Trends and Issues in Volunteer Management

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Chapter Seventeen
Special Topics in Volunteer Management
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This chapter is devoted to a number of topics that are of interest both because they are new – and will be of growing importance in volunteering over the next decade – and also because they cut across many of the topics addressed in other chapters.

Involving Pro Bono/High Skilled Volunteers
In recent years much attention has been paid to improving the contributions of volunteers by involving them in donation of professional skills and expertise. This is referred to by a number of terms, the most common being "pro bono" volunteering – after a longstanding practice in the legal community – or "skills-based" volunteering. A pro bono volunteer differs from more traditional service volunteers in that:

•   their volunteer work is predicated on existing skills or expertise possessed by the volunteers, and is fact, the focus of the work done by the volunteer

•   the work is done more as a consulting project with agreed upon guidelines, deadlines and deliverables than as an ongoing contribution of time

•   the work often focuses on improving the management or infrastructure of the community organization

While it is not uncommon for volunteers for bring skills to the work they are doing, it has often been the case that the types of tasks undertaken by volunteers have nothing to do with the professional expertise of the volunteer. The Corporation for National and Community Service did an extensive analysis of volunteer tasks in 2009 and concluded that most volunteers do not perform service activities that relate to their professional or occupational skills.

While this is not necessarily bad, and, in fact, many who volunteer prefer to engage in tasks quite different from those they engage in during their paid work, it is rather limiting in that most nonprofits do not think at all about seeking to engage contributed professional expertise on their own behalf.

The 2009 Deloitte IMPACT Survey found that:

•   Although more than 9-in-10 nonprofits surveyed say they need more pro bono support, one-fourth have no plans to use skills-based volunteers or pro bono support in any capacity in 2009.

•   Nearly all nonprofits surveyed do not know whom within a company to approach with pro bono requests.

Interestingly enough, retired corporate executives may prefer not to directly assist in performing work they did as an executive but instead perform a slightly different role. A study in 2006 by Volunteer Victoria found:

Participants felt that their needs would best be met if they engaged in volunteer efforts on short-term projects that were well defined and had tangible outcomes. On such projects, they would mostly like to share their knowledge and experience in a coaching or mentoring capacity so they could aid the nonprofit organization in terms of their governance and personnel and financial management.

When corporate volunteers were asked why their skills were not being solicited by nonprofits they responded:

•   34% - the nonprofit did not inquire about their workplace skills
•   32% - the nonprofit was not structured to use their skills
•   27% - the workplace skills were not valuable to the nonprofit
•   22% - the nonprofit could not find a way to use the volunteer's skills

As a result, only about 19% of volunteers say their workplace skills are the primary service they provide when volunteering.

One of the more embarrassing articles even written about volunteering ran in *Fortune* magazine in 2000. It recounted the misadventures of Don Spieler, age 64, former president of Kodak's operations in Mexico. Speiler looked forward to the opportunities offered by retirement to become engaged in the community of Rochester, his hometown:

Like many executives his age, he saw retirement as a chance to give something back, to volunteer. In Mexico he had served on the national boards of Junior Achievement and the Special Olympics. He was a two-term president of the American Chamber of Commerce of Mexico. He figured nonprofit agencies in Rochester would be thrilled to get his combination of business acumen and volunteer experience.

No such luck:

Over the next two years, Spieler went to seven different nonprofit organizations; at nearly all, he was asked to do work that was boring or that ignored his expertise as a businessman. One organization wanted him to volunteer as a two-day-a-week office manager. Or he could attend community meetings and write up minutes for the Chamber of Commerce. "I felt like a trainee again," Spieler says. "I found an entrenched group of agencies that did not accept the skills I could provide for them."

Revenge, however, is sweet. The article in *Fortune* recounting his experience is entitled "Candy Striper, My Ass!."

To avoid this kind of fame we suggest thinking about developing a system for working with volunteers who are interested in utilizing the skills they have acquired over the years.

Gaining Management Support
Step one in involving pro bono volunteers is gaining management support and involvement. Since the tasks to be undertaken will often affect the core

functioning of the organization, leadership involvement is essential, both in shaping the work and in ensuring its implementation.

This is easier to understand when you consider some of the possible types of expertise that pro bono volunteers might bring. Assume, for example, that you have developed a relationship with a medium-size corporation that wants to provide expertise to your organization. Here are some of areas of expertise they will have and some examples of the kind of tasks they might undertake:

Accounting/Finance
- fiscal planning and cash flow analysis
- inventory tracking and purchasing
- evaluating earned income opportunities

IT Department
- website operation
- developing of client/volunteer tracking software

Marketing
- website design
- materials design and branding
- marketing planning and event promotion
- helping gather and analyze date on client needs and community demographics

Facilities Management
- re-design of office space
- assistance in negotiating office rental contracts or acquiring property

Human Resources
- staff development planning
- staff and volunteer recruitment plan
- succession planning for volunteers
- staff and volunteer training on occupational health and safety issues

Legal Department
- risk management plan
- development of policies and procedures

Executive Management
- mentoring/coaching of nonprofit executives and supervisors
- assistance in strategic planning

- evaluation plan and systems

The Taproot Foundation noted in 2007 that:

Specifically, 41% or more of each of the following roles is estimated to be filled by Baby Boomers: management analysts, personnel managers, chief executives, administrative and public officials, and communications specialists. The high concentration of Boomers in these roles alone suggests a great opportunity to leverage transferable skills to help the nonprofit sector.

Staff and board involvement is critical to involvement of high-skilled volunteers.

Task Definition

Step two is task definition. A common mistake is to assume that the pro bono volunteers design their own tasks, since they are the experts. While it is true that they can probably best determine how the work should be done, it is equally true that the other aspects of task design must be carried out with the involvement of the staff of the organization. This is especially true when part of the goal of the pro bono effort is transfer of knowledge.

Task definition includes determining the exact purpose of the task and the results that are desired. The pro bono volunteer will need to be told what is to be accomplished and why those results are important. Outlining these elements will serve to better motivate the pro-bono volunteers and to assist them in deciding how to best undertake the work. After all, the professional knows lots of "answers"; the problem lies in figuring out which ones are correct for this particular situation. The more information you can provide them about what you really need, the better they can match their knowledge to your specific concerns.

A further aspect involves setting the parameters of the task. This will include items such as desired timeframe for completion, available support system, treatment of expenses, and needs for reporting and approvals. All of these will need to be discussed and negotiated with the pro-bono volunteers, many of whom will be accustomed to exercising virtual autonomy and independent control over their work.

