

VASP Voice**February 2007****In this issue:**

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Next VASP Meeting Thursday, February 15**Submitted by Tracy O'Neill**

It's not too late to RSVP for the upcoming general membership meeting. The meeting will be held at Phipps Conservatory's Botany Hall on Thursday, February 15th. Join us at 8:30 AM for a continental breakfast and networking. Then at 9:00 AM we'll begin our panel discussion on inclusive volunteering.

What is inclusive volunteering? According to a brochure published by Partnership F.I.V.E. (Fostering Inclusive Volunteer Efforts), it involves "individuals with and without disabilities volunteering together to improve their community, where *everyone* is given the opportunity to be involved. Community members' assets are recognized and valued, and people with disabilities are empowered to serve others."

Sounds like a pretty great aspiration, right? To help us understand how we can incorporate individuals with disabilities into our volunteer pools, VASP is pleased to present panel members who can speak about their positive learning experiences with inclusive volunteering.

Tia Abshier is a Life Skills Counselor in the Life Skills Development Program at the Center for Hearing and Deaf Services, Inc. (CHDS). CHDS works to provide rehabilitative and supportive services designed to address problems experienced by children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing, and sometimes meeting this mission involves encouraging and supporting clients in volunteer work. Tia will be accompanied by Life Skills Program Director David Cummings, who will interpret for Tia.

Janis Thoma-Negley has worked at Community Living and Support Services (CLASS) of United Cerebral Palsy of Pittsburgh for over 20 years. She's had a variety of positions there, from being an instructor in community skills building classes to coordinating various projects such as a mentoring technology project and nursing home mentoring project. She's been the curriculum specialist at CLASS for the past 3 years and more recently started to coordinate the volunteer and student/intern activities at the center.

Joyce Driben brings a different perspective to our panel. Joyce is an active volunteer and disabilities rights advocate, and she is blind. Among other activities, Joyce volunteers in many capacities for Radio Information Service, Pittsburgh's only radio reading service for individuals who are visually or physically disabled. She is also a founder of Blind Outdoor Leisure Development (BOLD), a group that facilitates and fosters outdoor sports activities for people who are blind. Joyce was a proud recipient of the 2005 RSVP Outstanding Volunteer in Community Service Award.

Michelle A. Johnson, CEO of the Spectrum Charter School, has a lot of experience with inclusive volunteering. Since the goal of the school is to provide school-to-work transition instruction in the classroom, on-site business, and community-based work sites for students who do not learn well in typical classroom settings due to unique cognitive, communication, and sensory challenges, including students with autism spectrum disorders, Michelle has first-hand knowledge of incorporating her students into volunteer pools.

With such wonderful panel members, this meeting is sure to be useful to us all. Hope you can attend!!

Evie Award Nominations to be Accepted Soon**Submitted by Sheila Mozer**

Although the snow is falling and the arctic winds are blowing, it isn't too early to start thinking about the selection of the '07 Evie Award winner, which will be announced at the VASP Annual Meeting on a warm day in May (the 17th). Although the deadline for nominations won't be until the beginning of April, this is the time to start looking around at other VASP members to ponder who might best deserve the accolade "Outstanding Volunteer Director of the Year."

The selection guidelines and qualities to consider are that the potential Evie winner should:

- Currently serve in the role of volunteer director/coordinator/manager/administrator in Southwestern Pennsylvania
- Have at least three years' experience in volunteer management (not necessarily with the same organization)
- Be a current member of VASP and have been a member for at least three years
- Demonstrate excellent skills managing a volunteer program
- Demonstrate proficiency maximizing the effective use of resources
- Practice a professional code of ethics while directing volunteers
- Show a commitment to on-going professional development
- Make contributions to the profession through such activities as writing professional articles, mentoring novices, teaching workshops, serving on the VASP Board or committees and completing committee assignments, and demonstrating leadership in the profession of volunteer administration

Among the VASP membership, there are many excellent candidates to follow in the footsteps of past Evie winners, Linda Soldressen ('05) and Pat McCarthy ('06). When a

nomination form is sent to you (either by email or snail mail) the beginning of March, please use it to honor the person you have selected after having a month to really think about it.

Veteran Volunteer Coordinators Know About Recognition

Submitted by Tracy O'Neill

For volunteer coordinators, volunteer recognition is a daily task. We thank our volunteers for coming to help mentor kids when it's -2 degrees outside; we send them cheerful birthday and holiday cards throughout the year; we make sure that there is fresh, hot coffee and sticky doughnuts for early morning meetings; and we acknowledge their efforts in monthly newsletters and other publicity. And, in most non-profits, volunteer recognition culminates in a decadent yearly event, often held during or near National Volunteer Appreciation Week.

