

VASP Voice
August 2007

Editor's Note: Sorry that this newsletter is coming out so late! I especially apologize to all the writers I "hassled" for articles!! Things got quite crazy for me here just as I should've started compiling the newsletter.

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A Note from Our New President
Submitted by Alison Boyle

Hello all VASP members.

I am eager to begin my term as President for VASP and I am excited that I will be working with Mr. Randy Detweiler, Vice President. Randy and I have sat down and put together a tentative schedule of meetings to run past the board. Once the schedule is approved I will have the information to you.

We are excited to be bringing you some great programs during this term and I strongly encourage all of you to attend. In addition, please feel free to bring a Volunteer Coordinator with you who is not already involved with VASP.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding VASP, please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be reached at 412.731.7670 x33 or by email at aboyle@gwensgirls.org.

Let's make this a great year!!!!

**Membership Dues Due
Submitted by Pat McCarthy**

VASP dues are payable now. Don't delay or you will miss some exciting programs and opportunities for networking. Please send \$25.00 and the application form to VASP, PO Box 2367, Pittsburgh, PA 15230.

Upcoming VASP Meetings

Thursday, September 27 - General Meeting at the Mt. Lebanon Library. Come for breakfast and networking at 8:30 a.m., followed by a program at 9:00 a.m. and then the VASP meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Monday, October 29 - Basics of Volunteering at the Mt. Lebanon Libarary. Class will run from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and will be taught by our very own Sylvia Lynn and Randy Detweiler. Spread the word!

For more information about these events, contact Alison Boyle at aboyle@gwensgirls.org or Randy Detweiler at randy.detweiler@highmark.com.

**2007 VASP Annual Meeting Was Meaningful and Uplifting
Submitted by Tracy O'Neill**

“This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as I live it is my privilege - *my privilege* - to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work the more I love. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me; it is a sort of splendid torch which I've got a hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.”

How's that for an empowering quote? George Bernard Shaw said it first, but it was Allison Jones, Director of Boards By Design, who shared it with attendees of this year's Annual Meeting at the Doubletree Hotel Downtown. As the keynote speaker, Ms. Jones walked us through Boards By Design's 9 step process for recruiting good board members. Not surprisingly, much of this process also applies to recruiting good volunteers. Here are some of those relatable steps:

1. Identify – Jones proposes that we identify potential volunteers based on their leadership skills and positive attitude, not strictly based on their job experience and/or availability.
2. Cultivate – Though not the case for all volunteer administrators, some of us hesitate to advertise our volunteer positions because we want to avoid attracting people we can't really use. Jones encourages us to take the risk and advertise our openings anywhere and everywhere we can. Then we can select top individuals from a greater pool of applicants rather than settling on the few that we might otherwise attract that don't necessarily meet our needs.
3. Engage – Basically, many people don't get involved simply because they aren't asked. It sounds cliché, but as far as volunteers go, it doesn't hurt to ask.
4. Educate – “Educate your volunteers about your organization, developments in your mission area, and the meaning of being a volunteer,” Jones says. When volunteers really comprehend what makes an organization tick, they are more invested in helping to achieve the mission.
5. Evaluate – Jones explains that the more you let volunteers know what is expected of them, the easier it is to evaluate their performance and ensure they're meeting the needs of the organization while feeling fulfilled.
6. Celebrate – Recognize and celebrate your volunteers often! One recognition idea that Jones suggests is writing a thank you letter to the spouse and/or family of a volunteer. She explains that while it's great to thank the volunteer for their efforts, it can be extra meaningful to thank the family for supporting your volunteer as they gave so much time to your organization. Hopefully when the volunteer learns about your sentiments it will make them feel special and valued.

Ms. Jones' presentation was just one of the many highlights at the May 17th gathering. Before lunch, attendees networked, mingled, and bought chances to win gift baskets donated by board members. After lunch the new board was voted in, and this year's Evie Award was presented by Sheila Moser to a gracious and well-deserving Sylvia Lynn, who received a standing ovation.

