ABSTRACT

Supposedly, seniors have a good deal of discretionary time at their disposal, but so far, they form a much smaller proportion of the volunteer force than their numbers in the total population might lead us to expect. Yet they undoubtedly have much that they could contribute in terms, for example, of experience and accumulated skills. What might their contribution be, in fact? What do those who do volunteer contribute now? What training, if any, do they require and what do they actually receive? Do organizers underestimate their capacities and the contribution they might be persuaded to make?

Seniors as Volunteers and Their Training

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Most seniors help their families, friends, and neighbors in many ways. They engage in what Kabanoff referred to as "maintenance activities" like shopping, making small repairs, and so on (Kabanoff, 1980). In effect, they become part of an informal support network consisting of "volunteers." Rather fewer seniors volunteer through various official agencies and organizations, and are counted as members of a formal volunteer force. In general, what kinds of persons are those who join this force? What work do they most frequently choose to do? What training, if any, do they need if they are to carry out the duties assigned to them? It is with these and kindred questions that this article is concerned.

Unless they are specifically attributed to other sources, figures quoted throughout this paper are taken from a survey made in Calgary in 1991. This survey is reported in full in *Senior Volunteers, the report of the Senior Volunteer Program Committee*, 1991, published by the Calgary Volunteer Centre and Calgary Parks and Recreation with the assistance of The Seniors' Advisory Council for Alberta and the Alberta Council on Aging.

PROFILE

The bulk of senior volunteers (83%) are somewhere between the ages of 55 and 74 years; if they are considered old, then they are, in Neugarten's words, "young-old" (Neugarten, 1974, p. 187). The "old-old" of 75+ years form only one-tenth of the volunteer population. In this survey, women outnumber men by a ratio of 2:1, a result which will not surprise the reader given the fact that aging, as they say, is mainly "a female affair" since women constitute the vast majority of those who live on to more advanced ages. Most of the volunteers describe themselves as "retired," and while this may be meaningful for the men, it must be a less precisely determined category for the women who continue to do, in their later years, many of the things that they have always done.

Volunteers are evidently drawn mainly from professional, semi-professional, and clerical groups of the population. Together they constitute two-thirds of all volunteers. Added to these are 9% who have retail trade as a background. Together these account for three-quarters of all senior volunteers. Precisely what num-

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ber of persons this spectrum of occupations would include is debatable, and possible overestimation of status by respondents may have to be taken into account. Presumably, however, most who put themselves into these four categories would have had some dealings with the general public and have been accustomed to keeping records and to performing "secretarial-type" duties like taking messages, filing correspondence, or writing receipts. On the contrary, only 5% of senior volunteers described themselves as having "technical" backgrounds. Of the 156 seniors surveyed, 73% had attended secondary or post-secondary institutions of education. On the one hand, this appears to be a high percentage, especially as members of these cohorts were educated during the "Dirty Thirties" or during the Second World War. On the other hand, these figures may refer to a biased sample since, for the most part, respondents are already volunteers, and it is a well authenticated fact that those who have had more years of schooling are more likely to become volunteers.

In general, the longer the schooling, the higher the income. A full 56% of the 128 who responded to this question about personal resources in the Calgary Survey had incomes of over $25,000 per annum. This must imply, as is consistent with the rest of the profile, that they have some private means, perhaps in the form of pensions associated with their previous professional or semi-professional status. This relates to the facts that, for the most part, they drive their own cars to their bases as volunteers, and are not greatly interested in reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses which, for the whole of Canada, averaged $158 per person in 1987 (Ross and Shillington, 1989, p. 7a).

The demographic profile that emerges from this survey corresponds closely to others described in the literature. For example, The Research Unit for Public Policy Studies of the University of Calgary produced a series of seven reports in 1986 detailing the results of studies on *Volunteers and Volunteerism* in Calgary (Research Unit for Public Policy Studies [RUPPS], 1986). While this survey was not confined to seniors as volunteers, the general impression is that the profile of a senior presented here is at least credible in terms of extent, sex ratios, socio-economic statuses, and educational levels. Brennan, who provides "A Profile of Volunteers" based on a 1987 *National Survey on Volunteer Activity* says that "women represent 61% of senior volunteers," and adds that "seniors who do formal volunteer work have a higher level of formal education than non-volunteer seniors" (Ross, et al., 1989, pp. 3–4). Again, "Who Are Canada's Volunteers?" is a chapter in *A Profile of Canadian Volunteers* produced by the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations published in 1987. Both the text and the statistical tables in that work offer a profile similar to that which emerges from the Calgary survey (Ross et al., 1989, pp. 8, 25). Notes on individual characteristics chosen by their authors for their own particular purposes in a range of substantial articles would collectively paint much the same picture.