This year National Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 15th through the 21st. Since that week (and Spring!) will be here before we even have time to pick up that second bag of sidewalk salt, it's time to start planning how to toast our volunteers this year. For inspiration, let's turn to some veterans in the field of volunteer management who know a thing or two about what goes into a successful recognition event. Highlights of successful events- awards, favors or gifts for the volunteers, client testimony and/or interaction, and FOOD!

Lynn Guerra has been coordinating the dedicated volunteers of Holy Family Institute for almost 14 years. Since Holy Family's volunteers work toward a mission of "empower (ing) children and families to lead responsible lives and develop healthy relationships built on faith, hope, and love," it's significant that volunteers join the kids that live at Holy Family for dinner one evening a year.

Each dinner incorporates a theme. For this year's dinner, which will be held in May, Lynn came up with "Planting Seeds of Hope." Attendees will be given favors that incorporate seed packets, and award winning volunteers will be given birdfeeders. Past themes have been "Volunteers: Rising to the Occasion," with big balloons dotting the dining room and hot air balloon centerpieces; "The Magic of Mentoring," with black top hat centerpieces and name cards in the shape of gloved hands holding magic wands; and "Volunteers are Guiding Lights," featuring unique lighthouse favors that were hand-painted by the kids.

Holy Family is a big place with lots of regular volunteers, and of course they're all invited to attend the dinner. Lynn also gets occasional help from local youth groups, but she can't invite everyone from these periphery groups. In these cases she invites the group leaders.

Each year Lynn gives awards to recognize service anniversaries, and she also acknowledges volunteers who have gone above and beyond to work toward Holy Family's mission. Sometimes these awards are presented by kids from Holy Family.

Similarly, involvement of clients is an integral part of POWER's yearly volunteer recognition event. Volunteer Coordinator **Karen Clark**, who has been at POWER for 6 years, explains that around 30 volunteers gather at POWER's half-way house for a weekday luncheon. She keeps the lunch limited to an hour to accommodate working folks, and she packs that hour with so many good things that help volunteers feel valued and essential. Since volunteers work toward POWER's mission to "provide gender-specialized quality treatment & support services to women who are changing their lives through recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs," it is extremely meaningful when residents speak about how volunteers have made a difference to their recovery. Sometimes residents perform moving poetry or music, too. During lunch, volunteers are also updated on agency news. Finally, if volunteers are able to stay after lunch, residents take them on tours of the house.

A tour of a different kind became the "favor" for volunteers of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (GPCFB) last year. Volunteer Coordinator **Lynn McGuire-Olzak** organized a luncheon for 350 volunteers at the Heinz History Center. The "Super Volunteers" theme piggy-backed the Steelers' Super Bowl victory and was enhanced by the sports exhibits at the History Center. As far as a Volunteer of the Year award goes, Lynn explains that the GPCFB is hard pressed to select just one volunteer out of the fleet of hundreds that work toward the GPCFB mission, so they don't present one. Instead, all of the volunteers are honored collectively, and after last year's lunch, were given free tours of the museum.

Not every organization has room in the budget or calendar for an event dedicated solely to volunteer recognition. The Lupus Foundation of Pennsylvania is one of them. Instead, **Shelly Tonti**, who has been directing volunteers at the Foundation for 5 years, works volunteer recognition into the yearly luncheon given for the Lupus Foundation as a whole. Shelly makes sure that the volunteers are acknowledged at the luncheon by publicly presenting the Foundation's Helen Vandergrift Volunteer of the Year Award along with other awards that recognize volunteers who have excelled in other areas.

Shelly also leaves a token of appreciation at each volunteer's plate. Gifts have included engraved glass boxes and even a recycled soup can filled with thoughtful little things, adorned with a label that read "Cream of Caring Soup" and listed Primary Ingredients: VOLUNTEERS, Other Ingredients: Time, Talent, Energy, Discipline, Persistence, Joy, Humor, Love, Generosity, Good Will, Natural Color, Flavor and Preservatives. (If you'd like a Word version of the label to use for your organization, email Shelly at mtonti@lupuspa.org.)

How will our volunteers know how much we value them unless we let them know? And while we're at it, we can show them in creative and meaningful ways.

