

the Volunteer

M A N A G E M E N T R E P O R T

THE MONTHLY IDEA SOURCE FOR THOSE WHO MANAGE VOLUNTEERS

April 2019 • Volume 24, No. 4

Some of What's Inside...

- Pet therapy in a health environment.. p. 2
- Youth, college applications..... p. 3
- Planning your first volunteer fair..... p. 4
- Host a recruitment open house..... p. 5
- Make training more enjoyable..... p. 6
- Become trauma informed..... p. 7
- Tout your NPO's accomplishments... p. 8

Use Tact When Dismissing Problem Workers

Sometimes it's simply impossible to avoid dismissing a volunteer who is causing problems. Be prepared for that situation by giving advance attention to the following points:

- Make expectations clear up front. Include a reasons-for-dismissal statement in volunteer handouts, and cover the topic during orientation.
- Conduct regular evaluations for those volunteer positions that merit performance reviews.
- Give plenty of warning, both verbally and in writing, to lessen the surprise of being asked to discontinue service: "Mark, you've had three instances now of saying you would show up to help but failing to let us know you would not be here. That makes it difficult for us."
- Don't wait to communicate. If you see inappropriate behavior, address the issue when it happens rather than letting it become worse.
- When and if the time comes, choose a proper setting in which to dismiss the volunteer. Select a private, undisturbed setting. Think through your wording in advance and be clear about the reason(s) for dismissal.

GROUP VOLUNTEERING

Make Group Volunteering a Fun Experience

By Amber Erickson Gabbey

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado (VOC; Denver, CO), the state's oldest and largest stewardship organization, completes around 65 public projects every year on public lands. Projects are open to anyone, including groups.

These 65 projects vary in location and tasks. Some need a dozen volunteers, and some can accommodate 150 people. This means not all public projects are eligible for groups. VOC also offers custom group opportunities that fit the needs or goals of the organization and the group.

VOC has a long history of successful group projects, and many come back every year. Anna Zawisza, director of community relations and strategic partnerships at Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, offers four tips for ensuring groups have a great experience:

1. **Communication.** Ensure you and the group are on the same page. State the goals up front, define what each side will do and get it in writing. Also, set expectations: what to bring, what the conditions will be like, what work will be done and why the tasks are important. The last thing you want are surprises on volunteer day.
2. **Adaptability.** It's important to spell everything out, but you also need to be flexible. Sometimes groups come unprepared, weather doesn't cooperate, etc. The purpose is: safety, fun and productivity, so be ready to pivot if necessary to satisfy those goals. Also, train your staff or volunteer crew leaders in group management and how to adjust to situations.
3. **Recognition.** Make sure the group feels valued and appreciated. If you don't tell them why the tasks matter, they may not know. Explain how these tasks — even the most tedious ones — matter in the big picture (for example, safer trails, healthier wetlands, etc.). Follow that up with a, "Thank-you," and reiterate what the group accomplished. Find multiple ways to share the impact.
4. **Food.** Simple food, beverages or swag can make volunteers feel appreciated. Especially for groups doing manual work, an ice cream cone or cold beer (after the work is done, of course) can go a long way. Allow time to reflect, celebrate the work and socialize to ensure the volunteers leave feeling satisfied and productive.

Source: Anna Zawisza, Director of Community Relations and Strategic Partnerships, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Denver, CO. Phone (303) 715-1010.

E-mail: Anna@voc.org. Website: www.voc.org

Free Toolkit Helps Enhance Volunteer Groups

VOC created the Stepping Up Stewardship Toolkit (www.steppingupstewardship.org) which includes guides and trainings to help other organizations start, expand or enhance outdoor stewardship volunteer programs. While created for stewardship organizations, many resources are applicable to a wider variety of organizations.

THE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT REPORT, (Print ISSN: 1091-3777; Online ISSN: 2325-8578), is published monthly by Wiley Subscription Services, Inc., a Wiley Company, 111 River St., Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774 USA. **Postmaster:** Send all address changes to *THE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT REPORT*, John Wiley & Sons Inc., c/o The Sheridan Press, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331 USA.