While this independence on their part works well for them, you may find it uncomfortable. A common problem is that their notion of expenses may not match your capacities. A lawyer may incur several thousand dollars of quite reasonable expenses in an afternoon, and be accustomed to billing these to clients. You, on the other hand, might find that amount to be larger than the entire budget for your project...

Another common problem lies in setting out what matters require approval. If, for example, plans need to be approved by the management committee before they can be implemented, then this requirement should be explained at the start, with an explanation of the system and timeframe for this process.

And, of course, if there are restrictions that will impact the shape of the task, these should also be outlined. If a computer programmer is designing a system to enhance organization operations then any financial limitations need to be explained upfront.

Defining the task for a pro bono volunteer is more like writing a proposal than writing a position description. While they share many common elements (purpose of the work, description of task, expected results, timeframe, supervision, etc.) they do not have a common format.

In practice, more time needs to be spent on task design and negotiation with volunteer professionals than with most other categories of volunteers. Because the professionals are more likely to work independently and be self-supervising, it is imperative to have a clear initial mutual understanding of the desired results, parameters, and process of the volunteer work.

Design of volunteer positions for pro bono or high-skilled volunteers can also have a lot of variations. Fixler recommends the following possibilities:

1. Episodic assignments
2. Recurring episodic assignments
3. Coaching
4. Task Force
5. Special Projects

6. Seasonal work

Managing the On-Going Relationship
Step Three involves managing the on-going working relationship. The imbalance in knowledge, experience, and sometimes even status may make it difficult for staff to feel comfortable in exercising "control" over the pro bono volunteer, and may make it difficult for the professional to accept close supervision.

Supervision of the professional volunteer may assume some different forms. If you are working with large numbers of professionals, then it is sometimes very helpful to recruit a lead volunteer from the group, who will act as your intermediary, assuming responsibility for supervision. This peer relationship will make it easier for the leader to deal with any problem situations.

Relationships with agency staff can sometimes be tricky, as the On Resource Center of the Corporation for National and Community Service notes:

Identifying and mutually defining the "ground rules" for how the professional-level volunteer relates to the paid staff is critical. It is rare that a traditional volunteer directs the work of a paid staff person. However, a pro bono volunteer who is functioning as a consultant may well play a different role and find him/herself in the position of temporarily overseeing paid staff. An adequate orientation and training for both the staff and the volunteer are essential to ensure good working relationships as is the selection of a pro bono volunteer who possess the requisite interpersonal skills to work in an environment of ambiguity.

For situations in which only one pro bono volunteer is recruited, then sometimes a quasi-buddy system works well. One person (sometimes a member of staff and sometimes a volunteer) is appointed to "work with" the professional as a partner, operating as primary liaison with the organization. This person both monitors the progress of the work and helps the pro bono volunteer by retrieving information from the organization, presenting reports, etc. This informal supervision allows you to maintain some control of the situation without risking ego problems.

A common problem encountered in supervising expert professionals lies in "back seat driving". You have recruited them for their expertise: they know how to solve the problem and you don't. This means that you must trust that expertise, which is often more difficult than it sounds.

Marlene Wilson, for example, relates a wonderful story of recruiting an advertising expert to help design a new brochure for an organization. The expert was internationally acclaimed for her work, had agreed to help out, and eventually presented her suggested design. Marlene, who like most of us has her own preferences in style, started to make a few "suggestions." The expert stopped her, and asked "Why did you ask me to do this job, Marlene?" After a moment she realized that it was because he was, in fact, the expert, which meant she might well keep her opinions to herself. The brochure, unchanged, went on to win several design awards.

This does not imply that supervision of pro bono volunteers should be lax. Nonprofit Australia noted in 2005:

A more structured and professional recruitment and management process of skilled volunteers is more appropriate than the looser, more informal approaches which tends to characterise low skill volunteer recruitment and management. More value would be achieved for both parties were skilled volunteers treated more like paid staff or consultants than free labour.

Evaluating Results
Step four is evaluating results. Pro bono volunteers may, in truth, have a much better notion of how well the task is progressing than you do, and any evaluation of the work may rely on their expertise. If the contribution of the professional is to be on-going or on an annual basis, then you might want to conduct an evaluation or de-briefing session, and review the work or project much as you would a special event, concentrating on how can you do this better in the future.

The most common recruitment targets in pro bono volunteering are corporations that already have volunteer programs and small professional firms (architects, attorneys, etc.). Do not, however, limit yourself to these.

You could simply construct a targeted recruitment campaign aimed at the general public, highlighting the professional skills required for the volunteer position you are offering. This is particularly appealing to the 55+ population, as a report from VolunteerMatch found in 2007:

- 32% of non-volunteers 55+ would prefer a volunteer activity that helps them learn new skills or explore new interests

- Nearly two-thirds of male users 55+ would prefer a volunteer opportunity that makes use of their personal or professional skills

Students at the Harvard Business School has formed a Volunteer Consulting Organization whose mission is:

- To create lasting social impact in the Boston area by providing under-funded (typically non-profit) social service organizations affordable and sound business advice; and

  - To foster an appreciation for and provide an introduction to the traditional management consulting experience to Harvard Business School first-year students

Students form teams of 3-5 to complete a consulting project for a local non-profit organization. Students have the opportunity to meet the participating non-profits at the annual client fair in mid-October, and teams are paired with organizations through a mutual application process later that month. Projects start immediately, and typically wrap up around mid-May.

Nonprofit agencies specializing in helping organizations find volunteer consultants are also spring up. Endeavour, in Toronto, has provided an estimated $1,350,000 of consulting service as of

September 2009 on a budget of $2500. It describes itself as follows:

Endeavour not only attracts and selects top talent to provide consulting, we also invest in volunteer training and development to achieve higher levels of performance, and in turn, higher quality results for our clients. Through a partnership forged with CMC-Canada and the Ted Rogers School of Management in 2009, Endeavour is also extending its training sessions to the general public. To date, we have hosted over 20 educational sessions with expert speakers from business schools, top management consulting firms, and nonprofit consulting organizations, all of which was provided at no cost to nearly 400 volunteers and community members.

Many Volunteer Centers are also working to match pro bono volunteers to community agencies and one of the first and most successful examples of pro bono volunteering was the Go Volunteer Pro Bono project conducted by Volunteer Vancouver.

In addition to providing much-needed expertise to community organizations, skills-based volunteering seems to work well for volunteers. The Corporation for National and Community Service notes:

For volunteers in almost all of the eight occupational groups, the retention rate is higher when people use their skills while volunteering compared to when they do not. Within two of those occupational groups, the difference is significant: volunteers who use these skills at their volunteer assignment are more likely to continue serving the next year than volunteers from the same occupation who do not.