In general, senior volunteers in the United States resemble those of Canada. The Final Report of the authoritative *National Retired Senior Volunteer Program Participant Impact Evaluation* (U.S. Department of Education, 1985, p. 9) provides a box with the title "Who is the typical RSVP volunteer?" It contains the following statements:

- Woman (80%)
- 72 years of age
- White (86%)
- At least high school education (60%)

The typical new RSVP volunteer tends to be somewhat younger, but otherwise closely resembles her older sister.

INVOLVEMENT

In what activities did most senior volunteers engage? At the time of the Calgary survey, 38% were working in con-

nection with other seniors. Is this figure an artifact of the way in which members of the Calgary Senior Volunteer Program Committee (SVP) distributed questionnaires? A batch of them went to a seniors' centre, and this may have contaminated the result. On the contrary, it may be a genuine reflection of the interest of seniors in other seniors, their age peers. Almost all have shared "age-graded normative life events." Most of them married at about the same age and had their families at about the same age. Again, as already noted, all have lived through the same "history-graded normative life events"—through the "Dirty Thirties" and the Second World War, for example (Hultsch and Hultsch, 1981, pp. 22–25). To this extent they might be thought of as composing a subculture of Canadian society, and certainly they have similar backdrops against which to sit as they reminisce and share experiences (see also Baines, 1990, p. 9).

In contrast with their "cohort centredness," i.e., their considerable interest in other seniors, is their lack of interest in local sports groups, recreation events, and youth groups. Together these appeal to only 9% of senior volunteers. Returns to questionnaires show that seniors offer little support to "cultural groups" perhaps because they are themselves British or American by descent. It also may be because of the phenomenon known as "The Law of the Return of the Third Generation" (Hansen, 1952, pp. 492–503), their efforts as young people were to assimilate to Canadian ways and institutions rather than to explore and assert (as their grandchildren tend to do) their "ethnic origins."

There are 14% of senior volunteers engaged in work for their churches, a percentage much higher than that shown for any other category listed in the questionnaire. Churches, like senior centres, have congregations and assemblies to which they can appeal directly for help with their various activities by "word of mouth" and "by friend to friend." In addition, congregations in churches today are likely to consist largely of older persons who share so much of living history.

Two means of recruiting volunteers were clearly overwhelmingly important: through a friend or through the encouragement of a senior center. The Individual Questionnaire produced by the Senior Volunteer Program Committee contained two questions which, in retrospect, might have been better collapsed into one: "Did you learn that volunteers were needed for your present job by word of mouth, or did you learn about it through a friend?"

Should responses to these questions be tallied separately, and so added, or is it to be supposed that the two overlap to a great extent, and so should be averaged? Clearly, respondents could have taken the questions as implying "friend talking to friend," and indeed, the facts that 24% said "by word of mouth" and 23% said "by a friend" suggests that they did mean "friend talking to friend." However, even if they do overlap and are compounded, they still, separately or together, were the most important ways of recruiting. Almost as great was the percentage that replied "by a senior centre" (21%). There, too, they could have learned of opportunities "by word of mouth" or "by friend to friend." The figure is not surprising since, as observed earlier, senior centres as communities have many opportunities for recruiting from among their own memberships. This suggests that many potential volunteers among seniors are well primed about the kind of work they might expect to do, and for which, in many cases, they would require little training.

With respect to the recruitment of volunteers, two points stand out in the literature surveyed. The first refers to method, perhaps best thought of in the following terms. The potential for a certain behavior may remain no more than potential unless external events are such as to evoke it. Some thirty years ago, Sills, author of *The Volunteer*, pointed out that in the matter of volunteering, the external or "trigger"

events usually consisted of invitations to join friends or colleagues. Later, Perry, interviewing non-volunteers, added that "59% expressed a willingness to volunteer," and a "major reason for not volunteering was simply that no one (had) asked [them]" (Perry, 1983, p. 115). More recently, two social workers, joint authors of an article on elderly volunteers, have pointed out that "the most effective recruitment strategies are those that involve personal solicitation as opposed to advertising" (Morrow-Howell and Mui, 1989, p. 31). They add that these "strategies should involve current volunteers and agency staff asking people. Written or radio advertisement must," they argue, "be followed up with personal communications."