Copyright and Copying (in any format): Copyright © 2019 Wiley Periodicals, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission in writing from the copyright holder. Authorization to photocopy items for internal and personal use is granted by the copyright holder for libraries and other users registered with their local Reproduction Rights Organisation (RRO), e.g. Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, USA (www.copyright.com), provided the appropriate fee is paid directly to the RRO. This consent does not extend to other kinds of copying such as copying for general distribution, for advertising and promotional purposes, for republication, for creating new collective works or for resale. Permissions for such reuse can be obtained using the RightsLink "Request Permissions" link on Wiley Online Library. Special requests should be addressed to: permissions@wiley.com.

Information for subscribers: *The Volunteer Management Report* is published in 12 issues per year. Subscription prices for 2019 are: **Institutional Online Only:** \$1871 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £1178 (UK), €1366 (Europe). **Institutional Print + Online:** \$2340 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £1473 (UK), €1707 (Europe). **Institutional Print Only:** \$1871 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £1178 (UK), €1366 (Europe). **Personal Online Only:** \$110 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £70 (UK), €82 (Europe). **Personal Print + Online:** \$154 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), €97 (UK), €114 (Europe). **Personal Print Only:** \$131 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), €84 (UK), €96 (Europe). Prices are exclusive of tax. Asia-Pacific GST, Canadian GST/HST and European VAT will be applied at the appropriate rates. For more information on current tax rates, please go to www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/tax-vat. The price includes online access to the current and all online back files to January 1st 2013, where available. For other pricing options, including access information and terms and conditions, please visit www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/access.

Disclaimer: The Publisher and Editors cannot be held responsible for errors or any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this journal; the views and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Publisher and Editors, neither does the publication of advertisements constitute any endorsement by the Publisher and Editors of the products advertised.

Journal Customer Services: For ordering information, claims and any enquiry concerning your journal subscription please go to www.wileycustomerhelp.com/ask or contact your nearest office. **Americas:** E-mail: cs-journals@wiley.com; Tel: +1 781 388 8598 or +1 800 835 6770 (toll free in the USA & Canada). **Europe, Middle East and Africa:** E-mail: cs-journals@wiley.com; Tel: +44 (0) 1865 778315. **Asia Pacific:** E-mail: cs-journals@wiley.com; Tel: +65 6511 8000. **Japan:** For Japanese speaking support, E-mail: cs-japan@wiley.com. **Visit our Online Customer Help** available in 7 languages at www.wileycustomerhelp.com/ask.

Wiley's Corporate Citizenship initiative seeks to address the environmental, social, economic, and ethical challenges faced in our business and which are important to our diverse stakeholder groups. Since launching the initiative, we have focused on sharing our content with those in need, enhancing community philanthropy, reducing our carbon impact, creating global guidelines and best practices for paper use, establishing a vendor code of ethics, and engaging our colleagues and other stakeholders in our efforts. Follow our progress at www.wiley.com/go/citizenship.

View this journal online at www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/vmr.

Editor: Scott C. Stevenson.

Production Editor: Laura Aberle

Editorial Correspondence: Scott C. Stevenson, *The Volunteer Management Report*

For submission instructions, subscription and all other information: www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/vmr.

Printed in the USA by The Allied Group.

JOSSEY-BASS™
A Wiley Brand

Practical Advice for Offering Pet Therapy In a Medical Environment

By Yvette Boysen

Pet therapy is becoming more commonly accepted in a variety of places including crisis situations, schools, nursing homes, rehab centers and hospitals.

While different animals can serve as therapy pets, Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy (Rainbow; Morton Grove, IL) works strictly with dogs. Founded in 1987, nearly 200 dog and handler teams currently serve in the volunteer-run nonprofit. Each month, dogs and their handlers make more than 250 visits to help individuals — mostly children and those with special needs — improve their health, daily living activities and overall quality of life.

According to Susan Burrows, Rainbow's program coordinator, there are two types of pet therapy — animal-assisted activity or visitation and animal-assisted therapy. Although the nonprofit provides "comfort work" like that received from activities such as petting and brushing a dog, its primary focus is animal-assisted therapy.

"That is the utilization of animals to facilitate healing and rehabilitation in a therapeutic setting," Burrows explains. "It's a goal-directed intervention in which the animal is an integral part of the treatment process. The dog plays an important part in someone's physical, social and emotional therapy activities. The dog's skills are used to meet the needs of participants."

For instance, in a stroke rehabilitation center, individuals who are learning to walk again may walk the dog. Or people relearning how to use a fork may work to spear the food and feed the dog. Those working on their speech may give the dog commands.

