ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

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THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

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 Develop-ment, 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

The Presidents' Summit for America's Future, held in Philadelphia in April 1997, stimulated follow up on volunteerism nationwide. Among the states that hopped on board was Illinois. One of the outcomes of producing a strategic plan for Illinois was a statewide discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of volunteerism in that state. A report is featured in this issue.

In the fall 1997 issue we published our first Internet Dialogue. In this issue we offer another, this time on mandatory student community service, court-ordered volunteering, and service learning. Opinions differ, the discussion becomes heated, definitions cause problems, and the conclusion is open-ended. Such is the provocative nature of cyberspace conversations where ideas take shape and develop in an open forum. Where do you come down on the issues discussed?

Other topics covered in this issue are animal-assisted activity and the needs of older adults. Guidelines on how to introduce animal-assisted activity into volunteer programming may give you ideas for your own program. A discussion of the social support needs of senior adult volunteers should give you food for thought as well.

And, as we do every two years, there is a cumulative index at the end of this issue to help you find your favorite author or articles on subjects of interest. To obtain copies of specific articles or entire back issues, get in touch with the AVA office. Covering a wide range of topics, the index helps you locate the resources you can use in your work.

Marjorie M. (Mitzi) Bhavnani
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ABSTRACT

This article shares the results of the Illinois Commission on Community Service's analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of volunteerism in the state of Illinois and discusses the significance of Illinois' findings to those who lead volunteer programs. The findings are based on six public hearings held throughout Illinois and the results of a statewide survey.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Volunteerism in Illinois and What That Means to Those Who Lead Volunteers

Jeanne H. Bradner

BACKGROUND

In 1997 the Illinois Commission on Community Service embarked on a year-long effort to develop a strategic plan for volunteerism in the state. The members were assisted most ably and *pro bono* by the planning staff of the Mid-America Chapter of the American Red Cross (Melanie Furlan, Caroline Dillon, and Cynthia Testa).

The plan was to focus on strengthening the infrastructure of volunteerism in the state, supporting the work of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future (America's Promise), and strengthening collaboration and cooperation among the Illinois Commission on Community Service, the Illinois Office of the Corporation for National Service, and the Illinois State Board of Education.

The federal Corporation for National Service, which funds AmeriCorps, Retired and Senior Volunteers, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, VISTA, and Learn and Serve, requires each state receiving funding to prepare a plan. At first the main objectives of the Corporation were to encourage collaboration among their programs in each state and improve the state's infrastructure for volunteerism. However, when it became a co-sponsor of the April 1997 Presidents' Summit for America's Future, the Corporation asked states to include plans to help implement the Summit goal to bring more resources to children and youth. The Illinois Commission on Community Service felt strongly that the most important focus for Illinois was strengthening the infrastructure of volunteerism. Strengthening volunteer involvement and management would provide the means through which the initiatives of America's Promise (the national organization created as a result of the Philadelphia Summit) and the Corporation for National Service could flourish.

To give stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to the plan, the Illinois Commission on Community Service co-sponsored an Illinois summit in June 1997 with Governor and Mrs. Jim Edgar, held six public hearings throughout the state in August, and distributed a comprehensive survey on volunteerism to over 5,000 non-profits, corporations, and local governments in October. This was followed by a retreat that included representatives from the delegations that attended the Presidents' Summit for America's Future in Philadelphia. By the time the strategic plan was drafted, 1,200 citizens of Illinois had participated. They represented a diverse cross-section from rural, suburban, and urban areas.

Jeanne H. Bradner is a nationally known author, speaker, trainer, and consultant in non-profit management, leadership development, and volunteer management. Her clients include the Illinois Commission on Community Service and the Metro Chicago Volunteer Coalition. She is the author of *The Board Member's Guide* (1995), *A Beneficial Bestiary* (1995), and *Passionate Volunteerism* (1993) all published by Conversation Press. She is a contributor to the *Handbook of Volunteer Management* (1995), and the *Nonprofit Handbook* (1997) both published by John Wiley & Sons. She has served as Illinois director of the Governor's Office of Voluntary Action and as Region V director of ACTION. She has held various positions within AVA and is the 1996 recipient of its Harriet Naylor Distinguished Member Service Award.

INFORMATION GATHERING

The Illinois summit meeting focused on the resource areas of the Philadelphia summit: to provide youth with ongoing relationships with caring adults, safe places and structured activities, marketable skills through effective education, a healthy start for a healthy future, and opportunities to serve. In general, attendees addressed how to get to know programs in one's community and how to measure the number of youth served and/or serving, as well as how to create new programs or expand or form collaborations with existing ones.

The feedback from the six public hearings held throughout Illinois was significant because people responded spontaneously when asked: "What is good about Illinois volunteerism? What is not so good?" There was extraordinary congruity in the responses to these questions throughout the state.

The survey was mailed to 5,040 organizations with volunteer programs and generated a 20% response rate. Some organizations served more than one community type (i.e., urban and suburban). Of those responding, 58% represented urban areas, 49.7% the suburbs, 50.9% small towns/villages, and 41.9% rural/farmland areas. The state's low-income population was served by 71.5% of the responding organizations. Of the total organizations responding, 44.5% had a full-time paid volunteer coordinator. (Agency demographics of those returning the survey can be found in the Appendix.) The information collected from the survey was useful not only because of the response rate, but because the questions were carefully written to elicit needed information.

Two major issues that emerged from the Illinois summit, public hearings, and the survey were the requirement for criminal background checks for volunteers working with vulnerable populations and issues of liability.

Criminal Background Checks

This issue was raised so often that one discussion leader at the Illinois summit said she had trouble getting people to talk about anything else. People were concerned not with the need for checking volunteers who would work closely with vulnerable populations, but with the cost and the time involved in getting the results. They spoke of the additional expense and confusion when checking crosses state lines. They lamented the fact that they lose interested volunteers who are diverted to other volunteer work during the long wait for a criminal background check.

What clearly is needed is a national system for checking volunteers who work with vulnerable populations. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is working on an Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS) which is supposed to be in place by July 1999 for states that have the appropriate technology. Summit delegates, volunteer administrators, and volunteers can advocate with their Congressional representatives for implementation of this legislation at a reasonable cost. It holds promise for national fingerprint checks to be completed within 24 hours.

Liability Issues

People were anxious about volunteer liability stating that "people don't want to volunteer because of a fear of being sued." These comments appeared to demonstrate ignorance of the liability situation in their own states on the part of many, including competent volunteer administrators. As in many states, Illinois has legislation that limits the liability of volunteers in 501(c)(3) organizations (organizations that are classified by the U. S. Internal Revenue Service as eligible to permit their donors to take an income tax credit for contributions) to acts that are willful and wanton (i.e., with a deliberate intention to cause harm). In addition, federal legislation was recently passed to limit volunteer liability. The language is complicated, but it limits liability if the volunteer was acting within the

scope of his/her responsibility; was, where appropriate, properly licensed, certified and authorized; the harm was not caused by willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, or flagrant indifference; was not a hate crime or sexual offense or a violation of the civil rights law; the volunteer was not under the influence of alcohol or drugs; and the harm was not caused by the volunteer operating a vehicle for which he or she is required to have a license or maintain insurance.

The Association for Volunteer Administration and individual volunteer administrators need to disseminate information about volunteer liability protection. In addition, we need to impress upon our peers that good volunteer management (job descriptions, training, evaluation, supervision) is good risk management. I was concerned that so many apparently feel powerless in the face of liability issues and don't realize that risk management is a component integral to their job descriptions. Good risk management deals with planned, concrete risk management policies and procedures and is supported and extended by good volunteer program management.

Another issue that came up frequently at the public hearings was the need for stronger volunteer centers. There was no question on this subject in the survey. Public hearing attendees advocated for more funding and support of volunteer centers.

SURVEY RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

What follows are major findings from the statewide survey, some of which were validated at the public hearings.

Fewer than half (46%) of the respondents reported that board members showed "a lot of support" for the volunteer program. The gap between policy making and service volunteers is a reality that can be dealt with through improved board training. However, it is only by advocating for the volunteer program with their boards and executive directors that leaders of volunteers will gain support. Ask to report to the board about the volunteer program and bring a couple of eloquent volunteers with you. Submit a quarterly report to the board listing the number of hours given by the volunteers along with an estimate of the value of the in-kind contribution. Ask a board member to chair the volunteer advisory committee. Ask to be part of the organization's strategic planning process. And, most importantly, present the measurable outcomes of the volunteer program to the board regularly.

Fewer than one-third (28%) of all respondents measure the impact of volunteer efforts on the community they serve. Volunteer administrators need to design programs they believe in passionately, set measurable goals and objectives, and make sure the board, volunteers, staff, and funders are aware of the results. Increasingly funders are demanding proof of outcomes from programs. How about a focus group of clients and another of volunteers to assess "customer satisfaction?" How about pre- and post-tests to determine if students really are improving their reading levels? How about student, teacher, or parent surveys to see if young people have changed their attitudes about conflict, drugs, or teenage pregnancy?

Today's volunteers want to carry out meaningful assignments. Measurements are a way to let them know what they have achieved. Measurements also help us decide what needs to be improved in a program rather than getting stuck in the "that's the way we always did it" trap.

Almost four out of five organizations do not use the Internet. While I would be the first to admit that there is a lot of useless "stuff" on the Internet, there is some wonderful material that the volunteer administrator on the cutting-edge shouldn't miss. Try the Support Center site at www.supportcenter.org/sf for information on non-profit management. Tap into Independent Sector at www.indepsec.org for the latest statistics on volunteerism or the Nonprofit Risk Management Center at www.nonprofitrisk.org for new informa-

tion on risk management. Volunteer management information is available through Susan Ellis at www.energizeinc.com, Nancy MacDuff at www.bmi.net/mba, and the Metro Chicago Volunteer Coalition at www.mcvc.org. Information on outcome-based evaluation can be found through the United Way at www.unitedway.org/outcomes. These are only a few of the many agencies, whose numbers are increasing all the time, giving away good, free information.