Utilizing Volunteering to Improve Employability

While we most often think of volunteering as focusing on allowing people we help others, increasing attention has been paid in recent years to the effect that volunteering has on the volunteer. We know, for example, that volunteering confers health benefits on those who volunteer and we often use other benefits as enticements in volunteer recruitment.

Because of recent economic conditions much attention is now being paid to the prospect of consciously utilizing volunteering as a way to improve the employability of some volunteers. The theory behind this is that since volunteering is essentially "work" if offer the chance for practitioners to gain or improve skills that might aid in employment – either obtaining or improving one's paid work situation.

This not a novel concept; it has been commonly accepted for a long time. Those of you who have been around for a long time might recall that using volunteer experience when applying for paid work was a major initiative during the 1970s, tied in part to the women's movement. Which is why almost all employers – both public and private – either ask for or accept volunteer experience on resumes and have done so for a long time.

Populations for whom the notion of utilizing volunteering to improve employability include:

• Those first entering the workforce
• Unemployed
• Underemployed
• Transitioning workers
• Immigrants
• Skilled employees

Most volunteer positions do not translate perfectly to paid work positions, but the majority of volunteer positions do provide skills that are relevant to doing paid work.

Examples of skills that volunteering provides that may contribute to increased employability include:

• Problem solving
• Decision making
• Literacy
• Numeracy
• Computer use
• Resourcefulness
• Working in a team
• Track record
• Self discipline
• Appropriate dress
• Integrity

• Working with others
• Commitment
• Communication
• Right attitude

A survey conducted by TimeBank in the UK found that:

• 94% believe that volunteering can add to employment skills
• 73% of employers would employ candidates with volunteering experience over one who has none
• 58% say voluntary work experience can actually be more valuable than experience in paid employment

A similar study by the Institute for Volunteering Research in 2008 found that "88% of those who are currently unemployed and intending to work believe that volunteering has ... a positive impact."

A 2009 study by V, the British youth charity found:

• Three-quarters (72%) of employers agree or strongly agree with that volunteering can have a positive effect on an individual's career progression.
• Nearly half (48%) of employers say that job candidates with volunteering experience are more motivated than other candidates.
• Two-thirds (60%) of employers feel that any volunteering experience can make a difference to an individuals career prospects.
• Employers believe that the three most important skills to be gained through volunteering are: team work (56%), building confidence (50%) and communication skills (39%).
• Over a third (38%) of employers say that candidates with volunteering experience have better people skills, are harder workers and show strong moral values.
• Half (49%) of employers feel volunteer experience is relevant even if it is not linked to what their business/organisation does.
• The top five volunteering activities that employers are impressed by on a candidate's CV include: experience of working with people with disabilities (42%), experience of working

with people with mental health issues (38%), youth work or after school activities (37%), mentoring (online, face to face, telephone) (36%), and community building activities in local areas (34%).

One of the most valuable things that volunteering can provide is simply a positive attitude, the feeling that the person is able to be effective at things they never imagined themselves capable of doing.

More tangible items that can be offered by a volunteer program interested in helping volunteers who are seeking assistance in future employment include:

- Letters of recommendation
- Volunteer experience resumes
- Work-related position titles
- Ability to try different kinds of work
- Promotions
- Skill Training
- Awards linked to accomplishments
- Employability counseling
- Pep talks
- Access to job information: www.govcentral.com
- Interview practice sessions
- Networking opportunities
- Preferential hiring

Some of the above are simple matters of paperwork; others involve more serious effort to upgrade the skills of volunteers. The final item – preferential hiring – is obviously a major inducement.

Overall, attempting to assist volunteers who are seeking to utilize volunteering to improve their employment chances is a very good and very manageable thing for most volunteer programs and we highly recommend you do it.

There are, however, a few caveats, most of which relate to your first interview with a prospective volunteer who is clearly approaching your organization with the hope or expectation that volunteering will provide significant assistance to them in finding paid employment.

These caveats include:

1. Determining why the person selected your organization as part of their employment search and how they think you will be able to assist them in their plan for employment. Are these expectations reasonable?

2. Determining how long they think they will remain with you and whether they can make some commitment to fulfilling their volunteer role even if do obtain paid work. This may not prevent you from accepting them as volunteers but it would suggest the wisdom of excluding them from some work assignments or of making them members of a team of volunteers.

3. Determining whether they primary motivation is an expectation that by volunteering with you they will be able to obtain paid employment with your organization.

The primary thing to remember in working with these volunteers is a simple principle: *don't seem to promise what you can't deliver.*

Using the Internet in Volunteer Management

The past decade has witnessed the incredible growth of the Internet. More than any aspects of society the Internet is now radically change just about every aspect of business, society and human interactions. It is becoming the pervasive means by which people conduct much of their lives and receive much of their communication.

US internet usage, as of June 2008 was:

- 220,141, 969 people with Internet access
- 72.5% of population

The Pew Internet Project in 2007 found that:

As noted recently in our Generations Online report, internet use still varies significantly across age groups. While 88% of 18-29 year-olds now go online, 84% of 30-49 year-olds, 71% of 50-64 year-olds, and 32% of those age 65 and older say they use the internet. In a separate survey conducted in Oct-Nov 2004, we found that 87% of 12-17 year-olds use the internet.

We most often think of the Internet as a tool for younger people but a recent survey UK Survey of old age pensioners found the following percentage among "most favored activities" during the week:

- 28 % Walking/hiking
- 28% Travel
- 36% Specialist interest
- 39% DIY/Gardening
- 41% Internet usage

The Internet has already begun to affect volunteering behavior.

In Canada, the 2004 NSGVP found that

- 20% of volunteers used the Internet in some way during their volunteer work
- 8% used the Internet to seek volunteer opportunities

A study by AARP in 2008 found that 70% of regular volunteers said they use the Internet at least a few times a week. An Oregon 4-H volunteer study in 2008 found that 91% of volunteers report typically using their computers at home for volunteer work.

We'll examine a few of the current way that volunteer program managers are making use of the Internet and give you some tips for how to make the most of them. And we'll end by looking ahead at some of the upcoming technological innovations that will begin impact volunteering

Online Volunteer Matching sites
A very short time after the Internet was operational it became obvious that it would allow prospective volunteers to look for volunteer opportunities online, much as they have done through local Volunteer Centers for decades. This immediately resulted in the rapid growth of volunteer matching sites around the world, including:

- 1-800Volunteer.org
- VolunteerMatch.org
- VolunteerSolutions.org
- Idealist.org
- ServNet.org
- Volunteer.gov

- GoVolunteer.org.au
- Do-It.org.uk

And many, many others.