Upcoming National Volunteer Days

Submitted by Cherie Hugh

I happened upon this information on www.energizeinc.com and thought it might be useful for everyone to get in their calendars now.

National Volunteer Week, sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, is scheduled for April 15-21, 2007 and April 27-May 3, 2008. It "honors and recognizes the individuals who have made a difference in our communities and alerts others to the need for more voluntary community service to help solve our nation's serious social problems." For more information, call 800-VOLUNTEER or go to www.pointsoflight.org (under Programs/Seasons of Service).

National Youth Service Day, sponsored by Youth Service America and *Parade* magazine, is scheduled for April 20-22. Visit www.ysa.org/nysd/ for more info.

Join Hands Day, a nationwide volunteer day to bring young people together with adults to create new and better relationships by working as a team within their own neighborhoods, is scheduled for May 5, 2007 and May 3, 2008. Go to www.joinhandsday.org for more information.

Upcoming fall dates will be published in the May newsletter.

Member Profile: Rebecca Maletto of the Foster Grandparent Program

Submitted by Helen Harrison

"I love my grandparents," exclaims Rebecca Maletto, Program Associate of the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP). She, of course, is referring to her FGP volunteers.

Ms. Maletto enjoys the relationships forged by working closely with the volunteers. According to Ms. Maletto, her position at FGP is a mix between being a field coordinator and a party planner. "No day is ever the same."

For example, Rebecca is responsible for recruiting volunteers, age 60 and over, to tutor, mentor, and support children with special needs. These volunteers help children develop the skills and confidence to succeed in school. In addition to visiting schools, sites, and volunteers, Rebecca also conducts trainings and in-services for her volunteers. Her grandparents are constantly kept informed and educated about how to better relate to and care for children in positive and constructive ways.

Moreover, the party planner aspect of her position involves two, back-to-back volunteer recognition events and various excursions for the grandparents, such as an afternoon at a Pirates game and spending a day at the races at Wheeling Downs in West Virginia. These are just some of the activities Rebecca enjoys with her grandparents.

"The best part of my job, however, is that I get to build relationships," Rebecca says. And as much as she gives and lends support to her volunteers, they often surprise her by returning and adding in kind. They confide in her, telling her funny or poignant stories about their volunteer experiences and their personal lives.

Rebecca recalls one volunteer's funny story. "One of my 80-something grandparents, instead of coming home in the afternoon to a surprise birthday party, had stayed out very late, having lots of fun. The volunteer's family, intending to surprise her, was kept waiting and waiting and waiting. The family finally had to give up." Ms. Maletto has learned not to make any assumptions about older people- "they will surprise you."

Rebecca's grandparents also tell her about their personal hardships, but mostly about their need to give back to the children. "Being foster grandparents is their labor of love," she says. "They are very humble and committed about their volunteer service, and they don't expect to receive anything in return."

When Ms. Maletto visits her volunteers in action, she is often amazed to see how well the grandparents and children respond to each other. When the two generations come together "they're like magnets. It's wonderful to watch."

The only downside Ms. Maletto experiences in her position is the paperwork involved. (Hmmm, that sounds familiar.) And, of course, recruitment and retention of volunteers are familiar, on-going challenges in a program that involves seniors.

Challenges aside, Ms. Maletto considers her position at FGP to be one of her most fulfilling. "I get to catch the grandparents and the children being themselves. There are no false faces- all I see are faces of openness, love, and trust."

"I love them all."

Corporation for National and Community Service Study on Volunteer Trends

Submitted by Cherie Hugh

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. As part of that mission, the Corporation supports schools, colleges, and other nonprofit organizations to help foster a culture of service in communities and on campuses. They work in partnership with schools and nonprofits to help build their capacity to recruit, train, manage, and support volunteers. Through these efforts, they continue to work toward a goal of increasing the number of American adult volunteers by 10 million, from 65 million in 2005 to 75 million by 2010.

They recently published a research brief, *Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974*, which provides an in-depth look at how volunteering compares by age groups for the period 1974 to 2005. Below is a summary of some of the key findings. If you would like to read the whole report, which isn't that long, visit www.nationalservice.gov.

Volunteering is at a 30-year high.

- The adult volunteer rate declined by 15% between 1974 and 1989 but has increased by more than 32% since 1989.
- The growth has been driven primarily by three age groups: older teens (ages 16 to 19); mid-life adults (ages 45 to 64); and older adults (age 65 and over).
- Volunteering that takes place through an educational or youth service organization had the largest increase between 1989 and today.
- The proportion of Americans volunteering through a religious organization decreased slightly, while the proportion of volunteers serving through civic, political, professional, and international organizations dropped substantially.