At our public hearings I was struck by the number of people who didn't know what training was available for volunteer administrators. A few hours on the Internet would bring them some excellent resources. For more information on the Internet, see "The History and Development of Internet Resources for Volunteer Programs" by Nan Hawthorne in *The Journal of Volunteer Administration* (Fall 1997).

Of respondents 65% do not collaborate with any corporations or businesses, a major focus of the Philadelphia summit. This high percentage can be interpreted as a lack of interest from businesses stemming from a lack of commitment from top corporate executives to make resources and staff time available for this purpose and/or a lack of persistence on the part of nonprofit volunteer administrators to forge relationships with corporations and businesses. At the public hearings we heard testimony from only a few groups that have positive relationships with businesses. Now is the time to piggyback on America's Promise by generating local business involvement and partnerships wherever possible.

Of respondents 85% currently have programs in at least one of the five resource areas of the Philadelphia summit. This suggests that the job of America's Promise is more to coordinate and collaborate than a need to develop new programs.

Of respondents 38% do not have any volunteers under the age of 18. One of the five goals of the Philadelphia summit is to involve more youth in service. At our public hearings, the school- and community-based service-learning programs were lauded by teachers and voluntary organizations alike. Service-learning is an opportunity for volunteer administrators to work with schools and colleges and encourage youth volunteerism. The greatest predictor of volunteering when one is older is having volunteered when one was young. However, as our Illinois summit pointed out, we must listen to the "youth voice" and encourage them to be involved in helping decide their roles.

Of respondents 73% feel their community is only somewhat aware of its volunteer needs and opportunities. A truism of the public relations field is, "I know half of my public relations efforts are wasted, but I'm not sure which half." As well as continuing to publicize needs and opportunities, however, we need to publicize outcomes. This can improve visibility and validate programs.

Only 16% of respondents find volunteer fairs to be helpful. We need to find some way to make fairs more engaging for those who walk by, frequently with eyes averted, or give volunteer fairs a low ranking on our list of priorities. We need to find other methods to recruit collectively, not just fairs.

Of respondents 44% say they are poor to fair when it comes to recognizing their volunteers. Is this because too many organizations think volunteer recognition is an expensive event at the end of the year instead of the way we treat and recognize our volunteers from the moment they first join us? Surely volunteer recognition is a daily part of volunteer management, not a once-a-year event. This response may also indicate that volunteer administrators are overworked and feel they can't spend adequate time relating to the individual volunteers.

Of respondents 70% rank themselves as poor or fair when it comes to evaluating volunteer performance. Evaluation of volunteer performance is one of those "I know I should do it, but I don't have time" activities. Those who responded may expect

too much of themselves and need to find simpler ways to give volunteers feedback such as sharing outcome results, giving brief on-the-spot but sincere compliments, or asking, "how's it going?" Negative reactions to the last question can be followed up.

Budget constraints are a problem. This is another area where volunteer administrators need to advocate for their programs. Of those surveyed, 65% said that only 0-10% of the organization's budget (excluding salary) goes to the volunteer program. A startling 12% said they don't know what percentage of the organization's budget goes to the volunteer program.

Frequency of staff communication with volunteers was ranked the most important characteristic when it comes to a program's success, yet only 60% of organizations give themselves a good performance rating here. Again, this speaks to recognition, evaluation, and feedback about the impact of the volunteer program. I recently interviewed a volunteer who had given up his volunteer job writing resumes for job seekers because no one ever bothered to tell him if anyone had found a job as a result of his efforts.

Of respondents 44% rank themselves as poor to fair in supervising volunteers. This may be another time availability issue, but sometimes volunteer administrators are reluctant to delegate supervision to others (even to capable volunteers) and try to do it all themselves, leading to frustrating results.

Administrators of volunteers are aware of some problem areas in their programs as is shown above. The fact that they are aware of them is a first step toward improvement.

Some positive survey findings include:

- Of respondents 90% believe volunteers make a meaningful contribution to the organization.
- Of respondents 89% who collaborate with schools find it effective.
- The 30% of respondents who use referrals and links to other community groups as a way to raise community awareness find this method to be "very successful."

CONCLUSION

The members of the Illinois Commission on Community Service and the Mid-America Chapter of the American Red Cross planning staff feel that the meetings and survey referred to in this article merit a high level of confidence.

While I don't think I heard anything I didn't already suspect, I was surprised by some of the percentages: Only 46% of the respondents believe their boards are supportive, meaning, unfortunately, that apparently 54% don't believe their boards care about volunteers. Only 28% of respondents do outcome evaluation and have data on the results of their programs to share with the board, funders, volunteers, and the public. And 65% of respondents don't have relationships with businesses or corporations. Clearly there is work to be done in these areas as leaders of volunteers become stronger advocates for the efficacy and importance of volunteers.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In addition to the Internet sources included in this article, the following are of interest.

Board Support for Volunteer Programs

Ellis, S. J.(1995). *The board's role in effective volunteer involvement.* Washington, DC: National Center for Nonprofit Boards.

Ellis, S. J. (1996). *From the top down: The executive role in volunteer program success.* Philadelphia: Energize, Inc.

Risk Management

Graff, L. L. (1997). By *definition: Policies for volunteer programs.* Dundas, Ontario: Graff and Associates.

Tremper, C. & Kostin, G. (1993). *No surprises. Controlling risks in volunteer programs.* Washington, DC: Nonprofit Risk Management Center.

Outcome-based Evaluation

Measuring the difference volunteers make (1997). St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Collaboration and Youth Involvement

The community collaboration manual (1991). Washington, DC: The National Assembly on National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations. (Includes a chapter on involving youth.)

Internet Information

Grapevine. A newsletter published by the California Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, Sacramento, California, that provides regular information on Websites of interest to volunteer administrators.

APPENDIX

UNIFIED STATE PLAN MAIL SURVEY — AGENCY DEMOGRAPHICS (n=1,200)

This Appendix lists the questions from the first section of the survey and the percent of respondents who marked each answer. Some of the columns may not add to 100% due to rounding or because respondents were allowed to make multiple responses. The survey was prepared by the Mid-America chapter of the American Red Cross for the Illinois Commission on Community Service.

SURVEY QUESTIONS (The first three questions asked for name, address and title)

4. Please mark the size of your organization in terms of paid staff:

Response:	Percent responding:
0-20	49.2%
21-50	13.5%
51-100	9.2%
101-300	13.9%
301-1,000	9.5%
1,000+	4.7%

5. Please mark the number of volunteers in your organization:

Response:	Percent responding:
0-20	24.9%
21-50	14.6%
51-100	12.6%
101-300	21.6%
301-1,000	17.3%
1,000+	9.0%

6. Approximately what percent of your organization's volunteers are:

A. Under the age of 18?		B. Between the ages of 18 and 35?		C. Over the age of 65?	
Response:	Percent responding:	Response:	Percent responding:	Response:	Percent responding:
0%	37.8%	0%	8.2%	0%	14.6%
1%-25%	47.7%	1%-25%	40.7%	1%-25%	45.6%
26%-50%	4.7%	26%-50%	22.3%	26%-50%	13.5%
51%-75%	0.8%	51%-75%	12.3%	51%-75%	8.7%
76%-99%	2.8%	76%-99%	6.7%	76%-99%	7.6%
100%	1.6%	100%	1.4%	100%	0.9%
Don't Know	4.7%	Don't Know	8.3%	Don't Know	9.1%

7. How many people does your organization provide services to annually?

Response:	Percent responding:
1-100	7.1%
101-500	16.4%
501-1,000	13.1%
1,001-10,000	34.5%
10,001-100,000	20.2%
100,000+	8.8%

8. What type(s) of communities does your organization serve? Mark all that apply.

Response:	Percent responding:
Urban	57.6%
Suburban	49.7%
Small town/village	50.9%
Rural/farmland	41.9%

9. Are you familiar with any of the following programs? Mark all that apply.

Response:	Percent responding:
AmeriCorps VISTA	53.7%
AmeriCorps	60.2%
Learn and Serve America	20.6%
Foster Grandparents	46.7%
Senior Companions	21.4%
Retired and Senior Volunteers	56.2%
None of the above	13.7%

10. Does your organization have any of the following programs? Mark all that apply.

Response:	Percent responding:
AmeriCorps VISTA	4.8%
AmeriCorps	8.3%
Learn and Serve America	6.7%
Foster Grandparents	5.0%
Senior Companions	3.3%
Retired and Senior Volunteers	22.5%
None of the above	56.9%

11. What kinds of populations does your organization serve? Mark all that apply.

Response:	Percent responding:	Response:	Percent responding:
Seniors	63.7%	Low income	71.5%
Children	74.3%	Disabled	53.3%
Youth	76.8%	Unemployed/ underemployed	43.4%
Families	71.6%	Ex-offenders	19.3%
Women	60.9%	Single parents	54.3%
Homeless	35.1%	Illiterate	34.1%
Juvenile offenders	26.8%	Other	15.4%

12. For what community needs does your organization provide services? Mark all that apply.

Response:	Percent responding:	Response:	Percent responding:
Health	37.7%	Mental health	26.3%
Education/ tutoring	59.3%	Institutional/ residential care	16.4%
Environmental	17.8%	Legal services/ advocacy	15.4%
Research	10.8%	Housing	22.1%
Feeding the hungry	21.0%	Cultural/arts /recreation	28.1%
Mentoring	34.1%	Job training/ income security	23.3%
Senior services	33.2%	Public safety	14.8%
Youth services	44.1%	Other	17.0%

13. Who is responsible for your organization's volunteer program administration?

Response:	Percent responding:
A full time paid staff member	44.5%
A part time paid staff member	11.0%
A volunteer	9.6%
Each department is responsible for administering its own volunteer programs	18.2%
Paid and volunteer staff share responsibility	10.3%
Other	6.3%

14. What percentage of your services is delivered by volunteers?

Response:	Percent responding:
0%-10%	39.1%
11%-25%	13.3%
26%-50%	7.8%
51%-75%	7.6%
76%-99%	13.5%
100%	13.2%
Don't Know	5.4%

15. What percentage of your organization's expense budget (excluding salary) is allocated to your volunteer program?

Response:	Percent responding:
0%-10%	64.6%
11%-25%	7.5%
26%-50%	2.9%
51%-75%	2.5%
76%-99%	4.0%
100%	6.1%
Don't Know	12.4%

Note: All responses were calculated based on the number responding to that particular question. Less than 4% of total respondents skipped any particular question except for question #13 where 7.8% of the respondents skipped the question.

