

MANAGING VOLUNTEERS: DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM

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Abstract

This paper is designed to help professionals in the Park and Recreation field as well as other organizations to identify the essential components of a sound volunteer program. The manual discusses volunteerism by addressing three core questions: Why should an organization manage volunteers? Where should an organization begin with the volunteer program process? And, what are the essential components of a volunteer program? This paper provides the basic foundation needed to develop and maintain a quality volunteer program. Beginning with a simple definition of volunteering, essential areas will be covered for developing and properly managing a volunteer program. All successful volunteer programs should begin with a needs assessment, have established goals and objectives, a sound risk management plan, clearly written volunteer job descriptions, marketing/recruitment plans, as well as retention and recognition guidelines to strengthen the volunteer program and ensure its longevity.

1.0 Introduction

Informal social control theories have suggested that voluntary service gradually draws a person to virtue. This can be further examined from the perspective of Tocqueville (1835) who posits that “by dint of working for one’s fellow citizens, the habit and taste for serving them is at length acquired” (p.197). Volunteers do play a vital role in many areas of the leisure service profession by providing essential work and know-how, which has become a considerable monetary advantage. Because

of today’s dwindling financial resources, the prudent development of a volunteer labor force has become essential. Most recreational professionals that have planned projects or events understand that they could not have been successful without the work, knowledge, and time donated by volunteers.

1.1 Volunteer Management Defined

Volunteer management has become a specialized form of personnel management. Today’s volunteer workforce is generally more highly motivated, better educated, more skilled, and more professional than in previous decades. Volunteers have now placed a greater value on the quality of life and the commitment to rebuilding and regenerating their communities. Recreational professionals working with volunteers must be able to operate efficiently and effectively. The future development of the recreation and park profession will be dependent on management, marketing, and information technology systems that can successfully implement a volunteer workforce. In addition, technical tools and built-in assessments as well as recognition and evaluation systems are also needed.

1.2 Why Manage Volunteers?

Productivity, high performance, positive attitudes, and good morale, result from an effective volunteer management system. Fischer and Schaffer (1993) define volunteering as, “the act of freely helping others without regard to financial and/or materialistic gain” (pg. 13). The services that volunteers provide on a daily basis create an atmosphere of continuous learning and sets precedents for future recreation and park professionals. For example, in 1927 Jane Adams influenced not only her neighborhood with the development of the Hull House, but provided a nation-wide standard for the treatment of people (Ilsley 1990). Volunteers often serve as a primary link between the consumers and the organization, making the training and management of volunteer personnel essential. Moreover, it is equally important to have properly trained professionals who know how to work with volunteers to create an atmosphere of productivity for the organization as well as the volunteers who freely

provide their services. Quality volunteers enable paid professionals to devote more of their time to performing needed functions vital to the survival of the organization (Lauffer & Gorodezky 1977).

2.0 Methods: Begin with a Needs Assessment

Before recruitment and interviews are conducted for volunteers, a needs assessment must be implemented. This process is vital to ensuring that the organization's needs are being addressed in an effective and efficient manner. A needs assessment distinguishes differences between the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) or capabilities people possess and those they need to acquire to do their job effectively (Learning and Development Training (n.d.) Retrieved August 6, 2004, from http://www.faa.gov/ahr/super/learn/training_needs.cfm). The needs assessment provides the company with training, information and other vital learning tools necessary to plan and budget for volunteers. Identifying potential learning opportunities and developing strategies helps the organization achieve its goals while reducing liability. The information gathered from the needs assessment is used to plan the next phase of education and continuous learning for volunteers and staff. A needs assessment often takes on different methods. The inquiry begins by interviewing recreation and park directors, managers, superintendents, and program supervisors in an attempt to understand their positions and future expectations. Additional program and facility surveys may be conducted to determine how volunteers will potentially enhance program implementation. Also, a taskforce can be used to determine the frequency and level of volunteer assistance that is needed. After completing the needs assessment the data must be analyzed, interpreted, and shared with the administrators who will make the ultimate decisions.

2.1 Developing Goals and Objectives

After completing the needs assessment, goals and objectives must be developed. Goals can be defined as the overall suggestions of how volunteers will function in the broad scope of the organizational plan. The objectives are the specific, yet simplistic strategies that are used to obtain the organizational goals. The goals and objectives assist in the planning and evaluation phase of volunteer

recruitment (Retrieved August 6, 2004, from <http://www.msu.edu/course/aee/806/syllabus/notes7.htm>).