After the meeting, many attendees approached Ms. Jones to ask her for a copy of the quote at the beginning of this article. This isn't surprising because the sense of privilege and inspiration reflected in that quote was in the air and palpable. We VASP members were there to celebrate the role we play in helping our volunteers to “burn (their torches) as brightly as possible,” and we definitely had fun honoring ourselves and one another.

Planning for the Boomers

Submitted by Pat McCarthy

After a year of planning, Boomer Connections was launched at Northland Public Library (North Hills). On May 30th and 31st, we held two workshops (Appealing to Experience: Engaging and Supporting Baby Boomer [age 50+] volunteers). The first workshop was geared to libraries and the second day was for nonprofits. Presenters were from the National Training Network at Temple University, Philadelphia. A total of sixty attendees learned cutting edge strategies for engaging baby boomer volunteers. Workshops were funded by Northland Library Foundation and Allegheny County Library Association.

On June 29th a Volunteer Speed Match was held at the library with seventeen nonprofits represented and approximately twenty-eight prospective volunteers. It was a fun time with wine and cheese, plus plenty of conversation. Everyone gave the event rave reviews. This is the first time in Pittsburgh that this type of venue has been used for a volunteer recruitment fair with a different flair. The idea originated in Canada and is slowly moving to the United States.

In the fall, a series of programs will be held centered around three topics – civic engagement, re-careering, and the sandwich generation.

Who are the baby boomers? Baby Boomers are persons between the age of 39 and 57, and there are 77 million of them in America today! According to Volunteer Connections – New Strategies for Involving Older Adults, “The Volunteer Management Implications are:

- Recruitment will be more competitive than ever before as the “super” volunteers retire from volunteering and organizations begin to compete with each other for new volunteers. Program managers will need to be innovative and cutting edge around the provision of great volunteer programming because there will be lots of competition from other organizations for volunteers.
- Organizations serving “the old old” will now be under even greater pressure as the aging population balloons and requires more support. This may create opportunities for more peer support.
- Organizations should consider developing and implementing family volunteering opportunities as we see an increase in multi-generations living together and providing support for each other.
- Managers of Volunteers in health-related volunteering might well find there is a shortage of volunteers due to Baby Boomers preoccupation with caring for aging relatives in a time when the health care system itself is no longer providing a full range of services. Will Baby Boomers want to volunteer in the same arena in which they are informally volunteering? While the traditional volunteer in health care has been older, these organizations may need to turn more to youth participants.

●Baby Boomers are highly tuned to the broader environment. Recruitment strategies and volunteer program descriptions should explicitly tie the volunteer contribution to an impact on the overall issue at hand. Baby Boomers will be less interested in having their personal contribution recognized (a la” thank you for being such a great person”) and more interested to know they’re making a difference (“because of you, our water is now six percent cleaner than it was last year”). Organizations should concentrate on producing promotional material that identifies the volunteer’s opportunity to make a meaning contribution to the identified social issues.”

Editors Note: There is another report on Baby Boomer volunteers at www.volunteermatch.org/greatexpectations.

Lending Library in the Works
Submitted by Lynn McGuire-Olzak

Calling all VASP members- We are in need of any books, tapes, Cd's concerning volunteering, volunteer management, etc.. Please email or call and we and let me know what you might have to offer. We will post a list of what is available to borrow. We would like to get this set up and off and running in the next couple of months. This is a great way to expand our knowledge of our field and not have to spend money. Thanks and I am looking forward to seeing all the great resources we have to share.