An Internet Dialogue: Mandatory Student Community Service, Court-Ordered Volunteering, and Service-Learning

Susan Ellis, Andrea Fey, Shelly Field, Gayle Gifford, Jacquelynn Grote, Nan Hawthorne, Wendy Lavine, Retha Patton, Robin Popik, Dawna Sarmiento, Karen Shaw, John Spencer, Catherine Thomas, Maureen Watkins and Deborah Witmer

INTRODUCTION

In February 1997 Nan Hawthorne, the host/owner of CyberVPM, an Internet listserv, asked "Are you pro mandatory community service?" The question attracted many posts to her list. What follows are selected excerpts from the discussion.

THE DIALOGUE

GAYLE GIFFORD
Principal, Cause & Effect
Providence, Rhode Island
Ceffect@aol.com
(Cause & Effect is a consulting agency offering services in management, fund raising, and communications to non-profit and government agencies.)

It's [mandatory community service] the equivalent of conscription and contrary to our first (freedom of assembly) and thirteenth (involuntary servitude) amendment rights.

SUSAN ELLIS
President, Energize, Inc.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
susan@energizeinc.com
(Energize, Inc. is an international training, consulting, and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism.)

Gee, wish I'd thought of [Gayle Gifford's] argument when they made me take physical education for four years in high school! Or algebra, or all the other things adults routinely "mandate" kids to do. We force students to read literature to teach them things, but also in the hope that they will continue to read books when they are adults. Why is community service so different? (It used to be called "Civics.")

Isn't the real issue not that it's required, but how well it's handled? I hated gym and still hate sports. I loved English and guess I still use lots of words! If we help students to have great service experiences, why not assume they'll end up liking it?

GAYLE GIFFORD

My concern about conscription and mandatory community service had to do with national service for all US citizens rather than students.

I'm not sure how I feel about mandatory service for high school students. I guess I still feel that it should be optional. Would participation in advocacy group activities, volunteering with Amnesty International by writing letters, or participating in political campaigns (no matter how distasteful), or volunteer activities of your religious organization fulfill a school's requirement for community service? I think of all of these as community service. Do others on the list?

DAWNA SARMIENTO
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(The St. Petersburg Free Clinic is an independent non-profit agency with seven programs that provide services in the areas of hunger, homelessness, and the medically underserved.)

My experience has been extremely positive. Not only do we encourage mandatory school community service, but also court-ordered. For the most part the youths continue to volunteer after the mandatory hours are completed. This is a great way to help influence the youth of today to become involved in their communities and feel their involvement does make a difference. Our agency is committed to providing emotional support and supervision to all youth volunteers. In addition, I ask these volunteers to write at least a one-page paper on their experience at our agency. I have been overwhelmed by their responses. The court-ordered, especially, seem to have learned many valuable life lessons.

MAUREEN WATKINS
Watkins & Associates
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(Watkins & Associates provides management training and consulting services for non-profit organizations.)

Why do I favor required student service? Because it's a way to introduce young people to the concept of becoming community participants in ways beyond their initial understanding of that concept. And it's a way for communities to see young people as helpers and providers as well as consumers of goods and services. We had students and their parents moan and whine about "mandatory service" or "prompted participation" (an Ivan Scheier-ism). But I applaud schools that understand that learning about your community and how to become effective citizens of that community are as much a part of education as learning math and language.

Now, is it "volunteerism?" I'm not sure. But the management of student service can fall within the scope of volunteer administration.

JOHN SPENCER
Volunteer Coordinator, Francis House
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FrancisHouse@worldnet.att.net
(Francis House provides a loving, home-like environment where people with terminal illnesses can die in peace and dignity.)

I tend to fall on the anti-mandatory service side, but I'd be more than happy to be convinced otherwise. Can someone who is pro mandatory service address the issues of whether mandatory volunteerism is moral (is it forcing students to act against their values)? Is it truly promoting volunteerism or is it just making kids jump through another hoop? If students are allowed to volunteer at "any" non-profit, how can we be sure they're getting a worthwhile experience? If they're only allowed to volunteer at "certain" agencies, are we enforcing our own set of values?

Thanks in advance for any thoughts!

JACQUELYNN GROTE
Richmond CLASS (Children Linked Across Schools and Systems) Coordinator
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(Richmond CLASS is a support system for 13 tutoring and mentoring programs at the University of Richmond.)

John [Spencer] asked: "If students are allowed to volunteer at 'any' non-profit, how can we be sure they're getting a worthwhile experience? If they're only allowed to volunteer at 'certain' agencies, are we enforcing our own set of values?"

Excellent questions!! One solution to this dilemma may be to recruit a set of agencies you know will work well with students. That is, they have a history of working with short-term volunteers and they have the manpower to supervise. If there is no agency the student finds appealing, he or she can take the initiative to go out and find one that is. In most cases this works well. Even if the agency would not normally work well with ser-

vice-learning (or any mandatory service), students who take the initiative to set up the project will most likely follow through and make it work.

Has any of this convinced you, John?

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(Volunteer ETSU provides student-led programs committed to involving students in effective, meaningful community service activities that enhance lifelong learning.)

I really do not follow the logic of [John Spencer's] statements. Where does the idea come from that performing service is forcing students to act against their values or enforcing our values?

In service programs students are presented with a wide variety of choices of placements so, therefore, they should be enthused about at least something that is offered. The flack of "I'm being forced to do this" is what every person in authority (parent, teacher, etc.) hears from teenagers who resent being told what to do, whether to clean their rooms, do their homework, perform chores around the house, be home at their curfew, etc. Instead of worrying about "forcing our values on them," let's spend more time making sure the school programs are staffed with trained volunteer coordinators (or run by community volunteer centers) and that [the school is] running a QUALITY site placement/referral program, matching students with sites that meet the students' needs/values as well as the school's requirements.

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Retha Patton said: "I really do not follow the logic of [John Spencer's] statements. Where does the idea come from that performing service is forcing students to act against their values or enforcing our own values?"

Here's an example. Let's say I'm a 14-year old in a smallish town. My high school just said I have to volunteer for 30 hours or I don't graduate. As it happens, there are only six approved organizations, all run by church-based agencies. But I am either of a different faith or an agnostic. What do I do?

Being forced to take a class like English or math is not the same thing at all.

This example could be re-argued in a number of different situations. What if you were forced to donate money to graduate? Why isn't our time as important as our money?

If my high school had a mandatory service requirement, I would've never graduated. I was in essence a Mom, raising my little sister. I never joined ANY extracurricular activities. If my husband's high school had required service, he would never have graduated. He lived in a rural area and had no transportation. Neither one of us would've gotten our diplomas, so no college, no college degree, no decent job where we could afford a computer, no access to the Internet, no Nan setting up CyberVPM, so we wouldn't be having this discussion here because there might be no here!

ROBIN POPIK
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It has been very difficult to place youth who are school-ordered or court-ordered in our city program. The three to six hours they need makes for a recordkeeping and sometimes supervision nightmare. Supervisors are constantly having to explain the

system and direct them. Many youth volunteers do their community service in libraries and by the time they catch on, their time is up. YES, some kids stay on and that is rewarding to all of us.

What I would like to see is the schools picking three or four large projects and dates, then have the kids choose between those projects. The kids can discuss the rewards of each project in their group or school. This would actually help us more because there are always places to clean up or a special event to work on.

I have stopped taking TRUANCY kids because they either do not show up or cause trouble when they do. I would like to see the truancy offenders go along with the adult probation groups that work on outdoor projects because of their offenses and help them clean the streets and parks on weekends.

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I am on a service-learning committee in Hendersonville, NC, to promote student service. Our committee is a small but diverse group of a couple of educators, a parent, a concerned citizen, and me, representing the Volunteer Center. We first came together because we believed that when students serve, everyone benefits.

When our group started meeting we had very different ideas about the way in which service-learning should be implemented in our community. Some felt that service hours should never be mandatory. I felt service-learning has the unique characteristic of reaching those hard-to-reach students who are at risk of dropping out of school, who are using illegal substances, who are engaging in sexual intercourse, etc. Show those kids that school is, in fact, relevant to them and you've really accomplished something. I believed that community service should be mandatory for all students.

Our committee came to a consensus that incorporating service-learning into the curriculum softened the "mandatory" vs. "voluntary" debate. What became clear to us is that there is a great distinction between "community service" and "service-learning."

A good service-learning program has three components: preparation, action, and reflection. Community service, technically, consists only of action.

While service-learning does not need to be included in the curriculum, that is where it is most effective and inclusive, in my opinion. If it is not in the curriculum, some type of preparatory work and reflection must be involved, lest the project turn into "community service." I am in favor of community service, but not to mandate it as a graduation requirement. For students who might have a values conflict, I would suggest independent service projects. Rural areas that have few service agencies to choose from may have a more difficult time developing local service projects. However, advocacy is a far-reaching service that can be performed from any location.

