again, we have a kind of super-volunteering which extends fun and recreation to “real” and valued helping work, clearly showing that the amount of money one receives for work is not an index of its value.

Some rockhound friends recently told me about the proprietor of a rock shop who will discuss a 10¢ purchase with them endlessly and enthusiastically, and even discourage them from making a more expensive purchase which he does not consider right for them. Here, the profit motive appears to be pure facade. This man has simply found a reason to pursue his hobby 50 hours a week, sharing it **helpfully** with other people. This is a recreation-extended volunteer (though he may not appreciate this label), whose main object or measure of value is not money.

William Penn probably meant something slightly different when he said, “The best recreation is to do good.” Our variation would be, “The best of recreation can be connected to doing good and thus empower helping.” In that sense, it is at least volunteer-like or of clear volunteer potential.

## **Position 2: The Gift-Giver**

Chapter 13 discussed the ways in which a giver of money or materials can sometimes be considered a volunteer or volunteer-like. To this extent, position 2 describes a person who is paying out — that is, losing money or its equivalent, in the process of volunteering.

## **Positions 3 and 4: The Volunteer Without Enabling Funds, and the Volunteer With Enabling Funds**

About eight years ago, NICOV tracked a set of probation volunteers, and found they spent \$50 to \$75 a year of their own money for volunteer work-related expenses. Again, this is negative profit (position 3 in Figure 1). The volunteer loses less by receiving

enabling funds or doing work which requires less in the way of out-of-pocket expenses (position 4). Theoretically, this approaches but does not pass the break-even point.

### **Position 5: Stipended Volunteers**

Somewhere near the break-even point are stipended volunteers such as VISTA and Peace Corps people, and community volunteers who receive reimbursement which extends beyond strictly work-related expenses. This is the main difference between enabled and stipended volunteers. The former receive reimbursement only for expenses directly related to the volunteer work, such as for meals eaten with a client while actually engaged in volunteer work. Stipending allows one to eat, more or less, with or without a client. It is a more generalized maintenance of the person — usually at a bare subsistence level — which permits the person to function generally as a volunteer, usually intensively and continuously, without other financial support.

The word volunteer is sometimes used to describe people in position 2, and regularly used for positions 3, 4 and 5. The word does not apply in any general sense beyond the financial break-even point, in positions 6, 7, and 8.

### **Positions 6 and 7: Some "Profit," but Probably Not Full Market Value for Your Services**

These people do make a "profit"; that is, they can lay some money away or exchange it for additional material goods beyond sheer subsistence. Position 6 describes such persons — Public Service (CETA) employees, for example — who might or might not be able to make more money, if they chose to sell their services to the highest bidder. Position 7 refers to people who, while they are making some profit beyond subsistence, nevertheless take jobs at lower salaries than they might otherwise command because they believe in what the work represents, have some special interest in it, or derive other benefits from work-related conditions.

This category includes every case in which a person, as the result of a deliberate choice, voluntarily makes less money, in exchange for other non-monetary benefits; the attorney who takes a job with legal aid, for example. It includes any idealist who refuses a high-paying position which is relatively meaningless in terms of personal ideals and takes a lower-paying one because it is more fulfilling; business, industry, and government are being forced to take this possibility more into account these days. Or, a person freely accepts a lower material standard of living by working for pay only part-time in order to devote free time to other-helping or self-interested helping. Or a person takes a lower-paying job in a community simply because the quality of life is better there. There used to be a saying in Boulder, Colorado: "Walk outside and take two deep breaths; that's half of your salary."<sup>3</sup> Business and industry are aware of this, too. And it seems to me there is a volunteer component in all of this, or at least a volunteer-type attitude: the willing exchange of material benefits for less material benefits. Such instances would include other-help-intending or self-help-intending for oneself or one's family, and we have argued for including both in the general notion of volunteering. However, I would agree that the behavior is more volunteer-like when what is traded off for money is the increased opportunity to help others.

What our discussion has done thus far is take the central notion of volunteering as work which receives no money in return (position 3), reinforce its current extension of acceptance to enabled and stipended volunteers (positions 4, 5), and push for an even further identification of some volunteer-ness at "dollar loss" and "some dollar return"

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<sup>3</sup>Today Boulder air is worth only about 5% of your salary, and on some days, zero.

positions bordering it (positions 1, 2 and 7). The common element (in positions 2, 5, and 7, at least) is the deliberate sacrifice of some material rewards for psychic benefits. The positions differ from one another, mainly in the extent to which this trade-off occurs.

### **Position 8: Selling Your Services to the Highest Bidder**

The last is the least likely candidate for volunteer-like. Here are the people who are making as much money as they can, in business, labor, government, as professionals, etc. If they are fortunate, the work is also meaningful to them. But if there is a choice, they will sacrifice meaningfulness for money. Presumably, such a choice does not necessarily entail an ultimate sacrifice of satisfaction, since money can be exchanged for satisfaction, or it may become a satisfaction in itself.

### **An Alternative to Money, as a Value Base for Work**

It is tempting to suppose that there is more caring about the work and more fulfillment in it as we move toward the left in Figure 1. Roughly speaking, this is probably so, but there are substantial exceptions. For example, some high-salaried people enjoy what they are doing very much; some volunteers (and recreation purchasers) do not. Moreover, there is the question of opportunity; for example, some volunteers might rather have paying jobs but at present cannot get them, and many paid workers would love to have more fulfilling jobs if they were available.

Still, if it were announced tomorrow that everyone would be provided necessities and comforts without money, I believe there would be a decisive shift to the left in Figure 1 in terms of choice of work. This announcement is unlikely to come tomorrow. Yet the filling in of the continuum at positions 5 and 7 suggests that society is perhaps less committed than formerly to money as the major measure of work-value and of satisfaction in life. And the entire area 2 through 7 is a far broader one than formerly, giving scope to activities involving various degrees of volunteer-ness. There may be opportunity for us here; this will be discussed later in this chapter. To the extent that there is the potential for some volunteer component in any purposeful activity, regardless of its relation to money, volunteer leadership knowledge is far more widely applicable than previously supposed.

If people today, while still respecting money, are less enslaved to it, with regard to work, then we should be thinking about definitions of volunteer work which are also less enslaved to money. That is, the notion of sheer absence of money as a primary characteristic defining volunteering, needs to be re-examined. We are seeing money as a measure of work become less crucial, as the earlier discussion indicates, and we are seeing the meaningfulness of the work, the "cause" behind it, assume more importance. We have also perceived that the meaningfulness dimension is less than perfectly related to a continuum on which money is the major defining characteristic (Figure 1). And it is also derivative.

I think it would be a step forward to single out and emphasize this meaningfulness as the major defining characteristic of work; money would then be secondary. In other words, we should deliberately try to separate the quality of work from the color of money, not so much by denying the value of money, but by explicitly offering other characteristics in terms of which the value of work may be judged. Let's make a first attempt at this now though meaningfulness of the work itself is admittedly not a very concrete characteristic, we need to come to grips with it because someday when we have finished applying money to the enrichment of the quality of life, we will have to define what that quality is, and recognize that quality of life depends largely on the quality of work.

Therefore we should reconceptualize our definition of work so that it is not so much based on whether it is paid or not, or on how much, but rather on the extent to which a person is intrinsically motivated by the nature of the work itself, or has to be motivated by

extrinsic rewards (including but not restricted to money). Leading from that, a proposal will be developed to consider volunteering more as a positive attitude towards any work (paid or unpaid) rather than as a special kind of work. We're about ready for that concept and it has profound implications for the reach of our impact as volunteer leaders. For now, the implication is that acceptance of volunteering as a positive attitude towards any work, paid or not, would further dissolve the stereotype: unpaid is unworthy.

There seems to be no single word which expresses meaningfulness as a primary characteristic defining the value of work. The coined words "intrin" and "extrin" might serve the purpose. Individuals or groups have an intrin relation to work, or are intrins, to the extent that they are motivated by the nature and purpose of the work itself, rather than by other (extrinsic) benefits. The degree of caring about the work itself is difficult to objectify. One of the ways Nebraska's 4-H recognizes volunteer assistance is by presenting a check for a million thanks. But ordinarily psychic credits are not nearly as concrete and visible as dollar bills, which may be one of the reasons why volunteering is widely considered less important than paid work. A list of criteria for being an intrin should include the following:

1. To refer back to previous language, the intrin relates to work in terms of "glad gives" and will tend to act as if avidly pursuing a hobby or other recreational interest.
2. The intrin, if paid enough money to keep body and soul together,
  - a. cannot be lured away to another job simply for money, unless that job is equally fulfilling on other grounds, and
  - b. would do the job "for nothing," if financially able.

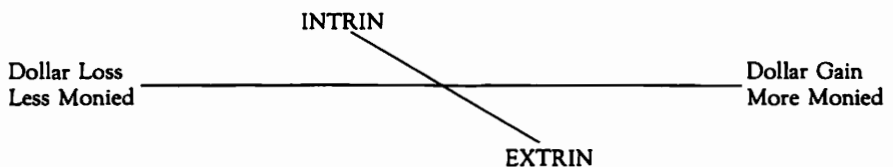
Intrin-extrin is a gradient. All work is a varying mixture of intrin and extrin components. Put otherwise, work is intrin if done out of desire rather than necessity. By definition, intrin work would be prompted less by any benefit outside the work itself, be it money or other work-external benefits such as certificates, academic credit, banquets, dollars, or the like. Such things might be present; the point is they would not be necessary to ensure the involvement of the person in the work.

Intrin describes a person or group in relation to situations where the work itself is the primary motivator; extrin describes instances in which the work itself is less of a motivator, than are work-extrinsic incentives, such as money, a certificate of recognition, favorable public notice, etc.

One might assume that volunteers are usually intrins. But this is not necessarily so. Volunteers may, out of obligation, be doing work they do not enjoy or may be motivated by very sophisticated external incentive programs. It is equally wrong to assume that all paid people are extrins. Insofar as they also happen to care about the work, they are intrins (position 7 in Figure 1, for example). Once again, the intrin-extrin dimension de-emphasizes the importance of money in relation to work, and makes the meaningfulness of the work the focus.

In relation to money in exchange for work (Figure 1), the intrin-extrin dimension might be diagrammed roughly as follows:

Figure 2  
Two Dimensions in the Valuing of Work



The positioning of "intrinsic" to the left is clearly based on the assumption that work done for free or for less money is likely to be more intrinsically meaningful than work done for more money. The reason is that people can be induced to do work they do not like if they are paid for it. It is ordinarily far more difficult to get people to volunteer for work they do not like. Nevertheless, we have previously noted the possibility of extrinsic volunteers and intrinsic paid employees. Indeed, ideally the two dimensions would be at right angles to one another; money recognized as valuable and to varying degrees necessary for people to have, but not a definer of the work; intrinsic-extrinsic would be the main measure of that.

Figure 3 relates intrinsic-extrinsic to volunteering and paid work:

Figure 3  
A Money-By-Meaningfulness Classification of Work

	UNPAID	PAID
INTRIN →	"GOOD" VOLUNTEER	"GOOD" PAID WORKER
EXTRIN →	INEFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER	INEFFECTIVE PAID WORKER

Thus "good" volunteers care about the work itself and are more reliable and effective for that reason. They also require less effort on the part of volunteer leadership in providing work-external incentives. "Good" paid employees, paid intrinsic, need the money, want the money, but are "good" precisely because they want to do more than they have to. They are intrinsic insofar as they might do it "for free," as volunteers, if they could afford to. Unpaid extrinsic are the volunteers who have to be motivated by external incentives and are even then likely to drop out or be ineffective, not caring much for the work itself. They may also have other hidden agendas in the work. Paid extrinsic are the clock-watching paid employees, because they don't really give a damn about the work.<sup>4</sup> There is no "extra mile" effort. The frequent refrain characterizing such people is, "I'm not paid to do that."

Organized labor has tended to advocate extrinsic benefits: more pay and (literally) fringe benefits. More recently, there have been signs of a trend in organized labor to emphasize intrinsic benefits a bit more, benefits more closely related to the attractiveness of the work itself, or at least more intimately associated with the actual job. Among such benefits might be job safety, lower noise level, and flex-time. But the trend is not very marked, if in fact it is a trend at all. Volunteer leadership may someday be able to convince organized labor to fight more for intrinsic than for extrinsic job benefits, and perhaps to define just what these benefits are. Such a movement would also be an excellent anti-inflation approach, raising the quality of work and life without inflating the cost of living.

The "people approach" referred to throughout this book is quite simply an attempt to maximize the "glad give" or intrinsic component in volunteer work. As we shall see later in this chapter, a similar process could equally well be applied to paid work, which includes governmental workers and service employees as well as people who work in business and industry.

The chief advantage of Figure 3's four-way classification is that it draws together

<sup>4</sup>Theoretically, people could hate their work and still be effective in it, but this is unlikely, over the long run, at least.

"good" (intrinsic) volunteer and paid workers, on the basis of concern and fulfillment rather than separating them according to pay, which is ultimately less important. Unpaid and paid intrinsic have more in common with each other than either have with their paid or unpaid extrinsic counterparts, because extrinsics are less happy in their work, and are probably less productive. This can have profound practical implications for the improvement of volunteer-staff relations and in technology transfer from volunteer leadership to personnel work in government and industry. It does this by highlighting the importance of caring about work, rather than whether or not one happens to be paid for it (volunteer versus paid staff). The neologisms allow us to carve out new combinations of meaning, implant them in common usage, and capitalize on them.

One other implication is that if intrinsic is "good" and extrinsic is "bad" — both for the people involved and with regard to the quality of their output impact on others — our increasing intensity and sophistication in developing incentives for volunteers may actually be enhancing the extrinsic component in their work and lead more and more to the undesirable aspects of paid work, even though the instrumentality happens not to be money. We need to take this into consideration and re-focus our volunteer motivational strategies more strongly on the natural attractiveness of the work offered, rather than work-external incentives. That is, we need to implement people-approach concepts more into the design of volunteer jobs.

The intrinsic-extrinsic concept will also need some refinement. For one thing, what does "the work itself" mean? Can it also include the situation and context of the task, such as the social benefits of working with compatible people? Doesn't the including of work context begin to bring in work-external incentives? Should we adopt a flexible definition that includes anything that relates immediately and directly to success in accomplishing the task in its more intimate context?

Another point: intrinsic work does not necessarily imply helping or intention to help. The con artist might enjoy ripping people off. For our present purposes, however, we are free to consider only that portion of the intrinsic-extrinsic category which is, broadly speaking, help-intending.

## The Organization Worked For

As we have just seen, volunteers may receive some money as a result of their work, as long as it is no more than break-even (enabling funds, stipends). But they cannot directly make a financial profit as a result of their work. Therefore, many people seem to assume that volunteers cannot work for an **organization** which is out to make a profit. In fact, this is not so; probably this confusion between individual and organizational levels blinds us to the actual amount of volunteer involvement in the money-making enterprises.

A related confusion exists between private individuals and the public organizations with which they may work. In fact, millions of volunteers work for government agencies — federal, state, or local. (A recent estimate is that two million volunteers work for federal agencies alone.) True, the government is not a profit-making enterprise; it simply taxes us and goes further into debt. Still, government agencies — and private non-profits as well — have money, spend money, need money, even though they do not make profits in any full and literal sense. And herein lies the confusion: we unconsciously assume a contradiction exists when a (nonprofit) volunteer works for a profit-making **organization**. We instinctively conclude that since a volunteer by definition is not primarily motivated by immediate financial gain, organizations which make use of volunteer work must be similarly "uncontaminated." We can see that this is an oversimplification simply by noting the continuum between the theoretically nonprofit and explicitly profit-making organizations that volunteers work for.

1. First, there is the healthy current development of employee volunteering within

business, industry, and labor — sometimes with a volunteer coordinator or director presiding. While these employees are mainly volunteering for the community and not for the corporation, the impact of their work can help the corporate self-interest indirectly, through improved public image and community relations. Again, it is not ordinarily the volunteer's intention to contribute to this corporate self-interest but it may occur as an indirect spin-off.

2. Secondly, a probably increasing number of nonprofit organizations with which volunteers are associated do charge fees for services where possible, or otherwise try to operate on a financially self-sufficient basis, insofar as they can. This is specifically true of an increasing number of programs and resource organizations in the volunteer part of the nonprofit sector. These organizations do seek money in exchange for their work, which includes the work of their volunteers. They can, for example, acquire property and pay staff salaries, sometimes quite high. In my view, a nonprofit organization such as VOLUNTEER can parallel profit-making organizations in every major aspect, except that it cannot distribute dividends to stockholders or accrue profits in the usual ways. Such self-sufficiency oriented nonprofits are more properly called semi-profits, I should think, or organizations which merely break even.

At present, VOLUNTEER earns approximately two-thirds of its operating budget on the basis of memberships, fees and contracts for services. Other local, state, and national organizations "earn" significant portions of needed funding this way, too, as do some local volunteer resource organizations, such as Voluntary Action Centers. The pros, cons, and techniques of this self-sufficiency process need not be argued here. The point for now is that volunteers help make this "contaminating" money; the money is then invested in service to other volunteers and their leadership.

3. The Volunteer as Fundraiser. This involves one of the most direct relationships of volunteering to money. It is the job of millions of volunteers to raise the money for worthy causes. In this sense, these volunteers are making money for their organization. Sometimes they do it in ways directly paralleling the profit sector, as with thrift shops, garage sales, and theatre parties. The only difference is that they do not keep the profits for themselves; this is a significant legal difference.<sup>5</sup> But, barring this technicality, volunteer fundraisers can be extraordinarily effective money earners and are by no means innocent in this regard.

4. Co-operatives might be considered another intermediate example, involving perhaps hundreds of thousands of volunteers, though their level of self-awareness as volunteers is less than in more traditional volunteer programs. In the case of food co-ops, prices can be kept lower and food quality higher to the extent that volunteers are involved productively and reliably. The volunteers make direct material benefits more possible for themselves and for other members of the co-op. Five percent off one's monthly food bill may not be quite the same as money in the bank for exchange for work, but it is so close as to make little practical difference. Less directly, higher-quality food for the same money amounts to much the same thing. Beyond this, for many of these volunteers, there is a strong element of belief in the co-op cause itself. But there is also direct material benefit in exchange for volunteering. There is at least a profit-like (and self-help) motive in co-op volunteering.

5. Less clearly and directly, the same kind of thing might occur in mutual-benefit or fraternal organizations. In the U.S., their charters require them to provide insurance to their members, and to establish a system of local lodges, chapters, and units. To the extent that these local chapters are viable thanks to membership self-help or other-help volunteering, it is probable that more insurance will be sold. The correlation is far from perfect, and the activation of local lodge membership is probably not directly intended to

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<sup>5</sup>There is perhaps no more than an academic difference between a volunteer who raises \$5,000 for United Way and a hard-driving businessman who "earns" \$5,000 and then gives it to United Way.



sell insurance. But I believe there is some connection between volunteering and insurance sales, and the ability of the fraternal organization to provide quality coverage at reasonable costs. To complete the helping cycle, fraternalists are expected to invest a proportion of revenues from insurance sales in benevolent enterprises.

6. Most explicitly of all, the individual nonprofit volunteer can be associated with an organization legally defined as a profit-making enterprise. Many are — many more than we think, because of our conceptual blinders. This is another “secret” volunteer space awaiting identification, understanding, and cultivation. Many private nursing homes are for profit, sometimes almost scandalously so. Volunteers often work in these institutions. I was told recently about comfortably retired executives of one airline. Some of them voluntarily come back in and help the company for free, that is, as volunteers. I also heard of a Women’s Bank where volunteers served refreshments in the lobby during the inaugural week. (I hope these included some cookie-baking, coffee-fetching men, some of whom stood around saying things like, “I never could understand figures, could you, Sam?”) At least some small summer stock companies are for profit; that is, eventually they would like to make some money. Meanwhile, many of the actors, stagehands, ushers and so on are unpaid or underpaid volunteers.

A recent article reported a piece of news which is either very new or very old: the successful development of the first (?) completely human-powered aircraft. The Gossamer Albatross is very light and strong; the aircraft is kept aloft by furious peddling. Maximum altitude is 100 to 150 feet; hence there is little danger of the disaster Icarus suffered many centuries ago (though I’m sure there are other perils). The Gossamer Albatross was built by a California firm which intends to make some money on the enterprise; currently, the plane is challenging the English Channel for a substantial prize if successful, and a substantial dunking if not. The news article reports that the Gossamer Albatross was built by a team of paid employees and volunteers.

Recently I received a newspaper from a neighboring mountain town, Nederland, Colorado. It’s a small town, though evidently not without pride. They wanted a newspaper, and a group incorporated to publish this paper in what I assume is the usual profit-making way. But there was no way they could fully pay all employees at first and still survive. So many of the reporters, advertising salespersons, and other staff were volunteers or paid in only a minimal way. At a later point, they hope for profits. There must be thousands of profit-hoping enterprises like this, replete with volunteers. Hoping to make money sometime in the future does not make these people non-volunteers in the present. In fact much of the planning stage of any business is at least volunteer-like. At the outset there is no way of knowing whether the business will be a success or a financial disaster. Examples of volunteers working for profit-making (or profit-hoping) enterprises could be easily multiplied. For example, the U.S. Office of Minority Business Enterprise has used volunteers quite extensively to help deliver technical assistance in developing minority (for profit) businesses. OMBE currently has definite plans to expand its volunteers-for-profits efforts.

