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UNTAPPED DAYTIME VOLUNTEERS

PREMISE: Sources of volunteers are not "drying up" and the influx of women into the salaried workforce does not mean that voluntary organizations are doomed! Perhaps we have all been too complacent in taking traditional sources of volunteers for granted. Do we really reach out to recruit all available people? Not yet.

FACT: In every community—urban, rural, or in-between—there are many employed people who do not work a 9 to 5, weekday schedule. Such workers are largely untouched by volunteer recruitment efforts... so far.

CONSIDER: "Normal" working hours is a relative term. Think about all workers who are employed as follows:

1. Shift work: recognize that there are often 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. shifts, whereby people could volunteer between 3:30 and 5:00 at least; and there are 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. shifts, leaving people free for most of the morning and early afternoon. Even the 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. shift workers do not run home to sleep immediately after work.
2. Evening workers: many types of businesses operate only in the evening. Such employees may sleep late in the morning, but would be available to volunteer mid-day.
3. Weekend workers: note that these are day workers who are required to work over the weekend and therefore have one or more weekdays completely free.
4. Odd shifts: some employed people work on changing, inconsistent, or temporary shifts. Such unusual schedules may not permit acceptance of an ongoing volunteer assignment, but may be adaptable to project-oriented or results-oriented assignments.

OUTREACH: There is nothing mysterious about how to recruit the people just identified. All the regular techniques of volunteer recruitment apply, except that it requires genuine outreach to spread the word that these individuals are being sought:

1. Go to the potential volunteers, even if it means recruiting in the evening or on weekends.
2. Target recruitment materials to each particular audience.
3. Select sources in close geographic proximity to your agency so that people can "piggyback" volunteering onto their regular commuting to work.

PLUS: There still are some homemakers, students and retired people who have not yet been recruited as volunteers...at least a few here and there, don't you think?!