Generation 2.0 volunteer matching sites are now springing up, with these focusing on a targeted audience. Examples include:

- www.smartvolunteer.org (professionals)
- volunteer.gospel.com (church)
- www.nyccah.org/volunteermatching/ (hunger in NYC)

The most obvious thing about volunteer matching sites is that they work, both for the prospective volunteer and for the agency wishing to involve volunteers.

Consider the following statistics from the California Volunteer Matching Network, which uses a database of volunteer opportunities from VolunteerMatch and the HandsOnNetwork:

- During the period starting with the public launch of the system on September 26, 2006 through February 2007, a total of 976,298 hits to the website were recorded.

- Average length of website sessions: 29 minutes and 35 seconds

- Nearly 8 of 10 (78.3%) searches were for ongoing volunteer opportunities compared to 18.1% for one-time volunteering and 3.6% for full-time service

- Over 9 or 10 postings (91.6%) were for ongoing volunteer opportunities compared to 5.3% for one-time and 3.1% full-time service opportunities.

A 2006 study by VolunteerMatch looked at the experiences of organizations seeking to recruit volunteer online through their system and found:

- It is helping them recruit volunteers they wouldn't have found (84%);

- it is making it easier for them to find the right volunteers (82%);
- and it has helped them to find the volunteers they need (77%).
- 61% of volunteers report that they have become regular, ongoing volunteers at an organization they found through VM.

The average number of volunteer opportunities listed by organizations during the previous year was:

- 2%   None
- 1-5   65%
- 6-10   19%
- >10   14%

And the average number of responses per listing was:

- 2%   None
- 44%   1-5
- 26%   6-10
- 14%   11-15
- 14%   >15

If you list volunteer opportunities online, the following are critical to success:

1. Provide some organizational background if you're not a household word: who, what, where, why

2. Give a description of the volunteer work: what, with whom, how long, goal

3. Give contact information: physical address web URL for agency website, phone number, email contact. The link to the agency website is critical since the majority of prospective volunteers go immediately to that site to take a deeper look before responding. Our next section will cover what you need on your agency website.

4. The key to online matching sites is being able to get back to inquiries quickly and begin the process of cultivating a relationship. A "24 hour" rule is a good thing to strive for, even if your response is just an echo "we'll get back to you shortly."

Recent studies have suggested that those who volunteer via Internet sites may have a different demographic profile that than those attempt to volunteer via other mechanisms. A study for the GoVolunteer site in Australia found that:

- 27% speak a different language other than English
- 79% are female
- 68% were under age 34
- 40% had never volunteered before

A similar analysis by the UK site, Do It in 2007 found:

- 88% are under 45 years
- 75% are female
- 30% of those who applied for a volunteer opportunity actually started volunteering
- 40% said they would have been unlikely to volunteer without the website (51% of 16-25 year-olds)
- 38% were new to volunteering

And a study by VolunteerMatch in the US found:

- 84% female/ 16% male
- 50% under age 30; only 32% age 40 or older
- 58% Caucasian; 11% African-American; 10% Hispanic
- 25% had not volunteered before

The final figures in each of those listings are obviously quite appealing, but the data also suggests that online sites may help organizations that want to broaden the demographics of their volunteer population.

Agency web sites
While not as frequently used yet as the online matching sites, agency websites are likely to become the major way that organizations will seek to recruit volunteers. In some cases this will occur directly, with the organization using the website to deliver recruitment messages. In other, the website will complement information transmitted through

other means, such as brochures or the online matching websites talked about in the last section.

We have little good data at this point about how often prospective volunteers make use of agency websites. The most reliable comes from the UK which ascertained in 2007 that:

- *The use of organisational websites also varied significantly with age, with the highest use being among 25–34 year olds (10%) and the lowest among those aged 65 and over (<1%).*

- *Overall 7% of volunteers found their volunteer opportunity through an agency web site.*

- *Similarly, while 10% of Asian volunteers found out about volunteering through their organisation's own website, this was true for 4% of Black volunteers and 4% of White volunteers.*

Here are some tips for utilizing your agency website to promote volunteering:

1. Highlight a link to the "volunteering" section on first/main page shown to viewers. Many will not search for the volunteering page if it is not readily identified immediately. The best locations are either on a sidebar on the left of the page or on a visible button along the top of the page.

2. In your description of volunteer opportunities stress "contribution to mission" and "it's an experience."

3. Use stories and pictures to illustrate what volunteers do; video if you can

4. Cover a range of options for involvement, not just one style of involvement.

5. If there are questions or doubts you know that prospective volunteers will have about your clients, the type of work, your location or anything else, address these proactive in a FAQ.

The basic technique to use is one that you are probably familiar with – let volunteers tell their

stories. This remains the simplest and yet most powerful method of enticing new volunteers, and it works as well on the Internet as it does in a speech or in a conversation in a bar.

Some example pages to look at include:

- Mount Ranier National Park, Volunteers at Mount Ranier, http://www.nps.gov/mora/supportyourpark/volunteer.htm

- Big Brothers Big Sisters, Volunteering – Real Life Stories, http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.diJKKYPLJvH/b.1755227/apps/nl/newsletter.asp

If you have the technical support you can make your website interactive through utilizing the following techniques:

- E-mail link for questions
- Downloadable Information Packet and Application Form
- Online application form

If you'd like to see the current state of the art in this sort of thing check out the www.goarmy.com site and the www.peacecorps.gov sites.

While they look incredibly sophisticated the basic technology is probably within the understanding of the average 14-year old these days and most of them already have the necessary equipment.

One not-so-obvious aspect of this shift to utilizing the agency website as the primary provider of information is that it allows the Volunteer Program Manager to cover lots of ground without overwhelming the prospective volunteer – they can browse at their leisure. It also avoids the old "kitchen sink" approach that doomed many print brochures to unreadability.

And most beneficially, it levels the playing field between rich and poor organizations. Websites are incredibly cheap to produce and maintain.

And remember that volunteers aren't your only target audience. See, for example, the US Army Corps of Engineers "Frequently Asked Questions for Staff Who Work with Volunteers," http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/faqs.cfm?Id=volunteer

Social Networking

Social networking sites are the current object of intense exploration by Volunteer Program Managers. These include the omnipresent massive networking sites:

- Facebook
- My Space
- Bebo
- YouTube
- Meetup
- Twitter
- LinkedIn

A GfK Roper Consulting survey in 2007 found that 61% of American adults are not interested in online communities and 18% say they don't have time for them. On the other hand the Pew Internet and American Life Project found in 2009 that one-third of adult Internet users have a profile on a social networking site, up from 8% in 2005.