2.2 Stages of Plan Development

To begin the process, activity plans need to be developed in an effort to accomplish program objectives. In essence, the objectives should drive the activity plans as well as programmatic outcomes. Several criteria should be considered when preparing activities. They need to include accommodating for a variety of learning styles, identifying needed resources (e.g., personnel, community, financial and technological resources), and be based upon participant needs (Khalil 1991). Every organization must have a functional administrative plan. An administrative plan is the basic principle which shapes the characteristics of an organization. Organizations that are successful at volunteer management develop clear directives while recognizing limitations. With this in mind, consideration must be given to program administration to ensure the successful delivery of the volunteer program. Effective planning of a volunteer program demands that administrative systems are put in place. Typical elements of program administration include the following: Policies and procedures; a financial plan for the program; adequate staffing; meetings that devise program strategy and development; and, distribution of reports. Similar to the survival of the fittest phenomenon, recreation and park organizations must compete with each other for resources.

2.3 Designing a Program Evaluation

Evaluation is an important process of program planning and has a direct correlation to the effectiveness of program goals and objectives. Evaluation can be defined as the assessment of a volunteer's performance in relationship to identified strengths and weaknesses as observed by the supervisor. Moreover, the evaluation gathers information to measure the achievement of program goals as it relates to volunteer performance. Evaluation may also be used to accomplish the following: Identify and examine program growth; validate, increase, or verify program worth; provide acknowledgment of program accomplishments; build integrity within the organization and surrounding community; provide precedence for future planning as seen by expenses and time requirements; and support the board in deciding a plan of action (Khalil 1991). Evaluation is designed to provide the organization with

data that will explain the following: How will volunteers impact the organization's relationship with consumer markets? Also, how will the volunteer program promote cost effective strategies for the organization? Equally important is the recognition that both organizational focus and the type of information being gathered determine the methodology of implementing the evaluation. After completing a survey phase, a written plan of work detailing the evaluation objectives and range is very important. One should begin by gathering information on the reasons for evaluation, and rank the information in order of importance. Before moving to the next step, an agreement must be reached, among the individual(s) responsible for the program, using the evaluation priorities. The next step is to determine what data needs to be collected and collect it efficiently. For each objective, the evaluation must state the desired outcomes to be measured, the data sources, and method of data collection. The desired outcome may relate to change in program participants, such as improving self image, improving income, and learning new skills. It may also relate to changes at the program level, such as depth of program or level of recipient satisfaction.

2.4 Report Development Phase

The evaluation results should be organized in a manner that facilitates making program decisions while, at the same time, demonstrating program accomplishments. An evaluation report should be organized around program objectives that were thoroughly evaluated. The report may include a brief summary, a statement of the evaluation's purpose, evaluation methods used, results and findings (listed by objective or decision), as well as conclusions and specific recommendations. Develop a plan of action that addresses the findings of the evaluation, if such a plan is needed. Program evaluations conducted by volunteers provides valuable feedback. During the final phase of the process staff members clarify the findings, present both conclusions and recommendations, develop a draft report, request an internal review of the contents, and upon receiving feedback, the members revise and finalize the draft report.

2.5 Risk Management and Legal Considerations

Risk is often defined as a measure of known and unknown threats to achieve overall program objectives

within defined cost, schedule, and technical restraint. Organizational risk contains two components: the probability of failing to achieve a particular outcome; and the consequences of failing to achieve that outcome (U.S. DOD 2001). Safety, legal considerations, and effective and efficient services are all components of any organizations risk management plan. Administrators and volunteer coordinators may obtain proficiency in the expansion of risk management techniques by implementing a few suggested approaches to decreasing liability. This can be accomplished by first assessing the organizations current insurance policy to determine if and how volunteers are covered in the plan. Next, send the insurance holder documentation outlining possible risk management issues related to volunteers, and discuss the policies the insurance company will put in place to secure coverage for these risk areas. Volunteers should complete a waiver form that ensures they acknowledge the organizations policies and procedures with regards to safety, insurance coverage, and other liability issues. The organizations by-laws should be posted and a copy given to the volunteers. The volunteer's status (e.g., "independent contractor" vs. "normal agent") should be clearly identified prior to the volunteer beginning service. Required trainings, supervision, and disciplinary action policies should be explained verbally and provided in writing to all new volunteers prior to initiation of services. All volunteers must sign a waiver stating that they understand the policies. Volunteers handling financial documents and/or money should understand the organizations policy/procedural controls regarding the handling of money and/or valuable items. Adequate screening tools are crucial to assist in protecting the organization from lawsuits and the consumers against liability from the volunteer's actions. Such screening should begin upon receipt of the initial application. The process should include a formal interview process (with two or more disciplines involved); reference checks; and personal, employment, and criminal background record checks. During the volunteers orientation/training phase, several key areas should be addressed. They include discussing: code of conduct procedures; organizational policies and procedures; conflict resolution procedures; volunteer and staff relations, and alcohol and substance abuse policies (Khalil 1991).