Service-learning programs do not develop themselves. Teachers need to be trained to use service-learning methods. They also need to be given incentives (i.e., money) to develop new curricula. But this innovative concept is worth it.

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I echo [Andrea Fey's] belief that there is a big difference between "community service" and "service-learning" and, like her,

I advocate for the latter.

Here at our agency, we use many volunteers, some doing "community service" (through the courts) and some students doing "service-learning" projects. I have had both good and bad experiences with individuals from both groups, but by far find the "best service" comes from the students! Both groups are being "forced" to do the work, but the students are looking to learn/gain something from the experience, while the "community service" folks are just trying to get it over with by and large, although there have been some exceptions.

Although I bet teachers groan when something else is added to their already full plates, I believe these programs, incorporated into the curriculum, are tremendous learning experiences and should be graduation requirements.

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I agree with the many who have already made eloquent cases for promoting curriculum-based service-learning instead of co-curricular service requirements. Although we don't require students at the UW to do volunteer work or service-learning, we have very high voluntary participation rates in service-learning because students are excited about the opportunity to learn in a new way and to test and challenge the relevance of the more traditional theoretical curriculum. Many also tell us that they have always wanted to get involved in the community but they have been too busy or they didn't know where to start. There are ways to entice students to engage in service-learning (instead of requiring them to) by responding to their particular interests and limitations.

I am opposed to mandatory co-curricular service for many reasons, most of which have already been raised. But I'm surprised that no one has raised the issue of the potential negative impacts—for the students and the agency clients alike—of requiring that unmotivated and possibly resentful students do community service. I believe students who are forced to serve are much more likely to come away from the experience with their negative attitudes and stereotypes reinforced. And I hope that organizations that take students who have been required to volunteer [and don't want to] conduct careful screening to put them in roles far away from clients. Someone [Susan Ellis] was suggesting that requiring community service is similar to requiring PE or English. The problem I have with this comparison is that the consequences of the SCHOOL's requirement must be borne by the COMMUNITY.

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Just wanted to add my two cents. This has been a great topic!!!

One of the keys to making [mandatory community service] work is to be up-front from the start. If I get students with finite assignments, I tell them the options they have and if we can cooperate it works well. I want it to work for them without making too much extra work for the agency.

My favorite part of required service is the stealth education we are giving students. Direct contact with certain populations, i.e., substance abusers, people with HIV/AIDS, the homeless, young parents, can be an eye opening experience that

may change behavior more than any video or pamphlet can. Of course it does not always work. Like the truant kids who have had such a good time doing grunt work in the office they want to quit school and stay all the time, or when a parent wants to use the service as a punishment. But spending even a little well-supervised time out in the "real world" may be the best education experience kids can get.

JOHN SPENCER

Well, I gotta say I'm pretty impressed with the arguments in favor of service-learning. Making it an active part of the educational curriculum including both preparation and follow-up alleviates many problems.

Two issues I'm not totally convinced of: 1) As Nan [Hawthorne] pointed out, what about the agnostic student who is asked to participate in a project for a religious institution? 2) What about those "non-service-learning" programs that simply require XX amount of community service? I haven't seen much support for these in the discussion.

Absolutely loving this discussion, by the way!

RETHA PATTON

John Spencer asks: "What about the agnostic student who is asked to participate in a project for a religious institution?"

No coordinator who is doing a decent job would only come up with six placements, all affiliated with religious groups. That is not what I would consider a quality service program. The placements offered HAVE to be diverse, to offer something for everyone.

I also don't buy Nan's [Hawthorne] arguments about small rural communities, transportation problems, time commitments, etc. I am from a small high school (350 students - 73 in my graduating class), a small rural community (population about 5,000) 10 miles from the nearest big town. There are plenty of things going on or that can be started in small rural communities. Some examples are clean ups, low-income housing rehabs (Habitat for Humanity type stuff), meals-on-wheels deliveries (assistants!), helping an elderly neighbor with chores or just visiting, starting an after-school program/club at the local elementary school, assisting a local Scout troop or 4-H club as a co-leader or junior leader, in-school assistance such as working with the librarian, resource teachers, tutoring programs, bulletin boards, advocacy work, re-building the baseball field or track bleachers, sewing up some new curtains for the cafeteria or gym, etc.

Somewhere we are forgetting that students don't have to do 100 hours of service within the last week of school to graduate. It should be broken down into very small increments of time over the four years of high school attendance (and what about summers?). Again, if the program is implemented correctly—and administered correctly—through the classroom with teacher facilitation, the service components would not be an additional burden.

Transportation can be worked out as necessary. A lot of students don't seem to have problems getting to Little League games and the malls. I used to ride into town after school with a teacher who was my mother's good friend to attend a monthly 4-H Council meeting at the Extension office in town. She dropped me off there because it was directly on her way home after school. Another member's Mom picked up two other Council members after school and drove them to the monthly meeting. Some Council members were old enough to drive themselves. When there is a will, there is a way. Of course I am NOT advocating that all students start riding home with teachers, but just trying to illustrate that students and their parents have resources available to them when transportation is a problem.

SUSAN ELLIS

Without quoting anyone in particular, I

wanted to comment on a few things that have been said over the last few days.

First, the person [Shelly Field] who noted (in response to my posting) that requiring kids to take phys. ed. or algebra is different because community service imposes kids on the community made a very good point. I hadn't thought of that and appreciate the distinction.

However, I still think that the issue is HOW community service is imposed, not that it is required. Nan [Hawthorne] and several others seem to feel it is always coercive, with little choice to anyone. I must say the programs I've seen give students an extremely wide range of choices and, as someone else [Jacquelynn Grote] posted, allow students who don't like what's on the list already to go out and find their own placement sites. Church-related volunteering (directed at programs, not at religious service), activism of all sorts, and other types of service are also usually allowed, as long as there is truly an organization and an adult supervisor. In a well-run program, everyone's "values" can be accommodated. In fact, many schools even allow students to conduct their own personal service campaign (such as trying to get the county commissioners to put up a stop sign) if there isn't an agency that suits their tastes.

I don't buy the comparison to "what if you were required to give money." Along those lines, we do require students to buy gym uniforms, some additional books, etc. So schools are already "mandating" expenses. Maybe the question is one of time. If the school is telling students to do the volunteer work on their own time, that may be seen as oppressive. But if they can use classroom time, it's up to the school to direct how they use those hours.

Given the range of organizations in this world, it should be possible for 99 percent of students to find an agency they can care enough about for 40 hours to learn what they can there. I just don't get why this is wrong. In rural areas, or for people like Nan and her husband, a school ought to be able to work out options for community service (virtual volunteering, taking part in a babysitting cooperative, whatever).

To the people who feel that agencies are being dumped with unwilling students, just say NO. The student may be required to serve, but you sure aren't required to place them! Never accept anyone who doesn't want to be there. But also don't ASSUME that students are negative. In fact, again, 99 percent of them (OK, maybe 92 percent) actually like the chance to get out of school and do something different. And often will remain active afterwards as "pure" volunteers.

One more thought: You don't have to "take" only a limited number of hours of service. If 40 hours won't work for you, make your minimum requirement 75 hours or whatever. If the student can't meet your minimum needs, they have to look elsewhere. Don't do this as an obstacle course, but if you really need the extra time to make training worthwhile, stick by your guns!

NAN HAWTHORNE

Thanks for your thoughtful comments, Susan.

I did want to point out that much of what you said in response to my and others' objections to the mandatory part really boils down to "ideally" or "it should." Ideally every volunteer, no matter the age or circumstances, should get the best opportunity to be effective. But you and I both know that doesn't always happen.

I still object to MANDATORY (put in all caps because I've had several people suggest I am somehow against volunteering—huh???!—or youth service) community service on ethical grounds. I believe it is just plain wrong, very much in the same camp with school prayer. But I'm willing to concede that an ideal program with buckets of different opportunities and lots of respect for and support for students' choices and efforts would at least have a fighting chance of not being a negative experience. But certainly when a whole state makes service mandatory,

there's little or no guarantee that those ideal characteristics will become or stay reality for every young person in every city, town, or village. Like saying there should be buses for rural kids. Yeah, should. But there generally isn't the money for them.

I've always believed that for volunteering to be successful for all involved, we must accept that individuals will have a wide range of reasons for volunteering that are not always (in fact rarely are) pure altruism. And that there were only a few actual BAD reasons: intending to hurt or exploit, conflicts with the mission of organization, and SOMEONE ELSE'S REASON, Mom's, or God's, or the Governor's, no matter. In my experience, if you don't go in with a desire to volunteer, you have less than an even chance of having a good experience.

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This is my first posting to the list. I have quietly reviewed and reflected on the many thoughts that have been shared.

I have worked in the volunteer management arena for more than 15 years and am the mother of three daughters (now 17, 19, and 21). Each has been volunteering since they were 10 years old. Like Nan [Hawthorne], I believe that if my children had been required to do community service when they were younger, because of a lack of resources (mine and the system's) to support them, none of them would have graduated. As fate would have it, because we had the "freedom of choice" and the desire to be involved, they were able to experience community service with a variety of organizations. My oldest daughter escaped the mandatory service requirement for graduation, but was faced with service requirements through organizations in which she was a member. In addition, she served two years in a local AmeriCorps program that had a requirement of service hours. My younger two daughters did not escape the [mandatory] requirement, but saw it as a way to expand on what they were already doing.

"Mandatory" service produces some interesting challenges for all parties involved, but I am not so concerned with the "mandatory" as I am with the resulting "experience."

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Let's say you're in high school. The school requires you to take PE, which you hate. The school says you can't graduate without taking this. The school gives you a list of different PE courses you may take. High schools require all kinds of things to graduate. What is so different about this?