In addition to the many people who receive no pay at all, there are those who accept lower pay than they might otherwise command because they believe in what a company is doing. There is at least a volunteer-like component in what these people are doing (see position 7 in Figure 1).

There may be hundreds of thousands of volunteers engaged in work for the profit sector, though they seldom identify with the word “volunteer.” We are partly to blame for this. Our concept of the volunteer is hinged to our prejudice about money. If money contaminates individual volunteering, profit-making equally contaminates the helpfulness potential of any organized effort. So there appears to be a contradiction in a nonprofit individual working for a profit-making organization.

We need to broaden our concept. When we do, we may find a tremendous new area of

“monied” volunteer space to explore and exploit on behalf of quality of life — the total sum of helping in the world.

### Objections Over-Ruled

In the first place, it is possible to be a true volunteer in a profit-making context; there is no logical contradiction. A person, as an individual or as part of a group, can do relatively uncoerced help-intending work for this organization provided that it is not personally for profit at any given time. Indeed, one will probably affiliate with the organization precisely because it is an instrumentality through which one's help intentions can be effectively implemented. Volunteers in profit-making organizations are often in it for the cause, not the money. This cause is more important than the financial context of the host organization. This is the second point. A good service can help people, and a poor service or lack of service can hurt people, whether for profit or not. The difference in the profit part of it — and it is a real difference — is that profit-making organizations may tend to be giving less service to people who need these services but cannot afford them. But even here, volunteers may help keep costs down so that more people can afford these services.

But the basic point here is help-intending mission. The volunteer wants *Nederland* to have a good newspaper from which the whole community can benefit, and as of today that can only (or mainly) be accomplished by volunteering. For the same sort of reasons, we need more minority-run businesses, the play must go on, and the retired executive volunteers care about quality of services their airline provides the public.<sup>6</sup> Pride is a good word for this. The question is not so much whether the operation makes a profit as whether in so doing it helps people. And equally good work can be done strictly for money, partially for money, or for no money at all.

There are problems with profit sector volunteering, nonetheless, and we need to face up to them. The first is exploitation of volunteers. For example, there is concern that some (not all) private for-profit nursing homes could be exploiting their volunteers in order to exploit their patients. Volunteers are used to keep costs down, avoid hiring more paid people to do the work, and to raise profits. They are used as substitutes for service, rather than amplifiers of adequate base-paid service. The same might possibly be alleged of the airline.

These dangers are clear, but, not incidentally, they seem to apply about equally to nonprofit and government agencies. In any case, they do not disappear while we look the other way. We badly need to raise profit-context volunteering to focal awareness, consider it carefully, and develop guidelines for volunteer leadership and volunteers. First of all, for example, as a necessary but not sufficient condition, the overall mission of the profit-making organization must be help-intending in the same general sense as individual volunteering is defined as help-intending. Exact definition of help-intending is difficult enough at the level of individuals; it is even more difficult at the organizational level, and further complicated when dealing with the profit-making type of organization. Immediately a number of people will feel — and there will be strong feelings about this chapter — that a profit-making organization by its very nature cannot be help-intending. This will be the response of, for example, those who do not subscribe to free enterprise capitalism. Such people, of course, have an absolute right not to volunteer for a profit-making organization and to try to persuade other people not to do so. They also have positive options for involving themselves in noncapitalistic organizations, or organizations such as consumer protection groups which monitor capitalistic enterprises. An alternative view is that while some of the ways in which some people make money are certainly exploitative and objectionable, money-making per se is not necessarily evil. In

<sup>6</sup>Or, like any other volunteer, they might have more mundane objectives, such as attention, prestige, and having something besides shuffleboard to do.

fact, profit-making can be one form of the legitimate self-interest which as has already been argued, is an acceptable aspect of volunteering (Chapter 14). Nor should the profit sector be condemned simply because it is competitive; the nonprofit sector is also competitive, sometimes viciously so. We may even confirm someday that nonprofits are intrinsically as competitive as profit-making organizations.

In short, it is possible, with a clear conscience, to volunteer for a profit-making organization, under certain carefully defined conditions. Among these conditions would be that the organization's purpose is truly (not just theoretically) help-intending, and that other organizational options for providing the same service are not as readily available or feasible. Volunteers might also want some assurance that their volunteering would have a humanizing, enriching effect upon the organization and the services it provided.

There may appear to be a second general issue here in that the profit-making sector makes and sells products, while volunteering is work or effort, but in fact, volunteers can produce things or use things as part of their work (Chapter 13). In any case, as of recently, the majority of profit enterprise consists of providing services rather than producing things.

After one comes to grips with these general issues, there remains the question of deciding whether or not any particular profit-making organization is help-intending enough to merit volunteer participation. Ideally, virtually every profit-making organization projects a help-intending image of this type through commercials or public releases. Such organizations tell us they provide the best quality service or product at the lowest possible cost under the best possible conditions for the consumer. In other words, they convey the message that they and their employees do more than they have to because they want to in order to please us and deserve our business. In this idea projection, the profit sector sounds almost volunteer-like; in fact, the better, more reputable business is more volunteer-like. Businesses vary, of course, in the extent to which they live up to such ideals; Better Business Bureaus exist to monitor such matters. Indeed, there may come a time when prospective volunteers consult the Better Business Bureau to ask whether certain businesses are reputable or idealistic enough to volunteer for. Meanwhile, probably the best general guideline is to avoid obviously questionable enterprises and look for real services to the community which cannot practically be provided in any other way: the small-town newspaper, the community theater, or the struggling avant-garde bookshop.

There are other criteria which the prospective volunteer should consider as well. For example, where both profits, nonprofits, and government are providing the same kind of service, the profits should be volunteer-supported only if and as they promise better services to more people at less cost. Such a situation is conceivable. Where only profit corporations are accessible to volunteers as vehicles for their help-intending purposes, our guidelines should insist that this volunteer service improve quality of service and result in lower or at least stable prices. Whatever one may believe about how much profit an organization deserves to make, one thing is certain: volunteers should not be the instrumentality of making more profits. In this respect, a volunteer will differ from a paid employee in a profit-making organization. There should also be another difference: a volunteer has a **right** to contribute ideas along with service. In a profit-making enterprise, volunteers should be considered as stockholders — without portfolios.

These guidelines may well be, to say the least, somewhat futuristic for many kinds of profit-making organizations. Such organizations, particularly the well-established ones, show no overwhelming inclination to invite volunteers in — with the possible exceptions of family or friends who may help out occasionally without pay.

Indeed, our guidelines should make the clearest possible distinction between financially established profit-making organizations and those which are marginal in this respect, at least at the time of volunteering. (Nursing homes would generally be in the first class,

theatre companies and the *Nederland* newspaper in the second.) The guidelines for the first type could parallel those we are developing now for volunteers in government and nonprofits. Volunteer roles and task definition must be such as to supplement and enrich paid staff services, not replace paid staff. These guidelines might include working agreements with organized labor or professional associations involved in the operation. Guidelines of such types are quite well-established, and no more will be said about them here.<sup>7</sup>

In developing guidelines for financially marginal organizations — which do tend to use volunteers more frequently — there would be less concern about defining volunteer roles to avoid overlap with paid staff roles, since these latter roles would be necessarily minor or nonexistent; that is, there would likely be few or no paid staff. There would be more concern for what happens if and when the organization gets on its feet financially. At least two provisions are needed here:

1. Appropriate people would begin to be appropriately paid for the work formerly done by volunteers, and
2. There would have to be a clear agreement with those volunteers whose work precedes financial viability, describing the conditions under which, and the extent to which, they will receive preferential hiring consideration when payment for their positions became possible.

Thus the profit sector and volunteering can overlap. At the same time, volunteering is edging towards the profit sector in the apprenticeship model developed so ably by Herta Loeser of Boston and others. Here volunteering is deliberately cultivated as a training ground for and transition to paid work in nonprofit, government, and profit-making organizations.

With well-developed guidelines of this type, more people would have more options for involvement. More people would be included because of this awareness and the positive effect of guidelines in perfecting the model. It would be better understood as acceptable to volunteer for a profit-making organization under certain defined conditions; the involvement would be more "enriching" because better understood and more effectively engaged.

## A Developmental Model

The potential for including more people lies not only in the increased awareness and attractiveness of existing profit-context human service channels, but in the development of new profit-making organizations as well. Here the emphasis shifts to development of new small business or industry, and away from established profit-making groups, such as nursing homes, which parallel nonprofits in human service delivery functions.<sup>8</sup> For example, a project could be organized in which volunteers or stipended volunteers help to begin small neighborhood industry or business first on a pilot-model basis. Then guidelines for transition to financial self-sufficiency would be applied along the lines described previously for financially marginal enterprises. The indigenous volunteers would probably have to have some stipending and other outside funding support for materials, facilities, etc. But this support would probably amount to less than if a full-salary at the beginning were insisted upon. It would be further lessened if outside volunteers assisted with some volunteer technical assistance and gift-giving in the initial phases of the small business or industry. This corps of volunteers — involved because they

<sup>7</sup>See, for example: *Guidelines for Relationships Between Volunteers and Paid Non-Professional Workers*, by the Volunteer Centre, 29 Lower King's Road, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4, 2AB, U.K., 1977.

<sup>8</sup>My appreciation to Don Schierling of Denver for brainstorming this idea with me — he's not to be held responsible for how I may have misunderstood him or reshaped the idea afterwards.

believe in the cause of encouraging more small business — would pull out as the enterprise got on its feet financially. The indigenous stipended volunteers would then begin the transition to more fully paid status.

In this model, volunteering would serve as positive stimulation of the profit sector for people who might not otherwise enjoy its benefits. The model might also contribute to the wider economic well-being of community and society as a result of increased employment, initiative, self-reliance. To some extent this model is already beyond the stage of mere speculation. In fact, the U.S. Office of Minority Business Enterprise does indeed encourage its funded management assistance organizations to enhance their services to minority businesses via volunteers, and to a large degree this is actually being done.

### **A Volunteer Component in Established Businesses?**

But volunteering is not just for the struggling proto-business. We have already noted that the ideals of good business practice can be considered volunteer-like. In addition to that, or as a more explicit part of it, established businesses could integrate a volunteer component into their profit part, for an integrated profit-helping motive. Gas stations already provide free air, (alas, soon to be no more) free directions, and bathrooms. Such services bring people in, help them, and sometimes sell more gas at the same time, especially if the proprietors are reasonably gracious. My uncle had comfortable chairs in his package liquor store, and comfortable conversation to go along with the seats. It was a real help for tired feet and lonesome minds; it also helped keep my uncle and grandfather entertained while at work, and I firmly believe it also sold a lot more liquor in the long run. Incidentally, besides the good seat, good talk, and goodwill, one reason it sold more liquor was that you could always tell your friends and family you went in there just to talk. In such instances — there are many — the business does more than contribute to "charity"; it incorporates it, and this linked business-volunteer model could be developed more deliberately and intensively. For example, a fast food chain, a stop and shop, or a shopping mall could be integrated with a volunteer-operated community information center with no obligation to make a purchase.<sup>9</sup> People would make use of the free service, and some extra impulse buying would probably result.

### **The Relation Between Volunteering as an Institution and the Profit Sector**

Our third main area of discussion in this chapter deals with the question: how does volunteering as an institution, especially volunteer leadership, relate to the profit sector today? First of all, financial and material resources in support of volunteering are badly needed. There may be more potential for dollars in the profit sector than in all our traditional private philanthropic sources of support, and the potential at least adds substantially to government resources available to support voluntary help-intending. But there is a danger of over-reliance on this supplicant model. The danger is that we will end up selling ourselves to the highest bidder, and the bids may not have to be so high at that. There is cause to worry about the possible purchase of the volunteer movement by government or corporations. People who are simply giving money, with no mutuality to the help, will naturally want the money to be spent for purposes which appeal to them. For a volunteer movement which costs a billion dollars a year (see previous note), it's an offer we can't refuse.

It is good, then, that we are beginning to relate to the profit sector in another way, asking what we can do for them directly, as well as what they can do for us. We are starting to do this, first of all, because we sense that business and industry are more explicitly oriented

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<sup>9</sup>Thanks to Kenn Allen for this idea.

towards a direct return on their investment. There is another reason, very dimly perceived today. Volunteer leadership, though seen as the “poor relations” today, can be of genuine help to business and industry, whether paid in full — or not paid at all. If we are to adjust to this more reciprocal relationship, we must understand the full reach of our mission in society. We are the people who stand for the humanization of work, for meaningfulness and satisfaction in it. There is no other truly effective way in which we can involve volunteers in work. Thus we stand, in a society in which a recent study found 62 percent of Americans dissatisfied with their jobs. An even more recent study by Louis Harris Associates reported that white collar workers would work better if their job conditions were better. Of the 1,000 workers surveyed, 74 percent said they would be able to do more if their job conditions were changed, including higher quality of work. Harris urged employers to “seize the chance to make the most of your finest asset” by paying more attention to workers’ needs.<sup>10</sup>

In the above quote, I would underline **increased quality of work**.

I deeply believe volunteer leadership has a clear responsibility to this kind of paid-worker client: they are suffering, unfulfilled for forty hours a week, many millions of them for a large proportion of their waking lives. And we know how to help them, even if we and they do not fully realize it. We can vastly improve the quality of life through our knowledge of how to improve the quality of work.

Because so many people are unfulfilled, bored, or suffering as a result of the poor quality of their work-life, we as volunteer people should want to help them. This is the most appropriate response to colleagues who may be concerned about volunteer leadership taking a line which supports the profit sector and free enterprise capitalism as a way of life. In fact, it would make no difference if we were discussing unfulfilled wage earners in more socialistically inclined countries, such as England, Australia, or some provinces of Canada. The principle is the same: volunteer leadership should be facilitating help for people who need help. People everywhere who exchange their work for money or equivalent material return suffer because of the inappropriateness of that work for them.

It does not seem reasonable to believe that money-making per se is tainted or evil. Some money-makers may be unethical in their procedures and purposes, but that could also be true of some largely volunteer enterprises, for example, those which advocate racism or violence. As for peaceful advocacy for peaceful purposes, that can include attempts to modify, strengthen, or simply preserve our current economic system. Therefore, let us proceed in an approach by degrees to how volunteer leadership may enrich the worklives of paid people as well as volunteers — a vast new clientele for our skills and our concerns.

### **How Volunteer Leadership Can Help People Who Work for Money (Profit): An Approach by Degrees**

First, let’s review the currently better understood ways in which volunteering can help people in the profit sector. Obviously our knowledge can assist them in establishing corporate volunteer programs. In return for the money, facilities, materials, and employee time invested in a volunteer effort, a business or industry may benefit in improved public relations, visibility, public image. At the same time, it is able to discharge something called social responsibility, frequently through employee policy input on Boards as well as through service or money. The word “responsibility” is significant. It appears that the profit sector is increasingly seeing social responsibility as an integrated and imperative part of a profit-making mission, not as trivial altruistic addendum. Less well-recognized is the fact that the meaningful employee volunteer opportunities we provide as volunteer leaders

<sup>10</sup>A number of studies of this type are appearing today. I’ve never seen one that reported less than 25% of paid workers dissatisfied with their work. Usually, the percentage is much higher, as high as 75 percent sometimes.

can add to the total life enrichment of an employee. And it seems reasonable to assume that an employee who is more fulfilled, happier off the job, is likely to perform better on the job. Perhaps this last assumption is subject to serious question in certain cases where unhappiness outside work may prompt concentration inside. But it is not necessary to argue the point, because in fact the main concern in this chapter is precisely what we can do to enhance employees' work inside.

The previous section indicated a set of even more radical suggestions as to ways in which volunteers to business and industry, especially small business and industry, might develop and enhance it. It is important to note that every one of the above models could equally well be applied in cooperation with, and sponsored by, organized labor people, with parallel benefits for them.

But it seems that the major way volunteer leadership can enrich paid work is scarcely considered at all today. It is job enrichment for paid employees. Personnel people could be our principal clientele and consultees, and possibly fee-payers, too. But we would expand the scope of our job-enrichment efforts, extending our concern from the quality of volunteer work to the quality of all work, from work fulfillment for volunteers only to the same fulfillment for all people; we are, after all, to some extent capable of and responsible for determining whether our work is exciting or boring.

To establish this point, recall first of all our discussion of *intrinsic* versus *extrinsic* in a preceding section of this chapter. This concept links work-value to the immediate meaningfulness of the work as a more important defining characteristic than money or the lack of it. Recall also Chapter thirteen's discussion of skill-levels. The point made was that volunteering and paidwork are shadows of each other. Wherever in this world someone is doing something in return for money, you may be sure someone somewhere else is doing a similar kind of work for free. The difference is not in what volunteers do, but why they do it. The "why" is defined principally by the presence of certain work conditions: uncoerced, not for profit, help-intending. These can be summarized mainly in terms of attitude. The conclusion: **Volunteering is not so much a kind of work as an attitude towards any work.** It is not particularly that a certain type of skill or activity is engaged; it is the ambience behind it. This attitude and this ambience can be described as **doing more than you have to because you want to.**

Even this is too separatist. We cannot possibly assume that all volunteer work is totally characterized by this attitude, nor all paidwork totally lacking in it. Any task, job, or work is a mosaic of activities, elements, or components. Some are intrinsically more attractive to the worker than others. Each component may also be more intrinsically attractive on some occasions than others. Therefore, there is a non-volunteer "taint" in all or most volunteer work — caused by its less intrinsically attractive elements. Far less understood is that there can be more or less of a volunteer attitude or component in the mosaic of elements in a paidwork job. Potentially, there is a little volunteer in all of us, in whatever we do, with or without pay.

Consider the 40-hour a week paid person, such as a social worker who puts in long overtime, not primarily bucking for promotion and not getting paid for it, but because she cares. Is she not an "overtime volunteer"? And where do workaholics come from? What about the fifty-five year old businessman with money enough for fifty years of retirement, who keeps on working? At any minute or hour, what about the paid persons who do more than they have to, simply because they want to? When work is "love made visible," does a paycheck at the end of the week eliminate the love? The financial reward may be there but the work or that part of it is not done for profit; if it were financially feasible, the person might do it "for free."

Apparently personnel people are well aware of this, though they use different language to describe it. "Job enrichment" is one phrase. Though job enrichment can include money-equivalent fringe benefits, it can also include the enhancement of rewards in the

work itself. As with volunteers, the key here is improved job design to maximize these intrinsic values. In designing work for people, volunteer leadership has had to depend almost solely on the intrinsic attraction of the work itself. It has not been able to fall back on the very real "added attraction" of money, not directly at any rate. Therefore, we may have something to share with personnel people, in business, industry, government, and with organized labor. This last may seem surprising, but, as previously noted, it does seem that the benefits organized labor is working for might be tending away from emphasis on raw salary increases or their equivalent and towards more intrinsic benefits in working conditions; some of them, such as safety, are less "fringe" than others. We can anticipate the possibility of contract negotiations based on demands for job enrichment. This is desirable, and if organized labor does move this way, we might be helpful as consultants.

### **The "Volunteering" of Paid Work: A Possibility for the Future**

For leadership of volunteering, this is the ultimate extension question. We have a special, perhaps even unique, experience and expertise in designing work for the love of it. Will we share this? Do we include ourselves in the larger responsibility for the enrichment of all work? Surely we should, if our mission is the alleviation of human misery, for there is much more of this misery among "wage slaves" than among volunteers. There can be no clearer call for compassion. This call extends beyond the profit sector, and includes any paid work: human service and sales, professional services, any salaried worker in local, state, or national government, in a non-profit private organization, in business and industry, employed by others or self-employed.

There might first be a pilot test phase in which a team of volunteer leaders and personnel people could cross-fertilize their knowledge of job design principles from both the volunteer and paidwork worlds. The models would then be pilot tested on paid workers, the results analyzed, and the model refined for future use. Let's imagine what some of these job design principles might look like as presented by the volunteer people for review by the personnel people.

First of all, certain assumptions will usually be necessary or highly desirable before any work is capable of enrichment.

1. The work is composed of more than one task element or activity; the job is not rigidly confined to a single activity such as turning a screw to the right, endlessly repeated.
2. There is some flexibility possible in adding to, subtracting from, or rearranging the set of activities which constitute the work. To varying degrees, policies of management or organized labor may restrict such flexibility in job design; for example, enough change in the activity composition of a job may force a change in the pay grade. But all that is required is some reasonable degree of flexibility, a job description which is not totally rigid.
3. There are two or more persons in the overall work situation, between whom work elements or activities can be traded or rebalanced in some fashion. Where this is true, the "volunteering" of paid employment will be more feasible, as the following examples will indicate. Nevertheless, we may be able to do some job enrichment even for a person who is working also.

These three assumptions are valid in some significant fashion for many if not most work situations.

### **Task or Activity-Trading**

Let's begin with a simple sample. You and I are being paid to clear a person's land of dead or dying timber and prepare the wood for use in the stove over the winter. Activities include:



1. Diagnosing "bettle hit" trees which will die next spring and infect other trees next summer. (I like doing this; you don't.)
2. Using a chain saw. (You enjoy this; I'm scared of the bloody thing.)
3. Splitting wood. (Neither of us minds doing this, but you like it a bit more than I do.)
4. Stacking wood. (I'm compulsive enough to really enjoy this; you can take it or leave it.)

