ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

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THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

AVA
ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

The mission of the Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA), an international membership organization, is to promote professionalism and strengthen leadership in volunteerism. Members include volunteer program administrators in a wide variety of settings: agency executives, association officers, educators, researchers, consultants, students—anyone who shares a commitment to the effective utilization of volunteers.

Membership in AVA is open to salaried and non-salaried persons in all types of public, non-profit, and for-profit settings who choose to join with AVA to promote and support effective leadership in volunteerism.

AVA is an association run by its members. Active committees include: Public Information, Professional Development, Resource Development, Pluralism, Marketing, and Public Issues. Members also plan the annual International Conference on Volunteer Administration, a major event held each year in a different city in the United States or Canada. This conference provides participants the opportunity to share common concerns and to focus on issues of importance to volunteerism.

Two major services that AVA provides, both for its members and for the field at large, are the Certification Program and the Educational Endorsement Program. Through the certification process, that recognizes leaders of volunteer programs who demonstrate professional performance standards, AVA furthers respect for and appreciation of the profession of volunteer administration. Similarly, AVA educational endorsement is given to those workshops, courses, conferences, and training events that provide opportunities for professional growth in volunteerism.

Finally, AVA produces publications including informational newsletters and booklets and THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION.

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Editor's Note

In 1967, after 25 years working in the field of volunteerism, Harriet Naylor wrote *Volunteers Today: Finding, Training and Working With Them.* Her book "pleads for consideration of volunteers as persons [and] describes some conditions which could increase their effectiveness and the satisfaction they and others receive because of their service." She also championed what she then called "a relatively recent development in the field of voluntarism ... the concept of the administration of volunteers and service programs as an emerging profession, not a part-time peripheral activity."

In 1981, the Association for Volunteer Administration established the Harriet Naylor Distinguished Member Service Award to honor the life and work of this thoughtful and dynamic woman who influenced so many and strongly supported AVA. Honorees have included Marion Jeffery, Carol G. Moore, Marlene Wilson, Eva Schindler Rainman, Ivan Scheier, Harriet H. Naylor, Sarah Jane Rehnborg, Sue Vineyard, Joanne Holbrook Patton, Winifred Brown, Susan J. Ellis, Christine G. Franklin, Nancy Jane Barker, Laura Lee Geraghty, Caroline W. Todd, Billie Ann Myers, and Katherine Campbell. At the 1997 International Conference on Volunteer Administration held in Norfolk, Virginia, the award was given to **Jane Leighty Justis**, a foundation executive and trustee from Colorado who has more than 25 years experience in the field of volunteer management.

The award for Volunteer Administrator of the Year was given to **Nancy J. McLeod**, Acting Director of the Office of Community Relations and Multicultural Affairs in the Phoenix, Arizona, City Manager's Office and Municipal Volunteer Program Director. Criteria for the award include service as a mentor for new volunteer administrators; demonstration of a commitment to the core ethical values of AVA; promotion of volunteerism with his/her organization and/or within the community while managing an effective volunteer program; engagement of volunteers in an extraordinary way to improve the community; and demonstration of competency in volunteer administration.

A third award, the Organizational Award, went to **Adopt-A-Nursing Home** of the Texas Department of Human Services in Austin. The organization is an outstanding example of one that promotes volunteerism, provides service through a unique model and makes a substantial impact on the community—the state of Texas. Initiated in 1993, the program fosters community involvement through volunteer service to overcome severe isolation and enrich the quality of life of residents in long-term care facilities.

The annual International Conference on Volunteer Administration is always a stimulating event filled with workshops, panel discussions, plans for the future, and chance encounters that feed the intellect and the spirit. As is our custom, this issue is devoted entirely to the thoughts and ideas shared in Norfolk. As in the past, I have had the help and support of senior advisor Susan Ellis in producing this ICVA-related issue. My thanks to her and to the many who contributed articles. Those we could not fit into this issue will appear in subsequent ones.

Mark your calendars! The 1998 conference will take place in Dallas, Texas, from October 21-24. See the back cover of this issue for details.

Marjorie M. (Mitzi) Bhavnani
Editor-in-Chief
E-mail address: AVAJournal@aol.com

1997 Harriet Naylor Distinguished Member Service Award Introduction

After spending many years as a volunteer coordinator for Young Life International and as a trainer and author in the field of volunteer management, Jane Justis became the executive director and a trustee of her own family's newly formed foundation, the Leighty Foundation. A small, family-run foundation, the Leighty Foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals, but instead identifies the issues and causes it wants to fund. Jane Justis is every volunteer manager's dream: a foundation executive and trustee who not only understands professionalism in volunteer management, but believes in it deeply and looks for opportunities to provide funding to support her beliefs.

Jane and the foundation have provided AVA with three separate grants: one to underwrite AVA's marketing retreat in 1993; another to underwrite AVA's Certification Revision Task Force in 1995; and a third to underwrite the AVA Region 12 Conference in 1994. This funding was provided because Jane, as a longtime AVA member, understands and believes in AVA's mission. Formerly a member of the AVA board, Jane is an ardent supporter of professional development for volunteer administrators.

But even beyond the financial support she has provided AVA, she is taking her fervent belief in professionalism in volunteer management into the foundation community where it is sorely needed. Jane now has the opportunity to communicate with other foundation staff and trustees about the critical need to support volunteerism and the profession of volunteer administration with funding. As a funder she has participated in panels locally in her community and has been active in the Council on Foundations' national meetings and other funder organizations.

Jane is the author of *We Can't Go On Meeting Like This* and has been a regular presenter at Marlene Wilson's Volunteer Management Program in Boulder. She has presented frequently at AVA conferences and is an active volunteer in her own community of Colorado Springs. She is on the advisory committee to the Colorado Governor's Commission on National and Community Service and serves on the steering committee to develop a volunteer center for the city of Colorado Springs.

Jane Justis is deserving of the Harriet Naylor Distinguished Member Service Award for her longtime active support of AVA in so many different ways and her commitment and contribution to the field of volunteerism through the active role she plays as a funder and an ambassador for all of us in AVA.

AVA Awards Committee: Pam Sebern, Chair
Valerie Cooper, Sandy DeMarco, Anita Jones, Kathleen McCleskey

1997 Harriet Naylor Distinguished Member Service Award Acceptance Speech

Jane Leighty Justis

We all know that awards are never won by a single person. One of my favorite stories is about Sol Tax, a professor of anthropology at the University of Chicago, and his little granddaughter. Sol used to love to carry her around on his shoulders. One day, while they were attending a parade, Sol perched his granddaughter upon his shoulders so she could see all the activity. He met a friend of theirs who had not seen Sol's granddaughter for quite a while. The man looked up at her, high on her grandfather's shoulders, and said, "My, how you've grown!" The little girl looked down at him and said very seriously, "Well, you know, not all of this is me." What a great metaphor for each of us and for the field as well.

There are so many on whose shoulders I've stood. Receiving this award has given me a wonderful opportunity to pause a bit and say a little prayer of thanksgiving for each one. I want to mention two of those people who are here tonight.

I'll start with the one who has known me the longest. In fact, he was around at my conception. Since I can remember, my Dad has been in the front row of the balcony cheering me on. Tonight there's no balcony, but he's sitting in the front row, and I appreciate his coming all the way from Iowa to be here. Thanks, Dad!

And then there's the remarkable woman who invited me to attend the volunteerism parade and to sit on her shoulders so I could see better. Marlene Wilson introduced me to the field, shared her vision with me, and has been a mentor and dear friend for the last 20 years. Many of us here tonight have joined the parade or remained a part of it because of her. Marlene, your biggest recruitment success story may be seen in the many gathered in this room. Thank you from all of us.

I want to thank AVA as well. This is a field full of heroines and heroes, people I want to be just like some day, people like "Hat" Naylor. AVA has afforded me the opportunity to meet these folks and work in leadership positions with them. What a wonderful privilege this has been.

We've all been carried on the shoulders of others. I encourage you to take a little time in the next few days to reflect on who those people are in your life. Some of them may even be at this conference. Take a minute to tell them "thanks."

Choosing a few words to say to you tonight has provided me with quite a challenge. Your knowledge and experience in the field of volunteer management is vast. So perhaps what I best have to offer are a few thoughts from my perspective as a funder who is still very committed to volunteerism.

In the winter 1997 issue of the magazine *Philanthropy*, the publisher's note begins with these words: "America is about to enter a golden age of philanthropy. In virtually all respects, giving by Americans, individually and institutionally, is poised to grow at an astounding rate. The question is no longer whether this will happen, but how rapidly, to what level, and to what end." He goes on to say that "foundation assets are expected to double in the next decade. Adding to this

will be the largest intergenerational wealth transfer in history."

Estimates of this transfer of wealth run anywhere from $8-$12 trillion in the next 20 years or so. Financial resources—in this country at least—will grow. That's the good news. But we all know that the needs and the problems we face will continue to grow as well. I'm concerned about how much of these resources will go toward building and maintaining the critical volunteer management infrastructures in the organizations working to meet these dramatic needs.

In my experience as a grantmaker I have become increasingly aware that few foundations have an understanding—let alone a vision—for the critical role that effective volunteer management plays in an organization's ability to accomplish its mission. These same foundations would not consider funding an organization that didn't utilize its financial resources well, and yet they do not realize the tremendous significance of how that organization utilizes its volunteer resources. In light of this, I want to pose three questions for you to consider.

First, why do we as a field seem to be wrestling with the same issues and asking the same questions year after year? At each AVA conference I hear the same discussions about insecure jobs and dwindling budgets at a time when your skills have never been more needed. Someone once said, "Experience is a funny thing. After working 10 years, some people have 10 years of experience. Others have one year of experience 10 times." What is it we still are not learning after all our years of experience?

Second, why isn't there more awareness and understanding of the field of volunteer administration after so many years of singing our song? The general public—including funders—still doesn't really know who you are or what you do.

In a *Chronicle of Philanthropy* article, I recently read the following: "Volunteerism won't have an impact on social problems without coordination. We have to increase the capacity of agencies to utilize volunteers well. Volunteers don't magically recruit, place, manage, and reward themselves." You need to share this message with funders and then offer to equip them with the tools to evaluate the effectiveness of volunteer programs run by those to whom they award their grants.

And third, where are the funders at this conference? They will not invite themselves nor do they even perceive a reason to be here. We must make it a priority to personally invite them, show them why it's important for them to understand what you do. Let's create forums here for funders to learn from each other and from you, and for you to learn from them. It is time for these dialogues to be happening at conferences like this one.

But this conference is just one platform for educating funders as well as ourselves. Many others have yet to be created. Betty Stallings and I have begun to look closely at this issue from both the funder and seeker side of the table. We've placed a survey in your packets that will help us gather important information from you. We urge you to complete it, and we look forward to exploring this topic more.... However, Betty and I, and a handful of others, will have relatively small impact alone. You are the ones with the greatest potential to be the ambassadors and educators. **[Editor's Note: The questionnaire has been printed on page 6. It can be filled out and returned to Jane Justis.]**

I have shared three hard questions with you. I also share with you my deep conviction about the critical nature of the work you do. You, individually and collectively, must be at the table as resources are being allocated over the next few years. The stakes are high and I urge you to make this one of your top priorities. I assure you it will continue to be one of mine. We owe that effort to ourselves, to our field, and to those who stand on our shoulders.

Do You Want To See Increased Financial Support to Volunteer Programs?

Yes!☐ No ☐

If you answered yes, please keep reading...