2.6 Internal and External Communication

Communication is the informal network that carries messages about work and social topics. Communication skills are of rising importance due to the enormous amount of information that must presently be disseminated, consumed, evaluated, and returned or discarded (O'Hair & Friedrich 1992). The level of communication influences the general atmosphere of an organization, as well as staff and volunteer efficiency. The administration of a volunteer program requires efficient verbal and written communication skills. The articulation of the organization's philosophy, team building, the management of change, and explanation of tasks and standards, requires highly developed communication skills. Important decisions need to be made by the agency as to what types of information will and will not be provided by volunteers to the public.

3.0 Results and Discussion: Volunteer Management 101

Volunteering without a job description is like driving a car without a steering wheel; an accident is waiting to happen. A job description identifies the key areas in a volunteer's position. Starting with the most intricate facts of the organizations work area, the job description covers important tasks, techniques to accomplish the tasks, purpose and responsibilities, and future skill development obtained through training. Job descriptions have two major roles which include hiring and managing. The necessity of having a volunteer job description is directly correlated to the organization's expectations of the volunteers. Volunteers need to know what is expected of them during their service time. To maintain efficiency, the job description must reflect the goals and objectives of the organization. The volunteer job description should clearly define: what service the volunteer will be asked to perform, qualifications the volunteer must have to provide such a service, time allotment the volunteer will be required to commit, and who will be responsible for supervising the volunteer activities. And, most importantly, how much training will be needed to prepare the volunteer to carry out the task successfully? Written job descriptions serve many functions which include marketing or selling the job to prospective volunteers, are important tools for screening volunteers and to clarify supervision protocols and

evaluations, which provide a formal agreement between the volunteer and the organization as well as information about job responsibilities. This information concerning job responsibilities needs to be analyzed with care, and divided into subtasks, which can be used to develop the job description.

3.1 Volunteer Training and Orientation

A volunteer manager needs to recognize that without the commitment, dedication, and hard work of volunteers, the organization would be hampered in carrying out its mission. In order to recognize the efforts of current volunteers and to increase the knowledge and ability of volunteers, managers need to provide a sound orientation and ongoing training. A well designed volunteer training program improves a volunteer's ability to perform specific job assignments. Volunteers often need thorough training which can include learning how to complete myriad forms which range from reporting injuries to correctly logging their hours. Dekker and Halman (2003) suggest that one of the reasons that volunteer turnover may be so great is the result of receiving insufficient training. Without good training, volunteers may not be able to do their assigned jobs well or to get the intrinsic rewards they expect. In order for volunteer training to be effective it needs to focus on the attitudes, knowledge and skills required to perform specific tasks. Even though volunteers have different investments in the agency than paid staff members, every volunteer appreciates the investment of training they receive in order to make them perform better at their jobs.

3.2 Marketing and Recruitment

Once a volunteer management program has developed clearly defined job descriptions and conducted a volunteer training and orientation, they are ready to move to the next step which is marketing and recruitment. Marketing, more than any other organizational function, deals directly with volunteers as customers. Understanding, creating, communicating and delivering volunteer value and satisfaction should be at the very heart of every recreation and park organization. Gatewood, Taylor, and Ferrell (1995) define marketing as the delivery of customer satisfaction at a profit. Typically, marketing is used to attract new volunteers by promising superior value while keeping current volunteers through the

delivery of quality experiences. Sound marketing is critical to the success of every volunteer management program. Behind the entire massive network of people and volunteer programs are agencies that are competing for your volunteer's attention. Volunteer managers must create a fundamentally sound marketing plan in order to attract valuable and talented volunteers. Volunteers are an important resource for which organizations constantly compete. For organizations to grow in size and expand their services, they must ensure adequate volunteer numbers.

