

Jewish Communal Service Association of North America



# Harnessing the Power of Volunteers

March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010





**Volunteer: It does a body good!**

# Volunteers



- Lend time, talent and energy to make a difference
- Can bring great value to an organization
- Look different today than they have in the past
- Require staff time and attention to succeed



# Why use volunteers?

- Bring an infusion of positive spirit and enthusiasm
- Free up time for staff to attend to other issues
- Introduce new networks/spheres of influence to recruit and fundraise from
- Offer unique skills and expertise
- Provide firsthand knowledge of the community

# Who's your favorite volunteer?



- Achievers
  - The goal-oriented doer who completes tasks
- Affiliators
  - The chatty team player who makes 'fun'
- Influencers
  - The big picture thinker who envisions the goal



# What can volunteers do?



- *Keep things running* – repair & maintain
- *Save lives and property* - emergency relief
- *Build a sustainable world* - environment
- *Lead an organization* - board/committee work
- *Make good work possible* - fundraising



# What else can volunteers do?



- *Empower people* – teach & exchange skills
- *Provide support* - administration & clerical
- *Provide nourishment* - prepare & serve food
- *Help the world go around* - transport people & goods



# Everyone counts (2006 stats)



- Overall: 32.2% of the nation engaged in civic life
- 61.2 million volunteers
  - Additional 5.3 million helped neighbors informally to improve their community
- 8.1 billion hours of volunteer service
- Faith-based institutions are the most popular organization choice amongst volunteers



# What's a volunteers value in \$\$\$?

- Dollar value of volunteer time in 2008 was \$20.25/hour
  - In NY: \$28.04 (#50)
  - In Mass: \$25.47 (#34)
  - D.C.: \$31.55 (#21)
  - In Calif: \$22.79 (#38)
  - In Ohio: \$17.99 (#23)
  - In Utah: \$16.74 (#1)

# What type of volunteer opportunity can you offer?



- One-time:
  - No commitment
- Ongoing
  - Regular commitment, schedule
- Episodic:
  - sporadic, occasional, interim, flexible



# Contemporary trends

- More people volunteering; giving less time
- Tend to seek episodic/one-time volunteerism
- Heightened interest in:
  - Family volunteerism
  - Stipended voluntarism
    - Americorp, VISTA, ReSERVE,
  - Mandated community service
    - Compulsory, either thru school, work or the judicial system

# Who really benefits?



- the Volunteer
- the Organization
- the Client
- the Community



# What motivates volunteers?

- Interest in a particular cause or issue
- Interest in a particular culture or community
- Personal responsibility to give back
- Learn/practice new skills
- Socialization and social networking
- Intrinsic reward
- Because they were asked

# Volunteering happens everywhere



- Hands on in local communities
- Voluntourism – local or overseas
- Corporate volunteerism
- Board/governance
- Government/advocacy
- Office work/grant writing
- Virtual/online volunteerism
- Within one's professional field



# Good volunteer management



- Volunteer outreach
  - Orientation and training
  - Ongoing supervision and support
  - Regular thank you's & appreciation
- and
- No asking volunteers to do the work of paid staff!



# The ASK



- 50% of volunteers were asked by
  - a friend
  - family
- 50% of volunteers were asked by
  - School
  - Faith-based institution
  - Service clubs
  - Work



# Why is it so hard to volunteer?



## Onerous applications

- Interviews
- Screening process
- Background checks (where necessary)
- Long lag times in-between opportunities
- Lack of flexibility
- Lack of follow up by the agencies



# Retention – why is it so hard to keep volunteers?

- Unclear roles, start and end dates
- Poor screening process
- Lack of guidance/supervision
- Disorganized volunteer experiences
- Lack of recognition
- Insufficient materials
- Absence of team motivation
- Mismatched skill and interest with a task assignments
- Lack of proper training, especially when facing critical situations and
- Restrictive volunteer assignments

# Good volunteer experiences include:

- Matching skills and interests to a volunteer's assignment
- Training the volunteer on the task to be performed
- Offering new skills training (this could lead to personal capabilities enhancement such as learning computer skills, employment, internships, etc.)
- Sharing the expected time commitment for different volunteer activities (e.g., 1 day vs. 6 months)
- Promoting volunteering with friends or a social group
- Helping the volunteers understand the meaning of their work and the connection to the organization's mission
- Showing the volunteers that one person's help can really make a difference

# Turning Volunteers in Donors



- Our agency model: volunteer department is a part of the development team.
- Created a new lens in which to approach volunteerism.
- Goal: build resources for the agency.
- Every volunteer is a prospective donor - large or small.
- Stakeholders in your organization.
- Volunteerism as a cultivation tactic for current donor prospects.
- Fundraising is not a dirty word. Now more than ever, no matter what our role is, we need to keep the bottom line in mind to continue our missions.