Glad we got your attention. Now we ask you to invest a few minutes to assist us in our quest to improve giving to volunteer programs from foundations. Our combined experience includes training in fund raising and volunteer management and grant-making with a family foundation. In our work we have jointly begun to see tremendous potential for increased foundation funding. Never has the time been better, but our field has not previously launched a conscious effort to do the following:

1) provide education and criteria to funders to assist them in evaluating the impact of a well-led volunteer program; and
2) become more proficient ourselves in approaching and selling our "case" to foundations.

Our first step in this endeavor is to survey you, the leaders of volunteer programs, to learn about your experience in seeking funds from foundations to support your volunteer program. Simultaneously we are seeking information from foundations regarding their history, philosophy, and giving patterns to volunteer programs.

Armed with this data we feel our follow-up steps of education, materials development, and workshops will proceed with increased credibility and momentum and ultimately will pay off with additional funding to your programs.

Please return this survey to Jane Leighty Justis, P.O. Box 37, Cascade, Colorado 80909 (even if you have had no interaction with foundations). Many thanks.

Betty Stallings
Trainer and Author

Jane Leighty Justis, Trainer,
Director, The Leighty Foundation

We would appreciate your name and address so that we can reach you should a follow-up be necessary.

Name_____ Position _____

Organization _____

Address_____ Phone _____

_____ Fax _____

_____ E-mail _____

Foundation Support Survey

1. Are you responsible for funding all/part of the volunteer program?
   Yes ☐ No ☐
2. What are the major sources of funding for your volunteer program?

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Have you attempted to gain financial resources from foundations to support any aspect of your volunteer program? Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Were your proposals successful in securing funds? Yes ☐ No ☐
5. If yes, what was (were) the name(s) of the foundation(s), approximate amount and purpose of the grant(s), and number of years funded?

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. Who initiated foundation contacts?

   _____

   _____

7. Were you involved in creating the proposal? Yes ☐ No ☐
   Were you involved in meeting with foundation personnel? Yes ☐ No ☐
8. Have you discovered any foundations that have effective criteria for assessing their grantees' volunteer programs? Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, explain.

   _____

   _____

   _____

9. What barriers and/or challenges (internal/external) do you face as you attempt to access funds from foundations (e.g., fund raising is not in your job description, volunteer program is low priority relative to other agency needs for financial resources, no contacts with foundations, no grant writing experience, etc.)?

   _____

   _____

   _____

10. Additional comments, thoughts, insights, successes, etc.

    _____

    _____

    _____

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to share the experience of attending an AVA conference with those who may be considering going for the first time and give those who attended the opportunity to compare and contrast their own experience with that of the author. The article outlines conference highlights, offers suggestions to first-time conference attendees, and suggests possible considerations for future conferences to those responsible for planning them.

A First-Timer's Impressions of an AVA Conference

Linda K. Bailey

When I told several co-workers that I was attending my very first conference—the 1997 AVA International Conference on Volunteer Administration in Norfolk, Virginia—I frequently was met with knowing winks, hearty chuckles, and facetious instructions to "enjoy the conference!" Few who heard my bubbly travel announcement seemed to think I was going for any practical purpose whatsoever.

As a first-time AVA conference participant I am pleased to report that "Celebrate the Magic" was an extraordinary learning and networking opportunity. The more than 800 people who attended from all over the United States and the world brought with them unique perspectives from their diverse programs and many geographic locations. The vast majority were female. Perhaps in the future we will achieve a more equitable gender distribution and greater variety of ethnic backgrounds in our field.

"Celebrate the Magic" was an inspiring conference experience from beginning to end. These are some of the delightful discoveries I made.

- The educational opportunity was enriching. A most impressive selection of pre-conference sessions, consultations, and workshops were offered. Choosing among them was quite difficult. I had the silly urge to "class crash," popping in and out of various sessions in an effort to take in everything. So much can be learned from the experience of others in the field. Whether you interact with veteran volunteer administrators or with those, like myself, who have newly entered the field, it is advantageous to tap into the wealth of knowledge and ideas to take back to the office. Volunteer administration is unique in its many facets. This conference touched on so many of them. There were workshops dealing with the most basic aspects of volunteer management as well as ones on media relations, ethics, and the perspectives of our international colleagues.
- The sense of excitement was infectious. All around me were fellow volunteer administrators bustling eagerly to their workshops, actively participating and sharing, and chatting noisily at the "hot

Linda Bailey is new to the field of volunteer administration having obtained the position of police volunteer coordinator at the Police Department in Mesa, Arizona, in July 1997. She currently manages 110 volunteers in a growing program. She is the chairperson for the Arizona Justice Network, a network of volunteer administrators in the criminal justice field. She has been with the Mesa Police Department for more than 12 years, previously in charge of recruiting and advertising for both sworn and civilian positions.

topic" lunches. I felt comfortably at ease among them, a member of something timely and noble. Networking opportunities abounded. In every workshop, fellow participants were quick to introduce themselves and engage each other in discussion. I fell happily into conversation in the lunch lines with other conference attendees whom I had not met previously, all of us infused with the enthusiasm that stems from sharing a profession about which we are passionate.

- The vendor displays of related products, books, and other materials for sale attracted my interest. I discovered new volunteer recognition ideas to think about. A stimulating range of topics was available among the book titles. Whether in need of information on how to get a volunteer program up and running or self-management, the choices got my mental juices flowing.
- The AVA board chose an outstanding location. The Norfolk Waterside Marriott Hotel and Convention Center provided a lovely, accommodating environment. Its staff was gracious, each floor beautifully appointed, and the conference rooms easy to locate. It was a pleasure to walk from workshop to workshop, to see the gorgeous china displays, floral arrangements, and baby grand pianos on each floor. Especially enjoyable was the second floor lounge with piano music and a crackling fire.
- In addition to the learning experience, the AVA Conference Planning Committee guarantees you an exciting time. Entertainment galore was available to conference participants. Besides two celebrity speakers—the actress Alfre Woodard and the author Robert Fulghum—and the President's Open House at the national maritime center, Nauticus, tours of Colonial Williamsburg and Virginia Beach were offered. So were two harbor excursions, both offering a sail and dinner.

Was the conference worth the time and money invested? By all means, yes. I returned to my workplace armed with so much more than when I had left it. I am bursting with ideas I am eager to put into practice in my volunteer program. I formed relationships with colleagues across the country, acquired resources and information that could never have been gathered so quickly in any other way. I returned with a new-found sense of purpose in my work and the vital affirmation that volunteerism is truly making a difference throughout the world.

Of course, when I next attend an AVA conference, I will be an experienced conference veteran. So I would like to pass along to other first-timers the following suggestions that may help to increase the benefit of attending.

- If your schedule and budget allow, arrive the day before your workshops or pre-conference sessions begin. This will let you relax and explore the environment you will be living in for the next few days. Comfort stems from a sense of familiarity with your surroundings. Giving yourself ample opportunity to settle in will provide that. Take a moment to scope out the conference site, the proximity of restaurants and other amenities, and get a feel for how much time you must allow to get from your hotel room to the sessions you plan to attend. With a full night's sleep before the conference begins, you will be refreshed and ready to learn.
- Speak to those around you. Most volunteer administrators are in a rather isolated position in their workplaces; often we are the only ones holding that position in our organizations. Your conference colleagues can be a source of support, education, and inspiration. Who better understands the delicate tightrope you walk between the volunteers and your staff than someone who navigates the same tightrope. This is your opportunity to form relationships that will give you wonderful resources

for new ideas, fresh approaches, and commiseration when needed. Be sure to maintain them after the conference. Write or phone and include these new friends on your holiday card list. Share your own materials and ideas with them. A volunteer newsletter exchange between your program and those of your colleagues is an excellent way of staying in touch and on top of trends. Invite your new contacts to guest-author an article in a future issue of your newsletter. Be sure to bring a substantial supply of your business cards to distribute.

- Actively participate in the workshops. You need not have years of experience under your belt to have valuable information to share with others. Sometimes the most effective method of learning is telling the story of something that did not work. All of us have encountered "speed bumps" along the road to success. Educating others about a lesson learned the hard way is one method of avoiding the same pitfall. You can share your triumphs as well—big or little. Ideas generate ideas. Do not hesitate to ask questions in workshops. They allow the presenter to zero in specifically on what you need to know and give you more precisely what you sought.
- Seek out conference participants working in the same area of volunteerism as you are. Whether you are in a grassroots organization, a church, the health sector, law enforcement, the environment, or a cultural institution, establishing relationships with others in your line of work will afford the opportunity to form a network specific to your needs. You may wish to develop an interest group for those in your field. These colleagues are facing the same special issues you are and can best appreciate the idiosyncrasies of your field. Some of the most useful new concepts you gain will be from these people. Perhaps you can investigate establishing a regional conference of volunteer administrators in your geographic location.

Attending the conference for the first time brought to mind some ideas that may prove helpful to those planning future events. I include them here.

I stayed at the Omni Waterfront Hotel in Norfolk, the "sister hotel" offering accommodations for conference attendees. It would be helpful to have a conference representative on hand in the lobbies of all the hotels that participate in the conference. The representative should be present during the days and evenings preceding the pre-conference sessions and during the conference to welcome attendees and direct them to the location of the conference check-in. S/he can also provide precise directions to the conference site, along with information about nearby restaurants and other amenities, and answer general questions regarding the conference and related events.

I know that many volunteer administrators would probably wish for greater emphasis on their sector, but I hope the ICVA increases the number of workshops pertaining specifically to volunteerism in city and county government and law enforcement. I happily attended a pre-conference session and a conference workshop on law enforcement volunteer management, but wanted more in this area, as well as in the area of city and county government volunteer programs. It was by chance that I learned of a lunchtime NACO (National Association of Counties) meeting that covered topics pertinent to city, county, and law enforcement volunteerism. There are approximately 250 law enforcement volunteer programs in place nationwide and only a fraction of them is represented in AVA. Membership in AVA by these organizations would contribute immeasurably to gaining increased professional acceptance for volunteer programs in the law enforcement arena, typically a difficult environment within which to generate

credibility for volunteer programs.

My new conference experience has positively altered my viewpoint on what can be accomplished at such gatherings, furthered my education on volunteer administration, opened my network horizons wide, and given me a whole new set of tools and ideas that will greatly benefit my work. My volunteer program will be revitalized. The five days I spent in Norfolk, immersed in the culture of volunteerism, away from the daily demands of the office, focusing my energy on soaking up all the conference had to offer, renewed my enthusiasm and fired me up for what I do. I am refreshed. The October 1998 AVA International Conference on Volunteer Administration will take place in Dallas, Texas. Although technically I will not be a "first-timer" then, I will approach that conference with the same wide-eyed enthusiasm I felt in Norfolk. I suspect that getting the most out of a conference (as a participant), and putting on the best conference (as a planner), is for each to approach the task from the first-timer's perspective: an entirely new experience in which to make that magic happen.

1997 International Conference on Volunteer Administration

ABSTRACT

In these days of organizational downsizing and reorganization, volunteers are the most overlooked population. Seldom is the impact of this change on volunteers acknowledged and almost never is any planning done to assist them in coping with the organization's transition. This article discusses the particular challenges facing volunteer administrators, the management tasks involved in assisting volunteers to adapt and thrive in a changing environment, and the various strategies used by individuals and organizations to deal with change.

Managing the Impact of Organizational Change on Volunteers

Arlene Grubbs

We know that change is everywhere, but in no area of our lives has it become more visible than in our work lives. Today's organizations seem to be in a frenzy of change: mergers, takeovers, reorganizations, downsizing and re-engineering are more common than stable environments. We are gradually learning the lasting impact such massive changes have on organizations. The focus traditionally has been placed on those personnel in an organization who are left without employment as a result of organizational change. Out-placement firms provide support and assistance to those suddenly finding themselves without work. But it is only in the past few years that literature in the field has begun to address the impact of drastic organizational change on the "survivors."[1]

It is now recognized that any major organizational restructuring must include a plan for helping remaining employees cope with the new environment. Volunteers, however, seem to be off the radar screen when it comes to this type of planning.