3.3 Marketing Process

The marketing process explores the agency's capabilities and matches them to user needs. The foundation for this process examines what the agency's purpose is within the community. Does your agency have a mission statement, or a document that outlines the purpose of the organization and defines customer service? A primary goal for any marketing plan is to contribute to the agency's mission of serving the community, whatever that community may be, as well as the local area, worldwide on the Internet, or special user groups (Retrieved August 6, 2004.<http://www.olc.org/marketing/2process.htm>). To begin the process, the agency's capabilities should be assessed with a marketing audit and an internal assessment. Knowing what your agency is capable of and the services and resources you offer, are all critical to the marketing process. List both your agency's strengths and weaknesses? Determine the marketing mix (4 Ps): product, place, price, and promotion. Learn about your users through market research. Find out what your users want from your organization. Identify services or resources you have and/or need to promote, as well as the ones you need to acquire or create. Market research takes many forms (e.g., surveys, focus groups). Results help you select a target user group (market segment) and choose a specific product to promote or a problem on which to focus.

3.4 Marketing Plan

The single most powerful marketing tool for your organization is a good marketing plan. A marketing plan is a simple one page document that specifically describes who you are, what you do, who can benefit from your services, how you plan to attract volunteers to your agency, when you plan to do it and how you plan to pay for it, are all

things that everyone in your organization, network, and client base should clearly understand. Below is a list of questions that all volunteer managers should answer when developing their marketing plan. The marketing plan should address the following questions: What are the benefits of volunteering? Why the agency needs the support of volunteers? What are the target markets? What will be demanded from the volunteers? What are the program strategies and timelines? How can the organization build and establish relationships and partnerships in the community? And, what are the best avenues for recognizing and rewarding volunteer achievements? A detailed list of programs and services are needed to support volunteer efforts. Equally important to the volunteer's success is for each volunteer to know and understand the agency's history, mission, purpose, and goals.

3.5 Recruiting Volunteers

Recruiting can be defined as getting the right person in the right job with the right skills at the right time. A volunteer program is a two-way street: it must meet the needs of both the organization and the volunteer; a place where everyone wins. Recruiting volunteers should be a process rather than a problem. Securing volunteers should be done through a total recruitment process rather than just taking the first individual who walks through the door. The recruitment of volunteers in your organization whether it is to get someone to coach a tee ball team, or run the local Special Olympics, should not be handled any differently than recruitment of a paid staff member. Following the five steps listed below can make volunteer recruitment successful. They include:

Step 1 - Define the Job: The first step in recruiting volunteers is to define the job that needs to be done. This will help ensure that the volunteer program gets the right person to fill the position. Individuals responsible for recruiting and all potential volunteers should have a clear understanding of what the job involves.

Step 2 - Determine Job Qualifications: A job description is a useful tool that lists all the qualifications needed to do the job. This step clarifies for all those involved the expectations and

requirements of the volunteer position. Furthermore, it gives volunteers an idea of the role they play in the overall goals of the organization.

Step 3 - Develop a List of Potential Candidates:

Now that you understand what the job is, and what sort of person is required to do it, you need to list potential candidates who may be able to do the job. During your next step, refer to sources such as your membership lists, other community organizations, welcome wagon, schools, community colleges, universities or places where people gather (e.g., church meetings). It would be very useful if volunteer programs require all potential volunteers to complete a "Window of Work" when they join and refer to this information when recruiting the right volunteer for the right job. The window of work can be used as a primary means of locating a special place for your volunteers within the organization. Volunteer managers should also remember to have their volunteers to occasionally update this valuable information. This simple tool can help to quickly identify individuals with particular skills, knowledge and connections.

Step 4 - Interviewing the Volunteer: This is probably the most difficult step in the process because of the fear of rejection on the part of the volunteer. However, if you have followed steps 1 to 3 of the recruitment process, then you can be assured that the person being interviewed has the potential to be the right person for the job. In most cases, people will be flattered just to be asked.

Step 5 - Appoint the Volunteer: At this point in the interview, to ensure both parties understand what has taken place, summarize any decisions and actions that have been agreed upon. It may be necessary to have a formalized agreement, signatures, or application completed at this point. Also, offer additional training and orientation if deemed necessary in completing the volunteer's work.

