

# VASP Voice

February 2009

A Publication of the Volunteer Administrators of Southwestern Pennsylvania

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## IN THIS ISSUE:

1. [Welcome](#)
  2. [Upcoming Events](#)
  3. [Evie Award Nominations](#)
  4. [Crystal White—Guest Presenter](#)
  5. [VASP Networking Groups](#)
  6. [Never Stop Learning](#)
  7. [Online Networking](#)
  8. [VASP Scholarships](#)
  9. [Boomer+ Program](#)
  10. [Hot Topics from TechSoup's Forum](#)
  11. [Online Nonprofit Marketing Grant Opportunity from Google](#)
  12. [VASP Member Profile -- Mary Kay Bonn](#)
  13. [Editorial Information](#)
- 

## WELCOME

Welcome back everyone! It's been a long hiatus for *VASP Voice*. Our apologies. This year, 2009, promises to be a year of challenges, progress, and continued support for VASP members. So be involved, lend expertise, and network with existing and prospective members. Show your VASP pride!

Something new in VASP Voice:

Note the ease with which you can navigate through the articles—just click any particular article under “IN THIS ISSUE” and, presto, you’ll zap to that article in the newsletter. Then just click on “Back to top” to make another selection.

[Thank you, Renee, for showing me this tool! Helen]

[Back to top.](#)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 9, 2009 – VASP Board Meeting** at Gwen’s Girls in Lexington Technology Park, starting at 9 a.m. All VASP members are welcome to attend.

**March 16, 2009 – VASP Program Meeting** at Northland Public Library, starting at 9 a.m. Topic: “The Balancing Act of Staff and Volunteers,” Rebecca Maletto, presenter.

**May 11, 2009 – VASP Board Meeting** at Gwen’s Girls in Lexington Technology Park, starting at 9 a.m. All VASP members are welcome to attend.

**Mary 14, 2009 – Annual VASP Luncheon**, starting at 11 a.m. at the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy located at Washington’s Landing.

[Back to top.](#)

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## **EVIE AWARD NOMINATIONS**

Start thinking about nominating an eligible member of VASP for the prestigious 2009 Evie Award. The Evie award is given annually to the “Outstanding Volunteer Administrator of Southwestern Pennsylvania” to acknowledge a volunteer director/manager/coordinator in the field of volunteer management for his or her excellence. This award is given in memory of Evie Levine, a much-respected member of VASP who had passed away several years ago.

Be on the look out for more information to come via email or snail mail for guidelines, nomination forms, list of prior winners, and current list of eligible candidates.

[Back to top.](#)

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## **CRYSTAL WHITE – GUEST PRESENTER**

Recently, at the January 26, 2009 VASP Program Meeting, Crystal White, Director of Agency Relations for the Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania, conducted a presentation on “Overcoming Risks and Obstacles,” in the arena of volunteer management. She kept the audience riveted as she covered such topics as 1) preparing, 2) training and supervising, and 3) providing ongoing support for volunteers.

Don’t miss VASP’s next program meeting set for March 16, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the Northland Public Library—Rebecca Maletto will present information gleaned from her recent attendance at the AVRMC Conference.

[Back to top.](#)

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## **VASP NETWORKING GROUPS**

VASP members are resourceful. They have created three networking groups that meet on a regular basis to discuss subjects and issues relevant to managing volunteers.

### Downtown VASP Networking Group

Date: Last Monday of every month.

Time: 9 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Place: American Red Cross of SWPA (225 Blvd. of the Allies), 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Room 202.

Information: Susy Robison, [srobison@pittsburghsymphony.org](mailto:srobison@pittsburghsymphony.org)

#### North Hills VASP Networking Group

Date: Every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every other month), in 2009, begin with February.  
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
Place: Panera Bread on McKnight Road  
Information: Cherie Hugh, [cahugh@hearth-bp.org](mailto:cahugh@hearth-bp.org)

#### South Hills VASP Networking Group

Date: Last Tuesday of every month  
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.  
Place: Panera Bread on Greentree Road (near Marshall's)  
Information: Tracy O'Neill, [toneill@readingservice.org](mailto:toneill@readingservice.org)

Try to attend any or all of these groups. You'll be glad you did!

[Back to top.](#)

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### **NEVER STOP LEARNING**

Submitted by Renee Willow

When I was a former AmeriCorps member in 2001-2002, I was also a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher's assistant in Sacramento, CA. Every morning, students would begin the day with this poem:

*The more you read, the more you know.  
The more you know, the smarter you grow.  
The smarter you grow, the stronger your voice,  
When speaking your mind or making your choice.*

Reading and learning still holds true in my profession as a volunteer coordinator for the American Red Cross. And as a member of VASP, I know we have a great pool of experience, education, and opportunities to share with each other during our meetings, networking, and the newly-formed [VASP Group Blog](#).