Among a younger population, according to Pew, use of social networking sites is pervasive:

- More than half (55%) of all of online American youths ages 12-17 use an online social networking sites
- 48% of teens visit social networking websites daily or more often; 26% visit once a day, 22% visit several times a day.
- Older girls ages 15-17 are more likely to have used social networking sites and online profiles; 70% of older girls have used an online social network compared with 54% of older boys
- 39% of online teens share their own artistic creations online, such as artwork, photos, stories, or videos, up from 33% in 2004.
- 33% create or work on webpages or blogs for others, including those for groups they belong

to, friends, or school assignments, basically unchanged from 2004 (32%).
- 28% have created their own online journal or blog, up from 19% in 2004.
- 27% maintain their own personal webpage, up from 22% in 2004.

Most social networking sites are web-based, but many also provide users the ability to interact in other ways, such as email or instant messaging. And, as you will see below, social networking can also be built into physical interactions in the real world.

Social networking sites are now moving toward their Second Generation, away from the massive sites above to more targeted networking sites. Among these are "cause oriented social networking" sites that focus on charitable activities. Examples include:

- www.SixDegrees.org
- www.BeHandsOn.org
- www.Junction49.co.uk
- www.care2.com
- www.nabuur.com
- Cauzoo.com
- www.Change.org
- HorsesMouth.co.uk
- www.uplej.com
- Facebook Causes •www.dogoodchannel.com
- www.justcauseit.com•
- volunteerism.meetup.com
- i-volunteer.org

The advantage of this targeting obviously is that it more quickly connects you to a population that is probably receptive to the notion of volunteering.

As we said, it is still early to evaluate the effectiveness of social networking sites. A 2009 survey by the Red Foundation in the UK on the use of social networking sites found the following pattern:

	Recruitment	Talk with existing	Promote good	Promote

		volunteers	practice	volunteering events
Used it successfully	14.6%	22%	7.3%	21.5%
Tried without success	3.5%	2%	0%	2%
Not tried it	68.9%	67.2%	83.4%	66.7%
Planning for the future	13.8%	9.2%	9.7%	10.6%

Some tips for making use of social networking sites are:

1.   It's still a bit early to tell whether social networking sites, as currently operated, will last and where they still go from here. They probably are not good for all target audiences, but they have high value among younger people and especially among young females.

2.   Social networking sites require a lot of attention. Their key element is "interactivity" and that means someone from the volunteer program (either the Volunteer Program Manager or a volunteer) must be part of the discussion and participate on a regular and active basis without seeming to dominate the discussion or making things seem too formal. Your goal is to give people the tools and information they need to get involved and be successful but not look like you are overtly trying to manipulate them into volunteering.

3.   Ask your current volunteers to engage in online conversations and discussions about the volunteer work they are doing. This is another example of the always-effective "tell your story" technique.

4.   Social networking may ultimately have more use in increasing volunteer retention than recruiting new volunteers. This may be especially true in programs where volunteers are dispersed throughout the community and don't have much chance for face-to-face encounters with other volunteers. In this case, social networking can provide the vital glue to make volunteers feel connected to one another.

5.   Don't get involved in social networking if you're a control freak. You can't control the conversation without ruining the interaction.

Some examples of social networking sites related to volunteering are:

•   Triangle Chicks for Change, philanthropy.meetup.com/9/

•   Volunteer Center of Bergen County, Facebook page, http://www.bergenvolunteersblog.com/2008/07/volunteer-center-embraces-technology-by.html

•   FUEL – St Louis Social Networking and Volunteer Group, http://socialnetwork.meetup.com/504/

•   Association of Volunteer Managers, Facebook page, http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2664895930

The next generation of social networking efforts will probably occur within organizations. Bridgeland, Putnam and Wofford describe what IBM is doing with it internal website for employee volunteers:

IBM has created an "On Demand Community" website that matches more than 100,000 employees and retirees in more than 100 countries worldwide with local volunteer opportunities, as well as second careers in teaching, public service and non-profit service, and arms them with a variety of tools, such as online presentations, videos, and software solutions that train employees on mentoring a student, helping teachers with technologies, and sharing with nonprofits project management skills and new technologies.

The other innovation will probably involve sites that link online discussion with real world activities. One

Brick, an organization in Chicago, describes itself as follows:

We create a friendly and social atmosphere around volunteering, and after each volunteer event -- which typically lasts only 3 to 4 hours -- we invite volunteers to gather at a local restaurant or café where they can get to know one another in a relaxed social setting. Through our volunteer projects, we provide non-profits with the much-needed labor to carry out their visions. At the same time we also foster an environment in which to meet new people, both socially and professionally.

And Much, Much More
Rather than try to discuss these we'll just list the technology and show you where you can see it in action:

1. Podcasts

•   Volunteer San Diego, vsd.libsyn.com

2. Blogging/VLogging

•   UK Association of Volunteer Managers blog, http://www.volunteermanagers.org.uk/blog
•   Wexner Center for the Arts, WexBlog, http://wexarts.org/wexblog/?cat=45
•   Starbucks V2V Blog, http://www.v2v.net/starbucks

3. Wikis

•   PetTrust Wiki, Volunteers and the Volunteering Experience, http://www.pettrust.org.uk/grant/index.php/Volunteers_and_the_Volunteering_Experience
•   Association for Volunteer Managers, Welcome to a Volunteer Management Wiki, http://wiki.volunteermanagers.org.uk/index.php?title=Main_Page

4. ListServs

•   Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Frog and Toad Survey Volunteer Listserv, http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12143_12194-58306--,00.html
•   Association for Volunteer Services, Lebanon, Links Concerned with Electronic Discussion Groups and Mailing Lists, http://www.avs.org.lb/linkselectronic.html

5. Online Orientation andTraining (Girl Scouts)

•   Sask Sport, Online Volunteer Training Centre, http://www.ovtc.sk.ca/
•   Christian Volunteering.org, Webcast Workshops for Volunteers, http://www.urbanministry.org/wiki/webcast-workshops-volunteers
•   Key Volunteer Network, US Marine Corps Family Life Project, Online Volunteer Training, http://www.usmc-mccs.org/kvn/trainkvn.cfm
•   Girl Scouts USA, Online Volunteer Orientation, http://training.girlscouts.org/volunteer_upload/V3.asp

6. Twitter and Mobile Phones

•   The Extraordinaires, On Demand Volunteerism by Mobile Phone, http://www.theextraordinaries.org/volunteering/
•   Twitter, Volunteering Updates, http://twitter.com/volunteering

If you don't understand any of these we suggest you begin by visiting Jayne Cravens site, www.coyote.com where you can learn all you really need to know, interspersed with Jayne's acerbic and entertaining views on life and technology.

The bottom line on the above, in case you haven't figured it out yet, is that The Future is Here, and your volunteers are probably already part of it so you need to join it as well. If you aren't technologically savvy and comfortable, either start learning or recruit a volunteer who will guide you through this strange and wondrous land. If you're curious about where your volunteer program should be in ten years take a look at the behavior of today's twelve-year olds.