If we're rigid about the work, we will tend to trade off tasks so that each of us puts in approximately half of the work on each of the four task-activities. On the other hand, if we're sensible, I'll do relatively more of the work tasks I prefer and you will do relatively more of the work on the tasks you prefer. In other words, we will increase the intrinsic interest of the work by playing to our individual glad gives insofar as possible. Since such orientation to glad gives is the essence of volunteer job design, we have "volunteerized" the work, to some extent.

Probably, people do this kind of activity trading almost every day, informally. I'm only suggesting that we could be more self-conscious and systematic about it.

Suppose Steve and Jane are paid employees in an information system. They agree that operation of this information system requires four main kinds of activity, listed as A, B, C, D below. If there were time, they would also very much like to include two other activities, listed as E and F. (Steve suggested activity E; Jane suggested activity F.)

We ask Jane and Steve independently to rate the extent to which they enjoy or might enjoy each of the six activities, that is, the degree to which these activities are glad gives for them. The rating scale is from 1 as lowest through 5 as highest degree of intrinsic interest in the work. The rating is in parentheses when the person is not actually performing the task at present, hence an estimated rating.

We might get intrinsic interest work profiles which look something like this:

ACTIVITY	"GLAD GIVE" RATING	
	JANE	STEVE
A. Categorize and Code Accessions	4	2
B. Shelf Accessions	(3)	1
C. Respond to Information Requests	4	(4)
D. Develop Information Summaries of Major Library Sections	3	5
-----		
E. Redesign Information Classification System	(3)	(5)
F. Recruit and Supervise Interns	(5)	(3)

What this intrinsic interest profile tells us essentially is that the "same" total work could be accomplished with more enjoyment for both people if Jane helped out a little more with coding and shelving, and Steve did a bit more in responding to information requests and in developing information summaries. In other words, the work has been significantly volunteerized for both persons. Suppose further that this accomplishes tasks A through D not only more happily, but in less time, and that other people become available who do not mind taking over some of the tasks rated lower by Jane and Steve. We then know something about the best emphases for further job growth and enrichment for these ten people (tasks E and F).<sup>11</sup> [Not incidentally, when Jane and Steve agree voluntarily to the trading process, they are being good work-neighbors, and this takes us back to "neighboring" as a name for volunteering (Chapter 4).]

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<sup>11</sup>Clearly, the same principles could be applied towards the enrichment of volunteer work. The process differs from current custom in volunteer job design, because it deals with sets of volunteers, rather than one volunteer at a time. Thus, the process would be particularly appropriate for the enrichment of pair or other group volunteering (Chapter 10).

The real-life task-trading process would be more complicated, of course. For one thing, competency would have to be considered along with enjoyment of a task. Though the two tend to be positively correlated, this may not be so where tasks require a great deal of practice and training. Secondly, people may be threatened by having to rate the intrinsic character of elements in their jobs, especially if these ratings are low. The three assumptions made in the introduction to this section suggest other possible complications. Nevertheless, this task-trading process has promise.

### “Organic Gardening”

Chapter 8 described this process as applied to the enrichment of volunteer work. The three principles involved are:

1. **Main Sequence.** Where possible, link job-elements over time to show evolving purpose;

2. **Feedback Loops.** Wherever possible, the end of a work process should **feed back** into an improved repetition of the work cycle (more than sheer repetition);

3. **Parallel Opportunity.** Seize the opportunity to do a different but meaningful thing during a task element.

There is no reason why the same three principles cannot be applied to the enrichment of paid employment by adding variety, a sense of purpose, and completion.

Here is an example for just one of the three principles' main sequence, though examples of the other two principles could be found as easily for paid employment as for volunteer work (Chapter 8).

Suppose that three activities, #1, #2, and #3, must be done in sequence to complete a piece of work, and three people are presently deployed as follows in this work.

A performs #1 over and over again.

B performs #2 over and over again.

C performs #3 over and over again.

The principle of main sequence would prompt us to rearrange the work in this way:

A performs #1, then #2, then #3.

B performs #1, then #2, then #3.

C performs #1, then #2, then #3.

Presumably, all three people would now find more satisfaction in the work, because they could participate more in the natural evolution of work completion. There is some task-activity trading here, too, as in our library example. The difference lies in the increase of intrinsic interest in the same activity (#1, #2, or #3), by rearranging or adding to the task's activity context. In so doing, we have converted an assembly line type of task to something a bit more interesting. In fact, I'm told that an automobile manufacturer, Volvo, did something quite like the above example on the assembly line, with favorable results in employee satisfaction and productivity — but the union objected, I believe.

Indeed, personnel people are no doubt well aware of the activity-trading and main sequence principles described here, as well as the feedback loop and parallel opportunity principles which were illustrated for volunteer job design (Chapter 8) but only listed in the present section. The volunteer people and the personnel people should still talk together. Even if we have no more than different approaches to the same principles of job design, different perspectives, the dialogue should spark some insights. The special contribution of volunteer leadership may be practice, skill and sensitivity in recognizing what people are naturally glad to do, and building on this intrinsic interest.

## Epilogue: Homemaking

Homemaking belongs somewhere in this book. It is relatively uncoerced work (!) and not ordinarily done directly for financial profit, though it has enormous economic value. (One would have to pay a lot to have it done by a professional housekeeper.) Homemaking or housework is also generally help-intending, some mixture of self-help and other-help. Economists would exclude work done within a family as "volunteer"; yet homemaking is at least volunteer-like work, though the following proposal does not depend on this being so. Rather, homemaking belongs in this book because it is a vital work which millions of people do, and a substantial portion of them are unfulfilled in it. If 62 percent of paid workers are unhappy in their jobs, at least a similar percentage could be unhappy in housework. Job enrichment principles for volunteering or paid employment could be adapted and systematically applied to increase the meaningfulness and enjoyment of housework. Meanwhile, a voluntary exercise for the interested is to speculate on the application to housework of job design principles such as activity trading, main sequence, feedback loops, and parallel opportunity.

Maybe someday volunteer leadership will be bold enough to look at parenting, too — a crucial unpaid job in our society, which, for some people, needs enrichment. Here, some of the "technology transfers" might be even more direct. We know a good bit about designing companion volunteer or adult model volunteer jobs for a maximum attractiveness and character.

Paid employees, homemakers, parents — any or all of these people form another vast and important potential clientele for volunteer leadership. We could help these people if we wanted to. In the process, we would ourselves become more important to society and community.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# THEY ALSO SERVE . . .

The kids in our pre-television town played plenty of sandlot baseball. There were rules, more or less; most of the time they worked pretty well, and we played within them. But after a kid lost ten games in a row, he or she would sometimes start blaming the rules of the game and we would all hear about it (umpires were virtually unknown in sandlot baseball at that time). Parental input on rules was not unknown, especially after busted noses, modest riots, and missed suppers. We might get such arbitrary rule changes as limitations on the uses to which baseball bats might be put and automatic termination of ball games at 9:00 p.m. (moonlight or not).

The regular winners tended to protest rule changes, but the game evolved, nevertheless. As I recall, we ended up playing with a hollow rubber ball cut in half (what curves!), with a tennis racket for a bat, on a very small backyard ballfield. It's still the best game I ever played, and I say this as one of the principal complainers at the time.

Volunteers, too, can play the help-intending game within the existing rules (system-accepting volunteers), or they can work on the rules themselves (system-addressing volunteers), or do both. I believe a better helping game emerges when all work together.

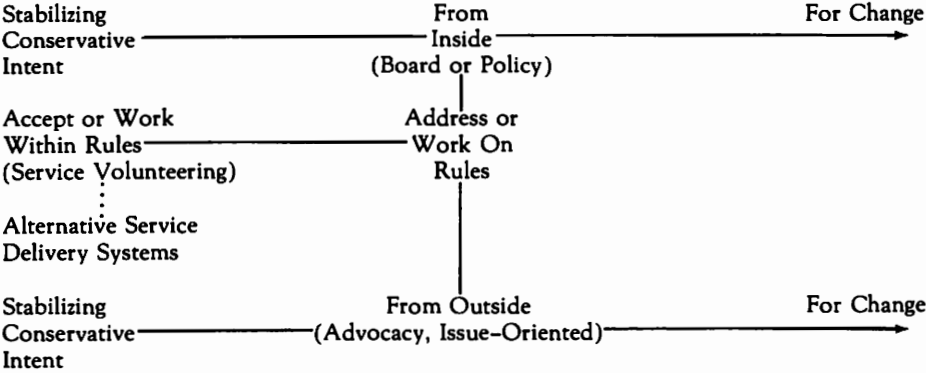
A system, as used here, is a set of rules or boundary conditions. These rules may vary to any degree in clarity, power, and pervasiveness — some systems are more systematic than others. The scope of rules will also range from the implicit rules of a relatively small, loosely organized group to the behavior codes of a community or society, with formalized laws and regulations.

The individual volunteer or the volunteer group may be engaged in a way which accepts one set of rules and tries to change another set. For any given set of rules, the balance between working **within** rules and working **on** them may shift from time to time.

Finally, system-addressing involvement can vary along at least two other dimensions. It can occur from within the system whose rules are being questioned (e.g., a policy or Board

volunteer) or it can occur from outside that system (advocacy or issue-oriented volunteering). Second, either from within the system or from outside it, leverage can be applied toward maintaining the rules or toward changing them. Thus, an in-house Board can be quite radical; an advocacy group quite conservative (don't change laws to permit homosexual rights). The somewhat lower probability of the role reversal is indicated in Figure 1, which diagrams a first approximation to all these complex relationships.

Figure 1  
MAIN DIMENSIONS IN VOLUNTEER "SYSTEM SPACE"



Any point in this total caring space can be occupied by a paid or volunteer position. Much of this space is volunteer, and that is what we will be talking about here. Moreover, any help-intending volunteer work probably contains some mixture of all the service, policy, and advocacy positions in the space. Beyond that, individuals or groups may be mobile within the caring space; for example, moving from a relatively service-oriented position toward advocacy. Finally, we have placed only three skeletal landmarks in this space: service, policy, and advocacy. For purposes of simplification, other important variations on volunteering are left out of Figure 1; for example, systems-monitoring volunteers. This is a form of system-address which is more observational than active and more indirect than direct (Chapters 9, 11).<sup>1</sup> Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) tend to link both the observational and active poles in the advocacy area. Another name at least partly in this space would be "community organization," which seems frequently to exist for issue-oriented purposes.

"Public participation," or citizen participation is also a term sometimes used to describe policy/advocacy input by citizens into government planning. This participation may differ from open-ended advocacy (choose your position and go to work on it) to the extent that the government people restrict the policy options open to you; for example, do you want the new highway to go through your front yard or your living room? That is just a bit overstated, of course; the point is, the advocate's scope of options for advocacy is restricted by others. The choice may only be "for" or "against" a government proposal.

Our other introductory point is that "newer" parts of volunteer space tend to be rightward, as usual, in Figure 1. Also, as usual, the newness is mainly in system address people's willingness to think of themselves as volunteers; to us, they have been "volunteering" for ages, but they usually don't choose to describe themselves as volunteers.

<sup>1</sup>We would therefore need a three-dimensional reference frame to place volunteer monitors more fully. The direct-indirect and the active-observing dimensions would intersect the system address area at right angles, in this reference frame.

One yearns for the good old days of sandlot baseball. But complexities must be faced.

The three landmark locations in Figure 1 are:

1. System-accepting or service volunteering.
2. System-address from inside the system (Board or policy volunteering, study committees, etc.).
3. System address from **outside** a system (advocacy or issue-oriented volunteering).

Let's discuss each of them in turn.

### Service Volunteering

To the extent that a voluntary help-intender accepts the rules, boundaries, and goals of the system and works within them, he or she qualifies as a service volunteer; for example, a volunteer probation officer, tutor in a school system, hospital aide. The benefits for the service volunteer include access to consumers of services the organization controls as gatekeeper. Add to this the ability to tap into the organization's resources and support in the work. On the debit side may be the volunteer's loss of control and freedom of movement as the price of admission; the need to adapt to some rules and purposes with which he or she may not agree and is relatively powerless to change. The choices in such cases are to adapt (to the point of cooptation), or withdraw toward a system address role, or to work within a more congenial system of rules.

I doubt if any volunteer ever accepts 100 percent of the rules, in which case they are no different for paid workers. Therefore, I also doubt that there is such a thing as a totally "tame" service volunteer. Even when volunteers don't actively try to alter the framework of the rules, they might do a little stretching and bending, or achieve some degree of informal input to rule-makers. There are also alternative service delivery systems peopled by service volunteers (see Figure 1). However system-accepting a volunteer may be within that alternative system, the system as a whole may impact on more traditional service delivery systems. Thus, by serving loyally within the rules of one system — an alternative school, say, or a criminal justice diversion program — the volunteer can have an advocacy effect on other systems. The volunteer ski coach who successfully teaches a new system of skiing may be helping speed the day when older systems are discarded or modified. Loyally serving inside one system is tantamount to implicit advocacy for that system and "against" other systems. An example of another point intermediate on the system accept-address dimension is a youth advocacy volunteer who serves within the rules of an organization, but helps young people deal with the rules of other systems.

Still, the notion of loyal service volunteering has been the core of workspace accepted as "volunteer." Such service volunteering is frequently agency-related, and tends to be distinctly uncontroversial and eminently respectable. It has also been enormously effective in getting certain things done that otherwise couldn't be done. I advocate maintaining and strengthening our volunteer service base, then expanding it toward other areas of system space, for they also serve who work on Boards and in issue-oriented groups. All are simply different sides of the same coin of caring; all are people who give a damn about the way things are. They simply exercise choice in the best way of going about their involvement: working within the rules as they now stand or attempting to exert some leverage on those rules. Any way you look at it, the quality of life gets some caring attention.

### System Address: General Comments

Volunteers or volunteer advocacy groups may believe that their best opportunity to achieve their helping purposes is to work **on** the rules rather than work **within** them. Again, this is a relative matter in practice, as we have seen.

System-address volunteers can operate either from within the system which has these rules, or from outside it (the vertical axis in Figure 1). Work on the rules from outside the system is most likely to be called issue-oriented or advocacy volunteering. Operating from within a system would more likely be called policy or Board volunteering. However, these distinctions are certainly a matter of degree. Members of a transportation system study committee appointed by the mayor are officially insiders by virtue of that appointment, but they are also outsiders insofar as they are independent citizens, not employed by the transportation system under study. Or a committee of a social work professional association makes some recommendations to a service agency; as individuals, many of them may be insiders, actually employed by this agency, but the association itself is outside the administrative part of the agency to which recommendations are made.

To whatever degree the operating base is inside or outside the system, all participants share the basic commonality of dealing with the rules of the system; Boards from the inside, advocacy groups from the outside. They may even find themselves going the same way in what they want to do; either insiders or outsiders may impact towards maintenance or change in the rules or system (horizontal link at top and bottom of Figure 1). A conservative Board may be primarily rule-preserving. But Boards and committees can also rock the boat. All change agency is not necessarily from the outside; it is only that the pace may be slower from within. Nor are all kinds of advocacy groups necessarily radical. There are conservative advocacy groups, too, who want to keep the rules as they are; for example, a punitive judge or police chief enforcing the laws strictly as they are may be solidly supported by a local "law and order" group of advocacy volunteers. Other issue-oriented volunteer groups may exist primarily to oppose changes in current rules, regulations, or law; for example, anti-ERA, anti-gay rights, National Rifle Association. However, it seems somewhat more likely that outside positioned system groups will be more change-oriented, and inside groups somewhat less so. This perception is reflected visually in Figure 1.

Policy and advocacy are the two main components of system address volunteering. Let's look briefly at each of them.

### **System Address: Policy**

In working with the rules, the policy volunteer has more chance of acceptance, respectability, and leverage from within the system. But this very advantage carries with it the risk of cooptation or simple neglect. Everything depends on how seriously the host organization takes the policy volunteer's directions or suggestions. Nonobservance of Board volunteers' policies is not unusual even when legal mandates explicitly provide for a Board's policy rights and responsibilities. Policy/advisory volunteers' self-respect is frequently eroded by doublethink and doubletalk about their alleged role: do what we want, not what you think. Though there have always been shining exceptions to this, the situation is getting better all the time. Even a malingering host organization is rarely totally effective in separating policy volunteers from their system address role.

### **System Address: Advocacy**

The outside positioned advocacy or issue-oriented group tends to lack the advantages of acceptance, trust, and leverage. The special advantages often enjoyed by volunteers working from within the system resemble those of the free-lance volunteer (Chapter 10): they can develop and advocate positions relatively independent of restraints imposed by the system they wish to impact. They can also impact a number of organizations at once; unlike many policy volunteers, their scope is not restricted to a single organization.

Advocacy suggests ideology. Yet I don't think any particular ideology is an essential characteristic of volunteering, and I hope it is never captured by one. The one exception

would be a general ideology of participation: within very broad limits, it is better for people to participate on behalf of their beliefs than not to participate. That is why something as respectable as voting is perhaps the fundamental act of volunteer advocacy in a free society. Whichever way you vote, it is relatively uncoerced and, persistent rumors to the contrary, unpaid.<sup>2</sup> To repeat: acceptable advocacy can be for just about any set of beliefs or ideology, and 99 percent of the time advocacy is a highly respectable and valuable thing. Indeed, advocacy is so pervasive in our society that we invite the charge of apathy if we are not involved somehow. A recent cartoon shows a little boy reproaching his mother saying, "How come we don't have a bumper sticker? Don't we care?" So, count a volunteer advocate behind, or in front of, almost every bumper sticker in the land. Count also a myriad of organizations which exist as channels for issue-oriented caring. A reminder of this point is this random list of organizations which have advocacy as one of their major functions; usually this advocacy is accomplished by volunteers.

## AFL/CIO

American Cancer Society  
 American Civil Liberties Union  
 American Humane Association  
 American Legion  
 American Red Cross  
 Amnesty International  
 Associated Councils for the Arts  
 B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League  
 Call for Action  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 Church Women United  
 Common Cause  
 Consumers Union  
 Crusade for Justice  
 Epilepsy Foundation of America  
 League of Women Voters  
 National Association for Retarded Children  
 National Association of Manufacturers  
 National Association for the  
 Advancement of Colored People  
 National Audubon Society  
 National Council for Jewish Women  
 National Council of Crime and  
 Delinquency  
 National Organization for Women  
 National Rifle Association  
 National Trust for Historical Preservation  
 Nature Conservancy  
 Political Parties  
 Sierra Club  
 Youth for Christ

No individual could possibly favor all these causes at the same time, but the fact that they are all represented somehow bespeaks the health of a society. I'm glad of that, and I'm glad so much of it depends on volunteers in advocacy organizations.

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<sup>2</sup>Experts advise me that in 19th Century England, voters were paid with beer. Unfortunately, I can think of no way to work this into the argument.



## An Argument for Integration

Volunteer system space was described in terms of three distinct locations: service, policy, and advocacy. This separate treatment was merely for purposes of illustrative convenience. In fact — as we have noted — volunteer system space is continuous and interconnected. The further understanding and cultivation of this interconnectedness is the theme for the remainder of this chapter. There are three parts to the argument.

1. Awareness of the interrelationship has “naturally” been increasing over the past few years. We have a foundation to build on.
2. There are a number of reasons why we should deliberately develop and exploit this awareness further.
3. Even today, a strategy for doing this can be outlined for further development.

## Happenings in Recent History

One way of discovering a person’s primary self-identification is to simply ask, “Who are you?”, and wait for the associations. The question was asked of astronauts and they responded with such answers as: “I am a man.” “I am an American.” “I am a husband and a father.” “I am a Christian.” Somewhere **much** later in the list you might have heard, “I am a volunteer.”

For the volunteer reading tutor, the maker of trail systems for the blind, the museum docent, “I am a volunteer” might appear quite early on the list in responses to “who are you?”. This is because self-identification as volunteer is high in service volunteering. However, Board members, unpaid advocacy people, and self-helpers do **not** identify themselves primarily as volunteers. Try it sometime and see for yourself. I know one former director of volunteers who tried it with her Board when appointed as executive of an organization reknowned for its involvement of service volunteers. But “I am a volunteer” was essentially nowhere in the identity associations of this organization’s Board. When she mentioned this to them, they were surprised and some were a little upset. They were **Board members**; they were **not** volunteers. That was four years ago; I’m sure she would do somewhat better today. In the “newer” volunteer space of policy and advocacy involvement, self-consciousness of volunteer identity is rising. Volunteer leadership is helping make that happen. Today policy volunteering is regularly indicated in our scope of interest, so solidly and naturally that it is hard to remember how “innovative” it was a few years ago. Though the integral inclusion of advocacy volunteering is still something of an issue, it is also on the way to resolution.

Today, articles in volunteer leadership journals regularly cover all three aspects of system-related volunteering. The books and manuals carried by VOLUNTEER’s publications distribution service represent an increasingly balanced mix of service, policy, and advocacy volunteering. Nobody seems to think this unnatural; in fact, the same people frequently purchase all three kinds of volunteer publications.

Volunteer leadership trainers and resource people often cover in one conference or consultation any two of the three, or all three, and this mix is reflected in workshop and conference agendas. Attendance at such workshops may be the most significant index of all. Policy-involved people solidly represented with service volunteers is a familiar enough sight today; it wasn’t three or four years ago. Increasingly, issue-oriented volunteers attend these workshops, too. In March, 1977, I attended a state volunteer conference in Hawaii which attracted a comfortable and productive balance of people ranging from traditional service to activist advocate volunteers, along with Board members. All these people shared a deep concern about the quality of life in their community and in Hawaii. That was more than enough to tie it all together. Now we need to cultivate this coexistence even more, and move coexistence towards interaction and integration. We could pursue a policy of

noninterference, allowing the integration to evolve further by itself. I find numerous reasons for doing more than that, beyond the usual busybody ones.