THE IMPACT OF CHANGE ON VOLUNTEERS

The first and most obvious truth is that volunteers are part of the organization and experience loss, pain, and displacement just as paid staff do. But volunteers' concerns have a different focus and priority. As unpaid staff, volunteers do not have the need to focus on the issue of current or future paychecks. However, they may feel betrayed and uneasy about whether services will be held to a high standard. In the confusion that follows any major reorganization, volunteers may be lost in the shuffle as other staff scramble to clarify their own roles and responsibilities. If the atmosphere after a restructuring or downsizing is too poisoned, volunteers will exercise their option to move on to work that is more fulfilling and meets their needs.

The relationship between paid staff and volunteers is also at risk during a time of massive organizational change. Volunteers may be viewed by paid staff with suspicion. The old question of whether

Arlene Grubbs has been active in the field of volunteer management for more than 20 years. She was a field mentor for the first trial of AVA's certification program. She is a founding member and past president of her local DOVIA and of the statewide Pennsylvania Association for Volunteerism. For the last 10 years she has been a trainer and consultant on non-profit management issues. She has co-authored a book on volunteer recognition and serves as adjunct faculty at the Institute for Volunteerism of the Community College of Allegheny County. She has been involved as a consultant in the aftermath of many downsizings and her current interests are in the areas of team-building and community development.

volunteers will be asked to take over the work of displaced paid staff will lurk in the background even if not openly expressed. It will be difficult for the volunteer administrator to be helpful to remaining staff if this issue is not put on the table and addressed with dispatch.

Volunteers themselves will be confused about to whom to report and who makes decisions since even surviving paid staff may not be certain about this. In addition, remaining paid staff, who now must take on more work responsibilities, may ask volunteers to pick up inappropriate tasks, tasks for which they are not trained or which demand more than was spelled out in the volunteer's original agreement with the organization. This may well be an invitation to disaster. At the very least it can lead to burn-out and high turnover in the volunteer ranks adding to the mountain of change already occurring in the organization.

An added risk to the volunteer department is that, for better or worse, volunteers often identify closely with certain paid staff with whom they work. If their paid staff partner is one of those leaving the organization because of major change, the volunteer may leave as well. If the paid staff person is a "survivor," s/he may use the volunteer inappropriately as a sounding board for concerns and complaints about the organization. It's difficult for either side to maintain a professional stance when nothing seems to be stable.

Fortunately, there are ways of helping volunteers through times of major organizational change. Effective management during this time means being aware of how major change impacts individuals and departments/programs and what actions are helpful in dealing with the impact of change.

MANAGEMENT TASKS

Individuals and organizations go through definite stages in moving through a time of disruption. There are any number of different models available to describe these transitions. The one we will look at enumerates four stages: resistance, confusion, integration, and commitment.[2] There is some overlap in these stages. At each stage there are specific management tasks and strategies that the volunteer administrator can use to support and guide volunteers through turbulent organizational times. Although the techniques described below apply to managing all staff during times of transition, the nature of the volunteer's relationship with the organization—part-time, unpaid, and voluntary—requires some important changes in emphasis with regard to their implementation.

RESISTANCE

At the onset of any major organizational change people will behave as they do in the early stages of grief. Their feelings will be running high. There will be an undercurrent of disbelief in which rumors find fertile ground. There will be anger and shock. Obviously, it will be important to be available to talk with volunteers individually, to hear them out and to allow them to express their emotions. Unfortunately, one's instinct at this point may be to put a lid on these emotions, to urge people to get on with it. If there are no opportunities for volunteers to express grief, outrage, and concern, these emotional reactions will continue to simmer and prevent volunteers from moving through the change process.

In addition to being available to talk with volunteers one-on-one, the volunteer administrator must set aside specific times for answering questions and giving information. This can be done by holding question-and-answer sessions, by giving volunteers written updates, by installing a "question box" and posting answers on a volunteer bulletin board; in other words, by any and all methods you can think of. Part of this information giving and receiving should be a clarification of volunteer rules and procedures. Some adjustments may need to be made on a temporary basis. These will need to be

communicated often to volunteers. In communicating with volunteers, the emphasis must be to deliver clear, honest answers. Be willing to say if you don't know what is going to happen and try to find answers to the best of your ability.

Finally, a major part of managing this stage is to find ways for volunteers to say good-bye both to the old organization and to those people who are no longer with the new organization. Rituals that focus on what the organization hopes to become and that include an acknowledgment of what it has accomplished can be helpful. Volunteers can recognize and show their appreciation for paid staff who are no longer with the organization by sending cards or hosting an informal farewell gathering if this seems appropriate. If the resistance stage of change is not appropriately managed, it will impact strongly on the volunteers' ability to get through the next stage.

CONFUSION

As volunteers become less emotional about the changes in the organization, they begin to hunger for some clarity about what is going to happen. They are searching for credibility and a toehold from which to understand their role in a newly structured organization. It is easy to see how failure to deal with anger, loss, and shock early on will make it more difficult to help volunteers find the vision they need to continue their work. The most difficult task for the volunteer administrator at this point is to help volunteers live with ambiguity. The broad outlines of the newly structured organization may be visible, but the finer details have yet to emerge from the planning paper. Living with ambiguity is never easy and it is frustrating to have things changing from day to day. The volunteer administrator needs to provide answers that clarify insofar as possible. As a colleague of mine says, people at this point in the change process become "information junkies." As volunteer administrator you cannot communicate with your volunteers often enough.

This time can be a period of burn-out for volunteer administrators. As much as the thought of hiding out in your office may be tempting, this is the time to be visible. Get out to see volunteers in their workplaces. Help them find areas of stability if only in the fact that you are there for them. This is also a way to keep your finger on the pulse of the change. You'll find it has impacted some areas of the organization harder than others. It is not always obvious which areas these will be. Give extra support where needed.

This is the time to be proactive in reaching out to departments where the upheaval has been the greatest. Changes in key players may mean that you have to reintroduce yourself and explain the role volunteers play in the organization. In many departments you may be starting over. For others it will be a welcome relief to find out that volunteers are still willing to assist in the work.

During this stage of confusion the rumor mill is operating at full tilt. Because there may not be many clear answers, any hints about how things will turn out are grasped as the whole truth and enlarged and modified as they spread through the organization. Rumors have the potential to create significant damage and should be dealt with promptly by supplying facts and information. Putting rumors to rest is a constant battle during this stage. It is important that you listen carefully to what volunteers have been hearing and that you provide ample permission and opportunity for them to tell you. Gradually confusion subsides and the organization begins to settle into a new routine.

INTEGRATION

Wouldn't it be nice if you could simply relax now and get back to normal? Unfortunately, the old "normal" is gone. Things will never be quite the same again. In today's atmosphere of constant change, just when we think the world of our organization has settled down, a new change is bound to come along.

The business of integration is to assist volunteers secure their roles in the new environment of your organization. The major task here will be for the volunteer administrator to prioritize the workload. When so many things all need to be done at once, it's hard not to feel overwhelmed. Now is the time to delegate some of your duties to volunteers.

An important task is to continue to keep up the information flow. Although volunteers may be beginning to feel more comfortable with the new structure, one cannot assume they no longer need information about ongoing adjustments and changes. Some of the structures you've put in place to handle communication may be mature enough to hand off to a volunteer.

The integration stage is also a time to work with paid staff to deploy volunteers in the most effective manner. Old volunteer opportunities may no longer be the best use of volunteer time and skills and will need to be revised. The redesign of volunteer assignments to meet the needs of the new organizational structure is an opportunity to revitalize the partnership between paid staff and volunteer staff. It is a chance for staff, both paid and volunteer, to join together around mutual needs. The volunteers want meaningful work; the paid staff want assistance where it really counts.

Now is also a good time to reconnect volunteers to the mission of the organization. If volunteers lose sight of the organization's mission, they will almost certainly get discouraged and leave. It is important to help volunteers see how the implemented changes will assist the organization in performing its mission better and to underscore the very important role of volunteers in the organization's future.

At this point the organization and the volunteers are ready to move into the fourth stage in managing change, commitment.

COMMITMENT

The commitment stage is identified by the fact that people begin to look to the future. They have a sense of empowerment and a willingness to show how productive they can be. Because all these stages overlap, the tasks of one stage tend to carry over somewhat into the next. Emphasis on mission continues to be an important task in the commitment stage. But this is also the time to encourage suggestions about ways to improve the program. At this point the last thing you probably want to hear are new ideas, but some temporary readjustments that have been made may need a second look. By this time the organization has settled enough that a full re-evaluation of volunteer policies and procedures is called for. One word of caution: With renewed energy there is some danger that volunteers may over-reach, so hold to the course that's been set while being open to new ideas.

Now is the time to celebrate successes and congratulate yourselves for coming through a difficult time. The organization has changed and the volunteer department has changed with it. None of you will ever work in the same way again.

As mentioned above, it's important to remember that although we have identified four stages in the change process, they are not discrete. One stage flows into another almost imperceptibly. In addition, organizations, departments, and people move through these stages at different rates. Senior administrative staff who have been planning major organizational change for months may well be ready to get on with it when the rest of the organization is still in the resistance stage. Different departments or programs will have their own timelines for adjusting to organizational changes depending on the leadership of the department/program, the personalities of the individuals within the department, and the coping style of the department itself. All of this will affect your volunteers.

THERE'S MORE!

In case you are in any doubt that

change is a messy, complex process, think about this: Complicating the picture is the fact that organizations, departments/programs, and individuals have their own styles for dealing with change and the stages described above.

In general we can identify three styles for coping with change: The change resister, the change adapter, and the change seeker. None of these styles is necessarily right or wrong. Each one has its advantages and disadvantages. The point to remember is that these coping styles will impact on how quickly or slowly individuals and departments/programs move through the change process. Figure 1 summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of each style and suggests some management techniques for interacting with each style.

It is important to understand how you and the volunteers deal with change. In addition, a volunteer administrator should learn how to be flexible and adapt appropriate coping styles in response to organizational change. There are times when change must be resisted, times when it must be sought, and times to adapt. Major organizational changes can force all of us—volunteers and volunteer administrators—to explore other ways of relating to change. Knowing your own coping style can be an enormous help in thinking through what challenges you will face in managing volunteers during a time of major organizational change.

THE BIG QUESTION

What if the volunteer department is being downsized or re-structured? What do you do if it is you who is out-placed? First of all, if you have any advance notice, prepare volunteers as soon as you can for the change. If possible try to have a transition plan in place. Talk to departments/programs that utilize volunteer

	CHANGE RESISTERS Like Control	**CHANGE ADAPTERS Like Comfort**	**CHANGE SEEKERS Like Risk**
Advantages	Cautious	Resilient	High need for challenge
	May see unanticipated problems	Open to possibilities	Risk takers
	May be more open about expressing emotions	Survivors	Action-oriented
Disadvantages	Stubborn—don't want to let go	People pleasers	Impulsive
	Look for drawbacks, problems, and failures in restructured organization	Lack of awareness of personal needs	Too quick to act
	High need for control over events	High need for comfort	Don't take time to process decisions
	Can feel victimized		
Management Tasks	Hear them out	Encourage them to pay attention to their feelings	Provide structured opportunities for them to process decisions/actions
	Seriously consider their struggle with problems about the reconfigured organization	Offer opportunities, encouragement to take reasonable risks	Build in opportunities for them to take on some challenges
	Give them as much control as appropriate and possible	Acknowledge their feelings of discomfort	

Figure 1

Coping Styles in Dealing with Change

time and skills to remind them they will need to be prepared for new ways of managing volunteers. Without a volunteer administrator certain program structures will rapidly disappear, particularly those around communication, record keeping, evaluating, and recognizing. Individual departments will have to pick up these functions if the volunteer program is to survive.