NAN HAWTHORNE

You [Karen Shaw] asked what the difference is between requiring a PE class and requiring community service. There are two differences:

PE is a class, supposedly teaching skills for keeping fit while service is labor, it's work. Whatever ostensible good one is doing, it is still a job, tasks, working for someone.

AND community service is intended to teach "values" along with skills and knowledge, whether a specific value about contributing to a community need or the general value of volunteering. Whether we like it or not, not everyone

agrees with this value. Why are we so willing to set it up as an absolute in spite of others' beliefs? Would we be so sanguine if someone else decided their "absolute value" should be enforced on us? Heck, several people went ballistic on this list over someone simply sharing his political point of view about gun control. What if the majority decided teaching all kids to use guns was important to teach them to be self-reliant and defend their family and property? I somehow doubt you'd be so quick to defend the forced teaching of that value.

Believing we should or must make community service MANDATORY assumes several things:

1. Young people cannot be trusted to develop the value of community service on their own.
2. You can make someone value something by forcing him or her to do it.
3. The individual's right of choice will be respected. (I'm particularly skeptical on this one. Since their right of choice as to WHETHER isn't being respected, why should their right of choice as to HOW?)
4. Everyone will be able to do it, they have the time, the transportation, the ability, or that every school district will have the money to provide buses, time away from school, tools, access to it.
5. The best possible use will be made of the young people's time availability and talents and the experience will be relevant to their schoolwork.
6. Local volunteer programs will have the volunteer opportunities, the staff, the record-keeping ability and opportunities, the funding, the knowledge of how to work with young people, the willingness to use these volunteers productively.
7. Young people will feel comfortable objecting or dissenting when faced with authority or peer pressure.
8. Religious, political, and social organizations will not take the opportunity to proselytize.
9. Opportunities to volunteer will exist for ALL young people, including disabled kids. (I see reluctance to work with disabled adults. Why would young people be any different?)
10. Everyone SHOULD believe volunteering is an absolute good. Not everyone does, nor do I have the b***s to demand they do.

I don't think any of these points is a given.

I honestly believe that modeling is the appropriate way to teach the value of community service. Modeling shows that you care enough about something to live it. And it shows you respect a young person and trust him or her to observe, make choices, act on his or her own volition. Volition—Volunteer. Same root: "willingness."

Your PE example may come back to haunt you. I did take it. It was required. I did hate it. I did resent being forced to take it. My disability put me at a disadvantage. I did poorly and was tormented by other kids. I still hate PE. If I had a kid who wanted out of PE, I'd do anything I could to help him/her get out of it. I have never participated in a single sporting activity in my entire life. I don't support sports programs. I don't vote for new stadiums. I tune out when sports news comes on. I don't buy Nikes.

No one forced me to volunteer. My mother volunteered. I had a very good first experience with volunteering. I love it. I put in at least 10 hours a week doing it. I speak and write constantly on the benefits of volunteering. I share my pleasure in volunteering with everyone. I even make respecting my volunteer work a condition of hiring me.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Nan Hawthorne writes:

A "listserv" is one type of "mailing list," one form of discussion possible on the Internet. What distinguishes a mailing list from the other forms, such as chat, newsgroups,

and message or bulletin boards, is its method of delivery. Mailing lists are conveyed entirely via E-mail. A central computer acts as the distributor for all messages, or "posts," to the list. Members, called subscribers, can send their messages to one E-mail address and have them automatically forwarded to every other subscriber. Likewise, each subscriber receives a copy of every other subscriber's messages. A subscription to a mailing list is almost always free-of-charge. Most mailing lists allow the subscriber to either receive each message as it is sent, or in digest format (a collection of all posts for a given day). An excellent resource for finding mailing lists and other online discussion groups on any topic is Liszt at http://www.liszt.com.

To subscribe to the CyberVPM listserv, send the E-mail message "subscribe CyberVPM <your name>" to Listserv @CharityChannel.com, use the Web-based form at www.CharityChannel.com, or contact listmaster@cyber-vpm.com. CyberVPM's Website address (URL) is www.cybervpm.com.

ABSTRACT

The acceptance and use of animal-assisted activities (AAA) and animal-assisted therapies (AAT) has greatly increased within the last 10 years. This article provides guidelines for program coordinators of volunteers who are considering including animal visitation in their facilities. The guidelines are designed to help coordinators evaluate the quality of a community AAA program and the type of training and certification appropriate for an AAA team.

Volunteers and Animal-Assisted Activity Programs

Dawn W. Harlock, Natalie Sachs-Ericsson

INTRODUCTION

In the last 10 years, the use of companion animals in outreach and visiting programs has steadily increased in acceptance as a beneficial adjunct to a patient's care, particularly in long-term care facilities. Once commonly known as "pet therapy," the practice of animal visitation is now separated into the categories of animal-assisted therapy and animal-assisted activity.

Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is delivered by a health service professional and is a goal-directed intervention in which an animal that meets specific criteria is an integral part of a treatment process (Hurt, 1996). AAT is usually conducted by paid professional staff who work with the facility to integrate their program into the residents' treatment goals.

Animal-assisted activity (AAA) is defined as the use of companion animals to provide opportunities for motivational, educational, recreational, and/or therapeutic benefits to enhance the quality of life. Animal-assisted activity is more common since less training is required of the human and animal team and is usually provided by volunteers who bring their own pets to residential programs. This article will concentrate on AAA provided by volunteers in the community.

RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF ANIMAL-ASSISTED ACTIVITIES

Many residents of long-term care facilities enjoy observing and interacting with visiting pets. The pets do not merely serve as a source of entertainment and a break from the residents' daily routine, but may also provide emotional and physical benefits. Studies have shown that the use of companion animals increases patient responsiveness and that animals can act as a catalyst in assisting person-to-person communication (Brickel, 1979; Corson and Corson 1975, 1987). Corson and Corson noted that at first patients related exclusively to the visiting pet. Soon, however, the pets began to serve as "social links," encouraging the patients to interact with others in the facility. Savishinsky (1992) found the use of AAA in nursing homes encouraged people to reminisce and the animals became a point of departure to talk about other related topics. Robins, Sanders, and Cahill (1992) exam-

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ined the development of relationships among previously unacquainted persons and found that dogs facilitated contact, confidence, conversation, and confederation among such persons.

It is important to note that some have questioned whether it is the human volunteer, rather than the animal, who has the most impact on client change. In a study on the effects of visits by pets and people on nursing home residents (Hendy, 1987), results indicated residents had more positive reactions and behaviors when exposed only to a person than when they were exposed to a pet or a pet with a person. Savishinsky (1992) found that the social and sensory stimulation of the pets was often superseded in importance by interpersonal ties with the volunteers who brought them.

While it is not entirely clear that AAA is "superior" to human visitation alone, it is apparent that AAA can be a pleasant experience for the facilities' residents, as well as their staff. Moreover, volunteers enjoy bringing their trained pets to visit facilities and AAA may significantly enhance a volunteer's interest and willingness to volunteer.

WHAT DOES AN AAA TEAM DO ON A VISIT?

During an AAA visit the volunteer handler encourages people to pet and brush the animal, entertains them by having the animal do tricks or retrieve items, and provides human socialization through conversation and reminiscence. All of these actions can provide therapeutic benefits that may not be recognizable immediately. The simple act of petting a dog provides basic tactile stimulation. Brushing a dog or throwing a ball encourages physical use of the patient's arms. Even the act of reminiscing can stimulate memory and thought processes.

Residents of long-term care facilities may receive individual visits or participate in a group visit program. Some people enjoy both. An individual visit usually takes place in a resident's own room. The focus in this type of visit is on the individual's needs and interests as they relate to the pet. Often the people who are scheduled for individual visits have had a pet in the past, or have expressed an interest in animals.

In a group visit, selected long-term care residents are brought into a central location such as the day activity room. A group visit stimulates not only interaction between the resident and the AAA team, but also among the residents. A group visit provides the volunteers with a mutual support system and gives new volunteers the opportunity to participate in an AAA program with other teams that are experienced in visitation.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF THE ANIMAL AND VOLUNTEER

There are many individuals who would like to volunteer to visit facilities with their pets. However, before the volunteers and their pets ever set foot in a facility, they need to be tested and trained to ensure their safety and that of the people they will be visiting.

First, the animal needs to be temperament-tested to determine if its personality is appropriate for pet visitation. The volunteer and animal then need to be trained to work in crowded, noisy areas and become comfortable with different types of people, smells, and environments. A good AAA training program assists the potential AAA team by providing opportunities for the team to practice working in different situations. In addition, volunteers need to learn about the special needs of the different populations they may visit such as the chronic medically ill, developmentally delayed, or those with psychiatric disorders.

In programs operating under the nationally-recognized Delta Society guidelines, certification of a dog includes passing the Pet Partners Skills Test and an aptitude (temperament) test. The Delta Society has animal evaluators throughout the country who are certified to test the animals and ensure they meet the skills

test requirements. There are nine parts to the skills test that simulate scenarios the dog might face in a residential facility. The required skills for the dog range from sitting politely for petting to walking through a crowd and coming to its master when called. The animal must then pass the aptitude test that includes a non-aggressive reaction to being bumped, hugged tightly, or being faced by a yelling individual. The dog's veterinarian must provide an extensive medical history. Cats, rabbits, and other animals, being somewhat more difficult to train, have different skill requirements but still must pass the aptitude test and have a medical history provided.

Certification of the volunteer is multi-faceted. The training focuses on a variety of different areas with a special focus on the communications aspect of the visit. Topics covered include preparing to visit a facility for the first time, health concerns, dog grooming, liability, visiting techniques, communication skills, and role play to simulate circumstances a volunteer might encounter during an actual visit.