Lynn McGuire-Olzak - lmcguireolzak@yahoo.com 412-608-0595

Member Profile: Jackie Abel-Stavropoulos
Submitted by Helen Harrison

Position: **Program Manager**

Organization: **Goodwill Literacy Initiative**

How long have you been at this organization? **Four years**

To whom do you report? **Director of Education and Training**

What are your major strengths? **Ability to read people, “flexi-adaptability,”and a great sense of humor!**

If you could change anything about your job, what would it be? **More hours in the day to “get it all done.”**

Number of volunteers: **70+**

What kind of screening process do you have in place for volunteers? **Face to face interview and perform background checks.**

What sort of training/orientation do you provide your volunteers? **Basic tutor training, followed by further training in the specific areas they will be working.**

What kinds of volunteer recognition do you provide for your volunteers? **Twice a year events plus various parties and picnics.**

What volunteer recruitment method have you found to be most successful? **Online and website.**

What volunteer opportunities exist at your organization? **Clerical and tutoring adults in literacy, GED preparation, or English as a Second Language.**

And, finally, what would the other VASP members be surprised to learn about you? **My background in volunteer management, training, and instruction all started with soccer about 30 years ago. I began recruiting volunteers for our local soccer program, twisting arms to find coaches, referees, and snack bar workers. Things evolved as they always do, and I became more involved in the referee aspect of the game. Soon I began training referees, working as an instructor, an assessor (on field evaluator), a mentor, and an assignor, matching referee strengths and personalities to various referee crews and the job to be done on the field. That experience has paid off exponentially in what I currently do with volunteers... training, evaluating, mentoring, and matching up in crews and according to the job to be done in the classrooms.**

Featured Website

Submitted by Lynn McGuire-Olzak

I found a great website! I am always searching for more volunteer management ideas. This one is www.managementhelp.org. Go to the website. You will see a Free Management Library. Scroll down to Volunteers and click on it. You will find yourself on Developing & Managing Volunteer Programs. You will find almost every subject available on volunteers. Some of the subjects are advertising, application forms, training, supervision, and delegation, just to name a few. As you click on any of these subjects, it will take you to articles on many other websites. I must have spent at least 2 hours

clicking on every subject, website, etc... It is very user-friendly, and you can find information on every part of volunteer management. You can look up something and find more information than you thought possible, and you don't have to spend much time finding what you need. I just get so involved that I can't stop clicking away. You can spend 2 minutes or 2 hours on this great resource. Let me know what you all think.

Update on National Volunteer Organizations Submitted by Tracy O'Neill

Association of Volunteer Resources Management (AVRM) – AVRM will hold their first annual conference in Dallas, Texas on October 3-5, 2007. The conference will feature interactive learning and networking opportunities for volunteer resources managers.

Also on their site, AVRM announces that International Volunteer Manager Appreciation (IVMA) Day 2007 is on November 1, 2007, “IVMA Day marks an important opportunity for us to educate about the important and crucial role volunteer resources managers (VRMs) provide and the difference they make in the work that they undertake. It also gives VRMs a well-deserved excuse to actually stop for five minutes and reflect on what they have accomplished individually and collectively.”

To find out more, check out AVRM’s website at <http://avrm.org/>.

Congress of Volunteer Administrator Associations (COVAA) – Like AVRM, COVAA continues to work toward forming a solid national organization to fill the void left by the now defunct Association of Volunteer Administration (AVA). Most recently, (June 8-10, 2007 to be exact), a Steering Committee met in Las Vegas to build on ideas and proposals that came out of the Denver Congress. The Steering Committee looked closely at the facets that should go into building a strong foundation for a successful COVAA. You can check out an in-depth report from the Vegas meeting at <http://www.covaa.org/>. Our colleagues are working hard to ensure all Volunteer Administrators have national support.

Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) – The Corporation has an interesting report on their website. Go to <http://www.nationalservice.org/>, and click on “Volunteering in America: New Report on Volunteering in America’s Largest Cities.” Within the report is a section on city profiles. There you can select Pittsburgh and see specific stats for volunteering in our area. For example, the report shows that Pittsburgh had an average volunteer rate of 32.6% between 2004 and 2006, compared with 29.5% in Pennsylvania as a whole. These stats would be great in a grant application or a proposal to your organization for project support, etc. (*For indepth articles about CNCS, see below.*)

Points of Light / Hands On Network – The big news here is the merger of these two organizations, thus creating the “world’s largest volunteer organization.” Here’s an excerpt from a press release announcing the partnership:

“The announcement transforms the landscape of the volunteer sector, creating a network of 370 affiliate organizations covering 83% of the US market. The merger will also create three million new volunteers over the next two years, generating an additional 90 million volunteer hours and transforming the landscape of the volunteer sector, according to a joint statement issued by the two organizations. . . Ray Chambers, a philanthropist, will serve as the new organization's chairman of the board during the integration period. Neil Bush, CEO of Ignite! Learning in Houston and son of former President George H.W. Bush, will serve as vice chair. The merger (took) effect on July 30 and will officially launch on October 1, 2007.”

For details, go to <http://www.pointsoflight.org/> or <http://www.handsonnetwork.org/>.

Introduction to The Corporation for National and Community Service Submitted by Linda Soldressen

For those who are unfamiliar with the Corporation for National and Community Service and all the programs it supports, the following information serves as a basics class.

History

With a clear appreciation for how a culture of citizenship, service and responsibility enriches a nation and its citizenry, the Federal government has supported volunteering and community service in a variety of important and different ways during the past century.

1930s: At the height of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) as a way to put idle hands to productive use to meet public needs. From 1933 to 1942, the CCC put some 3 million unemployed men to work clearing trails and restoring public lands. They have been credited with renewing the nation’s decimated forests by planting an estimated 3 billion trees. And more than 40,000 illiterates were taught to read and write through the education component of the corps.

1960s: The cause of federally supported civilian service was renewed with President John F. Kennedy's creation of the Peace Corps and President Lyndon B. Johnson's creation of VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). In that same period, the Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program began to show how older Americans could establish meaningful relationships with people in need.

1990: President George H.W. Bush created the Commission on National and Community Service to administer grants to schools to support service-learning in schools, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations and support full-time service across the nation.

1993: President Bill Clinton and Congress created the Corporation for National and Community Service by combining the Commission on National and Community Service with the federal domestic volunteer agency ACTION, uniting the full range of domestic community service programs under the umbrella of one central organization and creating a new national service program: AmeriCorps.

2002: President George W. Bush created USA Freedom Corps, a White House office to coordinate national volunteer efforts in response to the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. Beyond the existing AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Peace Corps, and Learn and Serve America programs, USA Freedom Corps spurs the creation of several new volunteer programs aimed specifically at securing the nation, including Citizen Corps Councils in all U.S. states and territories. In addition, the President calls on all Americans to devote the equivalent of two years of their lives—4,000 hours—to service and volunteering.

CNCS Role and Impact

The Corporation for National and Community Service plays a vital role in supporting the American culture of citizenship, service and responsibility. We are a catalyst for change and champion for the ideal that every American has skills and talents to give.

The Corporation is the nation's largest grantmaker supporting service and volunteering. Through our [Senior Corps](#), [AmeriCorps](#), and [Learn and Serve America](#) programs, we provide opportunities for Americans of all ages and backgrounds to express their patriotism while addressing critical community needs.

The desire to serve extends across generations and in every part of our country. Since the Corporation's inception:

- More than 1 billion volunteer service hours have been generated by Senior Corps volunteers
- More than 400,000 individuals have served through AmeriCorps
- And, more than 1 million high school students participate annually in service-learning initiatives funded by Learn and Serve America

The members and volunteers who serve in Corporation programs provide vital assistance to institutions and organizations that serve the public, including:

- National and local nonprofits
- Schools
- Faith-based and other community organizations
- Public agencies

Drawing on their skills, experience and concern for others, they provide a wide range of services. These include tutoring at-risk youth, building homes for low-income people, responding to natural disasters, and caring for homebound seniors. In addition, members and volunteers help mobilize other volunteers and build the capacity of local organizations.