Encourage volunteers to ask for the support they need from the organization and suggest whom they might contact. Volunteers may need to request opportunities to receive feedback about their work. They may need to be more proactive about getting information. Paid staff may need to be reminded that volunteers are not always on site when important organizational announcements are made and thus have no way of staying informed unless someone takes responsibility for keeping them up to date. Volunteers may have to be more supportive of each other in terms of providing day-to-day recognition of work well done.

It is to be hoped that volunteers are attached to the organization and its mission and not to you personally, at least not in a way that would make them say, "If you're leaving, I'm leaving." Flattering as this may be, it indicates a failure on your part to help volunteers connect to what they are really doing. Encourage volunteers to make up their own minds whether to stay or go and remind them of the important work they do for the organization. Good-byes are difficult. Recognize the toll that leaving will take on you. Find support for yourself and be professional in all your communications with volunteers.

CONCLUSION

To say that managing in an organization undergoing major change is difficult is probably the understatement of the century. Change is complex and chaotic in spite of the best planning in the world. Unintended consequences have a way of undermining even the clearest picture of what change will mean to the organization. But somehow organizations get through it. By being more aware of the change process, and its implications for individuals and programs, volunteer administrators can assure that volunteers are not left behind as the organization moves on. The longing for the way it used to be is a natural reaction to change. If the energy from resistance can be appreciated and channeled by appropriate management strategies, the volunteer program will emerge stronger than before. The "good old days" may not even look quite so good now that we've learned how to be even better.

ENDNOTES

[1]For a good discussion of this topic see *Healing the Wounds: Overcoming the Trauma of Layoffs and Revitalizing Downsized Organizations* by David Noer. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 1993.

[2]Material adapted from *Traveling Through White Water—A Manager's Guide for Organizational Change.* Available from KF Enterprises, 666 Dundee Road, Suite 1706, Northbrook, IL 60062. Phone (708) 205-0862.

ABSTRACT

The annual DOVIA Day pre-conference workshop was attended by representatives of more than 20 established or emerging networks of volunteer administrators at local and state levels. The day was organized as a "think tank" on several subjects of vital concern to leaders of DOVIAs (Directors Of Volunteers In Agencies). These included the purpose of a professional society, membership development, and trends in volunteerism to which a DOVIA should respond.

Report on DOVIA Day at the ICVA

A DOVIA AS A PROFESSIONAL SOCIETY

The group first discussed elements of an effective professional society based on their experiences with such associations in other fields. One important point made was that professional societies attract members for whom the profession is a career and identity, not just a "job." At this point in time, many people employed to run a volunteer program have not yet made a commitment to volunteer management as a profession. This is one reason why expanding a DOVIA can be difficult. Adapting the rationales for any professional society—issues applicable to a DOVIA—are that it:

- Does things that support volunteerism in a community that would not be possible to do (easily or at all) by an individual volunteer program on its own.
- Encourages exchange of ideas, skills, techniques among members and thereby raises the competencies of volunteer administration practitioners. In turn, this creates more effective volunteer efforts to help those we serve and volunteers themselves.
- Attracts and facilitates sharing of resources.
- Has an impact on other professions that intersect with our work.

From these goals, it follows that a DOVIA should be selecting projects that have an impact and will result in increased community visibility. This, in turn, will make it easier to attract more members, keep current members active, and gain influence for the organization.

During the course of the workshop, many ideas surfaced. Some were actual projects or activities already being implemented by the DOVIAs in the room. Others were simply creative thoughts that met with positive group response. Everyone wanted to capture and share these ideas with a wider audience and requested the list be submitted to *The Journal of Volunteer Administration* for this purpose. Readers are encouraged to write in and share their own experiences via Letters to the Editor. The following is a presentation of tantalizing potential ways to make a DOVIA more successful.

IDEAS FOR DOVIA PROJECTS TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

- Produce "position papers" on subjects advocating volunteer issues and dis-

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This report was prepared by Susan J. Ellis of Energize, Inc., the facilitator of DOVIA Day 1997.

seminate widely. Examples: volunteers and welfare reform; fact and myth about volunteer risk.

- Fund raise jointly for volunteer enabling funds, transportation pools, and other things needed by many volunteers. Administer the monies for all.
- Develop hour-long "modules" on how to work effectively with volunteers and offer these to as many professional conferences as possible for people in fields who work with volunteers on a day-to-day basis, but probably have little training in how to do it, such as nurses, social workers, teachers, etc.
- "Hire a Pro": Watch the newspaper for any classified ad seeking someone to work with volunteers and send an information packet about the profession of volunteer administration, why it's important to hire someone with skills, and how to find the best candidates.
- Link with Sister Cities International and get to know the volunteers in your city and your international Sister Cities as a new source of volunteers and other resources.
- Form a task force with local labor unions.
- Develop training cooperatives in which several agencies share the work of giving monthly in-service training to all their volunteers together on subjects of mutual interest. Examples: working with teens; issues in health care.
- Coordinate the "sharing" of volunteers with special skills (language, photography) among member agencies.
- Maintain a photo file of volunteers at work that can be shared and used in publicity, especially to respond to requests from the media.
- Hold a seminar for the press and media.
- Network with all-volunteer groups in the community.

IDEAS FOR MAKING A DOVIA MOST USEFUL TO MEMBERS

- Schedule site visit exchanges on a formal basis, enabling members to spend time with one another in their agencies, going through a checklist of questions to facilitate learning.
- Make better use of meetings. For example, select a "topic of the month" and ask every member to bring samples of their efforts on that topic (application forms; orientation formats), with enough copies for everyone.
- Make better use of the membership directory by adding information beyond address and telephone number. Some ideas: details as to what volunteers do in this setting; special skills the member is willing to share with other members; available resources such as meeting space.
- Schedule a 45-minute orientation session before every meeting to mentor newcomers.
- Disseminate information on news and things of interest to volunteer managers.
- For each meeting, identify whether the speaker's subject could be of interest to other professionals and encourage DOVIA members to bring along a colleague from another department in their agencies. For example, a program on screening volunteers could be useful to the agency human resources director. This is a great way to give collegial status to the director of volunteers and, one by one, introduce other agency staff to the scope of volunteerism.
- Create a newsletter or a Website. Recruit two volunteers: one to write the material and the other to find the items to include.
- Reach out to the CVC (Corporate Volunteer Council) and hold periodic joint meetings.
- Form a "book study group." Pick a volunteer management book that everyone commits to reading. Then schedule a time to get together to discuss it. A great idea for interaction on a Website, too.
- Form interest groups and encourage them to meet/exchange materials. Examples: people who work in similar

settings or who are using the same computer volunteer management software.

- Have an "exit interview" with members who do not renew to identify why.
- Instead of a year-long program committee, share responsibility for meetings. Form several short-term groups to each plan one meeting.
- Once a year hold a strategic planning session with an outside facilitator. Post the report on the Website.
- Have an "Honorary Chair" from outside the field attend meetings (or a conference) and present comments from a different perspective.
- Schedule brown bag lunches—rotating locations—at which members have the chance for personal professional development. Sample subjects: asking for a raise; developing a resume.
- Annually invite someone from state government to provide a legislative update.
- For all subjects, consider having a panel of speakers (rather than just one) to assure different perspectives. Have members write questions to speakers on cards.
- Add to the end of any workshop or training opportunity a brief talk on "Demystifying AVA Certification."
- Develop a written "Memorandum of Understanding" between the DOVIA and the local Volunteer Center to clarify what each collaborative partner gives and gets.
- Form a Leadership Development Committee charged with paying attention to rising stars, encouraging new members to be active, tapping experienced members as mentors, etc.
- To do right now: On new member and renewal application forms, add a line for E-mail address (and for fax number, if you don't already). Then ask if the member prefers correspondence by E-mail, fax, or postal mail and start sending it that way.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The group was led through a discussion of the accompanying appendix to show how attracting new DOVIA members is very similar to recruiting volunteers. First it is necessary to analyze and assess current DOVIA practices and then reach out to previously-uninvited audiences.

One problem confronting DOVIAs is the difficulty of finding one another so that leaders can share ideas and questions (and good program topics). Although Ivan Scheier turned over his earlier DOVIA Exchange materials to AVA, until recently there has not been a listing of existing DOVIAs. Energize, Inc. is offering its Website as a place to create a first-ever directory. As of January 1998, more than 45 DOVIAs in 20 states had registered. Readers are urged to go to http://www.energizeinc.com/dovia.html and add your local DOVIA or state association on volunteerism to this growing list. Having the information on the World Wide Web will also help attract new members who may not have been aware of a DOVIA available to them nearby.

Nan Hawthorne, president of the DOVIA of King County in Washington, has just created a special listserv for officers, board members, and other active leaders of local DOVIAs. This is a free and potentially exciting way for more exchange on a continuous basis. To join, send an E-mail to: majordomo@angus.mystery.com. In the body of the message say: subscribe dovia-boards <your email address>.

Finally, everyone affirmed the value of DOVIA Day and urged a repeat of this type of facilitated sharing at next year's conference.

APPENDIX

BROADENING THE MEMBERSHIP BASE OF YOUR DOVIA

1. Analyze your current membership. Who seems to join "naturally"? Who seems hard to attract? Have there been changes in recent years in the profile of newer members? Do people remain members as long as they are in their jobs, or do they join and then drop out?

2. Take a hard look at both the benefits of membership and what you expect members to contribute. Can each be strengthened? Do you state your expectations in membership materials?

3. Why did current members join? Why do you think others have not? Why do members renew? Is it easy to find members willing to take on leadership roles?

4. Expand your vision of potential prospective members:

   - Which organizations in your community have a volunteer component? Think beyond social services and health care!
   - Remember that most people who lead volunteer efforts do so on a PART-TIME basis. What professions are likeliest to have the responsibility for volunteers added to their primary job?
   - Start by making your vocabulary more inclusive: community service, alumni affairs, lay ministry, pro bono publico work, service-learning, etc.
   - What about directors of volunteers in for-profit settings, politically-partisan organizations, or officers of all-volunteer associations? Or volunteers carrying administrative roles in support of directors of volunteers?

5. Once you have a more inclusive list of prospects, brainstorm the potential places to find these candidates.

6. Develop outreach materials that are appropriate for the sources identified.

7. Set a goal and spread the word!

8. Have a plan for welcoming and orienting new prospects/members, including asking them to get involved in a project.

1997 International Conference on Volunteer Administration

ABSTRACT

This article makes the case that carefully designing written volunteer job descriptions is the most important task of the volunteer program manager. Job descriptions are the basis for success in every area of volunteer program administration. A carefully written job description—and the right volunteer placed in the right job—are the keys to avoiding and/or solving many commonly experienced program management problems.

Finding the Right Fit: Creating Successful Volunteer Job Descriptions

Carla Campbell Lehn

WHY HAVE WRITTEN JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS?

The volunteer program and the volunteer program manager are successful when, and only when, the volunteers are successful. Volunteers have the most chance for success when we place them in the right jobs—jobs that are carefully designed to be meaningful and productive, and which match the volunteers' motivations for volunteering.