Volunteers with animals need training in many of the same areas that other types of volunteers need. All volunteers need an orientation to the program and the facility they are to visit followed by pre-service training and on-the-job training (Novaratnam, 1986; Ilsey, 1990; Watson, 1993). Visits should be regularly monitored by the residential facility's program coordinator, as well as by a representative from the AAA certifying organization.

In addition to receiving general orientation and having their dogs evaluated and trained, it may be helpful for new volunteers to use a checklist similar to the one shown in the Appendix when making their first visits. Studies by Burch and Reiss (1987), Crowell, Anderson, Abel, and Sergio (1988), and Johnson and Fawcett (1994) suggest that the use of checklists providing task clarification will improve performance in health care settings and in human and customer service.

A small group study of the effects of training AAA volunteers visiting a long-term care facility indicated that a standardized training session offered in a group setting did not necessarily lead to the acquisition and transfer of critical communication skills (Harlock, 1996). More success was achieved through the use of individual instruction and feedback accompanied by a checklist. This type of training improved methods of communication and decreased the time necessary to teach effective communication techniques.

THE INTEGRATION OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE AAA

On any given day in Tallahassee, Florida, a volunteer team visits a local facility with his or her pet providing companionship and entertainment to the residents. Approximately 50 volunteer teams visit more than 25 different area facilities including nursing homes, day treatment programs, or group homes for the physically disabled. At the same time, there are more than 30 prospective volunteers on a waiting list for classes and certification. How did such a strong network of volunteers become established?

The volunteer teams operate under the guidance of the ComForT (Companions for Therapy) program which is affiliated with the Delta Society, a national organization that promotes the human and animal bond. Its Pet Partners program provides educational material, training programs, and certification of AAA and AAT teams. The ComForT program operates under the Delta Society's Pet Partners guidelines.

The strong infrastructure of the ComForT program has been built through the cooperation of several local agencies and some long-term volunteers willing to put in the time necessary to provide leadership for the organization. This collaborative effort has provided training, education, screening, certification, and placement of the volunteers who make up

the program.

The ComForT program has a volunteer director who is a veterinarian, and one paid, part-time coordinator who prepares mailouts, handles certification paperwork, contacts facilities, and schedules visits. ComForT is sponsored financially by the Northeast Florida Area Agency on Aging. The agency is responsible for the coordination and oversight of community services and elder program operations at the local level. It provides funding for the paid ComForT volunteer coordinator and her office space, mailing and newsletter costs, and any necessary workshop fees.

The ComForT program has volunteers with extensive experience in dog training and the human service field who provide free dog training classes and communication/orientation classes for prospective volunteers. The dog training classes last approximately 12 weeks and the volunteer training class is usually conducted in one seven-hour session. The classes prepare the dogs to pass the skills and aptitude tests and the handler to pass the Delta Society's Pet Partners Volunteer Review.

ComForT volunteers visit facilities individually with their pets or as part of an organized group visit. Several times a month ComForT arranges a specific day and time when the animals will visit local long-term care and assisted living facilities as a group. Each month there is a theme the volunteers incorporate into costuming their dogs and use as an icebreaker when first interacting with the residents. For example, "hats" may be the theme during a spring month. Occasionally the volunteers plan skits around the theme. During the month of February, a Valentine's Day skit portrayed a wedding ceremony in which the dogs dressed up as members of a wedding party.

The ComForT volunteer coordinator calls the volunteers each month to schedule the days and times of the visits. The group visits have been well received by both residents and staff at the facilities and have received a great deal of media attention that has strengthened the popularity of the program.

ComForT volunteers visit long-term care facilities as well as those serving the developmentally disabled. They also work with children who suffer from serious medical or emotional problems. Before group or individual visits are made to a facility, the ComForT volunteer coordinator meets with the facility's program coordinator to discuss the proposed visit. At that time, the staff person is given information about the ComForT program and can also let the ComForT representative know of any limitations or requirements at the facility. If individual visitation is arranged, the facility's program coordinator is asked to provide the AAA team with information about the facility, its sign-in requirements, and introduce the team to the facility's staff before beginning the visit. This additional attention to individual visitation is provided since these visits are not typically supervised by the ComForT volunteer coordinator on a continuing basis.

WHY DO SOME FACILITIES SAY NO TO AAA?

Even though there is a growing acceptance of animal-assisted activity, there are some facilities that are reluctant to have animal visitation due to health, liability, or safety issues or the belief that the animals may not behave appropriately in the facility. A major concern is the transmission of disease, particularly when residents have compromised immune systems. Programs fear there may be accidents associated with the animal visits such as animal bites or skin abrasions. Some may be concerned about dog hair because of allergies and hygiene. Some residents, as well as staff, are afraid of dogs and facility program coordinators may not be sure if it is appropriate to expose staff and residents to them.

Despite these concerns, research has shown there are very few diseases that can be transmitted from dogs or cats to humans. To minimize the chance of ill-

ness, a certified AAA program has all animals evaluated by a veterinarian to ensure they are current on their shots and are in good health. Volunteers learn basic health care for their pets, how to minimize shedding, and reduce the opportunities for skin scratches. Animals are bathed, brushed, and have their nails trimmed on a regular basis. A certified AAA program screens out any animal showing signs of aggression by putting each animal through a rigorous temperament test that simulates "worst" possible conditions.

The animal/handler teams have a greater responsibility than individuals who participate in other types of volunteer activities. In addition to being perceptive to the emotions and state of mind of those they are visiting, they also have the responsibility of ensuring the welfare of their animals and being able to "read" their animal's behavior. It is important for the volunteers to be aware of their animals at all times to ensure the animals' safety and comfort, and the safety of the persons they are visiting.

DETERMINING IF AAA WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO YOUR PROGRAM

AAA can be beneficial to many different populations with vastly different needs. AAA is particularly desirable for any program in which people experience loneliness or alienation because it provides structured, non-judgmental interactions for them with the animal. Patients who are experiencing pain can have a few minutes when pain is in the background while they interact with the pet.

Animal-assisted activities can further the specific goals of clients. For example, AAA can be used with stroke patients who are working on improving their speech by encouraging them to give the visiting dog commands such as "sit," "down," or "come." This exercise gives clients a chance to practice speaking as well as providing motivation to improve pronunciation so the dog can understand their speech.

In short, AAA can be useful to most residential treatment programs. The degree to which the program can benefit the residents is in part related to how much the residential program has integrated AAA into its facility. The extent to which the volunteers have been prepared to visit the facility also plays a major role.

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN AN AAA PROGRAM?

At a minimum, a facility program coordinator should ensure that any organization sending visitation teams into a facility has screened and certified the animals, provided basic training to the volunteer, and dealt with liability issues. The coordinator should be assured the AAA team has some understanding and interest in working with the population of the facility. The AAA program should ensure the facility's staff knows what the team will do at the facility, including standard operating procedures and safety precautions. A schedule for visitation should be arranged and a visiting time agreed upon. The facility's program coordinator can play a big role in the AAA program's success by informing volunteers about special needs and specific patients or clients the facility would like the volunteer team to visit. Before the first AAA visit, the facility program coordinator should hold a meeting to inform staff about the purpose of the AAA program, encourage them to talk with the visiting team, and address any concerns staff may have about the visits.

Paid staff from the facility should always be available to the AAA team. When visiting private rooms in nursing homes, residents often have requests the volunteers may need to refer to the staff. Staff can also let volunteer teams know of any special requests for a visit or can be of help if the volunteer encounters any difficulties.

Inviting the AAA team to special facility events such as holiday parties or volunteer recognition events helps integrate the volunteer team into the facility's recre-

ational program. By making the visiting teams feel wanted and valued, the likelihood of a successful partnership between the volunteer and the residential program is strengthened.

CONCLUSION

The integration of an AAA team into a residential facility need be no more difficult than the orientation of other volunteers who serve in a facility's program. However, the specialized training of AAA volunteers and their animals by a reputable therapy dog program is crucial due to liability, safety, and animal behavior issues.

Since the animals serve as a catalyst for person-to-person communication, the animal handlers often experience less difficulty than other volunteers do in developing a relationship with the people they are visiting. Once an animal visiting program is established, it can become the highlight of a resident's week. When both the volunteer and the resident look forward to the animal's visit, it becomes a pleasurable experience that provides the resident a bridge to the outside world.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the United States there are regional and national organizations that offer evaluations and certification of handlers and their dogs (and sometimes other animals). Although these organizations vary slightly, their goals in general are to screen, train, provide education to the handlers, and/or certify potential therapy animals. These groups also provide primary or secondary liability insurance to the handlers.

Local volunteer organizations can work with national programs to provide training, supervision, and certification of AAA teams and then coordinate and match volunteers with a facility that wants animal visitation for its residents. Facilities without an organized program in their communities can encourage potential volunteers to contact one of the national organizations that provide training and certification. National programs offer training for potential volunteers through regional workshops, tests by mail, or certification by an approved tester who lives in the vicinity. Most regional and national organizations maintain a list of all authorized trainers and testers for their organization.

Two well-recognized national organizations that train volunteers and their animals in animal-assisted activity (AAA) are:

Delta Society's Pet Partners Program
89 Perimeter Road, East
Renton, WA 98055
(800) 869-6898
E-mail: deltasociety@cis.compuserve.com
Website: www.deltasociety.org

Therapy Dogs, Inc.
P. O. Box 2786
Cheyenne, WY 82003
(307) 638-3223
E-mail: therapydoginc@juno.com

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APPENDIX

AAA VOLUNTEERS' COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST FOR VISITS

OPENING THE VISIT

- ☐ Make eye contact.
- ☐ Smile at resident
- ☐ Greet resident.
- ☐ If no or minimal response, repeat eye contact, smile, and greeting.