What CNCS Does

The Corporation for National and Community Service

- Acts as a catalyst by providing strategic critical support to volunteer organizations that, in turn, deliver much-needed services to communities throughout the country.
- Promotes a healthy, vibrant non-profit volunteer sector that can deliver community services efficiently and effectively.
- Builds character and creates career and educational opportunities through the volunteer experience.
- Develops and cultivates knowledge that will enhance the overall success of volunteer and service programs.
- Cultivates the growth of a culture of citizenship and service in which contributing to your community becomes commonplace.

To accomplish these goals, the Corporation provides grants and training and technical assistance to developing and expanding volunteer organizations. In addition, the Corporation explores, develops, and models effective approaches for using volunteers to meet the nation's human needs and conducts and disseminates research that helps develop and cultivate knowledge that will enhance the overall effectiveness of national and community service programs.

Volunteering Produces Health Benefits: New Report from CNCS Shows Helping Others Improves Your Wellbeing and Longevity Submitted by Linda Soldressen

Volunteers help themselves to better health while helping others, according to a study released recently by the Corporation for National and Community Service that reviews a compelling collection of recent scientific research.

The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research has found a significant connection between volunteering and good health. The report shows that volunteers have greater longevity, higher functional ability, lower rates of depression and less incidence of heart disease. The report is available in the Research and Policy section

of the Corporation's website at http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp#HBR.

“Volunteering makes the heart grow stronger,” said David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation. “More than 61 million Americans volunteer to improve conditions for people in need and to unselfishly give of themselves. While the motivation is altruistic, it is gratifying to learn that their efforts are returning considerable health benefits.”

The Health Benefits of Volunteering documents major findings from more than 30 rigorous and longitudinal studies that reviewed the relationship between health and volunteering, with particular emphasis on studies that seek to determine the causal connection between the two factors. The studies, which were controlled for other factors, found that volunteering leads to improved physical and mental health.

“I commend the Corporation for National and Community Service for its timely focus on health and volunteerism. These findings complement the Administration on Aging's ongoing efforts to harness the power of prevention and wellness for all older Americans. Volunteerism is an important tool in our strategy to promote health and prevent disease,” said Josefina G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Research suggests that volunteering is particularly beneficial to the health of older adults and those serving 100 hours annually. According to the report:

- A study of adults age 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the personal sense of accomplishment an individual gains from his or her volunteer activities.
- Another study found that volunteering led to lower rates of depression in individuals 65 and older.
- A Duke study found that individuals who volunteered after experiencing heart attacks reported reductions in despair and depression – two factors that have been linked to mortality in post-coronary artery disease patients.
- An analysis of longitudinal data found that individuals over 70 who volunteered approximately 100 hours had less of a decline in self-reported health and functioning levels, experienced lower levels of depression, and had more longevity.
- Two studies found that volunteering threshold is about 100 hours per year, or about two hours a week. Individuals who reached the threshold enjoyed significant health benefits, although there were not additional benefits beyond the 100-hour mark.

“This is good news for people who volunteer,” said Robert Grimm, Director of the Corporation's Office of Research and Policy Development and Senior Counselor to the CEO. “This research is particularly relevant to Baby Boomers, who are receiving as well

as giving when they help others. Just two hours of volunteering a week can bring meaningful benefits to a person's body and mind."

Last month, the Corporation released *Volunteering in America: 2007 State Trends and Rankings in Civic Life*, a report that includes numerous measures on volunteering and civic engagement. The Health Benefits of Volunteering report builds on that by showing states with higher volunteer rates also have better health and that there is a significant statistical relationship between states with higher volunteer rates and lower incidents of mortality and heart disease.

"There is now a convergence of research leading to the conclusion that helping others makes people happier and healthier. So the word is out – it's good to be good. Science increasingly says so," said Dr. Stephen Post, a professor at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and co-author of the forthcoming book "Why Good Things Happen to Good People: The Exciting New Research That Proves the Link Between Doing Good and Living a Longer, Healthier, Happier Life."

This follow-up report issued today brings more evidence that volunteering produces significant health benefits. Those who gave social support to others had lower rates of mortality than those who did not – even when controlling for socioeconomic status, education, marital status, age, gender, and ethnicity, the report stated.