The job description is the planning tool that helps the volunteer manager be successful. It's the basis for success in every area of volunteer program management. Carefully designed job descriptions (and the careful placement of volunteers in the right jobs) helps avoid and/or solve many commonly faced problems in volunteer administration.

So, if you've been putting off writing or revising job descriptions because it seems like too much work, here are some reasons not to procrastinate any longer.

Job Descriptions Clarify Roles

Roles between and among volunteers and staff are much easier to understand when the relationships between their respective jobs are clear. If you let volunteers (or staff, for that matter) guess what their limits of authority and responsibility are, chances are high they will do something different from what you had in mind. If volunteers understand what the paid and volunteer workers around them do, they're more likely to see the big picture and work within the parameters you set.

Job Descriptions Serve as Your Principal Recruitment and Placement Tools

Once you spend the time to think through the position so you are ready to develop a job description, you have a good idea of what you need: qualifications, duties, and time requirements. When you've carefully considered the requirements of the job, if the right volunteer's name doesn't immediately come to mind, where to look for him or her may. Once you've located a potential volunteer for the position, reviewing the job description together will help the volunteer (and you) make an informed decision about whether this is the right assignment.

Carla Campbell Lehn has more than 20 years experience as a professional volunteer program manager, developing, managing, and consulting on local, state, regional, and national projects. She is currently writing a book of best practices in library volunteer program management on behalf of the California State Library.

Written Job Descriptions Can Help You Take a Marketing Approach to Recruitment

If writing job descriptions for volunteers is one of the most important things we do in a volunteer program, knowing the source of volunteer motivation is equally important to understand.

The volunteer program manager's job is to identify each individual's reasons for volunteering and match him or her to a carefully designed job description that's right for the volunteer, one that will satisfy his or her motivations and help your organization at the same time.

Motivation is not something we do to volunteers, it's something volunteers bring with them. Their motivation is the reason (or reasons) they volunteered. We must understand why people volunteer. Start by thinking about why you volunteer. Some of the most common volunteer motivations include:

- giving back to the community
- feeling needed
- sharing skills/keeping current
- meeting people
- making business contacts
- learning new skills
- keeping busy
- gaining experience/building resumé
- exploring a career
- feeling challenged
- commitment to the cause
- learning about a new community
- gaining status
- boss expects it
- testing new ideas
- because I was asked

The goal is for the relationship to be "mutually satisfying" (Stern, 1994). A mutually satisfying relationship is when something has been exchanged. Selling is when you try to convince potential volunteers to take the job you have available, selling them what you have "on the shelf," whether it's what they came for or not. Marketing, on the other hand, is when you identify the volunteer's reason for being here, and match him or her with a job that meets that need. In other words, you make an exchange, giving something of value for something of value. When the person perceives the return to be of greater value than what was given up—in this case their time—receiving becomes the motivation for giving.

Job Descriptions Help You Design Appropriate Training

Here's a training design formula I'm familiar with and use: A - B = C. A represents what the person in the job needs to know; B what they already know; and C what's missing, or the training needed (Hook, 1971). Through careful job description design, you will know what the job entails (A) and what qualifications people placed in the job must have before you place them in it (B). This will determine the learning objectives (C) for the training you provide them.

Job Descriptions Are the Basis for Supervision

If the volunteer has accepted the assignment based on a written job description, and not just a verbal description, then performance concerns or questions are easier to address. If performance issues arise in the future, you can use the job description to reinforce your original agreement.

Writing volunteer job descriptions is your primary planning and implementation tool. Careful planning occurs through development of well thought out, clearly articulated, and realistic volunteer job descriptions. Knowing what you want volunteers to do will help you communicate your expectations to them.

Without written job descriptions you don't know who will do what to whom by when and for how long. With job descriptions you force yourself (and staff) to really think about where the job fits into the organization's structure, what kind of supervision will be required, and what kind of training is needed. Well- designed assignment descriptions also help you find the right volunteer for the assignment.

HOW TO DESIGN CLEAR, MEANINGFUL VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

To help you learn how to write good volunteer job descriptions, let's review what goes in them and why by reviewing an actual example, a Volunteer Book Mender's job description from a public library in California (see Appendix A). Review it with me now section by section.

Title

Notice the title is not "volunteer." Volunteer is not a job title, but a salary classification, meaning unpaid. A job title describes the responsibility one has. Volunteers deserve a title. Consider a fun title like Volunteer Spinetingler when appropriate, but also give the job a serious title for those who hope to put their volunteer experience on their resumés (for example, Book Repair Technician).

Importance of the Position to the Organization

In this section, we're not describing what the volunteer does, but why the position is important. What purpose is that person fulfilling for the library? Not only do volunteer assignments need to be clearly thought out and articulated, but they must be meaningful. This means the volunteer must be able to see how the work s/he is doing is needed by the organization.

For the Spinetingler job we could have said the purpose is "to clean the grunge off books." But that doesn't sound very meaningful until we talk about why it really makes a difference to the library and its patrons: "To keep the best-loved books available for patron use." Kids who keep checking out *Where the Wild Things Are, Curious George,* and *Alice in Wonderland* will keep the Book Repair Technicians busy!

Qualifications

Define for yourself and for potential volunteers what is needed to do the job successfully: someone with good small motor skills and eyesight, good attention to detail, and a willingness to work in a small group. These are important clues to potential recruits. If working alone quietly is a motivation for volunteering for the library or if the potential volunteer is not detail-oriented, this job probably will not make him or her happy.

Remember, volunteers want to be successful. So giving them a clear understanding of what's needed in the job ahead of time can help them (and you) make the placement decision that will be the best fit. To accomplish this, you must define in advance what's required.

Responsible To

Who's the boss? Who does the volunteer call when s/he is sick? Who does the volunteer talk to if there's a problem or if s/he doesn't understand something? Where does the volunteer "fit" in the organization?

Responsibilities

This section explains what the volunteer will be expected to do, how often, with whom, etc. Some think this section completes a job description, but it doesn't. This section is only part of what needs to be included.

Training Provided

How are you going to prepare volunteers for this assignment? In this section, you're telling them, "Don't worry—if you've got the qualifications, we'll teach you about the library and about book mending."

Benefits of Volunteering

This section is one of the most important and, unfortunately, one that I seldom see used. What will the volunteer gain from the experience? This is where you help match the reason (motivation) for volunteering with a job that will provide it. Maybe a benefit of the job is to meet new people. Maybe a benefit is learning a new skill. Maybe the benefit is the opportunity to work in a quiet place where the phone doesn't ring. Be creative here!

This is not just an exercise, but a really important piece of the job description you should sit down and think through carefully. Asking yourself what the potential volunteer will gain from the experience helps you define your recruitment approach. When you recruit, you'll know who you're looking for, and where to look. When you interview, you will not only help people understand the job, but what they'll gain by volunteering for your organization.

When you take a marketing approach to volunteer recruitment, you help to define what you have to exchange with the volunteer.

Time Commitment

Put right up front how many hours a week or month are required for the position. This allows potential recruits to make a conscious decision about whether or not they can realistically make the commitment required for this volunteer job.

Length of Commitment

Be clear about how long you want volunteers to stay. If you expect them to commit to a minimum of six months, be specific. The subtle message you convey with this statement is that this is a very important volunteer position. We only want people who are serious. We are going to invest resources in training you, and we want to be sure you can make that much of a commitment to us.

Another advantage of putting a time commitment on the job description is that it gives an end date so the volunteer won't feel guilty when the time is up and decides to move on; there's a graceful way out.

From the staff's perspective it's comforting too. What if the volunteer isn't doing a good job? You have six months to train and coach the volunteer and help him or her do a good job. At the end of six months you can say, "You know, we tried this, we spent a lot of time, but it doesn't seem to be meeting your goals, and (for whatever reason), it's not meeting our needs. Let's find another assignment for you that will make you happier."

Grounds for Termination

This section is sometimes controversial and may not be necessary to include in every volunteer job description. But let's think for a minute about a couple of situations where it might be useful.

What if you have confidentiality requirements? If the volunteer is going to be handling confidential information, you can send a message right on the job description that confidentiality is so important to you that the volunteer will be terminated if it is broken. What if you have some very specific policies the volunteer needs to follow about appropriate interactions with clients or how to represent the organization in public? Disregarding those policies might be grounds for termination. Putting policies like these in the job description makes it clear how important they are.

Contact Person

This is the person the potential volunteer should call if interested in this position, with a phone number.

Date Revised

This information is important because you only want to keep the updated version on hand.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KEEP IN MIND WHEN WRITING VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Don't create job descriptions sitting alone in your office. Enlist the assistance of staff and volunteers who will be working in the position, or who do the job already. Their insights will be very important. Plus, involving them in the design will help ensure its acceptance by them.

Take a hard look at the job description when you've finished. Is it realistic? Have you designed a job for a full-time employee? Chances are you won't find someone to volunteer full time. If you do, you could become so dependent on the volun-

teer that you will inherit the work if s/he leaves with no realistic expectation of finding a successor.

If you find the job description you've written is for a full-time job, don't give up. Break it down into its component parts. Try designing a couple of jobs that, when fitted together, accomplish the whole task.

Make sure you have enough information to recruit the right person. Are the qualifications complete? Are there clearly spelled-out benefits for someone taking on this assignment? How much time will it take? Over what period of time?

Think "outside the box" about what kinds of volunteer jobs you need and who can fill them. Be creative. What do you need? Do you need someone to design a Web page? Do you need a speaker's bureau? Public relations help? Who could do this? Does it have to be an individual like it's always been? Or can the task be completed by a family, a couple, a Girl Scout Troop, or someone over the Internet?

Your role as volunteer program manager can be extended by delegating parts of your job to competent volunteers in carefully designed assignments. As your volunteer program grows, you can quickly be overwhelmed or even burn out. Consider delegating some of your tasks, or even some of the coordination responsibility, to qualified volunteers. Take a look at the Library's Senior Spinetingler job description (see Appendix B).

Remember, though, coordinator jobs require an added set of qualifications beyond those required by the positions they're coordinating. In this case, the Senior Spinetingler must also have organizational skills and be willing to coordinate activities. Not every Spinetingler is qualified to be a Senior.

Consider the team approach:

> *A 'team approach' means recruiting helpers to share the tasks of coordinating people, projects, and paper.... This certainly is not proposed as a quick fix for the problem of too many responsibilities and not enough time. In fact, it will take time to plan for and build the best team structure for you. Once in place, however, a management team will indeed allow you to share the work, be in more than one place at once, and feel some relief from the burden of carrying the whole weight of the volunteer program alone.*
> (Campbell, Ellis, 1995).

HOW WRITTEN VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS CAN HELP YOU ADDRESS COMMONLY FACED PROBLEMS IN VOLUNTEER PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Below are some common problems experienced by volunteer program managers with some ideas about how using the techniques described in this article can help avoid or address them.

Volunteers don't show up when scheduled or disappear two weeks after you've trained them. Do they understand the importance of the job? That if they don't come, somebody else has to do their jobs for them? Do they know how their jobs fit into the big picture? In the job description, did you tell them the importance of their position is to "relieve staff of the duties of putting the books back on the shelves?" Or did you say it was to "keep the best loved books on the shelves where patrons can find them to check them out"? Although both are important, the volunteer may be more interested in and motivated by the needs of patrons than those of staff.

Are they happy in the job? Are their motivations for being there being met? Do they have the right qualifications? Did you make a good match?

Staff and volunteer relations are strained. Tensions often arise when staff feel volunteers are "going too far," or "not doing enough." Clearly articulated job descriptions will help the relationship between staff and volunteers.