Burrows says that although the use of animals in rehabilitation dates back to the 1790s and has been used in the United States since the mid-1970s, there are no national certifications or standards. So, before introducing a pet therapy program to your facility, she recommends doing your homework.

Each pet therapy organization has its own set of standards or requirements. Rainbow's handlers and dogs must go through a four-part class that addresses topics such as handling skills, therapy skills and activities, and how to interact with people. At the conclusion of the course, the team must pass a test. If they pass, the dog and its owner go through observation and internship phases. These allow for assessment in a variety of situations. Teams wishing to pursue hospital work participate in advanced training that includes work in a hospital simulation center where experienced handlers can observe the dog's behavior as it encounters things like beeping monitors and hospital beds.

Rainbow also re-evaluates its dogs annually, and handlers must undergo a criminal background check in addition to meeting each hospital's volunteer requirements.

When selecting a pet therapy organization, Burrows says to ask to see its certification or registration requirements. Beyond training, does the organization require health exams or obedience tests? Does it carry insurance? What type of reputation does it have? It's also important to remember that the training and requirements of a dog who is being read to during a library's story time are — and should be — much different than that of a pet therapy dog working in a medical setting.

Source: Susan Burrows, Program Coordinator, Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy, Morton Grove, IL. Phone (773) 283-1129. E-mail: rainbowaat@gmail.com. Website: www.rainbowaat.org

Recruit a Third More Volunteers Than Are Needed

When planning a special event, a phonathon or some project that requires a onetime showing of volunteers, over-recruit by at least one third to make up for any no-shows. By recruiting more volunteers than are needed, you should end up on target.

In the event everyone shows up and you have more volunteers than are needed, have in mind additional (and meaningful) work responsibilities that can be added to the mix to accommodate the extra volunteers.

Use a Separate Application for College, Youth Volunteers

Paper applications and a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet were the ways of the volunteer department at Baylor Scott and White Medical Center – College Station (College Station, TX) when it first opened its doors in August 2013. As the hospital's volunteer program grew from 20-some volunteers to approximately 150 volunteers, this process became more and more cumbersome. This led Kendall Parker, guest services director, to purchase VSys One (www.vsysone.com) in 2017, software that allows her to offer online applications and easily track volunteer hours.

The addition of this software also prompted the use of a separate volunteer application for college and youth applicants. According to Parker, there are two primary reasons for an application unique to students. The first being the ability to easily turn on and off the submission process, as the hospital only accepts new college volunteers twice a year and high school students once a year.

The second reason is that it allows Parker to ask questions relative to students. Rather than focus on past employment history, she asks college and youth applicants to highlight past service experiences, as well as their areas of interest, as many are considering careers in the health field. Additionally, because class schedules vary, questions about availability become more important.

Another important question for college-aged students is their years in school. While Parker says she does not turn any volunteer away based on his or her status, freshmen and sophomore students are often more appealing because it's likely they will hold a volunteer position longer than juniors and seniors.

Parker says her college and youth applications are brief and do not include an essay. She reserves in-depth questions for the interview where she delves into the heart of each applicant and tries to make sure the student is a good fit for the hospital's culture.

Source: Kendall Parker, Guest Services Director, Baylor Scott and White Medical Center – College Station, College Station, TX. Phone (979) 207-0122.

E-mail: kendall.parker@bswhealth.org Website: www.bswhealth.org

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Front Desk Volunteers Benefit From Shadowing Opportunities

Reception desk volunteers are the face of your organization. Because first impressions are everything, it's crucial these individuals receive proper training so they can confidently and accurately respond to questions and handle any issues that may arise.

While Debra Mitguard, director of volunteer engagement at Westside CARES (Colorado Springs, CO), carefully selects people for this role, she says training can be challenging.

“The most effective way for us to train our front desk volunteers is to have them shadow our paid and volunteer Neighbor Advocates (one-on-one neighbor/client assistants) until they have a good understanding of the scope of services we offer, the criteria to access services, where to send people for services we don't offer and who to ask when questions arise that they can't answer,” she says.

During the four mornings of shadowing, Mitguard has volunteers train in several areas. Not only does this ensure a well-rounded training experience, but it also allows her to learn more about the volunteers themselves.