The second outstanding point in the literature refers to an observation. In his paper, "Willingness of Persons 60 or over to Volunteer," Perry observes that "those who become active in the program tended to be those subjects who previously had volunteered" (Perry, 1983, p. 111). Chambré, in her inquiry into "Volunteering as a substitute for Role-loss in Old Age," argued that rather than responding to role-loss "a significant number of elderly volunteers may be volunteers who become elderly" (Chambré, 1984, p. 297). She adds that Atchley's Continuity Theory would offer a more reasonable explanation than Havinghurst's Activity Theory when dealing with volunteering among seniors. "Their involvement," she observes, "is a continuation of behavior patterns established earlier." They can thus anticipate what kinds of introductory courses might be offered to them, and the kinds of relationship they might establish with paid staff and other volunteers.

To summarize then, most senior volunteers choose to work with members of the cohorts to which they too belong since they are most likely to have been recruited by a friend or by personal word of mouth. They are also likely to be following some "behavior pattern established earlier" (Chambré, 1984). What do these features infer with respect to the need for "training"? Before any official approached them they knew a good deal about the kind of person with whom they might work later, and they approach life from similar stances, from shared positions. Consequently, they should find communication at least comfortable with those they are to serve. Again, they are likely to be well informed by friends, both about the work of the agency to which they may be recruited, and the kind of service they might be asked to provide. Finally, in many cases, they may require little training since they carry with them repertories of appropriate knowledge and skills.

MOTIVATIONS

The many reasons that older adults offer for volunteering can be classified under three headings. Some are altruistic, the result of public spiritedness. "Helping others" would figure prominently among these. A second class might be termed fulfilling, in the sense of a person's fulfilling social or psychological roles not usually open to him or to her in everyday life. Some of these fulfilling roles are compensatory, for example, to the mother left with "an empty nest" or the "need to be needed." Others under this heading might be termed extending, for example, a single elderly person might choose to become a surrogate "grandma" or "grandpa" in a public school early childhood class. Finally, many seniors volunteer because they lack the company of their age peers. Theirs are social reasons. Altruistic, fulfilling, and social reasons are often compounded. Most thoughtful volunteers would admit to responding to mixed motives.

When their questioners asked, "Was there anything that particularly motivated you to volunteer?" 29% of the respondents gave as their first reply "feeling useful." "Feeling useful" is a good feeling that in spite of advancing years one still has some part to play in the world's work and is a significant element

in self-esteem, in one's worth as an individual. No one wants to be, as the French say, "marginalized." This "feeling useful" might perhaps be linked with "use of skills," which is consistently rated high on the lists across first, second, and third choices in importance in the Calgary survey. It has about it at least a tincture of "this is what I am good at, and is a mark of me-ness."

As a first choice, "sympathy with the cause" fell only a little short of "feeling useful," but cumulatively as first, second, and third choices in importance, "sympathy with the cause" fell well behind "helping others." Cumulatively, across first, second, and third choices, the latter was rated almost as important as "feeling useful." "Sympathy with the cause" seems more specific, "helping others" more general. Both are outgoing, but "feeling useful" has about it a more self-indulgent connotation. All are certainly worthy motives, and together they are overwhelmingly important in the matrix of motivations of senior volunteers in Calgary.

It is understandable that volunteers would do "something they like" they are certainly under no compulsion to do what they don't like! This "something they like" accounts on average for about 12% of responses, but only 8% of those questioned gave it as their most important motive. A little less important to senior volunteers is "personal development," which, discounting some gain in width of experience, does not seem a likely outcome of volunteering if they are to use the skills they already have or if they are to promote a good cause. However, all will undoubtedly gain something from their involvement, though, unlike the young, most seniors do not become volunteers with that purpose in the forefront of their minds.