Here are some online training opportunities, professional articles, and Web sites covering topics of recruitment, motivation, retention, and recognition:

#### 1. Mark Your Calendars -- VolunteerMatch Webinars

Learn more about VolunteerMatch, one of the Internet's most popular volunteer recruiting services, and how it can help you to recruit volunteers.

VolunteerMatch posts all upcoming Webinars in their Non-Profit Learning Center at <http://www.volunteermatch.org/nonprofits/learningcenter/>.

#### 2. Corporation of National and Community Service Online Training Opportunities

Check out the Resource Center at the Corporation of National and Community Service Resource Center at <http://nationalserviceresources.org/online-courses> and discover online courses that could benefit you and your organization. Courses are free of charge

from the Online Learning Center. Browse the various topics of interest. Here's a sample topic of interest and its components:

#### Volunteer Leveraging

- Engaging College Students as Volunteer Leaders
- Leveraging Partnerships for Community Impact
- Managing Spontaneous Volunteers in Times of Disaster
- Moving Volunteers from Service to Civic Engagement
- On-site Project Management
- Project Planning
- Utilizing Volunteers as Project Leaders
- Volunteer Management
- Working with Diverse Volunteers

#### 3. Everyone Ready®

*Everyone Ready®* is a professional development program for volunteer management that is delivered via online seminars, electronic self-instruction guides, interactive discussion boards, and other online resources. Get 12 new topics for every year of enrollment.

Visit <http://www.energizeinc.com/everyoneready> to learn more!

#### 4. Recognition Ideas

Recognition is one of the most important parts of working with volunteers. Writing Thank You cards gets the message and sentiment across beautifully; for example: "Thanks for being an angel by helping with XYZ project" written on an angel-shaped notepaper.

One, low-cost Thank You gift could be a small booklet of quotes about volunteering that can be easily created on a computer. Give booklets of quotations to staff at collaborative agencies to show how much they and their volunteers have helped your organization.

Need help finding quotes? Visit these links:

- <http://www.quotegarden.com/volunteer-apprec.html>
- <http://www.alpenacc.edu/services/volunteer/quotes.htm>
- <http://www.cultureofpeace.org/quotes/volunteer-quotes.htm>
- <http://volunteerabroadfree.com/volunteer-appreciation-quotes.html>
- <http://thinkexist.com/quotes/with/keyword/volunteer/>

Remember: Recognition doesn't have to be expensive, but it does have to be sincere.

*Excerpted from "Recognition Doesn't Have to Be Expensive nor just for the Holidays (begin planning for Red Cross Month in March or for National Volunteer Week, April 19-25, 2009) from Sherry Leigh Mitchell, The Greater Kalamazoo Area Holiday Food Drive, Michigan*

[Back to top.](#)

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## **ONLINE NETWORKING**

Submitted by Rebecca Maletto

Would you like to be more active within VASP, but sometimes find it difficult to make it to the meetings and programs?

I am pleased to announce the launching of a new way to network and view valuable resource information—an online VASP Group Blog through Yahoo. This is a good, informative way for VASP members to connect with each other—at any hour—to ask questions; look up resources and view upcoming events; get feedback to questions; or just to keep in touch.

The new site is safe, FREE, and open to VASP members only. I encourage you to take a few moments to check it out and join in on great communication! To join, click on the link below:

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Volunteer\\_Administrators\\_SWPA/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Volunteer_Administrators_SWPA/)

Don't forget to check out the database section to add your name and company information to share. The calendar has listings of all upcoming meetings/networking dates—reminders—are automatically sent to those who subscribe.

Have questions? Don't know how to set up an account? Or want to add something? Just email Rebecca Maletto at [malettor@usa.redcross.org](mailto:malettor@usa.redcross.org).

[Back to top.](#)

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## **VASP SCHOLARSHIPS**

Submitted by Rebecca Maletto

Anna Olszewski, Pat McCarthy, and Rebecca Maletto were the recipients of VASP scholarships—each receiving \$100—so that they could attend the AVR M Conference back in October 2008 in Binghamton, NY. The scholarship fund is new to VASP. Look for upcoming opportunities like this one to help defray the costs of attending conferences of prime interest to volunteer managers.

Scholarships. Another great benefit of being a member of VASP!

[Back to top.](#)

---

## **THE BOOMER+ PROGRAM: ENGAGING BABY BOOMERS IN PROFESSIONAL AND LEADERSHIP VOLUNTEER ROLES**

(From the October 2008, AVR M Annual Conference)

Submitted by Pat McCarthy

### **Session Goal & Key Objectives:**

**Goal:** To present the pilot Boomer+ Program as a case study for growing a cadre of professional and leadership volunteers 55+.