### **A Conceptual and Practical Intimacy**

Service, policy, and advocacy are all variations of relatively uncoerced work which is help-intending and not immediately for financial gain. The family resemblance is unmistakable; all have equal claim to the proud title volunteer, if they wish to claim it. The people involved simply choose to express their volunteer caring in the different ways we have described in this chapter. Moreover, most volunteer roles in real life are a flowing mixture of service, policy, and advocacy enterprises. There is a little bit of advocacy in every service volunteer, and sometimes the service prompts him or her to more. Even if the advocacy component is minimal in the service work itself, there may be an associated generic advocacy for the clients or for the organization served. Or on the issue of dignity of work, there may be an advocacy for volunteering itself. You can't help taking a stand as you serve, or serving while you're taking a stand. As for the latter point, most advocacy groups simply would not function without a strong base of service volunteering within and for the advocacy group (a point which was gleefully made about the National Organization for Women's stand against volunteering). Somebody has to type, copy, mail, research, and answer the phone in support of front-line persuaders. Moreover, members of advocacy groups tend broadly to accept the rules of their own organization, while they work for changes in rules elsewhere. Similarly, magnify the policy-making Board and you will see individual members providing service to the Board or the host organization as the recording secretary, the public relations experts, or the money-raisers. And though officially inside the system address, an individual Board member may productively argue a point from an outside perspective. Self-help volunteering is frequently an intimate mix of service, policy, and advocacy; so is free-lance volunteering. Even the "traditional" one-to-one volunteer counselor finds it hard to separate service to a client from standing up for that person or advocacy to that person; that is, trying to persuade them to do something. I doubt such volunteers even bother much about the distinction within their total gestalt of caring. Individual people and groups move smoothly back and forth among the three aspects of volunteer roles, as well as integrating them at any one time.

There are also program-level interactions between relatively concentrated service, policy, and advocacy efforts. A Board's decision can impact the service volunteer program effort, or be impacted by a ruckus stirred up by "outside agitators." A volunteer service program can make an agency's overall approach more attractive and thus harder to change through outside advocacy pressure. In sum, service, policy, and advocacy volunteering are integral parts of a commonwealth of helping. Distinctions made between them — or worse, presumptions of necessary conflict — are abstractions which violate the reality of their essential unity. Sadly, one way in which these abstractions may be reality-based is that the leadership of these three types of volunteering have been separated administratively and in poor communication with one another. Service, policy, and advocacy leadership have scarcely begun to sense their shared volunteer identity, and what might be made of this commonality.

Yet, it seems to me that the world's greatest advances, both scientific and humanitarian, might have come from identifying the relatedness of things formerly seen as separate. Among the formidable examples of this were Einstein's relation of energy, mass, and time to one another, and Wendell Wilkie's vision of one world in a squabbling collection of nations. There is one world of volunteering, too, I believe. The help-intending connection is there. The language barriers which prevent full realization of this can become incidental, if we work at making them so, but we ignore the underlying reality of unity, at the peril of help-intending purposes. Divided, our caring can be conquered and often enough it is. Coordinated, we will be stronger.

## Knowledge

For those of us now centered in service volunteering — or in either of the other two forms — this much can be said: there is a well-organized body of knowledge in each of the three aspects of volunteering, readily accessible in published form.<sup>3</sup> Ignorance is no excuse; we can learn about all three and translate from one to the other.

Moreover, all of us, including service volunteer experts, share a vital common ground of knowledge and sensitivity. The core curriculum involves how to motivate people without money, how to communicate effectively with part-time people, and how to coordinate people's efforts without undue control. Possibly, dimensional analysis of volunteer space — of the type presented in this book but more sophisticated — will also form part of this general body of knowledge. Beyond that are functions which readily apply to all three variations of volunteering: planning, recruiting, assessment, training, communications and public relations, fundraising, organizational development, the understanding and use of power. If we can copy much of this methodology from paidwork models, surely we can effectively transpose it among three major versions of volunteer caring. The common syllabus for service/policy/advocacy volunteering has yet to be written definitively; later in this chapter, there is wistful encouragement for anyone who wants to try to write that syllabus or book.

For now, I would only like to reemphasize evidence that integration of volunteer system space knowledge is possible. The evidence is first of all in what resource people and organizations are invited to do these days, and actually do. No one thinks twice anymore about asking service-oriented national resource people and organizations to cover both service and policy volunteering in the same workshop, or both advocacy and service volunteering, and they cover these things successfully. VOLUNTEER, with origins in service volunteer programs, is often called upon to work with Boards and issue-oriented volunteer groups, and has included consumer advocate Ralph Nader and a Board expert, Gene Goetz, in conferences. The remaining step seems to be to achieve a synthesis of knowledge. Board and advocacy volunteering still tend to be separate chapters in the same book, and separate workshops at the same conference. The cross-fertilization remains incomplete; integration in the form of a general strategy of volunteering — service/policy/advocacy — is yet to come. Perhaps this book may begin to set the stage for such a general theory in anatomizing a more holistic volunteer space (see Chapter 17).

## Recruiting

People move through all three forms of volunteering today. As awareness of commonality is raised, we can expect this movement to seem even easier for people. Accordingly, they can be physically recruited more readily from one part of system space to another. Even when they remain in place they can be more easily recognized for the brand of volunteer contribution they choose to make and coordinated in a total caring effort.

## Power for Problem Solving

Though I have witnessed a fair number of human problems in my day, I can't recall ever seeing one that could be solved by service alone, or by policy consideration alone, or by advocacy alone, for that matter. So why do we keep them separate? We're like an army whose regiments behave as if they were independent armies, or a soccer team playing without team work. We don't win as often as we need to win. On the other hand, the potential in a coordinated cultivation of volunteer system space lies in a variety of resources capable of simultaneous mutually reinforcing development in problem solving.

<sup>3</sup>Volunteer Readership catalog, available at no charge from Volunteer Readership, P.O. Box 1807, Boulder, CO 80306.

For example, suppose we are concerned about disadvantages suffered by Hispanic children in an educational system dominated by Anglo standards and rules. A solely system-accepting approach might engage volunteer tutors to drill Spanish children for more effective performance in the English language. By itself, this approach might be considered realistic and helpful. It is surely not fully so, and it may also be unfair to pressure the young people to do all the adapting to another culture's rules. It would be much better if we could also reach out and coordinate with advocacy and policy volunteer groups, who at the same time would help us change the rules for greater fairness: for example, toward a bilingual approach. The tutoring would still be valuable, though the profile of the volunteers doing it might change, and they would almost certainly be teaching Spanish as well as English. The coordinated engagement of all three volunteer modes is vastly more powerful than any one of them alone. In general, the coordinated approach would first identify and inventory all groups in any part of system space with purposes relevant to the problem, whether their approach be system-accepting or any variety of system-addressing. Then, we would seek to negotiate an overall coordinated strategy. An enormous task is glibly contemplated by the preceding simple sentence; we don't know a great deal about coalition building between "traditional" service volunteer groups, advocates, policy people, and free-lance volunteers who share a common area of concern, such as the education of Hispanic children. Thus, what does one do when the set of concerned groups indicates organizations with conflicting positions on goals and strategies for problem solving? One approach is to organize the set of groups whose policies are reasonably consonant with one another's.

A more modest and attainable objective would be the facilitation of improved communication among service, policy, and advocacy groups in a subject area where broad consensus on goals is likely. Consider, for example, the problem of making nutritious food available to all people at affordable prices. A number of groups might be trying to deal with this problem in a single community, operating with various mixtures of service, policy, and advocacy volunteering. Among the identifiable groups might be:

- People who have their own vegetable gardens (self-help), and who also might persuade and help others to do the same (advocacy, service).
- A volunteer program which delivers food wholesale to senior citizen housing units (service), after which the senior citizens retail it to their peers (service, self-help).<sup>4</sup>
- A group which encourages local farmers to market their produce close to home via a farmers' market rather than adding 15 percent to cost by marketing through relatively distant distribution centers (advocacy, policy, service).
- Food co-op volunteers (self-help, service).
- Meals on Wheels (service).
- Volunteers who help provide hot lunches to school children (service).
- A consumers' group which observes and reports on grocery store prices and food quality (monitoring, service).
- A local citizens' committee which is dealing with the issue of food prices (policy).
- Volunteers who help determine eligibility for food stamps and see that those people who are eligible do get this mandated service (service, advocacy).
- Salvation Army and similar volunteers who provide hot meals for the hungry (service).
- 4-H volunteers who help teach good nutritional practices (service and advocacy, the latter in the sense that education is in part an attempt to persuade students).

<sup>4</sup>Self-help is often a blend of service and advocacy, and should be understood as such in these listings.

If all these volunteers knew about each other and worked together as a coalition, or at least shared ideas, the total effort might be greatly improved. We don't do enough of this integrating, first of all because we're often too isolated in our agency or organizational boxes. But part of the problem is also attitudinal: service, policy, and advocacy people treating one another as aliens, if not with contempt. That kind of problem can be dealt with decisively now; this book tries to begin eroding the alienation. Even if we improve communication, people with origins in service volunteering generally need to learn more about coalition building techniques. Our cousins in advocacy and self-help volunteer space can teach us.

### **Problem-Solving Power for Volunteering as an Institution**

The increased power for problem solving also applies to volunteering as an institution, and advocacy for volunteering generally. If volunteering were to integrate policy and advocacy methodology and theory along with service, it would become more a power than a pet in the house of society. Volunteering's "too nice to really bother about" image would be confronted by the strength which policy and advocacy bring when synthesized with service volunteering. The equally unfair "radical" image of advocacy would now flow with the greater acceptability and safety of service and policy volunteering. The image would change, because the reality behind the image had changed in terms of a more complete, varied, and powerful constituency, for all the things volunteering needs to do as an institution. The issue today is that while volunteers are devoted to their particular volunteer investment, they have very little sense of common identity and cohesion as volunteers, advocating for citizen participation. One purpose of this book is to provide a basis for broadening and deepening that sense of commonality in a new and larger volunteer community.

Let's return for a moment to the implications of melding policy and advocacy with service in a total package of voluntary help-intending. Political and civic leaders are busy, and they are besieged by (often angry, upset) people putting pressure on them to do things. By contrast, service volunteers are seen as nice people, right? They are warm, friendly, helpful, loyal ("suckers," the cynical would say). Ordinarily, they do not kick up a fuss; they can be fired. Accordingly, service volunteers are eminently forgettable when it comes to deciding things; they don't rock the boat. This may account for the vague affection some top decision-makers hold for volunteers.

But the forgettable is also powerless, in terms of advocacy, and so is its leadership. The boat is going to rock a little bit more now, and the rocking is largely because of the trend to explore and coordinate more of volunteer space. Legal pressures increasingly insist that we take the policy volunteer seriously as a decision-maker. Advocacy volunteers cannot easily or often be dismissed with a pat on the head each year during volunteer week. Self-help volunteering is visibly serious, and service volunteering is a core all others need as a basis of operation. Insofar as people in every part of system space are recognized as volunteers in some sense, and accept that identification, the special powers of each form of volunteering are combined and the glittering phrase gives way to political reality and voting power. Volunteers are not nearly so tame in the outer reaches of volunteer space. This call for closer linkage and alliance through all parts of volunteer system space is due, quite simply, to the fact that we need each other, and need to become more aware of that.

### **Towards the Further Integration of Volunteer System Space**

So far we have said that an integration of service/policy/advocacy volunteering will generate more modes of involvement, hence a greater variety of people, approaches, and capabilities can be involved for accomplishing help. We have further established that this growing together has been happening serendipitously in the recent past. Now we need to explore a more deliberate strategy for further integration.

## Some General Approaches

1. We can deliberately and intensively cultivate the **awareness** of commonality and greater integrated power for helping among all versions of volunteer caring. This book tries to help in this. I'm hopeful its message, and later more refined developments of it, will be incorporated in the education and training of all volunteer leadership.

2. We can deliberately encourage and implement a more balanced representation of service, policy, and advocacy volunteering in our arsenal of knowledge. Books, libraries, and publications distribution centers should contain a balanced mix of service, policy, and advocacy volunteer rationale and methodology. Workshops and conference agenda should reflect the same, with more active promotion of leadership attendance from all three modes. Training of trainers should cover all three. Exercises exist for training people in the understanding of volunteer system space. In outline, one of these exercises presents a set of service, policy, and advocacy volunteer groups such as those listed throughout this chapter. Trainees are then asked to locate each of these groups by placing dots on a reference frame resembling Figure 1 in this chapter. If a group is some mixture of the three volunteer modes, its placement on the reference frame can be in terms of circles, ellipses, or rectangles. Trainees perform this task individually or in small groups; comparative discussion follows, and usually leads to some clarification.

3. Staffing of volunteer programs and resource organizations must begin deliberately to assure expertise in policy and advocacy volunteer methods and theory as well as service, and particularly their integrated usage in problem solving.

4. Service, policy, and advocacy knowledge must alternately be conveyed as more than separate chapters in the same book, or different workshops at a conference. Beyond mere coexistence of three bodies of knowledge, we must seek deliberate interactions and cross-fertilizations among them. From this, an enriched body of knowledge will emerge, common to all three, in which each is a separate division of the same core, rather than a separate entity. We can no longer afford to build technology solely from a service base tenuously outward, or from a policy base outward, or from an advocacy base outward. We must build them together.

A modest beginning would be a translator's dictionary. When a volunteer director says "recruiting," "screening," "fundraising," "evaluation," "public relations," etc., what is the closest equivalent concept for, say, the community organizer, the club president, the Board chairperson, the self-help or advocacy group leader? Other sections of the dictionary would begin with, say, the community organizers' natural terms, and provide translations into volunteer leadership language.

Next, we must impatiently await the arrival of an integrative genius who will write a book which stands astride the common center of service, policy, and advocacy volunteering, enriched by cross-fertilization from all three, in language equally intelligible to directors of volunteers, community organizers, gadflies, Board chairpersons, club officers, and all rowers and rockers of boats. Some chapter titles for this new book might be: motivating people without money, communicating with part-time people, coordinating without overly controlling people, etc. But we had best leave such decisions to the author.

5. Our individual agency or organization boxes isolate us from one another. We must therefore begin to emphasize administrative settings for volunteer leadership which are more accountable to the community or neighborhood at large, and less accountable to any one agency or interest group within it. Roughly, this would be a horizontal rather than a vertical alignment of volunteer leadership resources, so that we can better orchestrate all three aspects of volunteering, whatever their organizational base. While it is difficult for any of us alone to do this deliberately, it is feasible for volunteer leadership to accomplish it together, as an institution, through organizations which represent us generally as an

institution: Voluntary Action Centers, state offices of volunteerism, and national volunteer resource organizations. But, to the extent such resource organizations are oriented to service volunteering, they must be willing to learn from and work with organizations in other parts of volunteer system space; for example, community resource centers (self-help, advocacy) and the Citizen Involvement Training Project, Division of Continuing Education, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts 01003.

But even where many of us live now, in our separate agency or organizational boxes, some things can be done. I will exhort the people I know best here: self-identified leadership of volunteers. Add to your books and newsletters, open up your workshops and memberships, take a community organizer to lunch, and all the while think big.

6. Overall, we must explore more seriously and specifically the ways in which we need each other and can work together. Let's briefly overview some of the more obvious possibilities for all combinations of service, policy, and advocacy involvement.

### Service and Policy Volunteering

Many organizations have both service and policy volunteers within their structure. Too often, these two kinds of volunteers are subject to *de facto* segregation, though much can be accomplished by alliance. Have you ever seen service and Board volunteers act as if they were separate islands in the same organization? Board people may see themselves as Board people, not as sharers of a volunteer identity. This attitude is changing rapidly; part of our strategy is to foster the trend to "volunteer" self-awareness in Board members in any way we can.

One of the fascinating implications in the alliance of these two types of volunteers is power. Let us take a simplified but roughly typical situation. At one end of an agency hierarchy, service volunteers may see themselves, and actually be, the lowest of the low, marginal, expendable, powerless. In the middle are the paid staff people who are often responsible for the volunteers' feeling of powerlessness. Potentially at the top of the power pyramid are another group of volunteers, the policy makers.

Roughly, the power pyramid looks something like:



The power structure should look like:



with whatever further linkages can grow with staff.

Service volunteers, who have been looking just about everywhere else for help, might find it right under their noses in a mutual awareness of common volunteer caring with Board members in their own agency or organization. Beyond awareness, there are practical ways of forging links between the volunteer ends of the organizational power structure.

But some will say that these are basically different kinds of people; service people aren't interested in Board work and vice versa. This "never the twain shall meet" kind of negative prediction is somewhat suspicious. There are many counter-examples: people who have

been both service and Board volunteers at different times, or sometimes at the same time. Nor need we assume the service/policy linkage requires all policy volunteers be interested in service volunteering and vice-versa — a few of them showing genuine interest will be enough.

A more realistic impediment may be presented by staff resistance to the link-up of service and policy volunteers. But how long can we let that problem stop us, wherever it exists? We have at least the recourse volunteer leadership has always had: we can issue and widely disseminate ideal guidelines and standards, for their educational value, and hope funding sponsors will take some account of them in awarding of agency support monies.

As a discussion-starter, here is a first outline of guidelines:

1. Design of policy Board slots should routinely provide for representation of service volunteers working in that organization.

2. One incentive for service volunteers should be preferential consideration for such Board slots, based on their productive tenure as a service volunteer, their potential as Board members, and their willingness to take any needed training for this work. The advantage for the Board is a kind of organizational grass roots input from frontline volunteers, whose caring is validated in unpaid service to the organization.

3. At least some Board meetings should be open to at least some service volunteers, as observers.

4. The Board agenda should regularly contain an item on maintenance and upgrading of the quality of volunteer service in the agency or organization.

4. A committee composed of staff and service volunteers should deal with the above issue on a continuing basis as a standing committee of the Board.

6. The Board itself should be organized along the task force lines recommended by Marlene Wilson.<sup>5</sup> That is, membership on the Board should ordinarily be earned through chairing or otherwise participating in a committee responsible for dealing with one major sector of agency functions: recruiting, funding, public relations, etc. This task force participation frequently grades over from policy to actual service as unpaid staff; hence policy volunteers can identify more directly with service volunteers. Board experience in volunteer service roles could also be achieved by regular rotation of Board members into positions in the volunteer service program, but this may be less feasible.

7. The director of volunteers should be seen as a trainer and resource person for the Board. The rationale for this is that the Board is a collection of volunteers who must be properly motivated to participate, in terms of imaginative and appropriate work assignments for Board members, screening, training, public relations, etc. Moreover, as we have seen, Board membership is often a mosaic of service as well as policy participation.

## Service and Advocacy Volunteering

In the effort to integrate service and advocacy volunteering, a mutually respectful exchange of knowledge would be a good start. Among other things, such a reciprocity might help rid us of stereotypes on both sides: the radicals and the suckers. Most advocacy groups depend on a broad base of service volunteering within themselves to support their advocacy. Probably, the glamor often goes to the front-line advocacy troops, but neglect of the service base can have quite shocking effects, even if nurture is intended. (Ask some political party volunteers about this.) Generally, effective service is a highly desirable precondition of effective advocacy. Moreover, my impression is that advocacy groups are

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<sup>5</sup>Marlene Wilson, *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs* (Boulder, Colorado: Volunteer Management Associates, 1976).



not as good at service involvement as are service volunteer experts. Therefore, the latter have a great deal to share with advocacy groups, based on what they know about recruiting, motivation, organization, supervision of service volunteers. Advocacy people need only be willing to see the value of it, and listen.

At the same time, service volunteer leadership obviously needs to build its advocacy skills and its understanding of power; I doubt if that point needs to be labored. Advocacy experts can teach us much here. Visualize flip-flop workshops in which the agenda includes service people teaching advocates, and advocates teaching service people. In sum, the bridge will be shared knowledge in terms of which we will come to value each other more and begin to work together more.

### **Advocacy and Policy Volunteering**

The common elements in advocacy and policy are substantial reliance on volunteers, plus the purpose of concerned impact on systems or rules, and a similar dependence on a supportive basis of service volunteering. Special expertise can be shared in all these areas. Moreover, the within-system policy person is frequently involved in advocacy of a position, at Board meetings, individually, or with a group. Advocacy groups usually have policy-making volunteers within their organization. Both policy and advocacy people need skills in researching and presenting positions. The point is: both policy and issue-oriented volunteers are advocates. They simply advocate under somewhat different kinds of conditions.

At an organizational level, policy volunteers can use advocacy groups more intensively as resources, for information and for allies on preferred positions, or even as grinding stones for honing their own position. Advocacy groups can do the same with policy volunteers.

Too often, both parties assume hostility rather than collegiality. The advocate differs with agency policy, opposes it, then tends to disdain every member of the agency's Board (some of whom also dislike some agency policies). The Board member sometimes views the advocates as "irresponsible" types. Yet the advocacy/policy alliance can be enormously powerful, when not deterred by automatic prejudice of this type; all do share the concerns of caring citizenship.