Social motives are acknowledged as important in all the literature surveyed for this report. However, Morrow-Howell and Mui provide a new gloss on this aspect of volunteering. "When asked about their motivations," these two authors claim, "men were likely to give only altruistic reasons for volunteering. They rarely mentioned social reasons, as most of the women did." This, they add in part explanation, is because men had "higher levels of social resources" and accordingly, did not need "the opportunity for socializing that some of the females (*sic*) did" (Morrow-Howell and Mui, 1989, p. 31). By "social resources" they refer to wives, surrogate families, club members, and the like with whom to interact. It is in fact true that most older men are married, and living with their wives, whereas women are much more likely to be widowed or single—though not on that account, friendless! Another likely explanation for the fact that men did not mention social reasons for volunteering is that "older men tend to be less expressive than women." This too, could well be the case. As social gerontologists have it, the lives of men are likely to be oriented toward the "instrumental," those of women toward the "socio-affective." In other words, even in retirement, men gravitate toward a less personal "world of work," women towards the highly personal nurturing of others.

According to Sequin, there must be stimulating relationships, real work, an accepting atmosphere, and positive identification with the organization in order to attract older volunteers (Sequin, 1982, pp. 47–58). The last point echoes the result of the present survey which found, as shown earlier, that "sympathy with the cause stood high in the ranking of most important motives."

Bharadia's work in Calgary, which dates from 1986, also shows that for volunteers in general, "I believe in some or all of the organization's goals, values" was a response given by 57% of the 940 who replied to her questionnaire (Bharadia, 1986, p. 5).

Two other motives, not previously considered, are referred to in the literature. Ebnet says that "after a more self-serving period of early retirement years, a substantial and growing number of senior

persons, age 60 and over, find volunteer service a route to self-expression" (Ebnet, 1989, p. 5). Is this only another gloss on what was referred to in the Calgary survey as "Personal development/satisfaction"? A tangentially related motive might be the acquisition or exercise of skills of various kinds: interpersonal. communicational, organizational or managerial, and fund-raising skills. These are listed in Table III, *Giving Freely: Volunteers in Canada*, published in 1987 by Statistics Canada.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

More than half the volunteers who responded to the SVP Questionnaire claimed that they did not need training to do the jobs that they were then doing. Does this mean that the jobs did not demand special skills, or that the senior volunteers already possessed the skills required? It is to be assumed that the latter is the case, though there might be some who, as a relief from more demanding and stressful labours, are prepared to do some routinized, relatively unskilled work. In general, however, it may be assumed that agencies would not involve volunteers to do only unskilled jobs that no one else wanted to do, and that they would ensure that some part of any job description would include work consistent with the abilities and dignity of the volunteer. A total of 33% of those who had required training thought that its scope and duration had been "just right." A further 9% claimed to have had "too little training" and only 1% said they had had "too much."

On the assumption that some senior volunteers would not only need but would also choose to take some form of training as a means to personal enrichment and development, the SVP Committee asked, "Is there training that could be offered that would increase the likelihood of your volunteering?" Responses to this question were not ranked in importance, and items in the question were not mutually exclusive. With these cautions in mind, the reader should note that 34% of all respondents said that "no training in particular" would increase the likelihood of their volunteering. The remaining 66% who think that training might boost recruitment, would most often choose to train in "communication skills" (11%) and in "interpersonal skills" (17%) even though most volunteers must already have some acquaintance through experience with these. Training in management and office skills are the least popular choices perhaps because most volunteers consider themselves already competent, or simply do not choose to work in these or in related fields.

In the main, results from the SVP Questionnaire for Agencies reinforce findings from the Questionnaire for Individuals since 42% of officers of the agencies think that an offer of training acts as an inducement to possible volunteers. Such training may, of course, mean simply introduction to the job to be done, for which the volunteer already has the requisite skills. It may not therefore imply increasing the range of the volunteer's skills, though that might be an inducement to some. The literature of the subject would tend to support this view, though it would be of greater importance to younger than to older volunteers (Ross et al., 1987 p. 14; Bharadia, 1988, p. 5). However, this may be, the scores were universally low on all suggested specific training items. Four of the agencies offered training in fund-raising, and four more in technical/office skills. Another four offered training in organizational/managerial skills. As might have been predicted from the results produced by the SVP Individual Questionnaires, training in communication and interpersonal skills was much more widely offered, 6/12 in the case of the former, 7 (or 58%) in the case of the latter. Training in the form of "knowledge" was provided by 6 of the 12 agencies which responded. Presumably, this "knowledge" refers for the most part to "knowledge about . . ." the purposes of the agency, its constitution, its function-

ing and its clientele. In general, it is probably reasonable to deduce that most senior volunteers do not think of further training and the acquisition of new skills as possible reward.