“(I can) observe their temperament under a variety of conditions, which enables me to choose volunteers who are best suited to the duties and challenges of the front desk,” she explains.

Additionally, Mitguard periodically conducts meetings with all front desk staff to problem solve issues and discuss changes in procedure.

Source: Debra Mitguard, Director of Volunteer Engagement, Westside CARES, Colorado Springs, CO. Phone (719) 389-0759, ext. 108.

E-mail: debra.mitguard@westsidecares.org Website: www.westsidecares.org

Pair Up Volunteers To Maximize Productivity

Many volunteer managers realize the benefits of pairing up volunteers as a way to accomplish certain tasks more effectively.

Paired up, volunteers can often accomplish more than if working individually. They can divide responsibilities, help one another meet deadlines, complement each other's strengths/weaknesses and likes/dislikes and have more fun completing tasks.

Give it a try. Select a project and assign tasks to volunteer teams of two. Then consider incorporating any or all of the following ideas to maximize productivity from these volunteer duos:

- Create a competition among teams based on different criteria — those who complete projects first (or on time), those who achieve the greatest success, those who are most thorough, etc. — then award prizes accordingly.
- Structure your training sessions so one half of each team gets particular training in one area followed by training in another area for the other team members. In this way you will have trained each member of the paired volunteers in a special area so that together, they can complement one another.
- If your paired volunteers are expected to make calls on others — for instance, on donors or potential sponsors — design a dual script for them. Designate one individual as the lead presenter and the second as the one whose job it is to provide supporting but key information. One person may be charged with doing the asking and the other, being prepared to answer any questions.
- If your volunteers provide tours, train one to provide more practical information regarding facilities/services, while the other focuses on anecdotal information.
- Pair veterans with rookies to train new recruits and pass the baton.
- Allow spouses and other couples to work as teams — also consider parent/child or even grandparent/grandchild teams.

Best Practices for Managing an Intern Program

If you don't have the staff, budget or time to enhance your volunteer program, consider developing an intern program.

According to Gabrielle Montoya, program project manager at Houston Methodist Research Institute (Houston, TX), interns are a great way to complete projects. They work more hours than traditional volunteers, and their objectives are different: Traditional volunteers work set shifts with an expected activity (maybe they walk shelter dogs, work the front desk or assist at an event), whereas interns work for experience and college credit. They are eager to develop their skills.

At Houston Methodist, Montoya has one to two interns per semester. Each intern has one primary project for the semester that helps improve the volunteer program. Montoya offers three best practices to ensure your intern program's success:

1. **Plan weekly check-ins.** Traditional volunteers don't need as much management, but interns benefit from touch-bases. Use the time to answer their questions, ensure progress on their primary projects and give feedback. With interns, you need to consciously consider their development and help ensure they get what they desire out of the experience. Even a mid-semester and end-of-semester review can help them track progress and skills development.
2. **Be very clear about expectations.** This starts at the recruitment phase — if you know what project you need completed, you can screen for those skills. For example, if the project is planning an appreciation event, look for candidates with the requisite skills and an interest in event planning. But remember this is a two-way street: It's also your responsibility to understand what the intern hopes to learn and set him or her up for success. In addition, up-front clarity around their projects means they always know what to work on. Montoya also requires some office and customer experience skills, so she can spend less time on training at the beginning. There will always be some training required, but requiring certain skills or experiences could make the program more manageable for you day-to-day.
3. **Since most internships are unpaid, consider what other incentives or perks you can offer.** Montoya offers opportunities to have informational interviews with hospital staff, potentially opening doors for future jobs, and free parking. Other ideas include free shirts or meals; discounts at your store or partner stores; and discounts on memberships, events or classes.

Source: Gabrielle Montoya, Program Project Manager, Houston Methodist Research Institute, Houston, TX. Phone (713) 363-7481. E-mail: gmontoya2@houstonmethodist.org. Website: www.houstonmethodist.org

Training Sessions

- In a half-day or all-day workshop, give your volunteers 15-minute breaks every 90 minutes.

Tips for Organizing A First-Time Volunteer Fair

The Urbandale Public Library's goal is to be vital to the community. One way they are achieving this is hosting a volunteer fair where people can connect with local nonprofits and city departments who need volunteers.