### **Service, Policy, and Advocacy Volunteering**

We have already traced the mutually beneficial potential of shared knowledge and of further cross-fertilization among all three modes of involvement. We have further suggested the super-summative problem solving potential of orchestrating all three aspects of volunteering when consonant in the same mission area. Another approach, indicated in Chapter 7, is the possibility of a national coalition of volunteers; the cohesiveness of such a coalition would afford striking potential as a policy-setting and advocacy group for volunteering and all the values it represents.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# THE HELP-INTENDING CARDSHARK IN VOLUNTEER PARK — AND OTHER USEFUL GAMES

### Reflections

Chapter 16 ended our tour of ten separate dimensions in volunteer space. The next two chapters will attempt a summation with several different approaches. Before that, I would like to exercise author's license in sharing some reflections which have occurred to me at this point: general, personal, and mystic.

I have sometimes been accused of being a thinker, and I've not chosen to object to that claim as decisively as I might have. Valid objections do exist, as readers of this book may have some cause to confirm. My own view is that a real thinker can deal with a wide range of issues and problems. Yet, in my whole life I can recall thinking *seriously* about only two problems: Why is it that people help one another? And, why is it that people work and enjoy it?

The questions are stated from the positive side because of long habit in the volunteer leadership field, for we are the people who prefer the study of the positive. Other fields may choose to focus on how and why things go wrong: neurosis, breakdowns in society, and so forth. We are the people who revel in what can go right — how and why people do good things — and we are the people who believe we can promote cause for rejoicing in a more humane future. I hope volunteer leadership never changes in this respect.

Nevertheless, the more complete statement of the two questions is: Why do people help each other as distinct from hurting one another, or being indifferent to one another? And, why do people work and enjoy it as distinct from working and hating it, or working and not caring either way, or not working at all? I happen to believe they pose fundamental questions for volunteer leadership, perhaps *the* fundamental questions. In any case, the basic question — why do people help — has been grappled with throughout this book; the work enrichment issue has entered secondarily as an important spin-off.

This book has struggled to develop a strategy whereby we can facilitate more helping and create a more favorable balance between help versus unhelp in our society. This strategy is

essentially a set of prescriptions for making it easier, more convenient, and even more pleasant for people to help, by identifying their natural inclinations more carefully, and relating helping work more closely to these inclinations. The most explicit statement of this strategy is the oft-repeated exhortation: make the minimum change in what people want to do and can do, which has the maximum positive impact on other people. Since we are not sufficiently aware of all the "can do" and "want to do" styles which may appeal to people — and they may not be fully aware of these styles either — I have attempted to systematically explore the widest possible range of helping styles available to people. A huge set of logically possible options in involvement styles have been found; a few of them have been discussed but most were barely noted or only indicated in a very general way. This is one of the reasons I call the set of options "volunteer space." Like space, the full range of options in helping styles are barely understood today, scarcely mapped, and virtually unvisited.

### The Size of Volunteer Space

This book is merely a first foray into volunteer space, enough to assure us that the volunteer world is round; that is, we won't fall off if we walk beyond the visible horizon, and it may be well worth the walk. These last two chapters will get us ready for more ambitious hiking in two ways. The first is an exercise in outward moving logic; the second is a venture in humanity at home. First, let's check the trail behind us. Ten dimensions in volunteer space were traveled. Each was anchored by a pole at either end and usually at least one point intermediate to these extremes. Thus:

as an \_\_\_\_\_ as one \_\_\_\_\_ with a  
individual \_\_\_\_\_ of a pair \_\_\_\_\_ group

We have sampled at least the two polar positions in volunteer involvement on each of ten dimensions and on some dimensions, we examined one or more intermediate positions as well. This probably totals about thirty variations in style of volunteer involvement or locations in volunteer space. We also briefly visited a few promising combinations between poles of **different** dimensions; for example, individual/occasional (skillsbank) and direct/with group (a church tutoring project). There were, perhaps, another 15 or 20 of these combinations in volunteer space. In all, we have visited about 50 locations in volunteer space or variations in volunteer involvement style.

How many are there left to go? Logically, about 60,000! We have been to less than one-tenth of one percent of all the places there are to see in volunteer space. This is something like a ten-minute nature hike in Rocky Mountain National Park. It's illustrative, and you get the idea there is much more worth seeing, but you haven't really been **through** the park; you have just been in it, and barely that.

Is volunteer space really that big? Let's run over the outer boundaries with two extremes on each of the ten tracks.

- |     |                                  |          |                         |
|-----|----------------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| 1.  | Continuous .....                 | To ..... | Occasional              |
| 2.  | As An Individual .....           | To ..... | With a Group            |
| 3.  | Direct .....                     | To ..... | Indirect                |
| 4.  | Participating Action .....       | To ..... | Observation             |
| 5.  | Organized Formal Structure ..... | To ..... | Informal, Unstructured  |
| 6.  | Via Work .....                   | To ..... | Via Gift-Giving         |
| 7.  | For Others .....                 | To ..... | For Self                |
| 8.  | Accept System .....              | To ..... | Address System Rules    |
| 9.  | From Inside the System .....     | To ..... | From Outside the System |
| 10. | Losing Money .....               | To ..... | Break Even (Plus?)      |

These poles may combine in any way except with their opposite; you can't be both a

continuous and occasional volunteer **at the same time**.<sup>1</sup> But continuous service can be either as an individual or with a group; that is, either pole of one dimension can combine with either pole of any other dimension. Moreover, most of these combinations make sense logically. A few do not, on first scan. For example, what is observational gift-giving or a “break-even” gift, for that matter? Sometimes, too, there is partial overlap. Observational volunteering tends to be indirect because it is often in a supportive relation to other work, but not all indirect participation is observation. Moreover, the participating action and work poles substantially overlap one another, while many of the other dimensions are variations on the work and action poles. But generally either pole of any dimension can combine with either pole of any other dimension to form a potentially meaningful variation in volunteer involvement or location in volunteer space. For the moment, let’s assume this is always so.

Another concern might be that some extreme poles are completely outside the limits of volunteer space; for example, totally “for self” is not volunteer at all, nor is more than breaking even on the money dimension. If this bothers you, simply foreshorten these poles. Thus, I think earlier chapters have established that there is some degree of acceptable self-interest in volunteering; also that activities accepted as volunteering can have some significant relationship to money in exchange for work, even if these activities don’t make a profit.

A further point: volunteer participation cannot be completely described until it is located on all ten dimensions (and probably others as well). Not to do so would be like trying to visualize a person when the only data you had on that person was brown eyes; you wouldn’t begin to get a reasonably complete picture until you also knew height, weight, sex, and several other characteristics. Similarly, it isn’t enough to say a person is volunteering continuously, because you still don’t know whether the person is volunteering as an individual or with a group, directly or indirectly, in service, policy, or advocacy modes, and so on. One example of such a complete description of volunteer involvement mode would be positions at the leftward pole of all ten dimensions. Here we would have a volunteer who is participating **continuously/as an individual/directly** involved with the problem/**through overt action/in an organized setting/working** (not gift-giving)/**for others/in a way which accepts the system** as it is (service)/**works from inside this system/and pays** his or her own expenses. This could be a volunteer probation officer, but we don’t know that for sure, because while **mode** of volunteer involvement is quite completely described here, we are still not describing the **substance** of the work.

Now in the preceding marathon sentence, change just the first description of the ten from “continuously” to “occasionally,” and the ten-word combination describes another distinct mode of volunteer involvement. This could be a community resource bank volunteer, working for the welfare department. Now continue the same two sequences with the second dimension at the “with a group” instead of “individual” pole. Keep going, and you will discover over a thousand distinct ten-way descriptions of volunteer involvement modes or locations in volunteer space. To be precise, there are 1024, or 2<sup>10</sup>.

This is unrealistic because it is a drastic **underestimate** of all the locations in volunteer space. First of all, there are almost certainly more than ten meaningful dimensions along which volunteering can vary, but let’s leave that alone for the present. The point is that there are a whole series of intermediate points between the extremes in each of our ten dimensions. Continuous grades into occasional; “for others” grades into “for self” by degrees of self-interest; between “as an individual” and “with a group” there is a pair and a family, and so on. This book has discussed a number of these realistic intermediate points. If we added only three or four major points on each of the ten dimensions, the number of

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<sup>1</sup>Partial exception: you can **integrate** work with gift-giving at the same time (Chapter 13), though it would seem difficult to combine extreme emphasis on both in the same work. Nevertheless, I do think this is one exception.

possible combinations or locations in volunteer space could be vastly increased — many millions of distinct locations. Let's take the most oversimplified instance in which only one intermediate point exists between extreme poles on each of the ten dimensions. Thus, instead of just:

as an \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ with a  
 individual \_\_\_\_\_ group  
 it would be something like:  
 as an \_\_\_\_\_ as one of \_\_\_\_\_ with a  
 individual \_\_\_\_\_ a pair \_\_\_\_\_ group  
 or instead of just:  
 only \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ only  
 work \_\_\_\_\_ gift-giving  
 it would be something like:  
 only \_\_\_\_\_ work and gift-giving \_\_\_\_\_ only  
 work \_\_\_\_\_ integrated \_\_\_\_\_ gift-giving  
 and instead of just:  
 for others \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ for self  
 it would be something like:  
 for others \_\_\_\_\_ some \_\_\_\_\_ for self  
 self-interest

How big is volunteer space now? There are 59,049 locations, distinct variations in volunteer involvement, or  $3^{10}$ . The number of combinations of ten possible with four points on each dimension would be  $4^{10}$  or slightly over a million locations in volunteer space (1,048,576 to be exact). But this is a case for the world's champion three-dimensional volunteer chess player.

For now, 60,000 locations are quite enough, even in an era when millions and billions are bandied about casually. Human-sized illustrations are helpful. A 1974 NICOV study found the director/coordinator's salary averaging about \$10,000 a year, full-time. Adjusting that for inflation and, let us hope, progress, let's say the average is \$12,000 per year today (still low). Sixty thousand dollars represents every single dollar paid to five full-time directors of volunteers over a one-year period, or, if you like, every single dollar of a volunteer director's salary for five years.

As indicated earlier, some of these sixty thousand variations in volunteer involvement will prove meaningless logically, practically, or both. I would guess half or more of them will prove potentially meaningful after study; in any case, many thousands of them must be. But we won't know for sure until we scan them all. Any location unvisited may be a beautiful place we will be sorry to have missed.

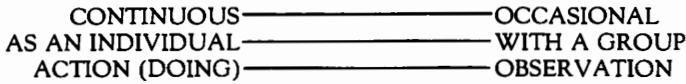
In summary, and with rather ridiculous precision:

Volunteer space has 59,049 locations  
 We have visited about 50 locations.  
 There are 58,999 left to go.

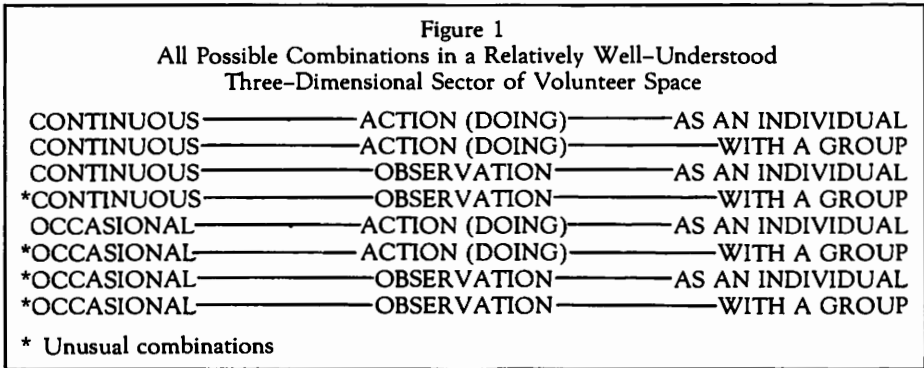
Even if there are only ten thousand potentially meaningful locations left to visit, it is too easy to get lost out there, especially if one of us goes out alone. Eventually, I would see this organized as a collective enterprise for volunteer leadership. We certainly can't afford to wander aimlessly without a systematic search plan.

### Systematically Exploring Smaller Sectors of Volunteer Space

There are reasonably easy ways of tracking through smaller sectors of volunteer space. Suppose we want to exhaust combination possibilities in simplified versions of only three dimensions (simplified because we eliminate intermediate points between two poles). Let's do this for three fairly well-understood dimensions:



All possible combinations would look like Figure 1.



We obviously are still pretty close to camp in volunteer park; that is, in Figure 1 we are generally looking at reasonably well-identified modes of volunteer involvement. Thus, the continuous action volunteer who operates as an individual could be the candy striper, the volunteer counselor, the volunteer who has a regular show on public radio. Still, even in this fairly well-understood region of volunteer space, the asterisked combinations in Figure 1 are at least thought-provoking.

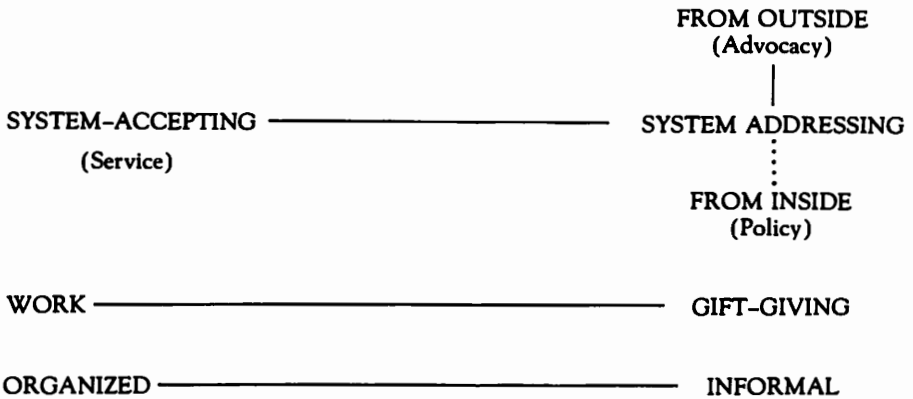
*Continuous observing with a group* (birdwatchers?) makes one wonder whether there are certain kinds of helpful observation which can be done better with a group or as a pair than as an individual. This could add accuracy and provide more mutual support among the watchers, hence be an attractive mode of involvement for them.

*Occasional observing as an individual* suggests that maybe there are helpful possibilities for involving watchers on a less-regular, less-organized basis — simply watching wherever they happen to be. *Occasional observing with a group* suggests similar possibilities. Maybe some people are willing to be involved as time-limited occasional watchers, when they wouldn't sign on for more time-extended observational chores (an observational skillsbank?).

*Occasional action with a group* brings to mind the traditional volunteer-sponsored Christmas party for kids, or other annual projects. But it also makes me wonder if there isn't such a thing as a skillsbank or human resource bank composed of **groups**, awaiting more self-conscious development on our part.

In sum, Figure 1 exhausts all eight possibilities for bipolar combinations in one sector of three-dimensional volunteer space. All eight possibilities are reasonably meaningful, and four of the eight suggest intriguing further development of volunteer styles for attracting more people to help-intending work. That is a pretty good batting average thus far, especially considering that the three dimensions involved are supposed to be relatively well-mapped parts of volunteer space.

One more illustrative exploration occurs in a section of volunteer park a little further away from home base. This involves three dimensions which are perhaps less fully identified in our self-awareness of volunteering.



To simplify, we will discuss the "from outside" variation on the system-addressing pole; that is, advocacy or issue-oriented volunteering. Figure 2 describes all possible combinations in this sector of volunteer space. As in Figure 1, unusual combinations are asterisked.

**Figure 2:**  
All Possible Combinations in a Less Well-Understood Three-Dimensional Sector of Volunteer Space

ORGANIZED	SERVICE	WORK
*ORGANIZED	SERVICE	GIFTS
ORGANIZED	ADVOCACY	WORK
*ORGANIZED	ADVOCACY	GIFTS
INFORMAL	SERVICE	WORK
*INFORMAL	SERVICE	GIFTS
INFORMAL	ADVOCACY	WORK
*INFORMAL	ADVOCACY	GIFTS

\* Unusual combinations

Organized service or advocacy work are well enough understood as volunteer involvement styles. Moreover, Chapter 12 should have helped us see that the same kind of help-intending efforts can occur on an informal basis. But what are "service gifts," either organized or informal? The phrase may be little more than a redundancy; gifts are by definition help-intending (Chapter 13), which is to say they are meant to be of service to their recipients. There is nevertheless a useful reminder here: things as well as effort can be a medium for the expression of caring. Furthermore, gifts and work are not only alternative modes of helping; the two can be effectively integrated in a total caring package, and we could more deliberately exploit these integrative possibilities (see Chapter 13). An intermediate point on the work-gift dimension would be a better representation of this possibility: organized service giftwork (integrated) and informal service giftwork (integrated).

Finally, in our lexicon, "service gifts" literally means materials or money donated within a system-accepting framework; that is, the gifts are given in a manner which is consistent

with the *status quo*, or actually reinforces an existing system of rules. Donations to an established charitable cause would then meet the test of being service gifts.

But not all gifts need to be engaged in a *status quo*-accepting manner, and this brings us to the other two intriguing descriptions in Figure 2: organized advocacy gifts and informal advocacy gifts. Once again, let's assume that the difference between organized and informal isn't critical for our present discussion.

What are "organized advocacy gifts"? Is this a case for the constable, that is, bribery? Could be, as in the case of a calculated gift to a dishonest politician. But a little more thought conjures up positive forms of advocacy giving. Suppose you are a volunteer companion working with a little girl. You sense she has a special flair for understanding spatial relationships (engineering, architecture, interior decoration). You want to encourage (persuade, advocate) exploration and development of this potential by the little girl. So you give her a few dollars worth of appropriate materials to work with: drawing paper, marking pens, a ruler, and other tools. You don't expect any "favors" in return, except the satisfaction of successfully persuading the girl to explore, release, and refine her potential. Your advocacy gifts are an inextricable part of your advocacy efforts. In all, this is a most benign bribery, if it is bribery at all.

Gifts can also be relatively expensive and still be part of positive persuasion (versus malicious calculation). Suppose you have a friend with a serious hearing problem. A hearing aid would probably help her function far better in the world of sound — this much is known through medical/audiological testing. But your friend is very sensitive about wearing a hearing aid; you and several other concerned acquaintances have been unsuccessful in efforts (work) to persuade her to try a hearing aid (advocacy). One of the arguments she gives against a hearing aid (counter-advocacy) is the expense, with no absolute certainty the hearing aid would help (some people can't get accustomed to wearing a hearing aid). You suspect the above argument is largely a rationalization for your friend's emotional sensitivity, and you say so. She remains unmoved, and your advocacy work is at a dead end. So you and a few other concerned acquaintances find a reputable hearing aid dealer and purchase a gift certificate which will cover the cost of a good hearing aid, and is refundable after a trial period if the hearing aid doesn't work for your deaf friend. The gift certificate is given to your friend, perhaps anonymously.

Your advocacy work alone did not succeed. This "advocacy gift" alone might well have failed. But the advocacy work-plus-gift might succeed. (It might fail, too, but I have seen something like it succeed, and what have you to lose, if you really care about your friend?)

The second three-dimensional sector of volunteer space (Figure 2) is less well-understood than the first (Figure 1). The interpretations are correspondingly more difficult, and even somewhat labored, for the four unusual listings in Figure 2. Indeed, I am not sure how much stimulus value these interpretations would have for people who had not already read this book and agreed with at least some of its conclusions.

## Developing Your Own Definitions of Volunteer Space

The difficult interpretation case leads us to a second main purpose of this chapter. The first main purpose, you recall, was the need for a systematic way of exploring all the locations in volunteer space. The additional point now is that you shouldn't be forced to define these locations in the same way I do. In our volunteer park analogy, what I see as a good campsite on our hike through volunteer park may not be the same as what you see as the best campsite. Specifically, throughout this book, I've asked you to go along with my descriptions, titles, and interpretations of the ten dimensions covered. Thank you, but you're on your own now, as much as you wish to be. You are absolutely free to do any of the following:



1. You can modify descriptive terms to suit yourself, at either pole or any intermediate point in any of the ten dimensions.
2. You can "shorten" any dimension so that the pole on the right makes more sense to you. Thus, if "for self" goes too far for you as compared to "for others," substitute something more intermediate, like "self-interested." Similarly if pure gift-giving gets too confusing when contrasted with work, use something like "work-plus gift-giving" for your right pole.
3. You can also work with combinations of intermediate points as well as poles, simply because these intermediate points seem interesting to you. For example, between "as an individual" and "with a group," "a pair" might seem a significant combining option to you; and between "for others" and "for self," the "mutual helping" alternative might promise a yield of significant combinations with other descriptors.
4. You can completely discard any dimension.
5. You can add any new dimensions you want to.

Though I'm locked into the descriptors chosen for this book, I wish you well in developing your own perceptions of volunteer space. And please note: the systematic exploration process described in this chapter will apply, whatever descriptors you choose for poles and intermediate points in your perception of volunteer space.

The exploration process thus far is simple enough for exploring any three-dimensional sector of volunteer space. Look at Figures 1 and 2. One dimension rotates vertically from four left pole titles followed by four right pole titles down the first column; the second dimension is left pole titles followed by two right pole titles down the second column; while the third column is a simple alternation between left and right pole titles. For combinations of four dimensions, you would add a fourth column in which you repeated one polar title eight times running, then the other polar title eight times running. Suppose you wanted to graft Direct-Indirect onto the three dimensions in Figure 2. You simply write "Direct" eight times in a new column of Figure 2, then repeat the entire figure with "Indirect" in that column. You could also do it by taking a single card with "Direct" written on it, and another card with "Indirect" on it, running each down Figure 2.