Training offered by the agencies is not specifically geared to senior volunteers, and indeed, in the light of their small proportion of all volunteers, it is unlikely that it could be. However, six of the 27 agencies thought that training should be "differentiated by age" both in respect of content and approach. Ways in which these two objectives could be achieved are not specified. Senior volunteers may learn more slowly than their younger counterparts, but then, how much have they to learn? As stated earlier, they are likely to be reasonably skilled already in a number of the ways specified, such as communication and interpersonal skills, not perhaps so much in fund raising. They, like anyone else, would have to acquire "knowledge about . . ." the agency for which they are preparing to work.

To summarize then, most senior volunteers choose to work with members of the cohorts to which they too belong, since they are most likely to have been recruited by a friend or by personal "word of mouth." They are also likely to be following some "behaviour pattern established earlier" (Chambré, 1984). What do these features betoken with respect to a need for "training"? Before anyone tried to recruit them they knew a good deal about the kinds of person with whom they might later work since they approach life from similar stances and from shared positions. Consequently they should find communication at least comfortable with those they are to serve. Again, they are likely to be well informed by friends, both about the work of the agency to which they may be recruited, and about the kind of services they may be asked to provide. Finally, in many cases, they may require little training since they carry with them repertories of appropriate knowledge and skills. A survey completed recently in Victoria, BC, reported that "many [senior volunteer] respondents indicated that training was not required" for the jobs that they were then doing (Lee and Burden, 1991, p. 29).

COURSES PROVIDED

The composite portrait of a senior volunteer that emerges from the literature is that of an active 65+ to 75+-year-old in reasonably good health with a fair background of formal education. As explained earlier, the longer the schooling of this conjectural person, the more likely that he/she will volunteer. Volunteers are drawn mainly from professional, semi-professional, and clerical groups, and consequently, most should have little difficulty in adjusting to the bulk of the jobs for which orientation courses are intended to prepare them.

It is customary for recruiting agencies to offer orientation courses even to senior volunteers who bring with them requisite knowledge and skills. Take, for example, the Senior Consultants' Program of the Alberta Council on Aging (ACA). This program attempts to use in the service of seniors expertise of many kinds that some seniors have acquired over the years. Now suppose that a senior centre wants to start a newsletter. The Senior Consultants' Program will find a former editor or reporter of a local newspaper to help the centre produce its first few issues. Such a person needs no specific training, but he or she can still benefit from the support of the Program and its general purposes, the mission to which it is devoted. Typically, orientation courses for this program consist of an explanation of the origin and purposes of the ACA, the purpose and design of the Senior Consultants' Program, communication by and for seniors, and illustrative programs that have been successfully completed. These matters are supported by reference to *A Guide to Developing a Senior Talent and Abilities Registry* (STAR), published by the ACA in 1990.

Almost all agencies offer either formal and/or informal orientation "courses" to

volunteers, including senior volunteers. Such courses usually comprise a discussion of the mission statement of the agency, some "dos and don'ts" connected with the carrying out of that mission, job descriptions, and aspects of communication. The purpose of this orientation may be thought of as "job enlargement," to expose to the volunteer the wide context in which he or she will work. Such, for example, is the case at the Calgary General Hospital where an invitation to volunteers to attend a formal two-hour orientation course expresses the hope that it will lead to "a better understanding of the contribution (he or she) can make . . ." to the work of the hospital "no matter what program (he or she) is in."

The course consists of a lecture/demonstration followed by a guided tour of the facilities. This is supported by a *Volunteer Handbook* for later reference. The formal general introduction is followed by an informal "on-the-job, Sitting-by-Nellie" training for specific jobs in chosen departments. "Communication—Staff/Volunteer/Patient" is one of the items referred to in a preliminary way in the formal orientation course.

This kind of orientation and training are, in the words of *Getting Started*, "crucial components of the management of volunteers" (Fels, 1988, p. 14). "All volunteers," she asserts, "should receive an orientation session to acquaint them with (the) organization, its goals and objectives, history, philosophy, programs, clients, and the services it provides to the community." Again, according to *Getting Started*, volunteers should tour the facilities, meet members of the paid staff, and have at hand a manual outlining administrative policies and procedures. Training sessions may take various forms, including lectures, seminars, workshops, or discussion groups. The American Health Care Association (American Health Care Association, 1985) recommends that "it probably will be best to plan (such an orientation course) over two or three sessions of a few hours each. . . ." While this may be ideal, organizers are obliged to take into account, first, that most senior volunteers don't want to be "talked at" but want rather to "get on with the job" (Brookfield, 1988, p. 31), and second, that it is frequently difficult to collect the same group week by week over a period, especially if its members have to travel some distance to join it. Many seniors to not choose to drive, especially when traffic is heavy or when nights are long and dark.