**Objectives:**

- To understand emerging concepts about boomers as volunteers.
- To help agency to “boomerize” its volunteer opportunities.
- To identify strategies for meeting challenges that may occur.

Why all the fuss about Boomers? There are several factors relating to the boomer generations: The size of the cohort (over 77 million), their expected longevity, different retirements, experience and skills, and interest in community involvement. Boomers are moving into a new stage of life. Many are looking for ways to connect with and contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.

Compare the characteristics of traditionalists and boomers:

**Traditionalists**

- Tradition, respect for authority
- Conformity, blending in
- Organizational loyalty
- Adherence to rules/rigid
- Delayed gratification
- Referred to themselves as “senior citizens”
- Retirement vision—moving to Florida
- Predefined phases of life

**Boomers**

- Respect and authority have to be earned
- Less conformity, individualism
- Willingness to whistle-blow
- Choice and flexibility
- Forever young/health & wellness
- Retirement visions—exploring new civic engagement/lifelong learning
- New opportunities

**Project Needs Assessment**

Ask staff to “think outside the box” in how they are currently using volunteers. Staff needs to analyze the biggest program challenges and how professional/leadership volunteers can help build and expand program’s capacity. Look beyond the traditional administrative and direct service volunteers. What could professional/leadership volunteers help you develop within your program?

The following are examples of roles that a professional/leadership volunteer can fill: Fundraising Assistant Volunteer, Research Volunteer, Special Events Volunteer, Program Evaluator Volunteer, Graphic Design Volunteer, Recruitment Specialist Volunteer, and Volunteer Leader/Liaison.

**Physical Space Considerations**

What type of space is available to allocate or modify for shared use? If none, what can you do?

**Technical Needs**

Identify the types of technology your new opportunities will require, such as phone, fax, and computer with correct software, Internet access, and copier. Then make cost projections for each.

### **Access to Organizational Resources**

For logistics, who will be the primary point of contact? Who will be responsible for recruiting, interviewing, placing, training, supervising, tracking, and evaluating? Will formal training be required, such as skills-building in computer and customer service? If so, what kind?

### **Associated Costs**

What sorts of supplies, materials and equipment will be needed?

### **Internal Culture Change**

Offer a range of incentives, enrich current and future opportunities, expand the types of roles, offer varying time commitments, and explore new ways to structure roles.

### **Volunteer Orientations to Agency/Program:**

- Internal Orientation (for agency staff)

How will you orient current employees and volunteers about the changing paradigm of volunteers and secure an agency buy-in at every level? How will the lines of communication within the organization be strengthened to create a welcoming environment? What current organizational policies and procedures should capacity-building volunteers know to help adjust to the agency or program?

- External Orientation (for incoming Boomers)

What is the organization's operating culture (loose, flexible, or rigid)? What is the history and current mission of the organization? How do you get the resources you need? What are the best ways to communicate with staff and other volunteers? What is the best way to introduce the agency to your community resources? How should you present your relationship to the organization?

### **Types of Roles:**

- **Organizationally-defined Roles--**  
Created by staff with no input from volunteers. Volunteers are recruited to fill existing assignments.
- **Volunteer-defined Roles**  
Created with volunteer's particular interests and skills. An opportunity is created to use those unique qualities. Find more effective ways to use specialized skills.

### **Types of Teams:**

- 1) Service delivery
- 2) Problem-solving
- 3) Leadership

There are inherent values of creating teams—increased job satisfaction, increased retention, and increased creativity. Also, teams are often self-directed.

### **Telecommuting**

It's another way of offering a service. Volunteering from home or work through technology can be used to complete tasks offsite, enable direct client service, and manage distant volunteers.

### **Incentives**

Think of incentives along a continuum by offering gift cards, token gifts, major gifts, expense reimbursement, cash-equivalent benefits, cash, lifelong learning opportunities, leadership development, and/or presentations on program results.

### **Recruitment Strategies**

Think creatively about how you and your organization can reach the boomers, such as professional associations, learning centers, corporations, retirement communities, churches, AARPs, and RSVPs.

### **Challenges**

Things to consider when working toward solutions: Start-up time; initial training and orientation; flexibility; and time commitments. Other challenges include finding highly-skilled professionals to fulfill assignments; keeping volunteers stimulated and engaged; and finally "letting go" as volunteer managers.

### **Results**

Boomers want flexible hours, team-based, virtual, and short-term assignments. They want assignments that are meaningful and of impact to the community. They want to participate in program meetings, to be treated like staff, and to be part of innovative programs that are well-run. They also want to take advantage of trainings and continuing education opportunities.

