

VASP Voice
May 2007

In This Issue:

1. Sylvia Lynn Named Evie Award Winner
2. New VASP Officers Crowned
3. United Way Volunteer Update
4. VASP Member Profile: Lorraine Berner
5. COVAA Hires Wanda Lee Bailey as Project Strategist
6. Upcoming National Volunteer Days
7. Max & Erma's Cookie Coupons
8. Newsletter Committee Needs Your Help
9. Editorial Information

Sylvia Lynn Named Evie Award Winner
By Sheila Mozer

Sylvia Lynn was nominated for the 2007 Evie Award not by a single VASP member but by three different members, Myrna Antonio-Hall, Lorraine Berner, and Alison Boyle. The nominations repeatedly mentioned “her overall dedication to the field of volunteer administration.” This dedication is manifested in numerous ways, both professionally and personally.

According to the Lutheran Service Society’s web site, last year their volunteers spent more than 300,000 hours of their time helping those in need. Since it is Sylvia’s responsibility to recruit and train those volunteers for LSS’s numerous programs, each of which requires a special core of volunteer skills, she enthusiastically assures that each one is assigned to a program that best utilizes his/her talents.

Sylvia has contributed to the profession of volunteer management by mentoring novices in the field on best practices, by serving as an excellent role model, and by teaching workshops on volunteerism. She has served as a member of the VASP Board for several years and, this year, served as Co-President and Co-Program Chair, along with Christine Meurer. She not only conducted the Board meetings but brewed the coffee as well!

The personification of the spirit of volunteerism, this very busy lady currently serves as Treasurer for the Alliance Against Drugs, as a Stephen Minister, as a Thrivent Builds Specialist, as a member of the Synod Advocacy Committee, as a member of the Global Missions Committee, and in her church choir, all in her “free time.” As a member of VASP, she completed the Disaster Action Team training through the American Red Cross and, along with her husband Jerry, made three trips through Lutheran Disaster Response to Mississippi to assist Katrina victims recover from that disaster.

A graduate of North Dakota State University (BS in Home Economics) and Northern Illinois University (MS in Secondary Education), she completed an additional twenty credits to earn certification as a Dietary Manager and as a Food Protection Professional.

Thirty year residents of the Pittsburgh area, Sylvia and Jerry have three adult children, Angela, Brian, and Jonathan, whom she describes as “really neat people.” To that, we have to respond, “With a Mom like that, what would you expect?”

**New VASP Officers Crowned
By Cherie Hugh**

At the Annual Luncheon on May 17, VASP's new officers were named. Our new President is Alison Boyle of Gwen's Girls; Vice-President is Randy Detweiler of the Highmark Pals program; Tracy O'Neill of Radio Information Service will continue on as Secretary; and Lorraine Berner of Bethlehem Haven is Treasurer.

Congratulations to all!! More extensive profiles of all will be included in the next newsletter.

**United Way Volunteer Update
By Karen Clark**

Although United Way's volunteer services have been cut back, two of the major ones are still being offered: the web site that helps individuals find volunteer positions and the one-day group volunteer project Day of Caring.

The web site is virtually unchanged. Both agencies and individuals visit it; the agencies list their volunteer needs, and the individuals list their volunteer interests. Individuals can email the agencies that match their interests directly from the web site.

Day of Caring, though, has changed since United Way created it here in Allegheny County in 1991 (it spread after that to other cities). In the beginning, there was only one designated day. Now United Way works with Pittsburgh Cares to offer multiple Days of Caring from April through December. The link for Day of Caring registration on the United Way web site puts people in contact with Pittsburgh Cares.

Three years ago, United Way started a new event, the Technology Day of Caring. This year, it will be held on May 23. This is a joint effort of United Way and the Robert Morris Bayer Center for Non-Profit Management. It offers non-profits a day of technology assistance from skilled professionals.

The United Way web site, www.unitedwaypittsburgh.org, lists referrals for other volunteer services, such as Community College of Allegheny County for volunteer administrator training classes. United Way's list of organizations that it works with includes a link to VASP.

Thank you to Karen for agreeing to be our liaison to The United Way. She will continue to report on issues affecting Volunteer Administrators in future issues.

VASP Member Profile
By Helen Harrison

Name: Lorraine Berner

Position: Volunteer Coordinator

Organization: Bethlehem Haven

How long have you been at this organization? 8+ years (part-time)

To whom do you report? Director of Operations

What are your major strengths? Organizational and diplomatic (people) skills.

If you could change anything about your job, what would it be? Not much – probably more understanding within our organization between program staff relating to the volunteer program.

Number of volunteers: over 300 “regular” volunteers, over 700 annually

What kind of screening process do you have in place for volunteers? We ask for references and follow up there. I also interview prospective volunteers to try to make sure they are an appropriate fit for the opportunity.