The situation is different where an agency must convey a considerable body of information or varieties of skills to its senior volunteers. Take, for example, the training of *docents* at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. This museum specializes in Western Canadian artifacts, and while seniors born in Alberta may know something about them from their own experience, they did not take courses in Canadian history because those did not exist when they were schoolchildren. In any case, children born in Alberta sixty-five years ago were few, and now as seniors are by attrition many fewer and much farther between. The organizer of volunteers—Glenbow has a thriving volunteer program—therefore provides two courses of ten Monday meetings each of four to five hours that deal with Western Canadian history (Native People, and Exploration and Settlement) from pre-Columbian native cultures to the ethnic mix of Alberta's population today (*Glenbow*, 1987, p. 14–16). For similar reasons, a long course, sometimes residential, is also provided for facilitators of the Fully Alive program that originated in Calgary. "A key feature . . . [of this program] is the training of older people to serve as group facilitators . . ." (Larsen, 1988, p. 28).

Agencies using volunteers in many different capacities like the Calgary General Hospital and Calgary Parks and Recreation develop standardized packages to supplement orientation courses. These lead to more training geared to specialized jobs. For obvious reasons, however, smaller agencies cannot devote resources

to the development of such elaborate orientation procedures. In any event, they do not recruit enough volunteers to make this provision profitable. Nonetheless, all such agencies orient their volunteers in some way to their principal purposes and activities, and volunteers are necessarily introduced to the work they are to do by responsible members of salaried staff.

A number of courses include aspects of "interpretation," that is, the requirement that senior volunteers pass on in acceptable ways the information that they have recently acquired to group of listeners, groups of students, touring parties, and casual visitors. Elements of good teaching practice may be talked about and demonstrated in some orientation courses. These elements are often included under the heading of "Communication" which, in various guises, is almost always part of orientation courses.

There is some suggestion that the men among seniors, oriented as they are toward the "instrumental" by previous experience, tend to gravitate toward administrative work in volunteer organizations—toward, say, work on committees. For many of them, training in matters such as institutional organization and rules of procedure may not be necessary. Nevertheless, they are likely to attend with their women colleagues generic courses dealing with the conduct of meetings, the organization of boards, and the resolution of conflicts between board members who are volunteers and salaried executives. In Calgary such courses are offered by a voluntary leadership program known as *Boardwalk*. Courses offered under the aegis of this organization are given by the equivalent of the ACA's Senior Consultants, that is, by persons who already dispose of the knowledge and skills required. Their training consists in showing them how to use in their teaching supplementary materials provided by the organization.

Do those who provide orientation and other courses attended by seniors modify them in any way to suit the requirements and expectations of seniors? For the most part they do not since, at the moment, seniors constitute so small a proportion of the total volunteer force. Nonetheless, organizers would undoubtedly benefit from some knowledge of what has been called *gerogogy*. They would then be better positioned as presenters and facilitators to take account of the physical and non-cognitive obstacles to learning encountered by many seniors. Among the former would be *presbycusis* and *presbyopia*, and among the latter, *distractability, meaningfulness*, and *pacing* in the deployment of material.

CONCLUSION

Unlike many younger volunteers, seniors do not generally seek jobs records of which will look good on their résumés. They are likely to have already appropriate skills (and particularly, "people-skills") by virtue of their experience. For the most part organizers of volunteers will assign them to jobs for which they are well suited, and, in any case, they have usually learned something of what these jobs entail from the friends to whom they are attached. Where they are preparing to take up jobs relatively new to them, they can learn what to do as well as any younger volunteer, given perhaps, a little more time. For these reasons, they may need little training, and agencies might attempt to use seniors more if only paid organizers would consider not what seniors—a notoriously heterogeneous stratum of society—have lost in aging, but what they have gained, and what remains, and as the Director of the Retired Senior Program in Detroit noted some time ago, those responsible should create "an atmosphere that . . . extends opportunities for maximum application of the older volunteer's skills and experience" (Rakocy, 1981, p. 36). In addition, they should not fail to take advantage of the potential for growth which is part of the make-up of most of today's seniors.

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