### **Tips for Volunteer Managers to consider:**

- Listen to volunteer needs and desires.
- Remember to ask for help.
- Be open and flexible to new ideas and new assignments.
- Start small—progress is an incremental process.
- Use self-managed or self-directed teams.
- Build an evaluation tool that evaluates your program and volunteer satisfaction.
- Apply for volunteer management grants.

[Back to top.](#)

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### **HOT TOPICS FROM TECHSOUP'S FORUMS**

Submitted by Rebecca Maletto

Have you ever thought about using Facebook for your organization, but not sure where to begin? Facebook can be a critical tool for nonprofit organizations, because it can help connect your organization with others.

To get started, visit the Facebook Resource page at <http://www.techsoup.org/community/facebook/index.cfm>.

Or find out how others are using Facebook at  
<http://forums.techsoup.org/cs/forums/t/24218.aspx>.

[Back to top.](#)

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### **ONLINE NONPROFIT MARKETING GRANT OPPORTUNITY FROM GOOGLE**

Submitted by Rebecca Maletto

Nonprofit groups can apply to receive at least three months of free advertising on Google's Web site to promote their missions. Additional information and applications are available on the site. Who may apply: U.S. organizations classified as tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Religious and political organizations are not eligible.

Contact: Google, 1600 Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View, CA 94043; (650) 253–0000; fax (650) 253–0001; [googlegrants@google.com](mailto:googlegrants@google.com) or <http://www.google.com/grants>.

[Back to top.](#)

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### **VASP MEMBER PROFILE -- MARY KAY BONN**

1. **Name:** Mary Kay Bonn
2. **Position:** Volunteer Coordinator/Public Affairs
3. **Organization:** Chartiers Community Mental Health and Retardation Center Inc.
4. **How long have you been at this organization?** 12+
5. **To whom do you report?** Executive Director
6. **What are your major strengths?** I am a people person, and I love spending time with our volunteers and clients.
7. **If you could change anything about your job, what would it be?** I work as an island; if I could change anything, I would prefer to work with a team.
8. **Number of volunteers:** 35+
9. **What kind of screening process do you have in place for volunteers?**  
Volunteers are interviewed and required to complete an application process. This process includes completing a volunteer application, emergency contact, confidentiality form, criminal clearance application, review and sign HIPAA policy, and some of our programs require the volunteers to have a physical and a TB test. Volunteers are also asked for the name of two references.

10. **What sort of training/orientation do you provide your volunteers?** Once volunteers start, their supervisor provides an orientation to the program in which they will volunteer. I meet with them to review the Volunteer Handbook (policies and procedures).
11. **What kinds of volunteer recognition do you provide for your volunteers?** Currently, we offer a combined volunteer and employee recognition luncheon. Volunteers are recognized for 100, 500, 1,000, 2,500 and 5,000 hours of service. These levels were established to coincide with the employees' years of service.
12. **What volunteer recruitment method have you found to be most successful?** The Internet. With young people being so computer savvy and with the instant gratification you get from sending and receiving emails (I do not know anything more advanced than emailing. I don't text message etc.), the Internet has made it possible to get your message out there and for volunteers to respond in a timely fashion.
13. **What volunteer opportunities exist at your organization?** Volunteers are recruited for both direct service and non-direct service opportunities. If they are comfortable with the special needs population, they can volunteer in our day program for mentally retarded adults or they can volunteer in our day program for mentally ill consumers. If volunteers are not available during the day, but still want direct service they can volunteer in our Community Activities Program which provides social and cultural opportunities for special needs population. The majority of our volunteers are not looking for direct service and therefore they are interested in clerical tasks in our medical records department.
14. **And, finally, what would the other VASP members be surprised to learn about you?** People may be surprised to know that I was a waitress at Bimbo's. Anyone from Pittsburgh in the early '80s knows about Bimbo's. In fact, that is where I met my husband. I was a waitress and he was a bouncer! (In fact, three couples made similar pairings.) It was the most fun job.

[Back to top.](#)

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## EDITORIAL INFORMATION

VASP Voice has been compiled by Helen Harrison, using information provided by VASP members. VASP encourages its members to submit articles, information, and/or topics of interest to volunteer managers. If you want to assist with future newsletters or have information to share, contact Helen Harrison at [harrisonhe@usa.redcross.org](mailto:harrisonhe@usa.redcross.org) or 412-263-3183. Give feedback, make suggestions, and let Helen hear from you!

VASP Voice comes out three times a year and is regularly posted on VASP's Website at [www.vaspdovia.inpgh.org](http://www.vaspdovia.inpgh.org).

[Back to top.](#)

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