3.6 Volunteer Placement

Since volunteers are not paid, it is especially important to provide them with a job that is worthwhile and

rewarding. Most organizations may wish to employ a volunteer coordinator to develop job descriptions and find people to fill each position. Volunteer placement must be done effectively and efficiently to maximize the skills and abilities of each volunteer. The following is a list of key elements in the success of volunteer placement. They include matching the volunteer to the job; assigning a supervisor for the volunteer; matching the volunteer to a specific program; providing adequate and appropriate orientation and training, and also following up with an evaluation and feedback process. Placement is an extension of the screening process. Poor matches will result in dissatisfied volunteers and staff members as well as increased volunteer turnover. Volunteers who are not placed in a comfortable role can potentially hurt future recruitment efforts if they leave with a negative experience and attitude. Placement should occur within a reasonable amount of time following the interview. Remember that not all volunteers recruited, screened, and interviewed, will be appropriate for the program. The volunteer may decide that the placement is not the right match. The agency, upon gathering information from reference and background checks, may decide that it is not in their best interest to place the volunteer. It is important to be truthful with volunteers and to offer other volunteer opportunities they may wish to pursue.

3.7 Supervision of Volunteers

When volunteers are fully integrated into a volunteer program, the volunteer's supervisor will generally be the volunteer coordinator or another paid worker whose efforts are extended by the volunteer. Many paid professionals may find it difficult to supervise volunteers. This is more evident when a volunteer's assignment is ambiguous and when little thought has been given to identifying the work to be performed. Another problem occurs when a volunteer has been improperly oriented to the agency or poorly trained for the work they are expected to accomplish. Supervision of volunteers can be either task oriented, developmentally oriented, or both. Task oriented supervision focuses on getting the job done. Developmentally oriented supervision focuses on the volunteer's improvement in both skill and ability while completing the task at hand. Both orientations are needed if the volunteer is to be satisfied and to ensure that s/he is doing what is required at an acceptable

level during the volunteer experience. Other important aspects of supervision are listed as: Adequate supervision conveys the message to volunteers that they are valuable players in the organization; supervision is a form of recognition demonstrating that the service a volunteer performs is significant enough to measure how well it is accomplished; and, supervision of volunteers provides consistency in the quality of service that is delivered. Assigning a staff supervisor to volunteers creates team spirit with paid staff, thus enabling volunteers to achieve the same quality of service. The volunteer retention rate is heightened by effective supervision of volunteers. Many volunteers expect to be supervised and evaluated professionally because they have either recently retired from a paid position or currently hold a position with other companies or agencies. In addition, effective risk management for the organization is ensured by adequate supervision of volunteers. Many personnel policies that apply to the paid staff often apply to volunteers as well. Therefore, supervisors must keep volunteers informed of volunteer and client rights, liability considerations, and safety precautions and codes.

3.8 Evaluation of Volunteers

Evaluation is essential to maintaining a high quality volunteer program. Evaluations can provide the volunteer coordinator with ways of measuring how the program is progressing both on an individual and programmatic level (Keith 2003). On the individual level, evaluation is often a component of supervision. It includes regularly scheduled feedback opportunities between the volunteer and the paid staff member. Evaluations focus primarily on the performance of the individual volunteer, concerning their areas of strength and the areas that need improvement as perceived by the volunteer, the supervisor, and other paid staff. At the programmatic level evaluation focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency of the volunteer program at contributing to the organization's mission. Effectiveness measures how close the program comes to meeting its stated goals and objectives, while efficiency measures the costs associated with the program in relation to its perceived benefits. For an evaluation to be meaningful, volunteers must know to whom they are responsible and what criteria are being used to measure their performance. Both the supervisor and the volunteer should have clear standards

of performance measures agreed upon in which they base their evaluation. These performance standards should be given to the volunteer along with the job description (Ilsley 1990). When a volunteer's behavior departs from an organization's policy or is detrimental to the volunteer program, the misconduct must be addressed. First, give a verbal warning that informs the volunteer of the infraction and describes the consequences of a second incident. In the event of a second incident, a written warning should be given to the volunteer with a copy placed in the volunteer's file. If corrective action has not resulted after the second warning, disciplinary action should include releasing a volunteer from a position. The volunteer coordinator or administrator must handle dismissal of a volunteer since the volunteer was recruited, interviewed and oriented through the volunteer program. Prior to dismissing a volunteer, the coordinator or administrator should consult the appropriate administrative staff for purposes of adhering to the organization's dismissal policies. Infractions such as breaking confidentiality, opposing the policies, rules and regulations, sexual harassment, and undesirable language are examples for taking the above-mentioned steps to dismissal. Immediate dismissal may be warranted by such extreme incidents as: reporting under the influence of alcohol or drugs, any form of child abuse, sexual misconduct, threatening or physical altercation, and theft. With few exceptions, as noted above, volunteers should not be dismissed without an in-depth investigation into the specific circumstances, making certain that proof of violation of organization policies or performance standards has occurred. The volunteer may be suspended while the investigation is in process. Determine if extenuating or excusable circumstances existed and always document the findings and conclusions. Releasing volunteers should be handled fairly and with diplomacy. Do not apologize for your decision. Allow for an appeals process. Provide notification to staff and others who need to be informed that the volunteer will no longer be working with the organization. Whenever possible, conduct an exit interview to gain information about the program and organization, take measures to bring closure to the relationship and thank the volunteer, if appropriate. The interview will reduce negative feedback from filtering out into the community at large. Whether a volunteer resigns or is dismissed from an organization,