Last year was the library's first annual volunteer fair. Laura Sauser, community manager at the Urbandale Public Library (Urbandale, IA), planned the event. Around 60 people and 12 nonprofits attended, with a couple new additions planned for this year. The nonprofits were situated at tables around the room, allowing attendees to stop by, talk to the representatives, learn about volunteer opportunities and maybe even apply. The library also has a booth at the event. Sauser says she doesn't feel competition, because she wants people to find a great fit. Plus, the reality is many people volunteer with more than one organization. Getting volunteers and opportunities in the same room is good for everyone.

Now that Sauser is planning for year two, she offers a few lessons learned from year one:

1. **Start planning early.** While the event is pretty low-effort and easy to plan, starting earlier allows for better promotion and more time to find nonprofits to table at the event.
2. **Create a feedback loop.** Before planning year two, Sauser e-mailed attendees and asked for their input. They also helped select the date of the fair.
3. **Promote early and often.** Enlist the nonprofit attendees (including your city partners) to share with their social networks and e-mail lists. You want to cast the widest net you can.
4. **Encourage nonprofits to bring candy or interesting displays.** Rather than having empty tables, try to make it clear to people scanning the room who the organization is and what it does. Creativity will get more people to visit.
5. **Talk to people at the event.** Sauser plans to casually chat with as many attendees as possible this year to find out where they heard about the volunteer fair, why they chose to attend, etc.
6. **Determine your measure of success.** Sauser tracks number of attendees and also does a follow-up survey to the nonprofits to learn how many people they talked to, how many signed up, etc. Understanding the outcomes can help you determine ROI of hosting the event, though sometimes the intangible is just as important, such as developing community partnerships and being a resource to the community.

Source: Laura Sauser, Community Manager, Urbandale Public Library, Urbandale, IA. Phone (515) 331-6764. E-mail: lsauser@urbandale.org. Website: www.urbandale.org

Plan an Open House Aimed at Would-Be Volunteers

By Amber Erickson Gabbey

According to Kristin Field, volunteer program coordinator at the Garfield Park Conservatory (Chicago, IL), volunteers met through their open house are more engaged and stick around longer than volunteers from other recruitment channels.

Open houses can be a great way to meet potential volunteers and there are many ways to be successful. Let's look at two examples:

Garfield Park Conservatory

- Style:** Tables are set in a half-circle, with one table per program staffed by one to two current volunteers from that program. Each table has props to encourage attendees to stop (e.g., plants, beekeeping equipment, educational tools).
- Time:** Attendees drop in within a two-hour period, often during regular hours so visitors may stumble in.
- Frequency:** Two times per year at least, often for special events and seasonal needs.
- Attendance:** Varies — 40 people last time. Not all become volunteers, but Field finds it's easier for volunteers to commit face-to-face, especially after having their questions answered and those barriers removed.
- Communication:** Collect e-mail addresses and follow up with a reminder to apply.

History Colorado Center

- Style:** The focus was interactivity, to help attendees see the museum values. Stations were throughout the museum, so would-be volunteers interacted where they'd be volunteering. Each attendee received a passport to get stamped at each station. At the end, attendees hand in their passports for free museum tickets and entry to win a behind-the-scenes tour. Emily Dobish, director of volunteer engagement at History Colorado (Denver, CO), was in the volunteer lounge to answer questions.
- Time:** Attendees dropped in within a three-hour period on a Saturday afternoon. One lesson learned was to set expectations that the interactive style is more time-consuming than a traditional open house.
- Frequency:** The first-ever open house was January 12, 2019.
- Attendance:** Fifty-one people RSVP'd and 21 showed up. Weather was a factor. Even with a smaller number, Dobish thought it was successful and plans to do one again.
- Communication:** Focused on capturing interest at the moment — many attendees were signed up for orientation within a week after the open house. Also collected e-mail addresses to follow up with those who RSVP'd but didn't attend.

Sources: Emily Dobish, Director of Volunteer Engagement, History Colorado, Denver, CO. Phone (303) 866-3961. E-mail: emily.dobish@state.co.us. Website: www.historycolorado.org

Kristin Field, Volunteer Program Coordinator, Garfield Park Conservatory, Chicago, IL. Phone (773) 638-1766. E-mail: volunteering@garfieldpark.org. Website: www.garfieldconservatory.org

Make Your Website User-Friendly For Prospective Volunteers

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH) is doing what it can to make website navigation easy for prospective volunteers. The organization's home page (www.rmhcincinnati.org) features three prominent ways to access volunteer information, including a tab on its main menu.