If gaining staff "buy-in" has been a problem for you, getting staff involved in the process of developing volunteer job descriptions will be helpful. Ask staff to help you design the job and develop and present the training. This will increase staff support from the very beginning because they've had the chance to say how the program should work and increases the potential for their acceptance of both the volunteer position, and the volunteers in that position.

Our volunteers only want to do what THEY want to do. Exactly! They didn't come to do something they hate doing. If you're still selling potential volunteers what you have on the shelf instead of marketing your volunteer program—identifying what's in it for the volunteer and making a mutually satisfying exchange with them—then you need to go back and re-read the discussion on volunteer motivation and exchange theory.

Does this mean your "non-glamorous" volunteer jobs won't get filled? Of course not. Everybody has different needs and interests for volunteering. Some want the quiet, repetitive job. Some want a challenge. Your job is to make the right match for each volunteer.

TO SUM UP

"Failure to meet the mark is rarely the fault of the target." Although I don't know who said that, I try to remember it in many situations. It's not quoted here to make the point that we, the volunteer program managers, have to take the blame for absolutely everything that goes wrong in the volunteer program. But it does remind us that if there's a problem, we may not want to blame the volunteer immediately, but instead look a little deeper at the situation to see what we might have missed. I truly believe that people don't volunteer in order to make your life miserable. They volunteer because they want to help. If we're having a problem with a volunteer, s/he either doesn't understand the job, or we have placed the volunteer in the wrong job.

Using the tools and strategies discussed in this article can help to prevent or solve some of the common frustrations we face in volunteer administration and help us meet the ultimate goal: to provide more and better service to our communities.

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APPENDIX A
WOODLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Volunteer Spinetingler
(Book Repair Technician)

Job Description

Importance of Position to the Library: Assists the library by maintaining best-loved books and materials in good repair so they can be used by library visitors.

Qualifications:
- Good small motor skills and eyesight.
- Good attention to detail.
- Willingness to work with a small group.

Responsible To: Director of Volunteer Services.

Responsibilities:

1. Attend a three-hour training program provided by the library at no charge on book repair and cleaning.

2. Work with other Spinetinglers to set monthly book repair session dates.

3. Attend monthly book repair sessions or give supervisor sufficient notice if unable to attend.

Training Provided: Orientation to the library as well as a three-hour training program on skills and techniques for repairing, mending, and cleaning library books.

Benefits of Volunteering:

- Provide a much-needed service to the library and its customers by ensuring best-loved books are continually available.
- Gain skills in book mending and repair.
- Meet people who share similar interests.

Time Commitment: Three hours once a month.

Length of Commitment: Minimum six-month commitment requested.

Grounds for Termination: Failure to carry out assigned responsibilities.

Contact Person: Director of Volunteer Services at (telephone number).

Date revised:

APPENDIX B

WOODLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Senior Spinetingler
(Volunteer Manager, Book Repair Program)

Job Description

Importance of Position to the Library: To assist with the management of the volunteer program that maintains best-loved books and materials in good repair so they can continue to be used by library visitors.

Qualifications:
- Must have been a Spinetingler for a minimum of one year.
- Good organizational and "people" skills.
- Willingness to work closely with the Director of Volunteer Services to ensure the success of the Spinetingler program.

Responsible To: Director of Volunteer Services.

Responsibilities:
Under the direction of the Director of Volunteer Services

1. Interviews potential Spinetinglers to assess appropriateness for the volunteer assignment and willingness to make the commitment required.
2. Assists in providing orientation to the library and Spinetingler training.
3. Schedules monthly book repair sessions based on availability of volunteers.
4. Ensures books needing repair and repair materials are available for monthly book repair sessions.
5. Attends and supervises monthly book repair sessions.
6. Makes monthly reports to Director of Volunteer Services.

Training Provided: Regular meetings with Director of Volunteer Services to plan activities, monitor progress, and provide problem-solving support.

Benefits of Volunteering:
- Provide a much-needed service to the library and its customers by monitoring the program to ensure that best-loved books are continually available.
- Utilize or gain skills in program management.
- Meet people who share similar interests.

Time Commitment: 8 - 10 hours per month.

Length of Commitment: Minimum six-month commitment requested.

Grounds for Termination:
- Failure to carry out assigned responsibilities.
- Misrepresenting the library or its policies.

Contact Person: Director of Volunteer Services at (telephone number).

Date Revised:

1997 International Conference on Volunteer Administration

ABSTRACT

What happens to volunteers when they confront and experience loss? Living in a culture that fears and denies death, are they adequately prepared to face issues of loss, death, grief, and bereavement? Volunteer administrators in organizations where volunteers are faced with these issues must be prepared to train in these challenging areas as well as recognize personal attitudes towards mortality and be sensitive to other clues that might indicate a volunteer in distress.

When Volunteers Grieve

Ona Rita Yufe

We live in a culture that has a strong fear of death. In her pioneering work, *On Death and Dying,* Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1969) noted that "death is still a fearful, frightening happening, and the fear of death is a universal fear even if we think we have mastered it on many levels."

Many volunteer administrators work in organizations where volunteers are faced with multiple issues of loss, death, and grief. Volunteers in organizations such as hospices, AIDS and HIV-related service agencies, domestic violence centers, and child and elder abuse programs often find themselves experiencing feelings that mirror the values and beliefs of society as a whole—values that often do not adequately prepare us for life-threatening situations.

As volunteer administrators, if we fail to deal with volunteers who experience loss, we may find our programs and clients negatively impacted and we may lose valuable volunteers. Can we learn to recognize problems and assist our volunteers through a personal grieving process? Are we willing to examine our own and our volunteers' attitudes towards mortality? This article outlines an approach that may prove valuable in answering these questions and helping volunteers recognize and deal with personal grief.

RISK FACTORS

At-risk volunteers fall into two categories: those who work with clients in life-threatening or end-of-life situations, and those who have recently experienced a personal loss.

Volunteers who work with clients or patients in hospices, home health agencies, hospitals, AIDS or HIV service organizations, domestic violence or child abuse centers may be at higher risk for an unrecognized grief experience because of their close attachment to both the issue and the person involved.

Personal losses may affect the volunteer's capacity to perform. Personal losses include a death in the family, the death of a friend, a divorce or separation, termination from employment, an "empty nest," or any other unexpected trauma or

Ona Rita Yufe is currently director of volunteers with Kaiser Permanente Hospice in San Diego. She has been a volunteer administrator for more than 16 years having previously held positions with YWCA/Battered Women's Services, San Diego AIDS Project, and Planned Parenthood of San Diego County. She has trained locally, nationally, and internationally and is the recipient of the San Diego DOVIA's Volunteer Administrator of the Year Award.

loss. This condition is described by Thomas A. Welk (1992), Director of Education at Hospice Inc., in Wichita, Kansas as

> *... times when we need to address our own needs, to unbind our wounds for the possibility of healing. When that is the case, then we are not able to be available to the other. We will be in need of hospitality ourselves. We must be careful to be in touch with ourselves, to hear the signals that come from within.*

VOLUNTEER ATTITUDES TOWARDS GRIEF

Two prevailing attitudes should alert the volunteer administrator to possible problems: "It [unexpected or incapacitating grief or grieving] won't (can't) happen to me," and "Whatever happens, I can handle it."

The first response may be typical of the volunteer mirroring societal values that reflect both a fear of and a discomfort in discussing death. Since many have grown up in homes where death was a taboo subject, there may have been little opportunity to "practice" talking about it. Accompanying this uneasiness may be an unrecognized belief that death is contagious, and merely talking about it can make it happen. Along with this attitude of denial, frequently there is the feeling of invincibility and great strength—the ability to transcend anything as negative as death and grief—coupled with a noticeable lack of information on the grieving process.

Facing personal grief, a volunteer (read: nurturer, caregiver, helper, supporter) may become convinced that it is manageable. "After all," s/he may say, "I take good care of myself, I've been through hard times before, and I know what I must do to get through this!" Indeed, there may be times when this is a valid assessment based on a volunteer's previous grief work. But even those who have dealt successfully with personal grief in the past may find their skills inadequate in a current situation.

Who among us has not been the last to recognize when we are approaching the brink of the burn-out abyss? The savvy volunteer administrator working in settings where volunteers are facing issues of life and death should assess the risk factors inherent in the work to better identify the volunteer nearing burn-out. There are a number of telltale signs.

- The volunteer may be so emotionally overloaded personally that s/he withdraws emotionally from the client or patient:
- The volunteer may become either immersed in performing or carrying out activities at a frenzied pace or, conversely, will withhold from sincere involvement.
- The client or patient is objectified and depersonalized by the volunteer. The volunteer may place blame on the client or patient for the current situation or may appear intolerant and judgmental ("You people are all alike" or "You brought it on yourself").
- Anger replaces sensitivity and acceptance in reaction to the client or patient.
- The quality of the volunteer's accomplishments is not up to her/his usual standards.

ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATOR

The volunteer administrator working with volunteers who have grief issues can assist in three major areas: education, recognition of potential problems, and the provision of support.

Education

A volunteer self-assessment tool, supervision, and observation can help volunteer administrators determine which volunteers are not fully aware of or trained in death, grief, and bereavement issues. A program then can be designed to provide them with comprehensive education. The program should include the components listed here.

- A section in the initial volunteer orientation or training about loss, death, and bereavement. If you're not fully comfortable facilitating this section, enlist the help of a social worker, other staff member, or expert from the community.
- Personal death awareness training is vital and can be sensitive and sometimes uncomfortable. This kind of training also can help identify potential volunteers who may not be appropriate for your program.[1]
- Ongoing education and information exchange in the form of in-services, support groups, mailings, speakers, round table discussions, and open forums is extremely important.
- Include interactive and participatory elements in the program as well as a lecture format. Difficult information becomes more palatable if the mood is relaxed and informal.

Recognition of Potential Problems

An alert, engaged, and accessible volunteer administrator can intervene effectively when early warning signs are apparent. What action can you take to avoid crisis?

- Maintain close contact with all your volunteers. In smaller programs, you can establish a schedule of regular phone calls to "check in." In larger programs, you might train a volunteer as an administrative assistant to help with this. Encourage your volunteers to contact you as well.
- Whenever you encounter a volunteer—on the phone, on the job, at a meeting—ask friendly but probing questions about his or her current situation. "How's the assignment going?" or "Anything new with your client (patient)?" or "I know this is a difficult one—how are you doing?" or "What are you doing to take care of yourself?" Volunteers need to maintain a healthy balance between meeting personal needs and helping others to avoid becoming "wounded healers" who are unable to reach out effectively and helpfully to others (Nouwen, 1979).
- Elicit feedback from staff, clients, patients, families, even other volunteers to provide you with a well-rounded view of how the volunteer is performing and behaving. Have there been any complaints about the volunteer's delivery of service? Has the volunteer's "emotional space" spilled over into the patient's arena?
- Be alert for signs of burn-out (outlined above) and/or codependency that has been described by Melody Beattie (1987): "A codependent person is one who has let another person's behavior affect him or her and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behavior." Urge all volunteers to learn how to set limits, recognize appropriate boundaries, and feel okay saying "No." Remind them that one cannot pour from an empty pitcher.[2]

Providing Support

Your volunteers look to you for guidance and assistance while they navigate through sometimes troubled waters. By providing adequate support you ensure that they can continue to function effectively without being side-tracked by personal grief.