### **A Process for Systematically Exploring Wider Regions of Volunteer Space**

Exhausting all possible or promising three-way and four-way combinations should keep you busy for a while. Using the above manual method for sectors in volunteer space of five or more dimensions is going to give you writer's cramp, and maybe cerebral cramps as well. We'll need some help in these higher-level combinations of dimensions. In terms of our analogy of hiking through volunteer park, we've gone about as far as we can go without a horse. The horse is our friendly computer. The properly programmed computer scarcely blinks before commencing to print out all 1,024 locations in bipolar volunteer space or all 59,049 locations in three-point volunteer space.

I worked with computers long ago and still suffer anxiety attacks. Among other things, I grew up before the computer age. But I have been fortunate in a professional association with Steve Hansen, VOLUNTEER's information specialist, who also happens to be a computer programmer. He therefore understands the human side of volunteering, along with computers; and he provided the basic ingredients for this chapter: software, hardware, and concepts. In a short paper available upon request from VOLUNTEER, Steve explains and presents a computer program which will print out all ten-way combinations possible among all poles of each of the ten dimensions (the only restriction being that a pole of any dimension cannot combine with its own opposite pole). Steve has actually run this program, and we have a printout of all 1,024 combinations. However, if

you prefer to use your own titles for the poles of the ten dimensions, Steve's paper indicates how you can run your own computer program, or have someone run it for you. Steve Hansen advises that the ten-dimensional program was run on the University of Colorado's Control Data Corporation 6400 computer, costing a total of \$1.89. The computer allowed itself to be bothered for all of ten seconds with this exercise. The largest fraction of the cost, by far, was in printing the 1,024 locations — \$1.29. The size, speed, cost per unit time, and other characteristics of individual computers all effect the price, and the fact that they differ widely with different machines make it impossible to make a firm prediction that it would always run this cheaply, but it seems safe to say that a total cost of over ten dollars for this program would be very rare.

Steve's paper also describes a more ambitious computer program in which there are three positions on each of the ten dimensions: two poles and one intermediate point. This program yields 59,049 combinations for describing volunteer involvement styles.<sup>2</sup>

For the foreseeable future, 1,024 combinations (bipolar) is quite enough. The printout is 17 tightly packed pages (no paragraphs or illustrations) and reads something like the telephone directory — at least there is some of the interest of the yellow pages with a subject heading for shoppers entitled "Volunteer Involvement Styles" (comes right between "Voice Recording Service" and "Wake-Up Call Service").

Whoever has persevered through this book thus far deserves a sample of what these ten-adjective involvement style descriptions look like. You will also have earned the right to a sample considerably smaller than 1,024. The introduction to this chapter listed the very first ten-adjective description in the printout: continuous, individual, direct, action . . . etc. involvement. The comment on that style description was that it was easily recognizable in our current awareness of what volunteering is; that is, a volunteer probation officer, or a candy striper, has that style of involvement. The reason this style was so recognizable is that the descriptors were all on the left or more traditional poles of the ten dimensions. Whatever left poles tend to predominate in the printout, a similar sense of recognition occurs: "Yes, I've seen that kind of volunteering before."

On the other hand the listing begins to look strange whenever certain radical (as volunteer) poles appear, such as "for self" or "gift-giving," and at that point, one is well advised to substitute less extreme phrases, such as "self-interested" and "gifts integrated with work." There are certainly some wild descriptions, such as, continuous/as individual/direct/observing/organized/gift-giving/for self/system-addressing/from outside/break-even. This might be a person engaged in an ongoing organized attempt to bribe himself or herself to look at the rules he or she lives by. Moreover, the advocacy somehow manages to be within a single person, from outside the system, and is on a break-even basis (who pays for the gift?). Still, if you changed just two phrases — "for self" to "for others," and "observing" to "action" — the involvement style might begin to make sense; we have discussed something like it previously in this chapter in the example of the child with potential for architecture, engineering, etc.

Almost all the descriptions make one think hard, and the effort pays off with a glimmer, at least, in some cases. Take: continuous/with a group/indirect/observing/informal/work/for others/system-addressing/from inside/break-even. This could be a kind of informally constituted Board or study committee (system-addressing, from the inside) looking at how to improve the rules of a larger group of which they are members. If formal Boards are composed of volunteers, then so are informal Board-like groups (Board-like because these policy-type volunteers are operating **continuously**, not just a meeting every few months). I'm sure others have thought about this kind of volunteer style, but probably under another name.

<sup>2</sup>Simple mercy prevented including such a printout as an appendix to this book — simple mercy and an aesthetic feeling that an appendix should not be longer than the book itself.

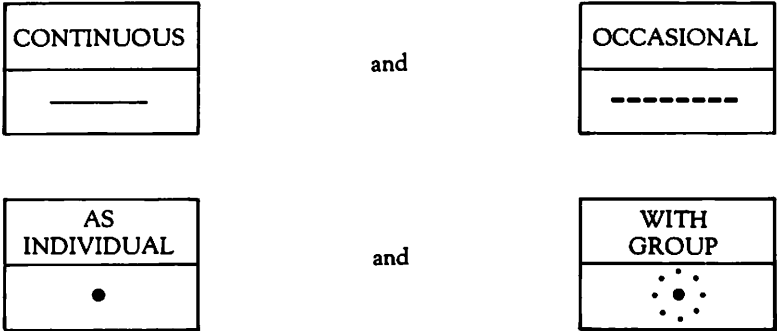
Now let's look at: occasional/as individual/direct/observing/organized/work/for others/system-addressing/from outside/break-even. This could be a stipended ombudsperson, on call from a human resource bank!

Now let's take: continuous/individual/indirect/observing/organized/gift-giving/for others/system-accepting/from inside/money-losing. At first glance, this looks palpably absurd; it doesn't seem that observing and gift-giving could go together, and I'll admit any reasonable interpretation calls for a resolute imagination. But what about a volunteer comparison shopper? Someone else buys the materials, or at any rate, this is not the most important part of the volunteer's task. Rather, the comparison shopper volunteer's service (for which he or she pays expenses incident to the service) is in selecting the most appropriate materials, and in getting the best possible deal on them.

Only 1,019 ten-way descriptions left to go. I leave that task to hardier souls. Indeed, it may be that computer-assisted search of volunteer space is more for the student than the practitioner, more for serious research than day-to-day application. In the first place, not everyone will have access to a computer for enumerating anywhere from about 1,000 to 60,000 or more ten-word descriptions of volunteer involvement styles. Even if you do get such a printout, what practitioner has the time or endurance even to look at each of the descriptions? Finally, even if you do have the time and endurance, the previous section has indicated that interpretation of many of the ten-word descriptions requires considerable mental agility. In the first place, it's extraordinarily difficult to juggle ten ideas at one time, and make coherent sense of the entire collection. (I believe psychologists say that most of us can hold no more than four or five things in our minds at one time.) What seems to happen is that as the collection of descriptors gets larger, you are more and more likely to get one that seriously violates the sense made by the other descriptions in this collection. Therefore, though ten-way descriptions are logically the most complete and probably the most appropriate for research on volunteer space, I think combinations of between three and six adjectives are probably more useful for everyday purposes of reminder and discovery in volunteer space.

**Exploration as a Learning Game**

An earlier section of this chapter illustrated a systematic process for exploring three- and four-dimensional sectors of volunteer space. That method is systematic and feasible; it may also get a bit boring, partly because it lacks some of the elements of surprise. Therefore, I'm going to illustrate a somewhat less systematic way to meander through volunteer park, if that's your style. You can make something of a game of the exploration. Here are the outlines of one simple game of this type; let's call it "three-card style." The game would be played with cards, each of which has the title of a pole of a dimension; thus:



and so on.

If you choose to use both poles of all ten dimensions, there will be twenty cards in all. There are 18 cards if you choose to use only nine of the ten dimensions, 16 cards if you want to play with only eight dimensions, etc. You can use your own polar titles and dimensions and you can also use cards marking a midpoint between, but to keep it simple for purposes of illustration, let's say we have 20 pole cards. Make duplicates of these 20 cards, so you have two "continuous" cards, two "occasional" cards, or a total of 40 cards.

Now add two wild cards:

WILD
!!!!

You can use these wild cards to represent either pole of any dimension. Or in some versions of the game, a wild card permits creation of your own new or modified titles.

Finally, you might prefer to have separate POLICY and ADVOCACY cards, rather than having these styles be a combination of two cards: system address-from-inside and system address-from-outside respectively.

Up to five or six people can play.

1. Deal three cards to each person (face down, please).
2. Each player, in turn, has a choice of passing, standing pat, or drawing one card from the remaining deck on the table. If the player keeps the card, one card from the hand must be discarded.
4. Two cycles completely going around the table are mandatory.
5. After the completion of the second cycle, the rotation continues until (a) the deck in the center is exhausted; (b) all players participating have passed in sequence; or (c) a player, having what seems to be a good hand, "calls," and all players must lay down their hands.
6. What is a good hand? A hand is good insofar as the three cards in it describe models of volunteer involvement which (a) are realistic, that is, could very well occur or can be documented as having occurred, and (b) are at the same time innovative, creative.

Players briefly describe and document their hands for a few minutes, and then are rated on a scale of 1 (poorest) to 5 (best) on each of the two characteristics. Thus a hand can be worth anywhere from two to ten points, unless anyone gets caught with both pole cards for the same dimension in a given hand. The penalty for this is **extreme**. Please note: In describing a hand, a player is restricted as to involvement style only by the three cards in the hand. On all other seven dimensions, the player can assume either pole as part of the involvement style described, or can ignore the other dimension entirely. For example, if neither OCCASIONAL nor CONTINUOUS cards are in your hand, you can assume the involvement style is either occasional or continuous, or you can assume this time-extension makes no essential difference in the involvement style. The above feature of the game, plus the interpretation of the three cards in a hand, permits considerable scope for creativity and imagination in interpreting a hand to other players, for purposes of achieving the highest possible score.

7. Who judges or rates the hands? The judges might be a consensus of all other players, the player to your right on one round and to your left on the next round. You might also have an outside judge, someone who is knowledgeable, intelligent, of unimpeachable integrity, and already unpopular with the group. Perhaps someday there will be fixed ratings for all possible hands in "three-card style." In any case, this game would be fun and

instructive at the same time, whenever volunteer leaders get together — at workshops and conferences, for example.

I will leave to help-intending cardsharks the further development of the game, but I can't help speculating. Suppose we are only playing three-card style. You are dealt:

OCCASIONAL
INFORMAL
POLICY

A creative and feasible combination, this could be the volunteer who is not on your advisory Board, but whom you call for valuable advice every now and then — or who calls you (free-lance?) to volunteer his advice (are you impatient or do you listen?).

The first three cards you draw to try to improve your hand are:

AS INDIVIDUAL  
WORK  
FOR OTHERS

They don't seem to add much, but the next card you draw is:

OBSERVER

Now that card is interesting. Since I'm kitbitzing your hand, I suggest you pick up OBSERVER and discard OCCASIONAL. What you then have could be an informal network of volunteers, targeted to observe certain things relevant to policy so when you call (or when they call), they will be able to back advice with evidence. If you described your hand that way, I would give you a rating of 8.

For the next game, you might want more challenge. If so, I suggest four-card style and after that, five-card style. In this way, we can play our way through all of volunteer space somewhat before the end of the present century. By that time we will have succeeded in redefining volunteer space in more precise yet richer terms. So we can begin the game again.

A final word about redefining volunteer space — the cards with which our game is played. The worst thing this book could do would be to fixate either you or me on "the ten dimensions." The best thing this book could do would be to stir up a dialogue which would unfix the ten dimensions, refine them, rationalize, and extend them.

I've gone about as far as I can go with the dimensions at this point, except for some uneasy speculation on how they might be improved. I've already mentioned overlap between some of the dimensions, and their sometimes logically absurd combinations, and the new space poles on the right of some dimensions are in need of rethinking and possibly renaming. For example, is "break-even" the proper end of the volunteer line from money-losing on that dimension? Or is the pole a bit less or more than break-even? Is self-help a bit too much to be included in volunteering, and if so, where is the polar alternative to "for others" best placed? Self-interest? Reasonable self-interest? Self-interest which doesn't damage the quality of help-intending work?

Finally, there are certainly other meaningful dimensions and refinements or realignments of the present dimensions. Some of these are at least implied by this book's analyses. For example, continuous to occasional appears to involve at least two other dimensions: time-extensive to time-limited, and regular to irregular. Lurking somewhere in the irregular area, and in informal volunteering as well, may be something called "spontaneous" as contrasted with stimulated volunteering (?). Second, within indirect forms of volunteering, we glimpse a complexity which might alternately justify two distinct dimensions: working directly with the client or on a problem or not doing so, and

geographical distance from the work site, “electronic volunteering” being one instance of the latter. (The two are not quite the same thing; you can work directly with a client by telephone; that is indirectly.) A third example: the observational pole of action-to-observing might justify within itself a distinction between sensing and studying, between observation and cogitation. Also, there is a meaningful difference between volunteering to observe, and volunteering to be observed. The latter category includes people who volunteer (unpaid) as subjects in a research study, and it suggests the possibility of an active-to-passive dimension in styles of volunteer involvement.

Other “new” dimensions might be: helpful to indifferent to hurtful, and seriousness of work to triviality of work. Both dimensions are quite subjective, which is why I have avoided them, and both dimensions exit from volunteer space well before the pole on the right is reached.

I leave all such remapping to you in the confident expectation of new insights.

**CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**

**INVOLVEMENT DAY:  
SCRIPT FOR A CELEBRATION**

**I. ON YOUR DOORSTEP**

**KALAMAZOO COUNTY'S DAY OF HELPING AND CARING . . .**

**INVOLVEMENT  
DAY !**

**IT'S SITTING  
AND  
FANTASTICK!**



**april 30th  
saturday**

A list of Projects that need to be done for some of Kalamazoo County's service agencies and organizations.

## WHAT IS INVOLVEMENT DAY???

This is the day when every individual, family and group who can provide a service of some kind (any kind) is encouraged to do something.

You are encouraged to come up with your own project. If you take a few minutes to look around, you'll find a person's yard that needs to be cleaned — and no one to clean, or a homebound elderly person nearby whom you have been intending to visit but just haven't gotten around to it yet — do it on Saturday, April 30.

This brochure contains specific projects which some agencies have requested. All of them can be done on Saturday, April 30. Supervision and staff assistance can be provided any group that selects one of the enclosed projects for its "Get Involved" activity.

When your group decides on its project, please call Vi Palladino, Voluntary Action Center, 342-0233, so your group will receive the appropriate recognition.

REMEMBER TO "GET INVOLVED"  
on INVOLVEMENT DAY — SATURDAY, APRIL 30

Published as a service by:  
The Voluntary Action Center  
121 West Cedar Street  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49006  
342-0234



## INVOLVEMENT DAY

SATURDAY, MAY 13, 1978

GLENS FALLS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES      VOLUNTARY ACTION CENTER

Dear Friends:

We would like to share with you the good news of an important upcoming community event — INVOLVEMENT DAY, MAY 13TH! What is Involvement Day? It is an opportunity for the people of Glens Falls and Queensbury to get involved with and for other people. It is an occasion to share our time and talents; it is a celebration of this community's spirit of caring.

Involvement Day is being jointly sponsored by the Voluntary Action Center and the Glens Falls Council of Churches. We are coordinating service projects for the day which can involve either groups of people or individuals. For individuals, we are suggesting any personal involvement such as doing yard work or picking up groceries for an elderly neighbor, spending some time with a lonely friend, or visiting a newcomer on the block. Group projects already underway are a blood mobile, musical entertainment for nursing home residents, and a clean-up of parks and trails.

Now, what can your group do? You can get involved in one of two ways. Either you can find your own project for Involvement Day, or you can contact the Voluntary Action Center and we will help you find a project. Local service agencies have let us know of their needs and what projects groups can do. This project list is available to you.

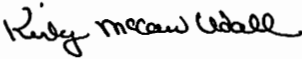
The Post Star and Stations WBZA and WWSC are cooperating by giving publicity to activities that are scheduled for Involvement Day.



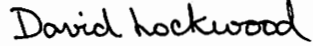
When you decide on your project, please give us a call here at the Voluntary Action Center, 793-3817, and let us know what it is. We would like to add to our growing list of activities for that day.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,



Kirby McGaw Udall  
Volunteer Coordinator  
Voluntary Action Center



David Lockwood  
Social Action Chairman  
Council of Churches

65 Ridge Street  
Glens Falls, New York 12801

### A visit

You can see them coming up the walk, a neighbor and a junior high student you've seen around before. Oh-oh, another solicitation and it's too late to get out the back window.

The first surprise comes in the way they begin. They ask you what you would like to see done to improve the neighborhood or the community (that people themselves might do). Then they ask what you as an individual could use in the way of help (clever, unusual approach).

The second surprise is that they do not even ask you for money. They only ask what your interests and hobbies are, the things you like to do. No pledge card is required, but they say they might get back to you later on the things you really enjoy doing.

By now your semi-automatic skepticism of doorstep solicitation is a bit enfeebled. Grasping at straws, you remember the letter you received about Involvement Day and point out that you are not a regular member of any group.

"You don't have to be," say they, "and maybe all the better." You can pick your project as an individual, or no project at all. "Have fun," they say, and leave. The rest of the day you try to figure out whether you've been sold anything . . .

## II. FLASHBACK TO CORRESPONDENCE

### Request for a Proposal (RFP)

Your government is interested in the recruiting of a nation for volunteer involvement. Current budget is about a billion dollars and manages to involve about one out of four people.<sup>1</sup> Can you get the other three-quarters for a few billion dollars more? On second thought, this other three-quarters may be the hardest of all to involve, so would five billion dollars be enough? In reply, please note our Gettysburg address: of the people, by the people, and for the people.

### Proposal

Dear Government:

Involvement Day is a dawn-to-dusk community event which seeks to broaden our identification with volunteering by showing how everyone is, or can be, in some sense a

<sup>1</sup>As noted earlier in this book, this sum is composed of salaries and a little overhead for all volunteer directors, Voluntary Action Centers, Volunteer Bureaus, state offices of volunteering, national resource people and organizations. The figure is very conservative for reasons we need not go into here.

volunteer. This contrasts with pointing up volunteers as mainly special or unique kinds of people, hence difficult for ordinary folks to emulate. We could use principles in the volunteer space book (Attachment A) to get people to identify with volunteering as something like what they do now. We could then seek to coax them into doing more. Coupled with this would be the establishment of an attractive range of community volunteer projects, visibly producing good results during a single day, extensive media coverage, and community leadership endorsement.

Involvement Day was pioneered by the Voluntary Action Center of Kalamazoo, Michigan several years ago. Glens Fall, New York has done it since. Background on the day in the form of reports and materials will cost considerably less than the billion dollars previously mentioned. The present project plans to steal ideas and experience from these two towns, with expanded larceny from as far away as Australia. Otherwise, the record of borrowed ideas is spread throughout the enclosed book (see Attachment A).

The first year we hope to pilot test the project with a few communities of different sizes and shapes in each state. Next year, the nation.

**BUDGET**

Locally-Raised Talent and Time:	99%
Locally-Raised Nickels and Dimes:	99%
Luck with weather:	2%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>200%</b>

Amount requested for planning and gearing up: \$0,000,000,000.00  
Amount requested for truly national implementation. Talk to you later.  
Sincerely involved,

**Response to Response to Request for Proposal (RRRFP)**

Dear Stranger:

We have received your proposal and our accountant is having a nervous breakdown. What are you trying to pull, anyway?

**HOW CAN WE GIVE YOU A GRANT WHEN YOU DON'T ASK FOR MONEY?**

For God's sake, give us a little overhead, at least. Some travel, maybe? An outside consultant or two?

Your book (herewith returned as Attachment B) says that everyone has something to give and that they should be offered a chance to give it.

Well, we have money.

Very truly yours,

**Response to Response to Response to Request for Proposal (RRRRFP)**

Dear People, money or not:

There's been a terrible mistake. We were proposing to give you a grant composed of people's caring, time, and effort.

Okay, we **could** use \$50,000 to \$100,000 seed money for a truly national project.

---

<sup>1</sup>Exploring Volunteer Space: The Recruiting of a Nation. Always attach a lot of big things to a small proposal.

Beyond that, the book never said people had only one thing to give. We think you have more than money, just like anyone else. Also, for a starter, how about a piece of the President's time as your matching contribution?

### III. TELEVISION

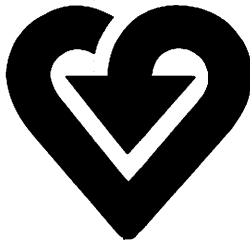
MUSIC: "Hail to the Chief"  
(fades to)  
"The Volunteer State"

(national award-winning Involvement Day song written by a 12-year old young lady from Nashville, Tennessee)

#### ON SCREEN

The Presidential Seal

(fades to)



**Announcer:** Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States.

**Scene:** The Oval Office in the White House. The President is seated in a relaxed setting, surrounded by her family.

**The President:** Good evening. This week we celebrate a great American tradition of caring for one another and for our country. This warm part of our history is as old as barn-raising, as new as Meals on Wheels. It is as young as kindergarten children serving with the American Red Cross, as mature as a 105-year old lady who crochets for day care centers. All races and creeds are involved, in neighborhood and nation.