"Volunteer" is one of four primary navigation tabs located on the top of the website. When users hover over the Volunteer tab, they see three categories of volunteer opportunities: Become a Regular, Volunteer When You Can and Help Our House From Home. Visitors can either click on one of these categories or a specific opportunity displayed under the category title. For instance, Snacks and Activities is one of the volunteer opportunities users can choose from under the Volunteer When You Can category heading.

"We know there are so many different people in our community who want to give back, so we try to make our website simple to navigate," explains Mike Weinberg, director of volunteers. "Just like in marketing, it is important to get the consumer — or in our case, the volunteer — what they need quickly."

Providing a hover option is a "clean and simple process" that allows users to quickly access the information they need.

"We only have a certain number of clicks per user before they get frustrated and move on to another site," he says. "The hover option is a great tool to use when looking to minimize clicks."

Since adding the hover option in the summer of 2017, Weinberg says there has been a significant decrease in troubleshooting e-mails and phone calls from prospective volunteers, freeing up staff time. The feedback from volunteers has been positive, as well.

Source: Mike Weinberg, Director of Volunteers, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH. Phone (513) 636-5586. E-mail: mweinberg@rmhouse.org. Website: www.rmhcincinnati.org

Plan for Results

- Create a yearly volunteer management plan that includes a statement about how volunteers advance your organization's mission.

Junior Auxiliary Accommodates Those With Daytime Conflicts

Atlantic General Hospital (Berlin, MD) has found a way to accommodate volunteers who have daytime scheduling conflicts through membership in its Junior Auxiliary Group (JAG).

“JAG is a sub-group of our auxiliary,” explains Toni Keiser, vice president of public relations. “The group consists of hospital and health system associates and community members who want to socialize and be active in supporting the hospital but are unable to volunteer during the day due to work and/or childcare responsibilities.”

The group’s mission is to “increase community awareness of Atlantic General Hospital and its associates through fun, fellowship and family-oriented activities and fundraising.”

While governed by the hospital’s auxiliary bylaws, JAG functions independently. Its members may attend and participate in auxiliary meetings, but are unable to make motions, vote or hold offices unless they are an active member of the auxiliary as well.

To date, there are 76 active JAG members and 124 with general membership. Each year the group averages nine meetings or socials with two to three fundraisers.

Started in 1998 by a group of physicians’ spouses, JAG acted as a “welcoming network,” allowing spouses new to the community to connect with others. More than 20 years later, it still helps families new to the area by publishing a welcome reference book. Additionally, JAG supports other programs and initiatives such as the hospital’s capital campaign, its Health Literacy Program for children and the James G. and Nancy W. Barrett Nursing Scholarship Program.

JAG has an eight-member executive committee that is responsible for most of the group’s planning, coordination and execution of events. Keiser serves as the liaison between the executive committee and the auxiliary’s board. While she’s there to provide support and resources, Keiser says allowing JAG members to maintain ownership is key to the group’s success. Also, contributing to the success is flexibility. She says it’s important to remember these individuals are busy, so it’s important to try to accommodate their schedules and understand that they will not always be able to attend every meeting and event. In an attempt to avoid over-scheduling, Keiser says JAG tries to keep the number of socials and fundraisers to a minimum.

Source: Toni Keiser, Vice President of Public Relations, Atlantic General Hospital, Berlin, MD. Phone (410) 641-9678. E-mail: tkeiser@atlanticgeneral.org. Website: www.atlanticgeneral.org

Recruitment Idea

- Schedule a series of “first date” days in which prospective volunteers are invited to spend a half day with your nonprofit to get a tour and do some volunteering, just to see if they might enjoy the real thing.

Design Training Sessions Volunteers Want to Attend

Let’s face it: Attending a training session probably isn’t among your volunteers’ favorite things to do. While trainings may never make a volunteer’s top five list, you can make these sessions more enjoyable and thereby more effective.