accurate records of the events must be retained to provide documentation for grievance procedures or simply to document a volunteer's work history with the organization. Volunteers should be encouraged to complete an evaluation assessing their job satisfaction and willingness to volunteer again. The volunteer coordinator should also make an effort to assess the performance of each volunteer. This information should be kept on file for future reference.

3.9 Retaining, Motivating and Recognizing Volunteers

Retaining volunteers may be even more critical than recruitment for the survival of organizations that utilize volunteers. Reliable volunteers can be counted on both by their organizations and by those who receive their services. Conversely, volunteers who quit after a short time are costly. Motivation in its simplest form is finding out what people like to do -- and can do well -- and then letting them do it. The study of what motivates volunteers is one of our oldest disciplines. The sphere includes behavior, communications, conflict resolution, perceptions, attitudes, values, interpersonal skills, leadership and much more. Investigations on motivation fill mountains of books yet findings on what moves people are still inconclusive. There are no easy answers to motivating others, but there are a few ways to inspire folks to action. The intent of this segment is to give fundamental ideas and direction as you attempt to organize and motivate the members of your organization. The concepts reviewed here are basic and recognize some of the motivational challenges unique to volunteer organizations. Once volunteers have a good understanding of their duties they should be empowered to perform their tasks. Volunteers should be kept aware of developments and encouraged to share in decision making in order to feel like they are a part of the team. Understanding motivation is relevant to virtually all aspects of volunteer programs, from recruiting to maintaining the commitment of volunteers. A manager of volunteers is one who establishes and maintains a creative climate. Within this climate, volunteers choose to work cooperatively toward the accomplishment of goals and objectives, which are compatible with personal and organizational values. The failure to perceive what people really want and need is the biggest motivational problem. Volunteer programs must be able to use supervision or

the buddy system regularly to be a source of support, assurance, as well as redirection for your agency. Volunteers are very special people whose donation of time and effort warrants special consideration. They should always be encouraged to grow, learn, and seek fulfillment as they help an organization. This is important even if it means accepting the reality that not everyone is perfect for every job. A formal recognition system should be comprised of awards, certificates, plaques, pins, and recognition dinners or receptions to honor volunteer achievement. Many organizations hold an annual ceremony in which individual volunteers are singled out for their achievements. Formal recognition systems are helpful mainly in satisfying the needs of the volunteer who has a need for community approval. These volunteers may very well feel more motivated and honored by a system which recognizes the achievements of "their" clients, and also recognizes the contribution that the volunteer has made towards this achievement. It has been the authors' experience that the most effective volunteer recognition occurs in the day-to-day informal relationships between the volunteer and the organization through the staff expressing sincere appreciation and thanks for the work being done by the volunteer. This type of recognition is more powerful in part because it is much more frequent -- a once-a-year dinner does not carry the same impact as 365 days of good working relationships.

4.0 Conclusions

While volunteers provide a service out of personal desire, they do so in the absence of financial and materialistic gain. Because volunteers are often seen as the primary link between consumers and organizations, it is of the utmost importance that properly trained professionals within organizations work closely with the volunteer staff to create an environment of positive productivity for the organization as a whole. Having properly trained volunteers who work well independently, while feeling they are a vital part of the team, enables paid professionals to devote more of their time to performing the functions vital to the overall survival of the organization. Adherence to all the principles needed for developing and implementing an effective program will ensure that the primary link between the organization and the consumer (volunteers) stays positive and in tact. The

organization's needs assessment, goals and objectives, volunteer job description(s), communication, recruitment and marketing phases all set the precedent for a successful volunteer program. Having properly trained volunteers who work well independently, who know their role in the organization, and have a positive outlook on the service they provide ensures continued success for the organization. The development and implementation of a comprehensive volunteer management program is necessary in order for an organization, and the community it serves, to fully realize the benefits of volunteer service.

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