Ethical Issues in Managing Volunteer Programs

We often focus on the volunteer involvement as a system for providing services to clients, a focus that is simple to do in organizations where the needs of the client are often straightforward and obvious. Volunteer service managers then address their own attention to the classic tasks of volunteer management – designing roles for volunteers, recruiting, orientation and training, and providing a supervisory and support system.

Within all these tasks, however, lurk a number of less obvious and much more subtle issues, many of which require decisions based on ethics and values-based considerations. These decisions are made not only by the volunteer services managers but also by the other parties involved in the process of providing care – organizational staff, clients and family members, and volunteers themselves.

Ethics is the process by which values and principles are transformed into action. Ethical values provide the decision maker with a means of determining what is *right* versus what is *wrong*. The field of volunteer management – like most professional fields – has produced a variety of its own codes of ethical behavior. In the United States, the Association for Volunteer Administration (2006) suggested the following core ethical values for those who mobilize, direct and motivate volunteers:

1. Citizenship and philanthropy
2. Respect
3. Responsibility
4. Compassion and generosity
5. Justice and fairness
6. Trustworthiness

Many fields of practice develop their own ethical codes. In Canada, the British Columbia Hospice Palliative Care Association (2007) enunciated a standard for ethical behavior of volunteers in hospice programs:

"Standard One: Competence
C. Ethics: You are confident that you are carrying out your responsibilities within the ethical guidelines of your organization and the setting in which you

volunteer. Volunteers are oriented to and understand all ethical guidelines related to hospice palliative care including:

1. *Confidentiality and privacy;*
2. *Boundaries to the relationship between volunteer and patient/family;*
3. *Ethical guidelines specific to each of the settings in which they volunteer."*

Neither of these sets of ethical principles is apt to provoke much argument – each provides a standard of action that seems admirable and appropriate.

As in many philosophical determinations, however, the difficulty lies not in stating ethical principles, but in practically applying them.

Ethical Issues and Conflicts in Managing Volunteers

Difficulties can arise in making ethical decisions in a variety of ways:

- differing ethical values are held by various parties involved in the situation
- conflicts exist among the ethical values held by an individual
- grey areas of interpretation exist within ethical principles

We will briefly examine some examples of these difficulties, focusing first on conflicts for the volunteer program and its operation and secondly for the individual volunteer.

Conflicts for The Volunteer Program
As volunteer service managers go about their operation of the volunteer program they face a number of ethical issues. Some of these conflicts are minor, and may affect only the Volunteer Program Manager. Mary Merrell, for example, tells the following story:

"A long time volunteer asked me if she could use my name for an employment reference. She has been with us for a long time and I know her well as a friend. She's a good person and a dependable

volunteer. But, I am very uncomfortable about giving a job reference. I do not feel she has the skills or ability to tackle the job she is seeking. I would personally never hire her for that job. That's not to say she wouldn't be great in a lot of other things. But this position is not where her strengths lie. So what do I do?"

Some of the ethical conflicts, however, can pose quite substantial issues for the volunteer services manager. These include:

1. Determination of appropriate roles for volunteers
Volunteer management has always held that volunteers are a means of supplementing not supplanting paid staff roles. This ethical principle – the protection of the right of individuals to fair employment – is supported both by volunteer service managers and by volunteers. In practice, however, this is a difficult issue, especially in very small charitable organizations, where changes in funding may often necessitate alterations in how and by whom work is done. Further complicating this issue is the interest of current and prospective clients in receiving service – if funding cuts results in staff layoffs is it then right or wrong to utilize volunteers to provide services to clients who would otherwise not receive assistance?

Related to this issue is the question of appropriate behavior by volunteers during industrial actions or work stoppages – should the volunteer service manager engage volunteers in providing service during such actions or should the volunteers cease work as well?

2. Matching of volunteers and clients
Volunteer/client relationships are a delicate act of matching for compatibility. Grey areas, exist, however in determining exactly what factors are appropriate in making this match and what factors ought not to be allowed. Suppose for example that a particular client (or volunteer, since this could come from either party) expresses a strong preference that their partner be of a particular ethnic or cultural grouping (or *not* be from a particular group). Is adhering to this preference simply good management – allowing for greater compatibility, better communication and understanding – or would

it be abetting a form of discrimination? What if the stated preference were related to the religion or religious beliefs of the client or volunteer? What if it were around lifestyle issues of either the client or the volunteer?

In addition to potential conflict between the value of allowing autonomy and control to the client/volunteer versus preventing discrimination to either party we must also factor in the practical issues of providing good care. Forced matches between clients and volunteers are likely to result in increased potential for less satisfactory care, based on a lack of comfort or ability to interact effectively.

3. Relationships between clients and volunteers
Some of the more interesting boundary issues around volunteer involvement develop because of the very good relationships that volunteers can form with clients. Commonly these relationships – when working well – will tend to expand in scope, with the volunteer offering to do more for the client than is stated in the assignment description of the volunteer. This can include offering to provide personal services outside those normally offered by the organization (shopping, repair work, cleaning services, etc.). It might – in an alternate form – consist of the creation of a romantic relationship between the volunteer and client or the volunteer and a family member. It might also consist of actions by the client who feels a strong affection or obligation toward the volunteer – resulting in the offer of a gratuity or gift.

In each these cases the ethical issue for the volunteer service managers is in to what extent the volunteer program has the right to intrude in personal activities of the volunteer or the patient. Does the volunteer program have the authority or obligation to say to the patient or volunteer that certain activities are not allowable? And, if so, by what method can the volunteer program enforce this dictate, especially if the behavior is initiated by the client?

4. Relationships between staff and volunteers
An ethical question for volunteer service managers is whether their own loyalty is to the paid staff of the organization or to its volunteers, and whether they

are willing to fight within the organization on behalf of the interests of volunteers. Susan Ellis notes

"In my opinion, we have an ethical dilemma whenever we find ourselves:

- *Working around resistance from paid staff (or veteran volunteers) rather than confronting and changing it.*
- *Seeing that there are no consequences when employees are unsupportive of volunteers and, maybe worse, that there are no rewards for doing a great job with volunteers.*
- *Accepting restrictions on what volunteers can and can't do that are created under negative, outdated, or otherwise wrong stereotypes about who volunteers are and whether they can be trusted.*
- *Allowing volunteers to be invisible or of lowest attention on organizational charts, in agency brochures, in annual reports, on Web sites, etc."*

5. Staff and volunteer boundaries
In considering these questions for volunteer services managers, some are further highlighted in exploring boundaries between paid staff and volunteers. It is important that volunteers become an integral and valued part of the organizational team. There are a number of areas, however, where staff and volunteer boundaries may become blurred.