Sarah Timm, manager of interpretation at the Maine Maritime Museum (Bath, ME), has been training volunteers for three years and has six tips to share:

1. **Be empathetic.** If volunteers understand why something is important to them personally, it’s more likely they’ll remember it. So Timm suggests approaching your training sessions empathetically. Think of your volunteers and how they may view the material you’re presenting. Find ways to make it relevant to them.
2. **Be organized.** Show your volunteers you take training seriously. After all, if you don’t, why should they? An easy way to convey this message is to provide a training packet. An agenda and a few notes are sufficient. Having even a simple packet lets attendees know you have a goal and a roadmap to get there.
3. **Consider learning styles.** Because everyone learns differently, Timm says it’s important to utilize as many teaching strategies as possible. “For a single topic, such as safety and security, I include an aural presentation with PowerPoint, a group case-study activity that promotes discussion and a question and answer session,” she says. “Safety and security is important information, and presenting the same information in a variety of ways in one session allows for repetition in a way that is interesting and appeals to a variety of learning styles.”
4. **Know your volunteers.** Use commonalities to create an engaging experience. For instance, if most of your volunteers grew up in the 1960s, create a game that resembles a famous TV show from that time period.
5. **Be candid.** If you don’t know the answer, it’s okay to say so. Simply find out the answer and follow up. This is much better than damaging your credibility by providing outdated or incorrect information.
6. **Allow for socialization.** “Do not underestimate the power of simply making your trainings enjoyable and social,” Timm says. “By doing so, volunteers will want to come and become more receptive to learning new things in a casual and supportive environment. This can be as simple as providing coffee and social breaks or including games and interactive elements to spice up dry content.”

Source: Sarah Timm, Manager of Interpretation, Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, ME. Phone (207) 443-1316, ext. 350. E-mail: timmm@maritimeme.org. Website: www.mainemaritimemuseum.org

When a Volunteer Wants to ‘Give Back’ Following a Trauma

By Yvette Boysen

Each volunteer has a unique story. Unfortunately, for some, that story may involve trauma. While you are unable to change the past, you can create a healthy environment at your nonprofit for all volunteers, regardless of their stories, to grow and thrive.

“The number-one reason people volunteer is there is a personal tie to the cause,” explains Susan Asselin Hawthorne, volunteer services manager at Sweetser (Saco, ME), a community mental health provider with a statewide network of care in Maine. “A particular cause calls to you because you have or someone close to you has personally experienced the hardship the cause is aiming to minimize or eradicate. Whatever the cause, it touches your heart and drives you to give back and make a difference in the lives of those going through the same situation now.”

While volunteering is great — and can sometimes aid in healing — those who have experienced trauma do run the risk of re-traumatization. Therefore, it is important that your organization be “trauma-informed.” According to Asselin Hawthorne, this means you follow the four R’s:

1. “Realize widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery.
2. “Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in volunteers and others involved with your organization.
3. “Respond by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices.
4. “Resist re-traumatization.”

Behind the four R’s, Asselin Hawthorne says there are five core principles nonprofits should follow:

1. Volunteers need to feel safe, physically and psychologically. She says safety “generally means maximizing control over our lives and our environment and minimizing risks.”
2. Volunteers need choices. Having an opportunity to choose makes people feel valued, so let your volunteers make some decisions. For instance, let them decide how and where they serve.
3. Treat volunteers with transparency. “The goal is building and maintaining trust among clients, family, staff, volunteers and others who are involved in the organization,” Asselin Hawthorne says. It’s important to handle operations and decisions clearly and with clarity.
4. Encourage volunteer collaboration. “Partnering and leveling power differences demonstrates that healing happens in relationships and in meaningful sharing of power and decision-making,” she says. “Everyone has a role in the organization; you do not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic.”
5. Empower volunteers. Recognize and build upon each volunteer’s strengths and experiences. Doing so validates a person’s voice and choice and demonstrates that your nonprofit believes in resilience and supports self-advocacy.

Source: Susan Asselin Hawthorne, Volunteer Services Manager, Sweetser, Saco, ME. Phone (207) 373-3006. E-mail: shawthorne@sweetser.org. Website: www.sweetser.org

Following a Trauma: Take Care of Yourself

“You can’t pour from an empty cup,” says Sweetser’s (Saco, ME) Susan Asselin Hawthorne, volunteer services manager. “Take care of yourself first. Be aware of signs of burnout in yourself.”

To avoid secondary or vicarious trauma, she recommends the ABC’s of self-care:

“Awareness:

- “Know your own ‘trauma map.’
- “Inventory your current lifestyle choices and make necessary changes.
- “Take care of yourself.