John Kennedy spoke in the spirit of this tradition when he said, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." And I would add: ask also what you can do for your community; rediscover what your neighbor needs.

Always in our nation the best things done for the people have been done by the people. For this reason I have declared next Saturday, May 20, Involvement Day. In many communities across our country it will be a time to show what a difference a day makes if each of us gets involved in a personally meaningful and important way. On this day, we will rededicate ourselves to neighbor and to the volunteer tradition, here and around the world.

I hope you will be at home for helping on Involvement Day. My family and I will return to our home in Honokaa, Hawaii, where my daughter Linda will rejoin her 4-H Club for a project during the day. Son George has selected a volunteer project with an environmental recycling project. I'll fly to Honolulu in the morning for rededication of Volunteer Park there, then return to serve as a volunteer swimming instructor at the town pool. My husband will resume his volunteer work at Honokaa's Center for retarded adults. I've always thought it good for him to get out of the White House every now and then . . .

CUT!

**Rude Spectator:** Just fine, Ms. President, but I wonder if we might hear that last sentence again.

## IV. CUT TO RATIONALE

I'm glad the President and her family will go home to Honokaa on Involvement Day. For that day is meant to originate from the home folks on up, not from the top down. For the same reason, I'm glad her family is participating, as well as talking, and participating in "ordinary" rather than sensationally sacrificial ways. Nor does the President refer to the seemingly unattainable "national award" type of volunteering. Beautiful as that may be, it is perhaps best saved for another day. The point of Involvement Day is that there is a natural location on volunteer space for everyone, natural in the "glad give" sense of something that they can do and want to do; something that will make a meaningful difference for them and encourage them to keep on doing it. The key then is self-motivated volunteering close to home with the willing participation of heart, mind, and hands.

Involvement Day uses all possible locations in volunteer space to bring a program from the people to the people; it does not try to bring the people to the program. Once again, this book has been a plea for application of that principle. "Make the **minimum** difference in what a person wants to do and can do, which will have a **maximum** positive impact on other people. Minimum change for maximum impact." There are many ways of implementing this principle. These approaches have in common a capacity to recognize, facilitate, and support a very broad range of volunteering, particularly the varieties in relatively unexplored space. Involvement Day tries to put this perspective all together in the space of a day.

A broad range of helping styles and purposes are welcome on this day. Some of them have never been called "volunteering" and do not need to be. Let people use the name they wish to describe what they are doing. Since some name has to be used, "involvement" is suggested as a flexible term. If people want to call it neighboring (Good Neighbor Day?), caring, getting involved, volunteering, giving a damn, let them (see Chapter 4). The object is to create an atmosphere where all can feel that what counts is a comfortable kind of relatively uncoerced work intended to help, without immediate thought of financial gain. This work can occur at any point on any of the ten dimensions in volunteer space; it is important that people realize this. For example, as we shall see, there is a strong element of self-help mixed with other-helping on this day.

Involvement Day differs crucially from the typical volunteer recognition event. Such events usually involve projection of the volunteer as a very special person, contributing in an outstanding way over an extended period, and often in a structured manner; that is, in better known regions of volunteer space. This is the volunteer of the year or the month whom we have all come to know and admire. Such people richly deserve recognition. But if this is all there is to volunteer recognition, there is a grave risk of elitism and actual alienation on the part of the vast majority of people who will never be the volunteer of the year or anything like it. Such people might well conclude, "I can never be as outstanding as these very special people; I'm not capable of such dedication." Or they might think, "It's wonderful that these outstanding people are taking care of things. It takes the pressure off me." In other words, we risk presenting volunteering as outside the reach of the ordinary person, as something other special people will take care of.

Involvement Day takes a different approach, stressing the accessibility of volunteering to all people. Its message is: you don't have to be outstanding or special to be a volunteer. You can easily be a volunteer; in fact, you probably are one now and do not even know it. Volunteer is everywoman and everyman. Volunteering is within the reach of us all; it is something all of us can identify with, where we are now; it is not something only special people do. It is something each of us has done, is doing, and can do more. Once this identification is made, the person may be more easily encouraged to become more intensively involved in volunteering, perhaps in a more structured, programmatic manner,

but not necessarily so. In other words, for some people, Involvement Day may be a bridge from occasional to more continuous participation.

Second, Involvement Day emphasizes intrinsic recognition and motivational dividends from the volunteer work itself rather than extrinsic rewards, such as certificates, banquets, and so on. Volunteer projects are designed which will show immediately visible and positive results for the individual, the neighborhood, and the community, from dawn to dusk on a single day. The situation is win-win rather than sacrificial or obligatory; helping others is consistent with helping yourself and your neighbors.

There is a wider positive message brought home by Involvement Day. Volunteering has a community-wide impact; it is not just an individual affair. It produces a better community for all of us to live in, and it need not take forever.

## V. GETTING READY

These guidelines will be somewhat vague in spots. There are two reasons for this. The only reason which I would like you to believe in is my sincere desire to encourage flexible local adaptation and creation. The other reason has to do with ignorance. Kalamazoo and Glens Falls have pioneer experience.<sup>3</sup> But, thankfully, this is still a somewhat unstandardized country, and every town is still at least a little special.

For your own committee's study, you may want to review the Kalamazoo and Glens Falls experience. There is a fine brief article on Glens Falls Involvement Day, 1978, in the Winter, 1979 issue of the magazine *Voluntary Action Leadership*, pages 21-25. This article is particularly good on realistic planning processes and events for the day. By contrast, the guidelines in this chapter sometimes stretch to imagine possibilities not yet attempted in real life. For Kalamazoo material, inquire of Karen Wahmhoff, Volunteer Involvement Day Coordinator, at the Voluntary Action Center, 820 John Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001. At present, Kalamazoo has a four-page description available for 50¢ to cover copying, handling, mailing, etc. If either group attempts to send you material entirely free, please resist; they can use copying cost reimbursement at least. Remember, even if they break even on the deal, they are still giving you volunteer help (Chapter 15).

Some guidelines for your own Involvement Day are included here.

1. Choose your scope. The involvement can include all of a lightly populated county, a single city or town, or a neighborhood in a metropolis. These can also be linked with other counties or towns in a state, other neighborhoods in a city, other states, and perhaps someday, other nations, if they are interested.

2. Choose the date. A Saturday in April or May is advisable. Young people are still in school; families are not yet away on vacations. It is spring and the football season has not quite begun. As for the weather, no committee can control it, but you can try to have back-up indoor projects, and try to follow through afterwards on outdoor projects.

3. Choose your facilitating people (but not too carefully) in the spirit of the day. Please make your planning group as broadly representative as possible: service clubs, churches and synagogues, schools with students of all ages, city officials, the labor and business community, neighborhood action leaders, the arts and the media — all volunteers, of course. It is helpful if some of these people have influential contacts to encourage participation by clubs, organizations, the media, etc.

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<sup>3</sup>I haven't been able to discover any other communities. If I do, I'll be thrilled to apologize publicly for the omission. My friend Dorothy Ronga, the originator of Involvement Day and now a Peace Corps volunteer in Jamaica, tells me they have something like it there, called "Labour Day."

Let there be others, too; get some gadflies if you can — non-joiners and plain folks not usually on anyone's committee. Insofar as practical, no single organization or set of organizations should dominate proceedings. Visibly concentrated proprietorship risks people seeing the event as somebody else's thing. Try to make as many people as possible feel that they own this day. The same goes for administering and participating in the various volunteer projects during the day. None of them should be seen overwhelmingly as, say a Jaycee-sponsored project or a Presbyterian project, good as such groups are and much as they are needed for facilitating project involvement.

Beyond the planning committee, you will need a number of task forces for developing volunteer projects and administering them during the day, setting up networks, public relations and working with the media, getting ready for "project buttonhole" during the day, and other matters we shall deal with later. The Kalamazoo and Glens Falls experience demonstrates the effectiveness of Voluntary Action Centers (and others) as overall low-profile facilitators and organizers of Involvement Day. But citizens involvement committees might do as well, or community resource centers. My own bias is that local government should not be a **primary** sponsor, for Involvement Day seems most of all a celebration and renewal of private initiative. Otherwise, the idea is to get a sponsorship which has the will and capability of doing the job, but does not represent only one sector of the community to the exclusion of other sectors. A coalition may be a large part of the answer.

4. Raise a little money or its in-kind equivalent in material donations (including the edible and potable). You will need money for such things as films, paint, transportation, badges, balloons, caps. Glens Falls, which is a fair-sized city, managed with less than a thousand dollars cash. This included reimbursement of an Involvement Day coordinator's time. Large single sums contributed are nice, but dangerous on two counts. Such gifts might tempt you to substitute money for volunteering at some points. Inevitably, big gifts also suggest primary ownership by the heavy contributors. I am in favor of smaller contributions with a maximum of volunteer donations of materials in lieu of money, such as hamburgers, balloons, loudspeakers, and rooms. As for the shadow of insurance needed on volunteer projects, this could be contributed, too, as it was in Glens Falls.

5. Task forces and research connecting the community: the goal here is to get a good sample of glad gives and needs in the geographical area chosen. These are sampled at both the individual and group level. Existing volunteers accompanied by students can go door-to-door in their own neighborhoods finding out people's glad gives and needs, as was done by project Link-Up in Mordialloc, Australia, a few years ago.

Another task force can do the same sort of glad give/need inventory for groups and organizations in the community. Group level needs and glad gives tend to be a bit different from individual ones.

A concurrent way of encouraging the same process is to facilitate Minimax or resource exchange processes in churches, synagogues, schools, civic and service clubs, neighborhoods, families, nursing homes, jails, and other institutions. (Chapter 12 describes the resource exchange process.) I suggest using both the survey and the resource exchange process because the latter not only intensifies the survey read-out on patterns of community glad gives and needs, but also provides first-hand experience of basic volunteering.

A task force will then scan all the glad give/need data for patterns and connections possible. But first, glad gives may have to be filtered somewhat to remove the overly controversial and the illegal — anything that is specifically **against** anybody and not potentially for everyone. For example, some freewheeling resource exchange processes have led to living arrangements considered innovative in some quarters; glad give offers of marijuana are also not unknown. Sensitive personal needs should also be screened out of the process. Indeed, needs or glad gives, individual or group, should move forward to

public participation in Involvement Day only with the explicit conscious consent of the contributors.

The community glad give and need bank is then examined for several purposes. First one looks for patterns of need which suggest a set of group volunteer projects which are badly needed for improvement of the community, and can show substantial visible impact as a result of group volunteering from dawn to dusk on one day. For example: a rundown park or neighborhood or trees needing to be planted. The pervasiveness of the need, as "voted" by the people, will help guarantee a turnout on Involvement Day, but there should also be a good store of project-related glad gives in the community resource bank. Finally, the set of one-day volunteer projects should be geographically distributed throughout the community for physical accessibility to all people.

A final caution: groups will give you many fine needs, giving rise to such projects as painting or planting flowers at a community center, running a bingo game in a nursing home, being a "Big Brother for a day," a scavenger hunt to collect materials for a young women's center, or giving a coffee for foreign students. This is all well and good, but make certain that a substantial number of group projects are also based on a pattern of needs and glad gives as expressed by **individuals**. Frequently, organizational goals and needs, however worthy, will miss these patterns. Here is a good mixture, emphasizing the individual, from Glens Falls Involvement Day.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

### Adult

- Share your plants with an elderly person
- Send a card to a sick friend
- Visit a friend in a nursing home or hospital
- Make a volunteer commitment to a service group
- Send or take flowers to a shut-in
- Bake cookies for a neighbor
- Take a batch of unused books to the library
- Offer to take an elderly person shopping, to visit a friend, for a ride, etc.
- Wash windows
- Take a meal to a shut-in
- Shop for groceries for a shut-in, new mother, or elderly person
- Take a handicapped person for an outing

### Children

- Draw a picture for a shut-in
- Offer to babysit free for parents or neighbors
- Collect metal, paper, bottles for recycling
- Rake up yard for older person or shut-in
- Read a story to a younger brother or sister
- Organize a neighborhood story hour for young tots
- Clean up yard for parents
- Scavenger hunt for recyclables or useables such as canned goods
- Bake cookies for a friend
- Put on a play for nursing home residents
- Make a get-well card for a sick child in the hospital

Isn't the list for children a beautiful idea? (How old can the children be, by the way?) Maybe there should also be a list tailored to elderly and shut-in volunteers, and generally

plenty of indoor projects in case it dares to rain. However, overall I would be against too many "special people" lists.

My admiration for the brilliant humanity of Glens Falls and Kalamazoo still permits mildly cautionary comment on this point. Be sure your suggested projects resonate solidly with known glad gives, individual or group. Looking at the adult project suggestions, I find I would be willing to do everyone one of them except, out of simple mercy, baking cookies. But then I would do so substantially from a sense of conscience and obligation, and I would indeed take satisfaction in having done things I clearly recognize as decent. But I would not have too much fun, and if this were my first or an early experience with self-conscious volunteering, I would probably come away with the old image of volunteering as duty, obligation, a thing I ought to do.

I am certainly not knocking conscience, and I fully recognize the fact that the list of adult projects represents real needs. I am only saying that if Involvement Day is to be marketed as, among other things, an attractive introductory offer on volunteering, it should include a substantial balance of tasks which are projects of joy — tasks which people are glad to do and really want to do. If you asked me, you would quickly discover my fanatic interest in explaining and demonstrating inexpensive solar power, wood stoves, and other natural energy sources (I don't sell them for any company). If you then found some other people for whom this happily volunteer effort were useful, you could not hold me back on Involvement Day. Incidentally, I would be delighted to talk about sunshine in a nursing home or hospital. And, if I were a first-time self-conscious volunteer, I would come away with a positive image of volunteering as a win-win situation for me and the people helped.

So, let's say our group and individual projects are set. At this point, recruit low-profile facilitators for each group volunteer project, and leave the projects as they are until Involvement Day dawns.

We have already mentioned the facilitation of resource exchange networks in personal acquaintance groups, such as schools, churches and synagogues, civic clubs, neighborhood groups, etc. A task force could also facilitate wider-ranging helping networks, not based on personal or common group affiliation. The task force would base their facilitation on the same sampling of glad gives and needs which was used to set up visible volunteer projects for Involvement Day (previous section). This, too, could be done at the group or individual level.

A few years ago, Donna Osborne, student field placement specialist at the Kalamazoo Voluntary Action Center, sent me a diagram of some of the group exchange transactions which did occur in Kalamazoo (see Figure 1). Note the extent to which traditional client groups, marked "C" on the diagram, became givers as well as receivers, and all kinds of groups mix together in the helping enterprise. I particularly liked such reversals as the Beverly Manor Nursing Home helping Meals on Wheels.

Help exchange columns in the newspapers and glad give/need marathons on television or radio can help facilitate the same kind of networking between individuals who have never met face to face. There will be more about this later in the chapter.

All three types of networks should begin forming well before Involvement Day; the potential connections, at least, should be known and in place. However, much of the actual discharge of the network — helping given and received — could await the day itself. It would also be nice if the networks persevered well after Involvement Day. All task forces should concentrate on follow-through opportunities. What happens during Involvement Day is important; what happens after the day is much more important. You will want to do all you can to insure a new wave of citizen participation, not just a few fading ripples in a pond. Indeed, while the project development and networking task forces are busily engaged, other committees will also be at work. One task force should be sure that there is a comprehensive layout of more traditional volunteer opportunities, ready to be





promoted at the end of the day. Perhaps a business community task force could look into the possibility of a "Be Kind to Customers Week," or day. Chapter 15 described the basic idea: special efforts by business to perform extra volunteer-type services for customers, these extra services being fully consistent with good business. For organized labor, a title keeps running through my head: "Labors of Love." I do not know how well either of these concepts would be received, nor can I think of any specific precedents for their implementation.

6. Choosing Materials: a task force should research the availability of educational and public relations materials in support of Involvement Day. Perhaps the most important part of these resource materials will be locally developed, after looking at nationally produced materials.

### Audio-Visuals

The United Way film *Let The Spirit Free* is excellent. Equally fine is *A Gift of Time* by the Association of Junior Leagues. There are others, and there will be newer ones by the time this book is out. Check with a local Voluntary Action Center or Volunteer Bureau, your statewide office of volunteering, or national volunteer resource organizations such as VOLUNTEER, P.O. Box 4179, Boulder, Colorado 80306. Do not overlook more local productions which may already exist in your state or town. California 4-H, for instance, has a fine slide show, *Today's Volunteer*. Orlando, Florida's Volunteer Service Bureau has some superb audio-visuals; students at Oak Ridge High School in the same town produced an animated cartoon on volunteering.

A few years ago, Bob Weir, a volunteer for the Kalamazoo Voluntary Action Center, used the people approach principles described in this book to develop and write a volunteer recruiting slide show, excerpted below in slightly modified form. Note how the presentation moves smoothly across dimensions in volunteer space — from the kind of informal helping most everyone has done, towards more organized and continuous helping efforts. The slide show may not still be in use; if it is, it probably is not available for general distribution. The script below is simply offered to help inspire ideas for your own Involvement Day slide show.

#### VISUALS

Person Drowning

People Saving Victim

Man Reading Newspaper in  
Living Room Chair

Same Man Looking Up,  
Listening

Woman Trying to Hang a  
Picture on the Wall

Man Trying to Help His  
Wife

#### VOICE

Desperate Voice:  
"Help me! Help me!"

Announcer:  
A primal cry of a person in  
danger and the rush of  
people to the rescue.

Fortunately, this is a scene that  
most of us only read about.

But wait a minute! Listen to  
those around you! Do we not  
hear and respond to cries of  
help everyday?

Woman's Voice: "Will you hand  
me the hammer?"

Voluntarily helping another person  
is a basic human endeavor that  
each of us practices throughout  
our lives.

Little Boy and Mother Setting  
Up Grill for Outside Barbeque

As a child do you remember helping  
your mom with family get-togethers?

Little Girl Holding Flashlight  
For Her Dad

Do you remember holding a flashlight  
for your dad?

Children Flying a Kite

Did you ever help a friend fly a  
kite?

Boy and Mom Fixing Bike

Has your son ever helped you fix  
your bicycle?

Woman Stopping to See if a  
Motorist Needs Assistance

Or helped another motorist?

Man and Girl Throwing a  
Baseball

Have you ever taught that special  
person of yours to throw a  
baseball?

Woman and Boy Sewing

Or shown your little boy how to  
sew his torn jeans?

Woman Typing

Have you ever typed an important  
paper for your husband?

Man and Woman Holding Each  
Other

Have you ever "just been there?"

Many Volunteers in Action,  
Perhaps a Disaster Clean-  
Up Scene

Every day, every citizen of  
Kalamazoo County makes a  
contribution of his or her  
time to another citizen of  
this county.

Red Cross Mobile

Some contributions are made  
through organized international  
organizations such as Red Cross.

The Flower Planter

Some voluntary action is the  
work of lone individuals,  
such as Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, who  
plants flowers along our  
streets and walkways in a  
one-man beautification campaign.

Hospital Nurse Assistants

Many volunteers give their  
time to the sick and disabled  
at hospitals and nursing  
homes.

Stroke Victims Learning  
to Talk

Some of these volunteers have  
been stricken themselves,  
and are now helping others  
along the road to recupera-  
tion and recovery.

Feeding Severely Mentally  
Retarded

Kalamazoo County volunteers aid  
those who are mentally disabled  
to understand the basics of  
human living.

Retarded Swim Program	And to understand the joys of rewarding accomplishment.
Crippled Children on Horseback	Volunteers also teach active recreation to the physically handicapped.
Old Person on Phone	Active assistance for the elderly ranges from a simple daily phone call . . .
Middle-Aged Woman and Old Woman at Supermarket	To individual transportation services . . .
Meals on Wheels	To providing meals for our neighbors who are shut-in.
RSVP	Our volunteers also include the elderly.
Big Sister and Little Sister	Likewise, many volunteer programs offer guidance for youth, such as the Big Brother and Big Sister programs.
Little League Baseball	Or organized sports . . .
Rehabilitation Officer	Or volunteer probation officers.
Park Scene	Our volunteers in Kalamazoo County include teens who are concerned about their inherited world.
Candy Strippers	And the welfare and health of their neighbors.
Day-Care Center	Volunteers of all ages are working with children to keep the spirit of voluntary action alive among the next generation.
Nature Center	Our volunteers are concerned about the preservation of our natural environment.
Urban Redevelopment	And about the restoration and healthful growth of our cities.
Donation Transaction	Many Kalamazoo County citizens pledge financial assistance to various volunteer organizations.
Walk-A-Thon	And some of our citizens work hard to collect that money.
Mass Help Scene	Who are the volunteers in Kalamazoo County?

Man with Outstretched  
Hand

You are a volunteer. In some way, today, you will go out of your way to help another person who needs you. You may help a member of your family, a neighbor, or a stranger.

Voluntary Action Center  
Logo

If you want to do more than that, and don't know where to go, contact the Voluntary Action Center. We know who needs help, and we know you want to help. Our role is to bring you in contact with those who need you.  
Thank you.

### Books and Pamphlets

Most books about volunteering are for self-identified volunteer leadership; the material is somewhat technical and sprinkled with in-house language. Such books have real value, but not for Involvement Day. You will want to reach people who do not see themselves as volunteers or volunteer leaders, people who are simply helping without particularly wanting or needing to know about sophisticated techniques of fundraising, public relations, management, and the like. You will want the kind of general readership material which will draw in the public library, the schools, the churches and synagogues, and the neighborhoods.