- Plan regular meetings for your volunteers and always include an emotional support group component. You may want to consider holding separate business and support meetings, if your schedule permits. Allow the volunteers the opportunity to ask for individual help if attendance at a meeting is difficult or impossible. Survey volunteers to find out if there are issues they want to discuss at future sessions.
- Memorial services or rituals are an excellent tool for allowing participants to experience closure. A staff chaplain can facilitate such an event with an audience composed of volunteers, staff members, and survivors. Frequently,

volunteers find it therapeutic to plan and implement such a service themselves.

- If your volunteers have had one-on-one contact with clients or patients who died, offer them time out between assignments, recognizing they may have grief work to do. If they claim to be fine and ready for a new assignment, maintain close contact to make certain there are no unrecognized problems.
- Acknowledge the pain and reality of a loss—either on the job or personally—and offer assistance. Meet with the volunteer personally, provide information on bereavement resources within your agency or in the community, and help your volunteer say good-bye.

SUMMARY

Grief can be described as the "hurt of love." Volunteers who work in the helping professions are not immune from grieving. By their very nature they choose this volunteer work because they care deeply and compassionately about others. Because of this commitment they may ignore their own emotional health, leading to problems of overload, diminished activity, and burn-out. The alert volunteer administrator will keep a finger on the pulse of ongoing volunteer performance in order to prevent and avert problems. The result will be an emotionally healthier and humane volunteer program that acknowledges both the susceptibilities and strengths of its participants, thereby preparing them for continued success.

ENDNOTES

[1]In collaboration with a licensed clinical social worker, the author has developed an experiential workshop titled "I'm Dying—Now What?" that addresses personal death awareness and is used in both volunteer and staff training. Materials and guidance in their use will be shared upon request.

[2]For a discussion on codependency in bereavement caregiving that can be generalized to codependency in other volunteer-related activities, see "Toward an Understanding of The Codependent Bereavement Caregiver" in *Thanatos*, Spring 1990, by Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt, Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado.

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(Please note: A more extensive booklist on grief and bereavement for both adults and children is available from the author on request.)

1997 International Conference on Volunteer Administration

ABSTRACT

This training design describes how to employ the use of interactive theater to promote experiential learning in volunteer settings. The audience, performers, and narrator all benefit from the exchange of ideas and solutions generated through an active discussion that occurs after the audience observes a problematic role play.

Using On-Stage Interactive Theater Techniques to Enhance Learning (A Training Design)

Donna Urbansky

BACKGROUND

The Elmira Players originated the technique of using role play for public educational purposes at the Elmira Psychiatric Center in Elmira, New York. The first program in 1969 received national acclaim. In 1978 they received a Federal grant that provided for the training of other groups nationwide. Many mental health player groups were formed including the Kentucky Mental Health Players in 1986. In 1991 they were succeeded by the Hospice of Louisville Players who patterned their troupe after the basic interactive theater design used by their predecessors.

This all-volunteer troupe began with the recruitment of one narrator and three players. The troupe now numbers four narrators and 20 players. Some players recruit friends, but the most effective recruitment has been to invite all hospice volunteers (regardless of what type of hospice volunteering they do) to interactive theater informational meetings.

The Hospice of Louisville Players has developed their structure and techniques to enhance their purpose: to promote awareness of health and end-of-life care issues through the use of experiential interactive theater techniques. This is accomplished in an entertaining yet thought-provoking way intended to stimulate and enhance the learning process.

TRAINING DESIGN

PERFORMERS:
Two to five players and one narrator.

GROUP SIZE:
Optimum 25- to 30-member audience. Can be as few as 10 or as many as 100.

GROUP TYPE:
Group will have a common interest, such as health care or end-of-life issues.

Donna Urbansky has served as the director of volunteer services for the Hospice of Louisville for the past four years. Previous experience includes coordinating a mental health crisis center, serving as the director of a social service agency, and working for the U.S. Army in Korea. She has led workshops locally, nationally, and internationally on topics of volunteer management and the use of interactive theater for educational purposes. As an active member of a self-directed theater troupe (the Hospice of Louisville Players) she has performed for many audiences and has promoted the use of interactive theater as an entertaining yet thought-provoking medium to stimulate learning.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Interactive theater is a technique for using a specific type of role play for educational purposes. Each role play has a beginning point, intermediate dialogue, and a conflict situation or issue building to a climax. Learning occurs as the audience witnesses this confrontation between the actors. The value of interactive theater lies in getting audience members emotionally involved and actively responding to the role play issue or topic rather than letting them be passive spectators.

TIME REQUIRED:
Twenty minutes per issue or topic.

PROCESS:
The complete presentation of an interactive role play occurs as follows:

1) Lead-in. The scene is introduced by the narrator in a short, action-oriented statement that describes the circumstances or situation of the players.

2) Improvisation. Players improvise a three-to-five minute scene. The scene gradually builds to a climax of conflict between the players.

3) Interaction. At the point of highest conflict, the narrator interrupts the scene and asks the audience members about what they have just observed. Players and audience interact for approximately 15 minutes guided by the narrator. Performers continue to portray the characters they role played during the entire interaction with the audience.

4) Summary. Narrator then provides a brief summary of the main points brought up by the audience during the interaction.

5) De-roling. The role play ends with the players identifying themselves and letting the audience know they are not the characters they played.

SAMPLE ROLE PLAY

Interactive theater has elements of improvisation in that the characters' lines are not memorized although the players, or characters, write the essence of the role play scene or skit in advance. The scene is more like a short vignette. What follows is a sample skit/scenario.

Subject

Professionalism and respect.

Performers

Hospice patient care volunteer, hospice patient, and narrator.

Audience

Hospice volunteers at a training session.

Issues

Should volunteers discuss concerns and complaints with patients? Should volunteers do what they feel is right or should volunteers accept patient choices? When should the advice of a supervisor be sought?

Lead in

Narrator states the scene takes place in the home of a patient.

Improvisation

A volunteer who has worked with hospice for a long time arrives at the home of her assigned terminally ill patient. The volunteer and the patient have had a very good relationship. The volunteer enters complaining that the social worker (or nurse) did not inform her that the patient was transferred back to her home from the hospital. The volunteer explains she has just gone all the way to the hospital to discover the patient had been discharged. The volunteer asks how the patient is feeling. The patient complains of a few minor physical discomforts. The volunteer then makes uncomplimentary remarks regarding the care the patient is receiving and about the social worker and/or nurse. The volunteer says she is glad she is now

with the patient to give her the proper attention she deserves. The patient is visibly upset because she has trusted and liked the social worker and nurses and says so to the volunteer. The volunteer asks the patient what medication she is currently taking. The patient shows her the bottles. The volunteer claims one of the medications has serious side effects. The volunteer says she wants what is best for the patient and cannot understand why the patient is taking a drug that has such serious side effects. The patient says she follows the advice of her doctor. The volunteer then says she wants to have a serious discussion with the patient regarding her soul because the patient doesn't have long to live. The patient says she talks to the chaplain. The volunteer wants to read Bible versus to her. The patient objects.

Conflict

The narrator stops the skit at this point of greatest conflict and asks the audience how they feel about what they just witnessed.

Interaction

The narrator facilitates an exchange of comments, ideas, and questions from the audience to the volunteer and patient. The audience is encouraged to speak directly to the volunteer and patient, who respond from the perspective of the roles they are playing.

Note: The following is only a partial list of questions likely to be discussed. Should a volunteer be notified of a patient's discharge? By whom? How are patients informed of the effects of medication? How are patients informed of the side effects of medication? If a volunteer has a strong religious faith, should she share her views with a patient? When should a volunteer get advice from a supervisor?

Summary

After 10-15 minutes the narrator summarizes some of the thoughts expressed.

De-Role

The narrator asks the volunteer and patient to identify themselves and let the audience know they are volunteer actors.

RESULTS

The use of interactive theater functions as an experiential learning tool, not as a means to promote any one system of belief. Although performances often are informative and compelling, the narrator and players do not impose any particular point of view on an audience, but rather seek to enhance individual self-awareness and generate problem-solving among audience participants.

The role play consists of a short presentation that gradually builds to a climax. The narrator interrupts the action at the moment of highest tension and then guides the audience in becoming actively involved with the players. The players remain in character throughout the exchange.

Once the exchange with the audience begins, the characters interact only with the audience and not with each other. This is important because resuming the role play between performers causes the audience to begin observing rather than responding to the issues raised.

An essential feature of dynamic dramatizations is conflict. A negative tone is purposefully sought by the players. If an agreeable version of a problem is presented, with solutions outlined and issues resolved, then the audience is not being asked to think and feel about that problem and does not feel compelled to interact and respond with ideas of their own.

There may or may not be a satisfactory resolution to the problem that is presented in a role play. Individuals in the audience may differ regarding the best resolutions. In the sample role play one individual may feel the volunteer was correct in questioning the care her patient was receiving; another may think questioning physical care is not the volunteer's role. The audience is told by the narrator that certain points will be clari-

fied after a summary of the issues raised.

The narrator then summarizes key points brought out during the interaction. The narrator asks the players to re-role (introduce themselves) so the audience realizes the play was just that—a play. Without the de-roling process, audience members may approach performers after the role play is over and address them as if they were still in character. This happens because scenes are often so realistic that individuals personally identify with a player. This causes an awkward and confusing situation that can be avoided with proper de-roling.

Finally, if certain issues need further clarification, the person responsible for the training discuss them with reference to the policies or guidelines of the organization.

CONCLUSION

Consider television talk shows and why they are popular. The host (the narrator) invites guests (the players) to discuss two different sides of an issue. At the point at which the guests begin to intensify their disagreement, the host stops the discussion and asks for audience input. The audience has responded emotionally to the discussion and is now ready to offer views or solutions. The conflictual tone stimulates interaction from the audience. Learning occurs by reflecting problems, fears, and ignorance the audience members may be experiencing or have had themselves.

It is this heightened sense of awareness and exchange of feelings and ideas that keep talk shows popular. Similarly, interactive theater allows for everyone to be involved in the learning process.

Interactive theater is a technique using brief role plays for educational purposes. A narrator guides the audience into a meaningful exchange of views, ideas, and alternatives. Interactive theater, then, serves as a vehicle through which increased awareness and problem-solving begin, and learning occurs.

1997 International Conference on Volunteer Administration

ABSTRACT

This article recreates the plenary session presented by Susan Ellis and Steve McCurley at the ICVA. It illustrates the arguments for and against exercising strict risk management practices for volunteer programs and then attempts to describe a middle ground that should be of benefit to both volunteer programs and those they serve. The essence of the discussion involves whether it is appropriate for some social service programs to avoid either the involvement of volunteers or to cease operation totally because of a fear of potential liability. The opening arguments for and against risk management are intentionally phrased in a somewhat extreme fashion to help stimulate discussion.

Protection or Paranoia: The Realities of Volunteer Liability

Susan J. Ellis and Steve McCurley

THE ARGUMENTS *AGAINST* STRICT RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

1. In the United States, we live in a society that is dangerously close to paranoia about risk and liability. So it isn't surprising that fears surface about volunteering. Yes, you and your organization can be sued about matters involving volunteers, just as you can about every activity in which you engage.

The real question is whether what you are doing is *worth* the risk of being sued and, if so, whether you (and your organization) ought to be willing to go to court and defend whatever you did that causes legal action. The worst that can happen is that you lose the suit and have to go out of business to pay the liability damages.

Think about it: Under the fear of the worst-case scenario of losing a law suit, we stop ourselves from being innovative or taking the kind of risk that can truly help so many people. To give the most needed service to the most participants, we sometimes need to walk on the edge.

2. It's lily-livered to stop ourselves from developing creative volunteer assignments simply because there is a small chance that someone might get hurt or sue. The *real* issue here is that liability is a smoke screen hiding unwillingness to involve volunteers substantially. It's all based on prejudice about the low skills and poor attitudes of volunteers. So administrators, lawyers, and insurance agents simply *assume* volunteers are inherently more risky than paid staff and therefore say "No" to new volunteer assignments. This is *risk avoidance* and not *risk management*.