What sort of training/orientation do you provide your volunteers? Orientation generally consists of my talking with the volunteers one-on-one, showing a video that gives an overview of our organization, and following up with key points relating to their volunteering with us. We distribute a volunteer handbook and job description as well as reference information on food safety, as many volunteers work with our meals.

What kinds of volunteer recognition do you provide for your volunteers? We try to have a recognition event annually. The format and theme seem to change all the time. Sometimes we send seasonal cards such as for Thanksgiving, Christmas or Valentine’s Day to the volunteers. Recognition is also given in the volunteer newsletter for volunteers who provide special help with fundraisers or other events. We also annually recognize milestones of service such as 5 years, 10 years, etc.

What volunteer recruitment method have you found to be most successful? The Volunteer Solutions website has been rather effective for us. We also rely a lot on word of mouth for volunteers to spread the message about the Haven to recruit friends, family, etc.

What volunteer opportunities exist at your organization? Most of our volunteers work providing/serving meals to our shelter residents. We also try to involve volunteers in activities with the residents. Some may also work in our office or on special events.

And, finally, what would the other VASP members be surprised to learn about you? I think a lot of members already know, but it always seems to surprise people to know that I went to school for and worked (in my first career) in civil engineering. I found my present position after a break of 11 years as a full-time parent.

Thank you to Helen for agreeing to interview VASP members for profiles in future newsletters.

**COVAA Hires Wanda Lee Bailey as Project Strategist
By Cherie Hugh**

In April, COVAA announced its hiring of Wanda Lee Bailey as a project strategist to provide leadership and guidance in the creation of the new association. She resides in Colorado and is a partner in a consulting practice that serves the non-profit sector.

Her responsibilities include facilitating relationship development with strategic partners; assisting with the identification of potential funding sources, market analysis, and research; supporting the steering committee and other committees; assisting with the planning for management of the new entity; and assisting with the development and tracking of a timeline for launch of a new national association.

COVAA is also planning to hold meetings prior to the National Conference on Volunteering and Service in Philadelphia in July.

Your name could be featured here if you agree to be our liaison to COVAA. The newsletter committee is looking for a VASP member to keep us updated on COVAA's progress in future issues. This could be as easy as checking the website for any new info, as I did above, which took me 2 minutes!

**Upcoming National Volunteer Days
By Cherie Hugh**

Continued from last issue...

Energize Inc. lists that One Day's Pay, formerly called United Day of Service, is set for September 11, 2007. When I went to www.onedayspay.org, I saw nothing about One Day's Pay, though; the site is now called www.mygooddeed.org and encourages people to volunteer throughout the year in honor of 9/11, not just on September 11 itself.

October 1 is Be the Change Day, an annual event sponsored by South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow (SAALT) that fosters leadership and community engagement through volunteerism and service. Formerly known as the National Gandhi Day of Service, the event draws individuals who are attracted to the values espoused by Mahatma Gandhi and other leaders who have devoted their lives to public service and engagement in their communities. Occurring during the weekend of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, Be The Change empowers participants to engage in collective civic action based on Gandhi's values of equality and compassion. Go to www.saalt.org/bethechange.php for more info.

Make a Difference Day, sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation and USA Weekend Magazine, is set for Saturday, October 27, 2007. This one is interesting because 10 agencies/ causes can receive a \$10,000 award from Paul Newman if the individual who did the service project is selected to be honored. Honorees are featured in USA Weekend Magazine during National Volunteer Week in April. Go to www.usaweekend.com/diffday/index.html for more information.

Look for more in the next issue!

Max & Erma's Cookie Coupons
By Cherie Hugh

In the past, Max & Erma's gave Cheers for Volunteers coupons to agencies who requested them. However, now, they no longer produce those specific coupons. They will provide gift cards for free cookies with a food purchase (I guess their cookies are supposed to be really good. Surprisingly, I have never had one.). Go to www.maxandermas.com under Fundraiser and Donation Requests to request the cards. I usually give the cards to our regular volunteers during National Volunteer Week, and I give them to our event and Day of Caring volunteers as well.

Newsletter Committee Needs Your Help
By Cherie Hugh

In each issue, we would like to feature a website and a book relating to volunteer administration and are looking for 2 VASP members to write reviews for upcoming newsletters. If you already spend a lot of time searching the web for info, you may be the perfect person to write our Featured Website article. If you already read books about volunteer administration, it would be easy for you to write up a quick summary for the Featured Book article.

Don't forget that you can always submit the above-type info for the newsletter without being our official writer. If you come across a good website or read a good book, please let your fellow VASP members know about it!!

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 August 2007 newsletter, I should have it by July 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!