They believe more people are volunteering because civic participation in general, including voting, has increased since 9/11 and recent natural disasters, such as the 2004 tsunami and Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. They also noted that between 1989 and 2004, the number of public charities more than doubled, so really there are just more Volunteer Administrators like us trying to get their message out and recruit volunteers.

Volunteering among teenagers ages 16 to 19 has dramatically increased since 1989.

- The percentage doubled, from 13.4% to 28.4%.
- 67.9% of teens are primarily interested in episodic volunteering (contributing 99 or fewer hours per year).
- Teens are more likely to serve with educational or youth service organizations. Religious organizations are second.
- More teens are serving with social and community service organizations today, from 7% in 1989 to 12.9% in 2005.

The Corporation believes these increases are due to the growth of school-based service and service learning. I'm sure we all get phone calls from teenagers who have to do a project for school. They also believe that, after 9/11, teens have become more politically engaged. There was an 11 percentage point increase in voting rates among young

people in 2004 (compared to 4 percentage points among all age groups).

Baby Boomers are creating the highest mid-life (ages 45 to 64) volunteer rate in 30 years.

- Boomers, who make up 75% of this group, are the primary reason for a 37% increase in volunteering among the group.
- The proportion of volunteers ages 45 to 54 who serve with educational organizations has more than doubled since 1989, while the proportion of volunteers ages 55 to 64 who serve with educational or youth service organizations has nearly doubled since 1989.
- The proportion of American volunteers who serve through a religious organization fell, but it is still the top place this age group volunteers.

They believe that higher levels of education and delays in marriage and childbearing are the reasons for the increase in volunteering in this age group. In general, college educated individuals tend to volunteer at a higher rate than individuals who did not go to college, and we learned before that Boomers are educated and skilled and want to share their expertise. Also, they have seen that parents tend to volunteer in organizations related to their children's educational and social involvement, e.g., Girl Scouts and PTA. Since people are getting married and having kids later, these parents who volunteer are older.

Volunteering among older adults (ages 65 and over) has increased 64% since 1974.

- The proportion of older adults who volunteer 100 or more hours a year is 46% higher today than in 1974.
- Today, older adults are the most likely group to serve 100 or more hours per year.
- 45.5% of older adult volunteers serve through a religious organization. 10.9% serve through a hospital or health-related organization.

They give a few reasons why this age group may be volunteering more. Research suggests that volunteering improves physical and mental health and may even lengthen life expectancy. Second, the income and education levels of this age group have increased, and they are looking for ways to stay active and contribute to those in need. Finally, they believe that non-profits have recognized the contribution this age group can make and have been actively recruiting them more.

Episodic volunteering (contributing 99 or fewer volunteer hours in a year) has increased between 1989 and 2005. They believe that people want to help but of course have time constraints; they just can't commit a lot of time. They also noted that charities are designing shorter, more flexible volunteer opportunities to accommodate these people.

As Volunteer Administrators, it's important for us to be aware of these trends and adjust our volunteer programs accordingly. Take a look at your volunteer positions. Do you have a variety of ways people can help without making a long-term commitment? Do you have positions that may be ideal for older adults, and are you specifically targeting that population to fill that need? Do you have more older adults volunteering because you're not offering as much that teens would be interested in? When a study like this comes out, it's just a good time to do a quick evaluation of our programs. Have fun!

What is Pittsburgh Cares?

Submitted by Daniel Horgan

Pittsburgh Cares, founded in 1992, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing community engagement through volunteerism and enhancing the impact of regional service partners. In 2005-06, Pittsburgh Cares coordinated over 425 volunteer projects, filling over 3,350 volunteer spots with our active network of 1,800 youth and adult volunteers. The Pittsburgh Cares volunteer network has provided over 12,500 hours of service over the past year and with an average of 75 new volunteers per month, our impact continues to grow stronger.

Since July 2006, Pittsburgh Cares has coordinated over 469 projects, filled more than 5,900 volunteer spots, and completed over 31,500 service hours

(doubling our total service hours for last year in just six months this year so far). Further, we have engaged 1,300 new volunteers and assisted more than 90 nonprofit agencies.