Consider, as an example, a hospice program. Historically, a number of hospices have involved professionals as volunteers, and volunteer nurses may be found working alongside paid nurses, often undertaking most of the duties of their paid counterparts. Is it appropriate to recruit some nurses as paid staff, but not others? On the other hand, many of these volunteer nurses are employed in other settings and involved in the hospice on a very part-time basis to enable them to further develop skills in palliative care. If volunteer nurses are not supplanting staff roles, could it be considered that they enhance the service offered to patients?

It is not only in nursing, however, that this happens. Often volunteers work alongside staff in very similar roles, for example in administration. Is this also an appropriate use of volunteers, and does it strengthen the hospice multi-disciplinary team by diversifying skill mix and motivation.

Yet another challenge for programs arises as volunteers become more involved over time, often taking on a number of different roles, or offering their service over a number of days. Whilst this undoubtedly adds to the skills and flexibility of the volunteer team, how many hours are too many for a volunteer? When do increasing levels of volunteer involvement highlight the need for additional staff? The global community of volunteer firefighters and emergency rescue workers is facing this question as many transition from a volunteer-driven system to one dominated by paid workers, a change prompted by the demands for training time required by the work.

In a small organization there may also be complexities where there may be a single staff member, for example, a gift shop manager, who is in charge during their formal work shift. In this circumstance, is it ethical to ask volunteers to cover staff holidays and off duty-shifts, and if so should the volunteer be paid?

Conflicts for The Individual Volunteer
It is not only organizations that face such challenges, however. Volunteers also face ethical conflicts in performing their volunteer service. These include:

1. Disagreement with organizational values
Volunteers may hold ethical beliefs that potentially conflict with the values or standards of the organization and indeed with those of the client and family. Volunteers in hospice, for example, are likely to face such a conflict. Payne (2001) found that religious beliefs were very important or quite important to 71% of hospice volunteers in New Zealand. Such beliefs can easily come into conflict with organizational practices. McMahon (2003) discusses the split between the values of sanctity of life and patient autonomy. Zehnder and Royse (1999) found, for example, that thirty-seven percent of volunteers surveyed endorsed the view that there are situations when assisting death may be morally acceptable; 4% had been asked to provide

assistance to help a patient end his or her life.

Donohue (2006) writes about a fascinating conflict that arose between the Friend's Group and their library over a used bookshop program. The organization wanted to change it into a more efficient money-raising machine; the Friend's group viewed it as part of their mission of providing reading material to the community, especially through their favorite project, Friend-to-Friend that gives book free of charge to a variety of institutional recipients.

This issue is obviously more critical to organizations are they engage in outreach recruitment to involve volunteers from more diverse cultures and segments of the community.

2. Conflict of loyalty to the client versus the program
One of the overlooked consequences of high levels of volunteer motivation is that it can result in strange patterns of behavior by volunteers, especially as it relates to loyalty toward the patient versus the volunteer program (see Chapter Eleven for a complete examination of this syndrome). Volunteers must often choose whether to heed what they perceive to be the interests of the clients or the interests of the volunteer program (as indicated through its policies dictating what the volunteer should and should not do). These competing interests can come into conflict in a number of ways:

• the client expresses a wish for assistance that is not within the boundaries of acceptable service as defined by the program, but the volunteer wishes to help the client however they can and so determines to provide the service anyway
• the program has rules for reporting abusive behavior by the client (or a family member) that the volunteer may choose to ignore out of affection for the client

Volunteers will face a similar dilemma in determining whether they have a greater loyalty to the client or to family members when the wishes of these two parties conflict.

Most often, volunteers will tend to resolve all of the above conflicts in favor of the interest of the client if

the volunteer has formed a close personal relationship with the client. Some volunteers may be particularly subject to this syndrome because of their high levels of empathy, which may be a primary motivation for their involvement in the organization.

3. Confidentiality of patient information
All volunteer programs have rules on confidentiality of client information. Volunteers usually adhere to these rules, but such adherence is much more difficult in small communities where outside personal relationships are all-pervasive. Volunteers who are known to be assisting a particular client will be asked by their friends and neighbors (who are also the friends and neighbors of the patient) what is happening with the patient. In this case the organizational value of protection of the privacy of the patient conflicts with the societal value of sharing information about members of the community.

More serious ethical conflicts around confidentiality can arise when the volunteer has access to information about client behavior that may break the law. Volunteers with access to client homes may encounter situations where they are privy to information about the client or their family members that they may or may not feel comfortable in reporting to the organization, especially if the volunteers is sympathetic to the conduct (such as use of alternative medications or treatment that may not be authorized or legal).

4. Disagreements between the volunteer and the paid staff on treatment or care
As volunteers become more experienced they will begin to form more opinions about how client should be treated. Often this is based on the fact that volunteers may feel they have more experience with both the condition and wishes of the clients than do members of the treatment team – based on their greater degree of contact with the client. This can be exacerbated if the volunteer does not feel a sense of involvement with the paid staff team, either in the sense that they are not listened to by the or if they do not receive full communication from the paid staff about the basis for decisions being made about the client. Volunteers may, through loyalty to the client, decide to resolve their ethical difficulty by not following the guidance of the paid staff or by

providing incorrect information to the client or family members.

Resolving Ethical Conflict Situations

We will divide our suggestions for resolving ethical conflict situations into two parts:

- systemic solutions
- individual situations

Systemic Solutions
The following will enhance the ability of the volunteer services managers to deal with ethical conflicts:

1. Develop standards and procedures that relate to common ethical conflict situations
Many of the conflict situations we examined above could be addressed by clear standards of practice. As an example, consider the following standards for interaction with clients, carers, and families produced by Volunteering Victoria (2007) for hospice programs:

"4. Interaction with patients, carers and families
In all instances, the onus of responsibility to communicate the boundaries of the volunteer role resides with the manager of volunteers. Volunteers are only required to carry out the duties of their role specified in a written position description authorised by the manager of volunteers. Volunteers need to be aware that:

- *they may only undertake or assume responsibility for any duties specified in writing by the manager of volunteers or agreed to in consultation with the manager of volunteers*
- *any requests from patients, carers and families to perform activities outside the volunteer position description needs to be referred to the manager of volunteers for consideration and approval*
- *any perceived opportunities to improve service delivery can be discussed with the manager of volunteers or the interdisciplinary team, and only enacted with organisation approval.*

In the event that a volunteer is given a direction or duty that the volunteer feels is inappropriate or does not feel equipped to comply with, the volunteer can:

- *decline to perform the direction or duty and provide reasons why this is appropriate*
- *request that alternative arrangements be made to fulfil a particular direction or duty"*

As the program develops a history of volunteers encountering ethical issues appropriate standards should be developed to indicate the values of the organization and to provide direction to the volunteers.