“Balance:

- “Give yourself permission to fully experience emotional reactions.
- “Maintain clear work boundaries.
- “Set realistic goals for yourself.
- “Learn and practice time management skills.
- “Seek out a new leisure activity.
- “Recognize negative coping skills and avoid them.

“Connection:

- “Listen to feedback from colleagues, friends and family members.
- “Avoid professional isolation.
- “Debrief after difficult days.
- “Develop support systems.
- “Seek training to improve job skills and capacity.
- “Remember your spiritual side.”

Make Big Missions Attainable

Large, almost all-encompassing missions like ending hunger or curing cancer are common to many nonprofits. These lofty aims are commendable and stirring, but also vague and hard for supporters to grasp. To attract and retain volunteers, organizations need to offer ways to help people accomplish large goals in their lifetime.

Habitat for Humanity offers an excellent example. It’s vision — a world where everyone has a decent place to live — is just as expansive as any other organization’s. But it makes that vision attainable by offering a concrete way of contributing to it — building one house at a time. Such tangible evidence of good works being accomplished leads many volunteers to move from a casual first involvement to a long-lasting and committed relationship.

Volunteer *INSIDER*

THE MONTHLY IDEA SOURCE FOR VOLUNTEERS LEADING THE WAY

APRIL 2019

SHARE ACHIEVEMENTS

Seize Opportunities to Tout Your Charity's Accomplishments

People like siding with a winner. That's why you shouldn't hesitate to make mention of your organization's accomplishments whenever the opportunity presents itself — during a social gathering, among your friends and family, at your place of employment and elsewhere.

To make it easier to tout accomplishments:

1. Keep a list of known achievements. Whenever you learn of a new accomplishment made by the organization you represent as a board member or volunteer, write it down. Keep a list of noteworthy items to which you can refer.
2. Seek out news worth bragging about. Ask the organization's employees about what's been happening in their departments. Carefully read all communications put out by the organization, identifying accomplishments worth adding to your list.
3. Talk to those who are served by your organization (e.g., students, patients, youth, etc.). Ask for their perceptions. You will no doubt hear some testimonial gems that could be shared with others.

BUILDING VOLUNTEER RANKS

Consider Your Organization's Clients for Volunteer Roles

Persons who benefit from a charity or cause often become its best volunteers. What are you doing to follow up on those who have been served by this organization?

Here are three ways you can help enlist these prime candidates as volunteers:

1. Identify those benefitting from this organization and explain to them the personal rewards of volunteering.
2. Point out that one of the reasons they were served so well was because of the volunteer system that presently exists.
3. Help to paint a picture of what more could be accomplished if only more people contributed their time.

BECOME MORE PROACTIVE

Matching Interests and Tasks, Create a 'Willing to Do' List

If you have been associated with this organization for any length of time, you probably have a good understanding of what is and is not being accomplished.

Make a point to create a short list of tasks you would be willing to take on and share it with the appropriate staff. Examples may be as diverse as signing letters to making presentations.

Recognizing additional ways to help and then stepping forward to accomplish them really separates leaders from others. If more volunteers witness your leadership initiatives, they, too, may step forward with their own “willing to do” lists. Those proactive acts help build group motivation to achieve.

Remind Yourself of Deadlines

As intent as you may be to complete assignments as soon as you get them, it doesn't always work that way.

To stay on target, give yourself a reminder. Determine the halfway point of the deadline date and make a note in your calendar. Recognizing that your allotted time is half over will serve to give you the push needed to get your project completed and turned in on time.

Memorize Mission Statement

As a new volunteer with a nonprofit, consider memorizing the nonprofit's mission statement to promote the organization.

By memorizing the mission statement, you will speak intelligently about your nonprofit's mission and possibly encourage others to volunteer or become members of the organization. If your nonprofit happens to have a lengthy mission statement, boil it down to two paragraphs or into talking points for easy memorization and recitation.

Look for the mission statement at your nonprofit's website or ask your volunteer manager for a copy, then start reciting it so you can commit it to memory.

Apply What You've Learned

Have you attended a conference or workshop lately? Or perhaps you have visited another organization that relies on volunteer service. What information did you take away that could help the organization for which you volunteer? Compare and contrast volunteer tasks and projects and apply what you've learned elsewhere.