Nothing like *Gone With the Wind* or "Superman" is currently available (though there are some samples of a comic strip entitled "Volunteer Man," produced by a teenager.) You might nevertheless want to review what is currently available in the self-consciously volunteer literature. If so, for a free publications catalog, write to Volunteer Readership, P.O. Box 1807, Boulder, CO 80306. The following five book descriptions are excerpted from the current Volunteer Readership catalog.

One highly recommended general book currently in print is *By the People: A History of Americans as Volunteers*. A local history of volunteers would go very well with this; students could also do oral histories with senior citizens. (The High School Volunteer Project described later in this chapter has a section with guidelines for such a project.)

*By the People: A History of Americans as Volunteers* by Susan J. Ellis and Katherine H. Noyes. This lively and authoritative work is a milestone for the field of volunteering. It is the first comprehensive documentation of the achievements of countless citizens who, as volunteers, had significant impact on American history from colonial days to the present. *By the People* delves into the history of volunteering in such diverse fields as communications, justice, social work, transportation, town maintenance, medicine, recreation, the military, and many others. Through their examination of the traditions of volunteer work, the authors have reasserted the value of citizen participation — a bid at consciousness-raising that will cause all readers to discover their own potential for affecting history. 1978/308 pp./Order #C14/cloth \$8.95/paper \$5.75.

*Religion and Volunteering: A First Portfolio*, edited by VOLUNTEER: The National Center for Citizen Involvement. The church, synagogue, and all religious bodies depend vitally on volunteers. In fact, they are the historic heart of volunteering. The 1974 ACTION Census of American Volunteer reminded us that fully half of the people

identifying themselves as volunteers reported a primary religious orientation in their volunteer work. In this first portfolio, selected readings cover five major areas: setting and background; religious leadership development for volunteering; volunteering within the church and synagogue to the community and from the community; and resource readings, people and organizations. Sixteen articles, booklets, and reprints are conveniently assembled in this notebook which can be updated as more information on this vital topic becomes available. 1978/165 pp./notebook/order #C16/\$11.95.

*Exploring Careers Through Volunteerism* by Charlotte Lobb. For virtually every career field a volunteer opportunity is available where a teenager can gain both insight and experience. This volunteer service can help them to make far more informed decisions about their career choice. Volunteering also gives potential careerists a head start in supporting themselves. The author provides the names and addresses of organizations that have opportunities at the community level. Volunteer activities in groups through school clubs are also discussed. 1976/159 pp./cloth/Order #A58/\$5.95.

*The Board Member: Decision Maker for the Non-Profit Corporation* by Pauline L. Hanson and Carolyn T. Marmaduke. This practical manual is a "basic" for all boards. The authors explore four major areas necessary for top notch board participation. Topics examining the local community, along with policy making, and an overall background on the many functions boards perform are completely presented. Sensitive leadership for the goal-centered board is the final area covered in this guide written especially for the individual board member. Board members may personalize their copies by using the checklists and making personal notations. Many boards utilize this as required reading for new board members, and as a guide for board trainings. 1972/40 pp./paper/Order #A45/\$4.00.

*Women, Work and Volunteering* by Herta Loeser. In recent years some feminists have argued that volunteer activities perpetuate the subservience of women. Herta Loeser challenges that viewpoint and lists the unique rewards women receive as volunteers that are not possible as housewives or paid employees. In addition she offers practical guidelines for compiling a portfolio, drawing up a resume, and approaching volunteer agencies for employment. Loeser sees volunteer positions as a possible training ground for a career and a necessary method for concerned citizens to effect social changes that otherwise would not be feasible.

One book not in the Volunteer Readership catalog is a paperback book for teenagers entitled, *Volunteer Spring*, "an inspiring story of Jill's work with the mentally retarded." The book is by Judy Long (Archway Paperback, #29810, \$1.25, ISBN: 0-671-29810-0). Also, many children's books and stories have volunteer messages, such as "The Elves and the Shoemaker."

## The High School Volunteer Project

Volunteering is wonderful. Volunteering with understanding is even better, and the younger one starts to understand the volunteer tradition, the better. At present, about a thousand high school students have experienced a curriculum on community leadership and participation, linked to actual volunteer experience in the community. VOLUNTEER developed this course under the sponsorship of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan. The curriculum is being extended to junior high schools; it will also be adapted for religious education and perhaps youth groups such as 4-H. The course can also be extended on the educational scale for people whose education goes beyond high school.

There are nine curriculum units in the course. The summary of the curriculum is as follows:

### Unit I: Who is a Volunteer?

The activities and information in this unit are aimed at identifying who volunteers are

and what it is that volunteers do. The materials are intended to break down stereotyped images of volunteers, to broaden the students' awareness of the range of volunteer activities in their community. Further, it is hoped that this introduction in volunteering will help the student to develop a perception of himself/herself as a volunteer.

### **Unit II: Getting Involved**

To commence the process of involvement, this unit's activities focus on where one can volunteer and how someone can decide what type of volunteer role can best use his/her skills and meet his/her needs. Specific activities are recommended which parallel in many ways the process by which a student would apply for paid work, i.e., completing a volunteer job application and a placement interview role play. Guidelines for volunteer placements are also provided.

### **Unit III: Group Reflection**

An essential element of a volunteer/community participation course is the provision of time for student group reflection. Activities have been suggested to help the student focus on what specifically he/she is learning; that is, to help derive meaning from his/her volunteer experiences.

### **Unit IV: A Map of Volunteer Country**

Just as earlier activities focused on who volunteers are and dispelled stereotyped images, the information and activities in this unit aim to provide a broader picture for the student on the importance of volunteer activity in the local community and across the nation. Possible areas for community-based surveys are included in order to provide a different dimension to student community involvement.

### **Unit V: Economics and Volunteering**

Because volunteer efforts in many community agencies are such an integral part of its services, there is often a tendency to underestimate the economic contribution of that time. The material in this unit is aimed at developing a simplified concept of estimating the "dollar value" of volunteered time.

### **Unit VI: A Tradition of Caring and Sharing**

The materials in this unit are a first attempt at examining the history of volunteer activity. There is no curriculum source otherwise available. Suggestions are made toward the development of a local history of volunteer activity as well.

### **Unit VII: Volunteering Around the World**

Expected to be completed by summer, 1979. The unit will explore the rich variety in expression of volunteer caring in a number of nations and cultures.

### **Unit VIII: Volunteer and Caring Preparation**

The activities in this unit aim to assist the student by focusing on their career interest. The unit specifically seeks to link volunteering to career planning and decisions.

### **Unit IX: Taking A Stand: The Advocacy Volunteer**

This unit seeks to familiarize students with the concept of advocacy volunteering as distinct from service volunteering. Also, the unit assists students in understanding that in the majority of cases, advocacy volunteering is a normal and valuable part of good citizenship.

VOLUNTEER carefully developed this curriculum with feedback from students, teachers, and community volunteers, and the course is relevant, readable, do-able, learnable, and even exciting. It is also designed for flexibility. There are wide choices in exercises, learning activities and plain language readings within each curriculum unit, and between curriculum units. There is also constant encouragement of local initiative in developing projects which further explore the meaning of help-intending involvement. A community could spend anywhere from a week to a year on the course material in schools, churches and synagogues, civic clubs, institutions, book clubs, talk shows, and the like.

Once again, this course is aimed at people who do not necessarily identify themselves as volunteers, much less as leaders of volunteers. And, like this book, the material projects a broad notion of volunteer as everyperson, along with the good person who is clearly identified as a volunteer. In sum, this course will provide good reading, learning, and discussion material for Involvement Day. The curriculum should be available for general circulation with a guidebook which explains options in its use by Spring or Summer, 1980. There will be a charge for the kit to defray printing expenses. Write Volunteer Readership, P.O. Box 4179, Boulder, CO, 80306.

### For the Love of Volunteers

I can recommend this book without reservation because I have not written it yet. *For the Love of Volunteers* will be more a booklet than a book and will help to fill a nearly scandalous gap in the somewhat technical literature on volunteering. The booklet will simply be a tribute to volunteers and the volunteer experience throughout volunteer space. There will be anecdotes, parables, poetry, humor, history, art, quotations, and maybe music, too. For example, do you know the hymn "As A Volunteer" on page 211 of *Christian Service Songs*?

### The Urge to do Your Own Things

The High School Volunteer Project also has a section on examples of music which suggest the spirit of volunteering; a few of the students in this course have written their own volunteer music, and have also produced posters, paintings, collages, and comic strips on volunteering. The best volunteer art I have ever seen was produced by students in the Ralya Second Grade, Haslett, Michigan, for the Michigan State University Volunteer Bureau. The title of this art portfolio is "It's IcSiting and Fantoostick" (samples appear here). The point is: if second-graders can do it, the rest of us can at least help in producing our own music, art, posters, and writing for Involvement Day.



You can even change the whole world! It may be pretty hard, yes, but it's true!!







When you  
Volunteer to help  
Someone, you feel  
so good its like you  
had a party going  
on in your stomach.



All these books, films, paintings, and songs are not your only “study materials” in the learning build-up for Involvement Day. For example, the resource exchange process (Chapter 12) is not only a way of establishing real helping networks; the process also has value as a learning game. “Three-card style” (Chapter 17) is another consciousness-raising game, albeit somewhat on the intellectual side.

### Choosing a Name and a Theme for the Day

Another preparatory effort could be a city-wide contest to name the day and the theme. The contest might further help to involve people. Or you might stay with Involvement Day and the theme, “what a difference a day makes.” The build-up described in the previous section could easily take six months or more. The next section describes events in the last week or two before Involvement Day.

## VI. GETTING CLOSER: A WEEK OR TWO BEFORE

Resource exchange networking begins in and across neighborhoods, churches, and synagogues, schools, service clubs, bars, homes, jails, bulletin boards, fire stations, TV marathons, help-exchange columns, CB radio, etc.

Books, pamphlets, and study materials are on display in bookstore windows (someone should be available to talk about them); these same materials should be available in the library. Leaflets (as money permits) are available as “freebies” in places of business or other public places, or distributed door-to-door by volunteers.

Study materials and exercises are part of schoolwork (kindergarten through twelfth grade) and also appear in college classes, in churches and synagogues, book clubs, service clubs, on talk shows, in editorials, etc. Learning games are also played at this time: resource exchange process, “three-card style,” etc. Posters, developed and distributed by volunteers, are in place throughout town.

There is a Volunteer Arts Festival, perhaps the week before Involvement Day, with drawings, paintings, music, and perhaps even dance and drama, expressing the spirit of neighboring and volunteering. Let your imagination be your guide here, but one example of the use of music is Mary Ann Girard's song for Glens Falls Involvement Day called, "Let it Live." The last verse is:

How I wish I could feel it all over again,  
I just can't tell you how happy I've been.  
Sometimes the perfect gift you can give,  
Is open up your heart and let it live!

Songs we suggested our High School Volunteer Project students look at for volunteer meaning included: "Help!" (Lennon/McCartney, 1965), "You Light Up My Life" (Brooks, 1976), and "You Make Me Believe in Magic" (Len Boone, 1977). I'm sure the musically inclined volunteers among you can find others.

Media build-up might have started months ago, but intensifies now. First, you should do your best to orient the media; coverage on radio, TV, and newspapers should inspire people to volunteer. You should be prepared to protest against non-prime time, the back pages, or the women's section. Almost half the volunteers in our country are men, and about a quarter of the people in your community are self-identified volunteers, so you are entitled to prime time and banner headlines.

Coverage should be broad-based, including: editorials (perhaps including the notion of a volunteer strike); news coverage of Involvement Day preparation and build-up; profiles of individual volunteers and volunteer groups; and talk shows, interviews.

Help-exchange columns in the newspaper or help-exchange marathons on electronic media should also be developed. People call or write in their glad gives and needs; the column or marathon gives them a chance to link the two with other matching needs and glad gives (see Chapter 12). There is precedent for the process both in newspapers and electronic media, but there is also a caution: the people who network in this way usually will not know each other face-to-face beforehand. There should be some warning about occasional jokers or ripoffs.

Some samples of media coverage in Glens Falls, reprinted with permission, follow:

### A Day To Get Involved

5/13/78

An elderly woman will sip some tea with her tour of the Hyde Collection.

A bed-ridden cancer patient will enjoy new bed socks and mittens.

Haviland's Cove and the playground at Monument Square Child Care center will be spruced up.

And two dozen Glens Fall City Hall employees will trade shirts and ties for painting duds as they brush a new coat of color on an elderly resident's Gage Avenue home.

Today is "Involvement Day" in Glens Falls, and hundreds of area residents will emulate the spirit of the day.

Dozens of community projects are planned. In many other endeavors of a smaller scale, yards will be cleaned, windows washed, meals served and smiles dispensed.

It's a day when area residents — not ordinarily involved in volunteer service — can become involved, say Involvement Day's co-sponsors, the Voluntary Action Center and the Glens Falls Council of Churches.

A brief summary of some of today's larger projects:

—At the Wilton Developmental Center, volunteers are planning a day of recreational activities and a Dixieland band performance from 2:30 p.m. to

3:15 p.m.; a hot air balloon flight at 9 a.m. and an exhibition of remote controlled airplanes in the afternoon.

—Armed with rakes and shovels, seven youths from the state Division for Youth group home will clean up Haviland's Cove.

—A bloodmobile will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Church of the Messiah Parish House.

—While its playground is remodeled, Monument Square Child Care Center will offer babysitting services to parents busy with Involvement Day activities. The children will clean up the Monument Square block and will participate in supervised activities. The Lower Adirondack Regional Arts Council will present an arts and crafts program from 1 to 3 p.m.

—Liberty House residents will donate baby clothes to new parents with few baby clothes of their own and bed socks and mittens to bed-ridden cancer patients.

The day's activities will conclude with a festival in Crandall Park from 4 to 6 p.m. and a dance at the Mohican Grange, The Oneida, from 8 p.m. to midnight.

The Harrisena Youth Fellowship is sponsoring the dance for anyone 12 years of age and older, especially those who participated in Involvement Day. Admission is free but the group is asking that each person donate a can of food which, in turn, will be given to Lakeview Home for Adults on Lockhart Mountain.

### *Editorials* **Involvement Day Should Continue**

5/21/78

A popular phrase in today's busy world is "I didn't want to get involved." That is followed closely by "I don't have time," or its partner, "I'm too busy."

Citizens of the area are going to have an excellent opportunity to "get involved," no matter how busy they are, when Involvement Day is held on May 13.

Involvement Day offers an opportunity to every individual, family and group in the area to take part in a massive community effort to help one another.

Everyone can take part, no special talent is needed, but if you have a special talent — painter, carpenter, etc. — it can be used. So can such wonderful talents as flying a kite with a retarded child at Wilton's Developmental Center, reading a book to a blind nursing home patient or raking the lawn for your folks.

Involvement Day is being sponsored by the Voluntary Action Center and the Glens Falls Council of Churches, and it is a wonderful idea.

We hope this idea grows and everyone in the area takes part in some way.

There is a certain feeling that one gets from inner satisfaction and taking part in one or more of the programs offered should generate that feeling in abundance.

We think Involvement Day should be celebrated as many times as possible during the year. While it will be easier with an organized program, couldn't we find little ways to get involved at other times?

Neighbors cooking and baking for sick or elderly, visiting someone who needs cheering up, taking part in any one of the worthwhile programs offered in our area would make us all better for having been involved.

We live in a marvelous part of the world, free from so many of the problems that plague much of the world. Let's get involved and keep it that way.

## A Step Backward

5/19/78

Perhaps one of the first steps to getting the public "involved," was Involvement Day, which was so successful.

The entire community seemed to get caught up in the idea and took part in some event of the day.

People of the community getting involved can only lead to a stronger and better community. We don't need government to do everything for us, let's do something ourselves, and that was the success of Involvement Day.

There was no need for such a "day" a few years ago. People were involved, with their neighbors and community. When someone in the neighborhood needed help, it was provided. When the community needed something, it got done.

Now, we expect more government to solve all of these problems, then complain about the growth of bureaucracy and the increase in taxes.

Involvement Day was a giant step backwards, back to the days when neighbors helped and cared.

That house that got repainted didn't get a coat of red tape from a government agency, but a coat of paint from members of government with brushes.

Let's not let Involvement Day be only once a year, let's stay involved and remain interested in our community and our neighbors. It's part of our "roots" we should get back to more often.

## VII. THE DAY ITSELF

[Assuming a number of communities are involved in a single state.]

### About 8:00 a.m.

1. Message from the President of the United States.
2. Message from other national figures (entertainment, arts, etc.)
3. Message from the Governor of the state.
4. Announcer explains the day, if the Governor has not, with some overview of the human and dollar value of volunteers.

### Cut to local TV media about 8:30 a.m.

(One hopes there will also be coverage of an actual kickoff community meeting, and/or neighborhood meetings well attended.)

1. Mayor or City Manager sets the stage locally, as President and Governor did nationally and statewide.
2. Announcer lays it out locally as did statewide announcer.
3. "Recognition recruiting" media presentation locally. The message is: everyone can be a volunteer; in fact, just about everybody is.
4. Visuals or at least word pictures of what group volunteer project sites look like **before** volunteers get to work. These projects are designed to show quick visible results during the day and are relatively easy to get involved in. (Media spot coverage continues throughout the day, showing progress on projects, interviews of volunteers, etc.)

## The Day's Activities

1. Helping networks reach peak activity.
2. "What a difference a day makes" volunteers begin day-long work on special one-day projects.
3. "Project Buttonhole." Organizational volunteers walk the streets of the town, perhaps their own neighborhoods, with a supply of "I help too" or "I'm a (name of town) good neighbor too" badges, balloons, or some such recognition item. Tactfully, and concentrating on their friends or own neighborhood first when possible, they might "buttonhole" people and use recognition recruiting principles to convince these people that: "you're really a volunteer, too, even if you never really thought of it in that way before." Project Buttonhole volunteers could conduct the recognition recruiting survey in several ways. One way would work from an extensive, varied list of time-limited informal examples of volunteer involvement, based on Chapters 8 and 12, or the slide show described earlier in this chapter (giving a stranger directions on the street, holding a room or elevator door open for someone who is behind you, etc.). This list, or a sample from it, could then be presented to the interviewee, orally or in writing. The question is: "Have you ever done any of these things or anything like them?" An alternative or additional question might be: "How recently have you done any of these things or anything like them?" I find it hard to believe that many people will say "no" to the entire list plus other ideas the list will generate. When interviewees say "yes" to this first list, Project Buttonhole volunteers should then give them a chance to proudly add any of their more formal time-extended volunteer involvements.

Naturally, all participants in one-day projects and networks will also get badges. Hopefully, the individual badges (or caps, scarves, armbands, balloons — you can be creative here) will collectively have a visual impact as progressively more people acquire them during the day. What is the color of participation, anyhow? Suppose you decide it's green; you can talk about the greening of Peoria as more and more people materialize in green caps or balloons there during the day. Or if your color theme is gold, take a leaf from Florida's volunteer motto and "let the sun shine in," say, in Minneapolis.

There are all sorts of other visual effects possible. If your project buttonhole recognition item is a balloon, set a time near the end of the day for all the balloons to go up together. I insist that kids who break their balloons can volunteer again and get another.

An idea I stole somewhere in the vicinity of Jacksonville, Florida, is to have all volunteers (former and newly identified) join hands and form a circle around the neighborhood or town, the city, or even the county, if it's not too large and rural. There are usually enough helping people to stretch that far. This circle of caring might also be a culminating event near the end of the day. If the program ends after dark, there could be candles, matches, torches. Let the kids stay up.

4. Throughout the day, mobile radio and TV units cover the resource exchange networking, the visual impact as work projects proceed, project buttonhole progress, and interviews with volunteers on the streets, in their homes, in the jails, wherever they are.

## About 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Wrap-up on media, possibly also including coverage of the end-of-day community meeting or block meetings in neighborhoods. Glens Falls called this a "Festival." The same people as in the morning are involved, now stressing the before-and-after impact at special volunteer project sites, the increasing number of "discovered" volunteers, etc. The end of the day also includes a strong appeal to local people to move on to more intensive continuous volunteer involvement in either neighborhood or community. The end-of-day meeting should include less speech making from the top down, and more

participation by the volunteers of the day, especially the people who have newly discovered that they are volunteers, good neighbors, or whatever name is used.

The transition from "What a Difference a Day Makes" to "Let's Have 364 More" should be stressed. Ongoing volunteer opportunities should be presented in as wide and attractive a range as possible. Commitments should be asked for and made to continue the helping networks and projects. Maybe you could also leave a final tangible witness to the day by renaming some local public land as "Volunteer park" (plant flowers). They did this in Honolulu a couple of years ago.

**About 8:00 or 8:30 p.m. — statewide and possibly national wrap-up**  
(Catch the President and her family in Honokaa, perhaps.)

Statewide and perhaps national media will have been panning back and forth across the state during the day. If there is any "judging" within and between communities, it should occur here. Any awards should be as positive, widespread, and encouraging as possible. The main point is: **everybody** won.

See you there! I'll be with the volunteer group demonstrating a variety of low-cost solar collectors. I'll be closely trailed by an Involvement Day-recruited glad giver trying to help me stop smoking. Her vigorous argument will be that smoke blocks the sun's rays. My decisive counter-claim will be that more solar collectors would reduce collective smoke enough to make individual fumes affordable.

We'll both be holding green balloons.