INTRODUCTION OF DOG TO RESIDENT

- ☐ Bring dog close to resident.
- ☐ Approach from the front. If resident is in bed, come alongside as much as possible in order to face resident.
- ☐ Approach slowly, not with quick, jerky movements.
- ☐ Avoid standing over resident.
- ☐ Ensure dog is at resident's waist level or below (small dogs on lap or bed or paws up).
- ☐ Ask resident if s/he wants to pet, touch, or brush dog.
- ☐ If resident says no or shows fear, do not force dog on resident.
- ☐ If resident does not reach hand out or appears tentative, demonstrate dog is friendly by petting it.
- ☐ After demonstrating petting, again encourage reluctant resident to pet dog.
- ☐ Provide praise or make a positive statement about the resident's interaction with the dog.
- ☐ If resident is too rough, demonstrate proper touch.

VOLUNTEER/RESIDENT INTERACTION

- ☐ Encourage resident to talk or ask questions about the visiting dog or pets in general. Do not wait for resident to bring up subject.
- ☐ If resident doesn't respond to questions, continue encouraging resident to touch dog.
- ☐ If no interest is shown, move on to closing the visit.
- ☐ Encourage resident to reminisce about topics other than pets.
- ☐ Use nonverbal encouragement (facial expressions, body language).
- ☐ Use active listening techniques (paraphrase what patient has already said, make nonjudgmental responses).
- ☐ Respond to resident's questions or comments when possible.
- ☐ Have the dog do a trick or routine at an appropriate time during the visit.
- ☐ Tell a story about the dog.

CLOSING THE VISIT

- ☐ Tell resident s/he enjoyed visit and thank resident for allowing the visit.
- ☐ Terminate the visit tactfully when resident urges you to stay.
- ☐ Tell resident when next visit will be made (approximately).
- ☐ Tell resident good-bye. This may be done "through" the dog.

ABSTRACT

This article presents findings from exploratory research with 52 culturally-diverse senior adult volunteers serving as Foster Grandparents in the southwestern United States. The focus is on satisfaction in later life and volunteers' needs for social support. Practice and evaluation strategies are proposed to determine the linkage between social support, life satisfaction, and improved volunteer retention.

Serving and Keeping Those Who Serve: Foster Grandparents and Their Own Family Needs

Ellen S. Stevens

INTRODUCTION

The Foster Grandparent Program of the National Senior Service Corps matches low income senior adult volunteers with children and adolescents with special needs. Children and adolescents receive emotional support and mentoring from seniors who gain enhanced self-esteem from these activities, and communities reap valuable service. Millions of dollars in service are provided by nearly 24,000 Foster Grandparents (Corporation for National Service, 1997). Benefits provided are a small, tax-free stipend, assistance with transportation, meals, and supplemental insurance during service, and an annual physical examination. Their payback—in addition to these concrete benefits and the gratification they experience from serving—may be enhanced through the social connections Foster Grandparents make that support their own "family values."

This article presents findings from an exploratory study that inquires into the social support needs of Foster Grandparents. Specifically, the nature of relationships with family and friends is assessed and the following questions are addressed:

- To whom do senior volunteers turn for social support?
- Which relationships enhance life satisfaction?
- What can volunteer organizations do to meet the needs of senior volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds?

The focus here is on what Foster Grandparents say about their relationship needs. Through this information, administrators of volunteer organizations and practitioners at placement agencies can generate ideas about where their volunteers are coming from and what to do to help them stay.

BACKGROUND

As America proceeds through an era of cost-cutting and retrenchment, her volunteer workforce is being pushed to the fore. A significant cadre of this workforce is senior adult volunteers who are vital contributors to the national economy. Senior adult volunteer programs produce over $1 billion in volunteer service. The Foster Grandparent Program alone, contributing approximately 22 million hours of service each year, produces $243 million in volunteer service exclusive of programmatic costs (Corporation for National Service, 1997). As a result, requests for proposals are increasingly being issued for the development of more Foster Grandparent Programs (University of Houston, 1997).

Ellen S. Stevens' research with senior volunteers began during her doctoral studies at Columbia University and continues through her role on the faculty of the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work. Her interest is the enhancement of life satisfaction for growing cohorts of senior adults who may choose a volunteer career in later life. Practice-related publications appear in *The Journal of Gerontological Social Work, Families In Society, Clinical Gerontologist,* and *The Journal of Volunteer Administration.* Her research has been presented at national conferences of the American Society on Aging, the Gerontological Society of America, and the National Organization for Human Service Education.

Greater expectations are being imposed upon volunteer organizations as service agencies, with good intentions and fiscal constraints, look to volunteers to fill the gaps (McSweeney and Alexander, 1996; Wilson and Simon, 1993), gaps that can be filled with productive seniors. The fiscal benefits of volunteer service can be undermined by excessive costs incurred by volunteer turnover. Keeping senior volunteers satisfied is time- and cost-effective (Heard, 1997; Stevens, 1991).

The satisfaction of senior volunteers is related to giving as well as receiving. The giving of one's self, by way of skills and talents, may lead to a sense of usefulness that, for many, is the payoff (Stevens, 1993a; Wilson and Simon, 1993). Receiving may happen through formal recognition at ceremonies, informal recognition through camaraderie and praise, and concrete benefits such as stipends—all of which heighten the value of the volunteer experience (Asche and Janey, 1989-90; Corporation for National Service, 1997; Fisher, 1995; Stevens, 1992; Stevens, 1993b). The many senior volunteers who live alone can, through volunteering, engage in a give and take for mutual benefit. Older adults who live alone in their communities are said to benefit from the social support and sharing provided by friendships. Well-being is supported by having a confidante—even at a distance—and maintaining ties with old friends. This lends support to the "socioemotional selectivity theory of aging" that attests to the value of relationships which are tried and true (Potts, 1997).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of the social support needs of Foster Grandparents and to shed light on services that can sustain the service they provide. Research into what Foster Grandparents say about their social support needs and relationships forms the basis for practice implications.

The study intended to answer three questions: 1) Who are the study's Foster Grandparents? 2) To whom do they turn for social support? 3) What do the demographics and support systems of this population mean for volunteer organizations that want to find and keep senior volunteers?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Foster Grandparents serving communities in the southwestern United States voluntarily completed a 45-item questionnaire about "social support" and "satisfaction in later life." Social support was defined as "frequency of contact with family for the purpose of sharing activities, visits, belongings, and doing favors," and "frequency of contact with a significant other for the purpose of sharing personal feelings and concerns" (Mangen and Peterson, 1982). Satisfaction in later life was defined as "the overall quality of existence as derived from the comparison of one's aspirations with one's actual achievements" and was measured by the Life Satisfaction Index (Neugarten, *et. al.*, 1961).

The questionnaire also inquired into socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, education, income, occupation, health, race and ethnicity, and community residence. It was pre-tested for reliability and validity with a sample of older adults and was personally administered to the study sample.

The study sample included senior volunteers from two Foster Grandparent programs. Members of the first program served in an urban area and were part of a larger study who completed the questionnaire in 1989 (n=31). Members of the second program served in a rural area and completed the questionnaire in 1997 (n=21). The total study sample is 52.

DATA ANALYSIS

Information provided by the 52 senior volunteers was analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency distributions, cross-tabulation tables, and Pearson correlations were utilized to describe and under-

stand the data provided by these volunteers. Data analysis focused on determining how "contact with family" and "contact with a significant other" were associated with "later life satisfaction" for this culturally-diverse group of Foster Grandparent volunteers.

FINDINGS

Who are these Foster Grandparents?

The volunteers in this study—from a rural and urban area of the southwestern United States—exemplify senior adult cohorts most on the rise: racial and ethnic minorities who are older elders. This is not to say that Caucasian elders are not Foster Grandparents—some are—but in this study 90% of the overall sample self-identified as members of minority groups. More than three-fourths of the sample were in their seventies and older. Sociodemographic characteristics are identified in Figure 1.

While a majority of these Foster Grandparents have age and minority status, they are all low in socioeconomic status. Overall, the majority had no more than grade school educations and incomes of less than $5,000 per year. The majority are women who are now on their own. They enjoy relatively good health and residential stability.

Levels of later life satisfaction ranged from "low" to "high," with half of the Foster Grandparents indicating "moderate" levels of life satisfaction. About one-third indicated "high" satisfaction, and a smaller percentage indicated "low" levels.

Age		**Race and Ethnicity**		**Annual Income**	
60 - 69	24%	Black	65%	< $ 5,000 (approx.)	61%
70 - 74	34%	Hispanic	21%	$ 5,000- 9,999	31%
75 - 79	22%	White	10%	$10,000-14,999	4%
80 - 89	20%	Other	4%	$15,000 or more	4%
TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%
Education		**Occupation**		**Gender**	
< Grade School	21%	Housework	43%	Female	79%
Grade School	39%	Office Work	10%	Male	21%
High School Grad	36%	Business & Managerial	23%		
College Grad	4%	Professional	12%		
		Other	12%		
TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%
Marital Status		**Health**		**Residential Stability**	
Married	23%	Excellent	14%	> 15 Years	88%
Widowed	46%	Good	48%	10-15 Years	2%
Divorced	27%	Fair	30%	5-10 Years	2%
Separated	2%	Not very Good	8%	1- 5 Years	8%
Never Married	2%				
TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	00%
Household Composition		**Later Life Satisfaction**		**Geographical Setting**	
Myself only	52%	Low	16%	Urban	60%
Myself + 1	34%	Moderate	50%	Rural	40%
Myself +>2	14%	High	34%		
TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%

Figure 1

Who are the Foster Grandparents of the study?

Sociodemographic characteristics of the study sample

Overall, these Foster Grandparents were moderately satisfied with life, of low socioeconomic status, and were women who were often minorities living alone in their communities of long-term residence. Some rural-urban differences were notable.