While formal procedures such as that given above are important, it is also critical to develop informal rules. This is especially true in boundary areas related to relationships with clients. Adopt and communicate to all volunteers a "non-abandonment" policy regarding client needs that they encounter that do not fall into the normal work of the program. Urge volunteers to bring these needs to you and let them know that you will work to find some way of meeting the needs, usually through referral to another agency. Stress to the volunteer that the program will not "abandon" the patient. It is crucial to maintain open communication with the volunteers regarding these issues, and it is equally crucial to get them to know that you are on the same side as they are - each of you wants to do what it takes to help the client. If a volunteer ever gets the impression that the program doesn't "care" about the clients they will be much more likely simply to act on their own and they will eventually be likely to stop volunteering.

2. Engage in scenario-based interviewing and training
Many ethical dilemmas are not susceptible to easy rules and simple procedures. Volunteers may not easily realize why they feel troubled by some issues or what they would do when confronted by them.

One solution to this is to utilize more realistic role-playing scenarios during interviewing and training of volunteers. These scenarios allow both the volunteer and the volunteer services managers to think about and work through complex situations.

A. Think about past problems which your

volunteers have encountered, Select one that has some of the following characteristics:

• worries you and might occur again
• has no clear "right" answer or represents a conflict of ethical interests and values
• a volunteer might be likely to rush to their own "right" answer to the problem
• a volunteer might have difficulty in dealing with the subject matter
• a volunteer might have difficulty in dealing with the interpersonal relations involved in the situation

B. Briefly outline:

• main facts and characters
• basic "dilemma"
• key elements
• "wrong" responses

C. Further develop this situation into an interviewing scenario:

• description of basic setting to be given to volunteer
• characters involved
• key starting questions
• secondary twists and complexities

These same scenarios can be utilized for discussion in volunteer training sessions.

3. Create volunteer discussion groups
Many of the difficulties around ethical dilemmas for the volunteer can be avoided by providing the volunteer with opportunities to discuss their feelings and explore acceptable solutions with others. Some of this discussion can occur between the volunteer and their designated supervisor, but the volunteer may find it difficult to "confess" that they are tempted to break organizational rules. Volunteers will be more likely to admit these feelings to other volunteers and then to talk openly about possible solutions to their ethical conflicts. Volunteers will also be more likely not to feel guilty about these feelings, a condition that can lead to stress and burnout. Volunteers often cite expanded contact

and communication with other volunteers as valuable to them.

In addition to giving volunteers a forum for raising ethical questions, these discussion groups are an excellent venue for utilizing experienced volunteers as group leaders.

4. Foster inclusion and involvement of volunteers in staff teams
Volunteers who feel they are active and productive members of the overall staff team are more likely to understand and adhere to the values of the organization. Conversely, volunteers who do not feel bonded to the organization are more likely to follow their own inclinations when faced with a conflict situation. This involvement should go beyond volunteer simply being informed about what is happening; they should be allowed the opportunity to provide input and to fully discuss the situation of the client.

Individual Situations
The suggestions above will assist in avoiding or managing ethical conflicts in general. What we will discuss next are some steps in dealing with particular ethical situations as they arise.

The decision-making process below is intended to guide the volunteer services manager as they think through a particular situation, and is intended to ensure that the decision that is made is one that accurately reflects the ethical values of the hospice program and one that will cohere with future decisions.

As you consider what action to take in a situation involving an ethical conflict or dilemma think about the following:
1. What are the facts in this situation? Do you have all the relevant information? Do you have information from all sides? Is this information reliable and unbiased? Have you considered how various stakeholders may interpret the information differently?

2. Who are the various stakeholders and what do they have to lose/gain in the situation? What rights are in conflict? Which of their values are

in conflict? [Stakeholders may include the client and family members, volunteers, the hospice program, and even the community in general.]

3. What ethical principles or values underlie the situation? How do these values differ among the various stakeholders? Are there priorities among those values? Are there key values of the organization that must be upheld in this situation?

4. What decision will resolve this current situation and what principles/values is the decision based upon? Whose interests are best supported by this decision? Whose interests are lost?

5. Who should be involved in making this decision so that all interests are fairly represented?

6. How well will this decision carry to other similar situations involving the same principles/values? Will we be willing to apply the same decision to those situations? Would we be willing to apply this decision to our own actions?

7. What actions will we need to take in the future to uphold this decision?

8. Would you be willing to explain this decision to the media? To your co-workers? To children?

This process will make it more likely that the decision reached will be correct and more acceptable to all parties, both present and future.

Conclusion

Beneath the surface of the involvement of and support provided by volunteers lies a web of relationships and a range of philosophies. Volunteer services managers face the responsibility of reconciling these varying interests, understanding that the smooth operation of the volunteer program requires integrating a variety of beliefs, values and ethical standards held by volunteers, clients, staff, and others. These values are significant to their holders, and this is especially true in the case of volunteers whose beliefs are integral to their motivation and involvement. The philosophical

questions and dilemmas faced by volunteers are as troubling as some of the practical issues. Effective volunteer service managers will understand the need to support not only volunteers, but also staff and the organization itself, as they confront many of the difficult ethical decisions faced in their daily work.

While these issues may seem abstract they can arise at any moment. As an example, consider the Adopt a Highway program, one of the most successful and widely-copied volunteer programs in the US. In 1994 the Ku Klux Klan applied to perform Adopt a Highway duties along a one-half mile stretch of Interstate 55 near St Louis. The state of Missouri Adopt a Highway program refused their application, believing that placing the name of the Ku Klux Klan on a sign acknowledging their volunteer contribution was not consistent with the beliefs of the state of Missouri.

While you might view this as simply a political decision, it is in fact an example of a long-standing ethical issue faced by volunteer programs – to what extent should volunteer programs be allowed to determine who is "suitable" to be a volunteer for their program, and to what extent can this determination be made on the basis of factors such as race, age, religion, or political belief?

After being rejected by the state of Missouri the KKK appealed their right to participate in a government-operated volunteer program and eventually won the case in the US Supreme Court. They were accordingly given a stretch of highway to look after and a highway sign acknowledging their participation.

As we have noted above, however, individuals who volunteer also make their own ethical decisions about what is right and wrong. In this case, individuals in the St Louis community responded with entrepreneurial volunteer activity – each time the KKK sign was put up on the highway it was mysteriously shotgunned during the night, in what might be the first case of "drive-by" volunteering on record.