# Treat volunteers like donors



- Educate them about the agency at large- not just the area they are volunteering. Build an understanding of the impact of your work.
- Don't be afraid to use numbers, statistics and talk about your budget and funding streams so the volunteers know where the money comes from and what your current challenges are. They will feel "in the know."
- Show videos, or have clients or executives tell the agency story to groups that have giving potential (i.e. corporate groups, major donors to other organizations).
- Invite development staff to come schmooze at events.
- Stay in touch! Include volunteers in written and online communication (i.e. e-lists, newsletters, annual reports)
- Make follow up calls to ensure volunteers have positive experiences.



# Staying in touch

- Provide sign-in sheets at volunteer events to capture emails for future interest and correspondence.
- Invite to fundraising events, openings, to speak to youth about their service
- Solicit volunteers for targeted gifts to support the area they have volunteered with (i.e. nursery school, homeless program).
- Create cultivations strategy for individual or groups for pre/post volunteer experience.
- Leave-behind brochures with contact info and pledge cards (when appropriate)
- Send “Thank You” notes, emails and pictures (of them volunteering if applicable) to keep the experience fresh in their minds.
- Talk to them about next steps and other opportunities (committees, board).

# How do you know if a volunteer has giving potential?

- Review volunteer applications. Make sure application includes: place of work, position, spousal information, other organizations they are connected with and their role (i.e. board members in other places).
- Consult/share with your development staff. They may see something you don't (i.e. volunteer or spouse may work at company that your agency has identified as a corporate sponsor).
- Ask staff that the volunteer works with if they have expressed interest in learning more or getting more involved.
- During the interview process - listen for clues of potential wealth (they are not available over the summer because they are at the beach).

# Don't be afraid to ask and be open

- If a group approaches us to volunteer- we ask them “do they have a budget for a project?” or “would you consider helping us raise \$ for this program?”- after a good volunteer experience.
- Let volunteers know we don't have the resources to create events or special programs without groups covering their costs. Build in administrative/staff time in project budgets.
- RESEARCH: Google searches, more advance searches, check donor system to see if they are an existing donor.

# Building internal support

- Start with building strong communication and partnership with the program, marketing and development staff
- Open conversations with the goal of strengthening support for agency overall through volunteer and financial support.
- Clarify that fundraising from volunteers will be done in coordination with any staff that has built the relationship with the volunteer. No secrets or surprises that may upset the current relationship or role the volunteer has with the agency.
- Find out about events, needs and areas of your organization that need both volunteer and financial support.
- Try and fit volunteers into current events and needs in program areas. Try not to “create” work for volunteers and your staff.
- Create menu of opportunities and price tags together (i.e. Volunteer to feed the homeless lunch-\$1000).
- Share with program staff: by including volunteers in their area, it will potentially lead to support for their programs.

# Ways to connect the dots



- Website - link volunteer and giving opportunities.
- Add place to give on volunteer application and brochures that you give out to volunteers.
- If volunteer has a milestone, special event or loss-encourage tribute giving to agency.
- Track volunteer giving/involvement in fundraising system so participation is documented.



# Using volunteerism as cultivation tool

- Invite current donors to special volunteer opportunities. The more they see the more they give.
- Create a special board volunteer project where they can invite family and friends.
- Volunteer programs are a more impactful than meetings and lunches.
- Approach corporate prospects with volunteer and sponsorship projects that align with their focus.
- Create relationships with private schools, synagogues and community groups that have volunteer requirements or needs.

# Success stories

- Corporate volunteer who attended a few “one-time” experience became board member
- Board members children volunteered and sponsored literacy fair and introduced us to new prospects who attended event.
- Bar Mitzvah-age volunteer coach raised \$10K (30 new donors) from guests and secured meeting with senior person at Goldman Sachs.
- Increased volunteer hours from employees of a bank leads to doubling their foundation gift.
- College mentors asked their work places and contacts to support the program through a small scale fundraiser.
- Soup kitchen volunteers raised \$17K online in two weeks for a Passover Seder for the homeless.
- Bat Mitzvah volunteer in our early childhood program led to \$20K annual gift and a new library.

# Resources

- Corporation for National & Community Service  
[www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)
- Energize, Inc  
[www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com)
- Hands On Network  
[www.handsonnetwork.com](http://www.handsonnetwork.com)
- Idealist  
[www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)
- Independent Sector  
[www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)
- New York Cares  
[www.nycares.com](http://www.nycares.com)
- NYAVA  
[www.nyava.org](http://www.nyava.org)
- NYC Volunteerism  
[www.nycservice.org](http://www.nycservice.org)
- NYS Commission on National & Community Service  
[www.newyorkersvolunteer.ny.gov](http://www.newyorkersvolunteer.ny.gov)
- Points of Light Institute  
[www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org)
- UJA-Federation of New York  
[www.ujafedny.org/volunteer](http://www.ujafedny.org/volunteer)
- VolunteerMatch  
[www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)