3. If American society can justify continuing high school football games—an activity with enormous risks—how can anything volunteers do be questioned? We take the risks that we care about. When our desire to do something outweighs our desire not to, we do it. That's why bungee jumping isn't against the law. But why is it we become apoplectic about letting a volunteer drive the agency van?

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4. Remember the turtle only makes progress when it sticks its neck out. We must accept that some of the work volunteers do is *inherently* more risky than other activities. If you are helping the homeless on the street at midnight, providing services to frail and vulnerable populations, challenging the status quo with advocacy, protest, or even unpopular public education, you must accept that some issues of safety or accountability will arise. If a person won't volunteer because he or she is afraid of being sued, this might be the *wrong candidate* for the risky position. This is especially true for board members of non-profits. If there is a need for the non-profit, there probably is some underlying social concern that could some day make someone unhappy enough to sue. That's why going on a board is not just a client development step for corporate bigwigs, it's a statement of one's beliefs.

THE ARGUMENTS *FOR* STRICT RISK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

1. Avoidance of risks is an intelligent response to danger that allows you to both safeguard your agency and your clients and to continue to deliver services into the future. Programs need to accept the fact that they can't just do everything they want to do. Particularly in times of scarce resources it's reasonable to eliminate some program areas that are more dangerous than others. It's great to talk about leadership and innovation, but the real risks are going to be experienced by those who get hurt when something goes wrong and those who don't receive services in the future because your program has been eliminated. Ignoring risk doesn't mean that you're imitating the turtle; instead, you're imitating the ostrich, burying your head in the sand and hoping that reality will go away just because you're pretending you can't see it.

2. Saying that you will apply risk management only in "extreme" cases is nice in theory but difficult in practice. The reality is that you can't always predict, especially in the case of new and innovative programs, where the risks are likely to occur. Deciding to go ahead and leap in when you don't know the extent of the risk is foolish. Remember the Ashanti proverb: "No one tests the depth of a river with two feet."

3. Volunteer programs are inherently risky for two reasons. First, involving volunteers creates a more complex system of service delivery, and complexity is always an invitation to greater risk. Second, we all know and recognize that volunteer programs are under-funded and understaffed. This makes it extremely difficult to maintain standards of care that are as high as we would like. The reality of good volunteer management is that you do safely what you can with what you have available, and recognize that you generally won't have everything available that you would want. Many, if not most, volunteer programs have some deficiency in screening, training, or supervision of volunteers.

4. Saying we can defend volunteer programs in court underestimates the harm that is done by any incident. First, no court case can completely redress the damage done to those who are seriously injured. Second, any court case will decimate the resources of an organization. You can be driven out of business even if exonerated. Third, every time a volunteer program anywhere gets into trouble, it adversely affects the recruitment efforts of every other program in the community. One of the few pieces of real information we have about lawsuits involving volunteers is a Gallup poll which revealed that 16 percent of potential volunteers were so afraid of lawsuits they were altering their behavior by either avoiding all volunteer involvement or shying away from volunteer activities that looked dangerous. We can't afford the bad publicity generated by a few foolish programs.

IDENTIFYING A SAFE MIDDLE GROUND FOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

These are our suggestions for a way to operate your volunteer program that both heeds the realities of risk and strives to provide service to the community.

1. Here are four of the main issues. First, there's *safety.* We must take steps to assure all our program constituents are as safe as possible. This means clients (perhaps the most critical group, especially if you serve a vulnerable population), volunteers, employees, and perhaps the public (if your organization is open to the public or you interact with the public in some way).

Second, there's *risk of suit.* This has two sides to it. Any client, volunteer, or employee can both sue or be sued. The organization as a whole is also vulnerable to being sued, which raises the question of the liability of the board of directors as individuals.

Risk of suit revolves around the third issue of *accidents* versus *negligence.* You can do a lot more to limit negligence than to prevent all accidents (that's why they are called accidents).

Fourth, from an organizational perspective, you must decide whether you are trying to *protect participants from harm or protect the organization from suit.* The difference here may be between someone experiencing physical harm or someone taking offense—becoming riled up about an action or position taken.

2. Risk management is designed to proactively deal with potential problems. In order of preference, it advocates:

- Minimizing or eliminating risks through better management.
- Allowing others to assume risks, through such things as purchase of insurance.
- Avoiding risks by deferring them until they are safe.

The true goal of risk management is not inactivity, but safer activity. Conducting risk management decisions by only engaging in worst-case scenario planning is an incorrect and somewhat absurd application of risk management principles. Risk management is based on probabilities, not just possibilities. No one can prepare for all possible risks and no one can predict all possible risks, particularly in programs that have not been tried before. If volunteer efforts are truly worth doing, then it is worth considering the risks, making all possible efforts to reduce those risks, and then proceeding *even when some risk remains.* As Niccolo Machiavelli once wrote, "God is not willing to do everything and thus take away that share of glory which is rightfully ours."

3. Liability is often a consequence of bad management. For your program to be found at fault, it must have done something wrong. Good management is both the best mechanism for avoiding risk and the best defense when problems arise. Good volunteer management is the best form of risk avoidance for volunteer programs. Make sure that the volunteers in your program are adequately screened and selected and that they have the training and materials required to perform their work safely and effectively.

Place the safety of clients first. Be more concerned with risk management in situations in which someone vulnerable is placed into danger. But if you're worried about exposing clients and volunteers to risk, the best practice is to involve them in evaluation of the risks, examination of the alternatives, and development of protective practices. Allow others the dignity of deciding whether and how they will be involved.

4. Avoiding volunteer involvement because of a fear of liability is more likely to be an excuse than an appropriate exercise of risk management.

- Volunteers need not be less skilled, less trustworthy, less experienced than paid staff.
- Volunteers need not be less reliable or more inclined to risky behavior than paid staff.
- Volunteers will not take their responsibilities less seriously than paid staff.

Making a decision not to undertake a volunteer program due to risk may be a rational exercise of management judgment; making a decision not to undertake a program simply because the work will be performed by volunteers is an unfounded exercise of prejudice. In the latter case, risk management has simply been used as a smoke screen hiding basic resistance to volunteers. "Pay" does not automatically confer competence, nor does the lack of it mean a lack of reliability.

5. As a volunteer program manager, you probably do not have complete authority in these matters. This means you will be dealing with your bosses and perhaps your board, a lawyer, or an insurance agent. Keep in mind that none of these people have spent very much time thinking about volunteer-related issues and will most likely give you an off-the-cuff quick-and-dirty reaction. Their first inclination will be to avoid risk and say "No." Hold your ground. Be prepared to explain your screening, training, and supervision plan. Offer to test your idea with a pilot project. Involve volunteers and staff in developing risk management practices.

The ignorance of those in your organization concerning volunteers is your responsibility. If you let them make decisions based on that ignorance you are likely to end up with ignorant decisions. You need to educate and involve others to change their attitudes. The best approach is to be bold about risk management and to use it as a tool to help you. Fear of liability will get the attention of management, and you can use that fear to gain support for making needed changes in your volunteer program. But remember: If you are not using the tool to help you, someone else will be using it against you.

6. Innovation does require taking risks. One of the distinguishing characteristics of volunteer programs is their willingness to "walk along the edge." We all face risks in what we do, most of them much greater than will ever be faced by our volunteer programs. You'll face more danger on the way home from a conference than the average volunteer program faces in a year. Don't overreact to the prospect of risk; it may be a requirement to accomplishing the important work for which the program was created. View risk as simply another obstacle to be overcome, not an insurmountable barrier.

SUMMING IT ALL UP

What we're talking about here is an intelligent balancing of harms. By operating a program that has some element of risk you may, if things go wrong, cause some harm to your clients. But by not operating your program, you will also cause harm by depriving them of services they need. Either way has dangers.

The proper course of action requires determining what needs to be done to make your program as well-managed and as safe as is possible, and then going ahead and working your hardest to help those in need.

THE JOURNAL
OF
VOLUNTEER
ADMINISTRATION

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GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS

I. CONTENT

A. THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of knowledge and inspiration about volunteer administration. Articles may address practical concerns in the management of volunteer programs, philosophical issues in volunteerism, and significant applicable research.

B. Articles may focus on volunteering in any type of setting. In fact, THE JOURNAL encourages articles dealing with areas less visible than the more traditional health, social services, and education settings. Also, manuscripts may cover both formal volunteering and informal volunteering (self-help, community organization, etc.) Models of volunteer programming may come from the voluntary sector, government-related agencies, or the business world.

C. Please note that THE JOURNAL deals with volunteerism, not voluntarism. This is an important distinction. For clarification, some working definitions are:

volunteerism: anything related to volunteers, volunteer programs or volunteer management, regardless of funding base (including government-related volunteers).

voluntarism: refers to anything voluntary in society, including religion; basically refers to *voluntary agencies* (with volunteer boards and private funding) that do not always involve volunteers.

If this distinction is still unclear, feel free to inquire further and we will attempt to categorize your article for you.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Author must send four (4) copies of the manuscript for review.

B. Manuscripts may be submitted at any time during the year. THE JOURNAL is published quarterly: *fall, winter, spring* and *summer.*

C. In addition to four copies of the manuscript, author must send the following:

1. a one-paragraph biography of not more than 100 words, highlighting the author's background in volunteerism;

2. a cover letter authorizing THE JOURNAL to publish the submitted article, if found acceptable;

3. an abstract of not more than 150 words;

4. mailing address(es) and telephone number(s) for each author credited;

5. indication of affiliation with the Association for Volunteer Administration or other professional organization(s). This information has no impact on the blind review process and is used for publicity and statistical purposes only.

D. Articles will be reviewed by a panel of editorial reviewers. The author's name will be removed prior to review to ensure full impartiality.

1. Author will be notified in advance of publication of acceptance of the article. THE JOURNAL retains the right to edit all manuscripts for mechanics and consistency. Any need for extensive editing will be discussed with the author in advance. Published manuscripts will not be returned and will not be kept on file more than one year from publication.

2. If a manuscript is returned for revisions and the author subsequently rewrites the article, the second submission will be re-entered into the regular review process as a new article.

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F. Author is advised to use non-sexist language. Pluralize or use "s/he."

G. THE JOURNAL prefers authors use language accessible to the lay reader.

H. First person articles may be acceptable, especially if the content of the article draws heavily upon the experiences of the author.

I. The author is encouraged to use interior headings to aid the reader in keeping up with a lengthy article. This means breaking up the text at logical intervals with introductory titles. Refer to issues of THE JOURNAL for sample headings.

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ABSTRACT

TITLE OR NAME OF ACTIVITY

GROUP TYPE AND SIZE: This should be variable so that as many groups as possible can use the design. Optimum group size can be emphasized or ways to adapt the design to various group sizes can be described.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: One or more sentences specifying the objectives of the activity.

TIME REQUIRED: Approximate time frame.

MATERIALS: List all materials including props, handouts, flip charts, magic markers, and audio-visual equipment.

PHYSICAL SETTING: Room size, furniture arrangement, number of rooms, etc.

PROCESS: Describe *in detail* the progression of the activity, including sequencing of time periods. Use numbered steps or narrative, but clarify the role of the trainer at each step. Specify instructions to be given to trainees. Include a complete script of lecturettes plus details of the *processing* of the activity, evaluation, and application. If there are handouts, include these as appendix items.

VARIATIONS: If other ways of conducting the design are applicable, describe briefly.

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