Pittsburgh Cares coordinates three specialized programs: Youth Engaged in Service (YES), Campus Cares, and Corporate Cares. YES is an outreach program that connects youth under the age of 18 to volunteer opportunities. Campus Cares works with the local college community including Greek Life, student organizations, individual students, and faculty/staff to connect them to a wide variety of volunteer and service-learning opportunities. Corporate Cares coordinates employee volunteer programming for small, mid-size and large companies in the Greater Pittsburgh region through customized contracts. A sampling of our corporate clients include CVS/pharmacy, Alcoa, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Mellon Financial Corporation, the Federal Home Loan Bank, Eat'n Park Hospitality Group, American Eagle Outfitters, and Accenture.

In addition to our specialized programs, Pittsburgh Cares coordinates a variety of special events including Make a Difference Day in October, Shining Lights Volunteer Recognition Night in November, the Holiday Season of Service in December, MLK Service Day in January, and Hands on Pittsburgh in May.

Pittsburgh Cares would love to support the VASP partners in Allegheny County by assisting with volunteer recruitment and project coordination. Agencies can request volunteer support by contacting Daniel Horgan, Executive Director, at dhorgan@pittsburghcares.org. For more information on Pittsburgh Cares, please log onto www.pittsburghcares.org or call 412-471-2114.

COVAA Update

Submitted by Cherie Hugh

The Congress of Volunteer Administrator Associations (COVAA), the new effort to create a national association of Volunteer Administrators after the demise of the AVA, held a conference December 4-6, 2006 in Denver. I visited their website at www.covaa.org to get an update on any progress that was made.

90 people attended the conference. They started out by taking a moment to acknowledge the sense of loss at the demise of the AVA, then they got to work identifying trends, events, and forces affecting volunteering today and what the implications of those were on the Congress as they were going to deliberate on what our field needed at the national level.

They eventually generated 11 outcome areas, which became the following 10 committees:

1. Structure- Research and recommend a structure for a strong national membership association
2. Standards- Establish, disseminate, and adhere to volunteer program management industry standards of excellence
3. Resources- Be the knowledge resource for leaders of volunteers
4. Advocacy- Increase the recognition and respect for the profession of volunteer management
5. Professional Development- Provide professional development opportunities at a variety of levels utilizing a variety of means
6. Values/Principles/Marketing- Create a statement of philosophy, a set of guiding principles, and marketing strategies that reflect the organization's spirit and brand that attracts a

growing and diverse membership

- 7. Communications and Networking- Provide leaders of volunteers opportunities for interactive dialogue and information sharing through the organization's name, website, e-mail, and written correspondence
- 8. Certification Committee- Within the next 12 months, develop a memorandum of understanding with the new Council on Certification in Volunteer Administration
- 9. Collaboration Committee- Develop strategic partnerships and relationships linking with existing national organizations
- 10. Technology Committee- Explore and apply user-friendly, innovative, and emerging technologies to support organizational goals

They took two votes, which both passed. They agreed to form a national entity and that this entity would be a national membership association.

They did form a Steering Committee of 17 members, plus two co-chairs Rita Chick of the American Red Cross and Joanna Johnson of DOVIA Austin. Kenneth Manns of Cultural Volunteer Managers Council of Greater Philadelphia is on the Committee. The others are from San Francisco, Cincinnati, Colorado, and other national organizations.

Of course they are looking for more involvement! If you would like to join a committee, contact info@covaa.org. If you are interested in receiving updates on your own, there's an Individual Profile Form on the website that you can complete.

Featured Website: www.ServiceLeader.org

Submitted by Cherie Hugh

ServiceLeader.org is a project of the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. It contains various information on volunteering but has an area specifically for Volunteer Managers that contains a lot of resource information.

What I like is how organized the resources are. First, they are divided into categories by theme, such as Best Practices, Implementing a Volunteer Program, and Working with Specific Volunteer Populations. Under each of those categories, then, they have smaller themes. Under Implementing a Volunteer Program, for example, they have Corporate Volunteerism Resources, Recruiting Volunteers, and Volunteer Task Descriptions.

If you click on Recruiting Volunteers, for example, they provide a list of resources with a brief summary of each right there. If you click on that resource, you actually get to see and read the article. It's not a list of available resources; it's a collection of actual resource articles, etc. that you can read right there. They're all from various sources, including Energize.

Although it's very organized and you can read the articles right there, be aware that, when I clicked around the site, I did get a lot of pop-ups. Also, it seemed as though some of the links to articles were outdated. When I clicked on them, they didn't come up.

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 May 2007 newsletter, I should have it by April 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!