The rural elders were more culturally diverse with the majority Hispanic (43%) and the second largest group African-American (29%). These elders expressed somewhat higher levels of life satisfaction (40% were "highly satisfied," compared to 29% of urban elders) and socioeconomic status (45% reported incomes of $5,000-$10,000, compared to only 21% of urban elders).

The urban elders were usually African-American (90%), more likely to be widowed (55%, compared to 33% of the rural elders), and poorer in income (71% had incomes of less than $5,000, compared to 45% of the rural elders). They were somewhat lower in life satisfaction (13% indicated low satisfaction compared to 10% of the rural elders). These rural-urban differences are summarized in Figure 2.

A primary study purpose was to identify sources of social support and determine how this "support" links with "satisfaction."

To whom do these Foster Grandparents turn for social support?

The types of social support analyzed in this study were "contact with family" and "contact with significant other." Contact with family—for the purpose of sharing visits, activities, and belongings, and doing favors—was measured by "frequency of contact with relatives." Contact with significant other—for the purpose of sharing personal feelings and concerns—was measured by "frequency of contact with family member or friend." Figure 3 shows to whom volunteers turn for social support.

Contact with family was at "moderate" levels for most. Contact with a significant other was at "high" levels for most. For these volunteers there was less contact with family than with significant others. Less contact with family, more contact with significant others: Which type of contact relates to life satisfaction?

For these Foster Grandparents, it was contact with family that made the difference. The volunteers who were most satisfied were those with the most family contact ($r=.62$, $p<.01$), indicating a highly significant and moderately strong association between family contact and satisfaction. This lead to inquiry into marital sta-

Foster Grandparents in *Rural* Setting	Foster Grandparents in *Urban* Setting
Hispanic and African-American	African-American
Higher Socioeconomic Status	Lower Socioeconomic Status
Married or Widowed	Usually Widowed
Higher Life Satisfaction	Lower Life Satisfaction

Figure 2
Rural-urban differences

Contact with Family		Contact with Significant Other		Who is the Significant Other?	
Low	20%	Low	8%	Family Member	59%
Moderate	55%	Moderate	41%	Friend	39%
High	25%	High	51%	None	2%
TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%	TOTAL	100%

Figure 3
To whom do volunteers turn for social support?

tus: Was it involvement with a spouse that made life satisfying? Not necessarily. There was no indication that being married was associated with higher satisfaction in later life for these volunteers.

When volunteers in urban and rural settings were analyzed separately, contact with family was salient for both groups. Rural volunteers had more frequent contact with family and, for them, giving and receiving social support was also significant.

Even though many volunteers shared personal feelings with family or friends, it was getting together with relatives for activities, visits, the exchange of belongings, and doing favors that seemed to bring satisfaction in later life. Figure 4 itemizes the components of contact with family.

"Contact with Family" was measured by the Participation in the Extended Family Scale (Mangen and Peterson, 1982), with items as follow:
1. How often do you visit in the homes of relatives whether here or elsewhere?
2. How often do you engage in activities with relatives outside your homes?
3. How often do you borrow things from or lend things to relatives?
4. How often do you do favors other than lending for your relatives?
5. Do you visit more with friends or relatives?

Figure 4

Items measuring "contact with family"

In summary, when it comes to social support, family togetherness has much to do with life satisfaction for these senior volunteers, the majority of whom are women from minority groups who live alone. For the rural elders who had more frequent family contact, both frequency of contact and giving and receiving support were related to satisfaction. It was the rural elders who expressed higher levels of life satisfaction.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Demographic projections forecast a growing number of ethnic minority elders, the prototype of Foster Grandparents. Volunteer administrators can anticipate a growing number of culturally-diverse seniors who choose a volunteer career in later life (A. Monk, personal communication, 1984; Wilson and Simon, 1993).

The importance of family to this diverse group of senior volunteers suggests implications for the support functions of volunteer organizations. Seniors who volunteer to serve children are, in all likelihood, carrying out their own family values, the values they place on family membership, belonging, involvement. However, for many Foster Grandparents their own families—families of origin and families of procreation—are out of reach. Most volunteers in this study were widowed, divorced, or separated, and living alone. These elders may be among the few remaining survivors of their families.

What can Foster Grandparent programs (and possibly other programs) do to address the cultural value of family when family is gone? The benefits that may result from addressing this issue may enhance the recruitment and retention of this population by meeting the needs of those who are meeting the needs of others.

Recruitment

While Foster Grandparenting does not pretend to replace family, it may serve some of its functions. Activity-sharing, visits, doing favors, and borrowing and lending establish the importance of connectedness between elders and others and imply an interchange with the senior volunteer. Can volunteer programs tap into volunteers' ideas about family and their concerns about their own families? And in so doing, can the volunteer experience engender a culture of connectedness for senior volunteers? Since sharing, mutuality, and exchange are valued in the context of family, are there ways that volunteer administrators can address these needs in the volunteer milieu? Empowered seniors are likely to express their needs, if invited, to agency staff. Offering the opportunity and acknowledging the need for involvement is what matters.

Senior volunteers can impact the volunteer organization through its recruitment strategies. Who better than current, satisfied volunteers to reach out to peers for organizational affiliation? And given the long-term community residence of most of these volunteers, potential volunteers who live nearby may be a source of connection to one another as they travel to and from the volunteer work site together. Their residential stability, in both rural and urban settings, bodes well for retention on the job. Community-based peer recruitment could boost the cadre of senior volunteers and become the resource to meet ever-increasing community needs.

Retention

In-service sessions, inherent to Foster Grandparent programs, can address volunteers' changing roles and relationships. Only moderate amounts of family contact were the experience for most, the contact that was most associated with satisfaction with life. The partnership between volunteers and organizational leadership could be the unit that sets the training agenda. One option could be a focus on family—the families of foster grandchildren and their Foster Grandparents, and the families of the Foster Grandparents themselves. In-service sessions could periodically deal with support for Foster Grandparents whose own families are out of reach.

Such a support function could be offered through volunteer peer group sessions that provide opportunity to recollect past events that the volunteer's own family enjoyed together, reminisce about relatives and meaningful relationships both past and present, and relive memories the volunteer is fond of or grappling with. Volunteers will hear the accounts of others and learn they are not alone. Connecting with others who share some of the same inner life can bring a meaningful past into the present and create social linkages that enliven a sense of family and bond peers to each other.

Some questions that address volunteers' family values might include:

- What kinds of things did you and your family do together?
- What did you do for them? What did they do for you?
- What are some of the high points you remember? Some of the low points?
- How are your family members living on through your life?

Senior volunteers can be organizational partners in the planning and facilitation of these sessions.

Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

It would not be at all surprising if this reliving of family memories enhanced the later life satisfaction of Foster Grandparents and if enhanced satisfaction, in turn, enhanced retention. The impact of family-focused programming can be evaluated to determine its impact on life satisfaction. Thus, the relationship between social support, satisfaction, and retention would be evaluated as follows: Family-focused support group —> Later life satisfaction —> Senior volunteer retention.

The evaluation of support group effectiveness could be done by 1) measuring later life satisfaction using the Life Satisfaction Index (Neugarten, *et. al.*, 1961); 2) implementing the support group function as a component of in-service training sessions; and 3) again measuring later life satisfaction using the Life Satisfaction Index.

Does this support group function lead to higher levels of life satisfaction? Are the volunteers who are higher in satisfaction the volunteers who are staying on the job?

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There are a quarter of a million senior volunteers who are, relative to all elders, often poor and members of minority groups. Like many other elders, they often are widows who live alone. These volunteers are giving their talents, skills,

time, and lives. They are out on the front lines influencing society's next generations. They are a valuable human resource. Agencies want to find them and keep them. Senior volunteer programs at large are experiencing challenges with recruitment, retention, and costly turnover. Financial subsidies and fringe benefits provide incentive and reward to Foster Grandparents, but research into what contributes to satisfaction in later life portrays an opportunity to further serve those who serve.

While not meant to generalize to all seniors, this study of a small, culturally-diverse sample of Foster Grandparents presents findings worthy of consideration and further exploration in other settings:

- Frequent family contact is associated with higher levels of later life satisfaction;
- For rural elders who had more frequent contact with family, the giving and receiving of family support is associated with higher levels of later life satisfaction;
- Minority group members are a fast-growing cohort of the aging population and constitute a sizeable proportion of elder volunteers; and
- Elder volunteers may be the few remaining survivors of their families with remembrances in need of expression.

Recognizing the needs of these elders —many of whom experience racism, classism, ageism, and sexism—meets the mutual needs of volunteers and all volunteer organizations that utilize, or could possibly utilize, a senior volunteer resource. A culture of connectedness through partnership—with the organization and with other volunteers—can facilitate the expression and actualization of the values of family membership, belonging, and involvement. *Recruitment* can be enhanced by elder volunteers who reach out to peers to join the volunteer family. *Retention* can be addressed through in-service support groups that acknowledge the value of family to elderly volunteers. *Evaluation* can measure levels of life satisfaction and assess the impact of family-focused programming on satisfaction and retention.

The human resource of senior volunteers is alive and well and growing. As the population ages and increases in diversity while public resources shrink, senior volunteers who are well-served can continue their service provision. Supporting their efforts through research-based practice directions can further their well-being. Facing their own constraints while service needs mount, organizations can enjoy productive and mutually satisfying partnerships with senior volunteers and benefit from the person-power they provide.

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THE JOURNAL
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A publication of the Association for 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.

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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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K. Figures and charts should be submitted only when absolutely necessary to the text of the manuscript.

L. General format for THE JOURNAL is in accordance with the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.), American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, 1995.

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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.

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TIME REQUIRED: Approximate time frame.

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

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

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