"Civic Engagement and volunteering is the new hybrid health club for the 21st century that's free to join," added Thomas H. Sander, executive director of the Saguaro Seminar at Harvard University. Social capital research shows it miraculously improves both your health AND the community's through the work performed and the social ties built."

The Corporation for National and Community Service improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year, the Corporation provides opportunities for more than 2 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America. For more information, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

Volunteering in America: 2007 City Trends and Rankings Submitted by Linda Soldressen

As part of its mission to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through volunteering and service, the Corporation for National and Community Service conducts research on the volunteering habits of Americans. In April 2007, *Volunteering in America: State Trends and Rankings in Civic Life* was released. This report provided a snapshot of volunteering on a state level.

Now, for the first time, the Corporation provides volunteer information for 50 major metropolitan areas in *Volunteering in America: 2007 City Trends and Rankings*. By presenting information at an even more local level, the Corporation hopes to provide a tool for local governments, community leaders, service organizations, nonprofits, and volunteers nationwide who are working to increase service participation and solve our nation's most pressing problems.

Top 10 Cities for Volunteer Rate:

Minneapolis, MN 40.5%
 Salt Lake City, UT 38.4%
 Austin, TX 38.1%
 Omaha, NE 37.8%
 Seattle, WA 36.3%
 Portland, OR 35.8%
 Kansas City, MO 34.9%
 Milwaukee, WI 34.4%
 Charlotte, NC 34.3%
 Tulsa, OK 33.7%

Bottom 5 Cities for Volunteer Rate:

Riverside, CA 20.6%
 Virginia Beach, VA 19.3%
 New York, NY 18.7%
 Miami, FL 16.1%
 Las Vegas, NV 14.4%

Key Findings:

- ◆ While volunteer rates vary considerably, many top-ranked metro areas are in the central part of the country.
- ◆ Metro areas with high levels of community attachment, as demonstrated by higher homeownership rates, tend to have higher volunteer rates.
- The Minneapolis metro area has the highest volunteering rate, and also the highest rate of home ownership of all the areas profiled in the report.
- High proportions of residents living in multi-unit housing can also have a negative effect on volunteering. ◆ Longer commutes can curtail opportunities to volunteer.
- New York has the longest average commuting time of all the metropolitan areas profiled in the report and also has one of the lowest volunteering rates.
- If the national average commuting time decreased by just three minutes, we could expect to see a growth in volunteering by 2.3 percentage points.

- ◆ The capacity of a community's associations and organizations expands or limits volunteering opportunities.
 - The Austin, TX metropolitan area has the largest number of small nonprofits and also has the third highest volunteering rate of all the profiled metro areas.
 - If nonprofits are able to increase their volunteer retention rates nation-wide by just 4 percentage points to 71%, we could expect a rise in the overall volunteer rate of 3.2 percentage points.
- ◆ Volunteer rates increase as the level of education increases, and are generally lower in high poverty areas.
 - Los Angeles has the lowest graduation rate and the highest percentage of population living below the poverty line, while ranking in the bottom ten for volunteer rates.
 - If the national average for high school graduation rates rose from 83% to 87%, we could expect a 4.1 percentage point rise in the nation's volunteering rate.
- ◆ Suburbs and rural areas have similar volunteer rates (29% and 30%), while urban areas lag behind (24%).

Editorial Information

This e-newsletter has been compiled by Cherie Hugh using information provided by VASP members. Newsletters will be e-mailed to members on a quarterly basis around the 1st of February, May, August, and November. VASP members are welcome to submit articles or information for inclusion. We also have writers who could research topics of interest to members, so let me know if there is something you want to read about! Articles will be used as space permits and may be edited.

Please note that attachments will not accompany the newsletter, so items must be sent to me as Word documents that can be copied into an e-mail. Deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month prior to publication. For example, if you have something for the November 2007 newsletter, I should have it by October 15.

If you are interested in assisting with future newsletters, please contact me at cahugh@hearth-bp.org or (412) 939-2302 ext. 12. Thanks!