Making A Better Place:
Planning, Implementing, & Managing a Student Volunteer Program

A Capstone Project

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Make A Better Place (MABP) with an outline of the essential components for planning, implementing, and managing a student volunteer program; strategic issues pivotal to using college students as service providers for youth clients will be addressed. Recommendations will be made for steps MABP should take towards developing a replicable, model student volunteer program. The information contained in this report is based on a review of current volunteer management literature, trends in student voluntarism on university campuses, and the relevant practices of select volunteer based organizations: Court Appointed Special Advocates of Lane County (CASA), Start Making a Reader Today (SMART), Committed Partners for Youth (CPY), and the University of Oregon Office of Community Internships. These organizations were chosen based on their proximity to the University of Oregon, where this research was conducted, and because they are good examples of organizations using volunteers as primary service providers to youth.

This report is also relevant for other arts and culture organizations that, like MABP, are 1) searching for ways to expand the reach of programs and services, 2) have limited resources, and 3) have never had a formal volunteer program or involved volunteers as primary service providers. The principles of volunteer management applied herein to MABP can be applied by any organization to any volunteer population. Volunteers are a valuable human resource; they can provide outreach to people and attention to projects for which paid employees may not have the time, expand levels of service despite budgetary limitations, provide specialized skills and knowledge, fill in during emergencies and peak load periods, and improve an organization's relationship with the community (Brudney, 1990; Pynes, 1997). For any organization

considering using volunteers this report provides guidelines for developing an effective volunteer program.

Background & Support for Student Volunteer Programs

History of Youth Volunteer Programs

There is a long tradition of youth voluntarism in the United States, including Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps, the G.I. Bill, the Peace Corps, and the Youth Conservation Corps of the 1970's (Campus Compact, 2003). In 1985, Campus Compact, a national coalition of over 800 colleges and universities, was established by the presidents of Brown, Georgetown and Stanford universities to promote community service as an integral part of higher education, help students' develop citizenship skills and values, encourage partnerships between campuses and communities, and assist faculty who seek to integrate community engagement into their teaching (Campus Compact, 2003). In 1990, the U.S. congress passed the National and Community Service Act, legislation that provides grants to schools and other national service programs that support and provide service-learning initiatives. In 1993, President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act, creating AmeriCorps and the Corporation for National Service to expand volunteer service opportunities for all Americans. In 1997, the Volunteer Protection Act was signed into law to provide liability protection to volunteers, nonprofit organizations and governmental entities in lawsuits based on the actions of volunteers. And in 2002, President George W. Bush announced the creation of the USA Freedom Corps during his State of the Union Address and called for an increase in funding for the Corporation for National Service (Campus Compact, 2003).

The expansion of federally sponsored volunteer programs for youth, the growing involvement of universities in community based learning initiatives and the use of service-

learning curricula, as well as the current willingness of major foundations to research and fund voluntarism have had a major impact on youth volunteering statistics (Edwards, Mooney & Heald, 2001). In 2002, 22% (13 million) of the 59 million Americans who contributed volunteer service were young people between the ages of 16 and 24 (U.S. Bureau of Labor, 2002). Campus Compact reports that 28% of college students on American campuses are actively involved as volunteers for community service projects (Campus Compact, 2001). And a recent poll conducted by the youth organization Do Something shows that 70% of young people, ages 15 to 21, have participated in volunteer activities at some point in their lives (Do Something/Princeton Survey Research, 1999). The positive trends and attitudes toward student voluntarism in America today bode well for organizations like MABP that are considering engaging students as volunteer service providers.

Planning for Volunteer Programs

Planning and implementing a volunteer program presents human resource management challenges. Volunteer programs demand a great level of energy and commitment from an organization and its staff. Having a volunteer program means administrative and management responsibilities increase and the development of specific personnel policies and procedures become necessary in order to assist with the integration of volunteers into everyday operations. It may even be necessary to extend liability insurance and worker's compensation policies to cover voluntary workers (Milofsky, 1988; Pynes, 1997). Planning and implementing a formal volunteer program must be regarded as a systematic strategy for providing services (Brudney, 1990; Pynes, 1997).

Although well intentioned, an agency that puts out a call for citizen volunteers without due consideration of the additional demands thus created for orientation,

training, management, and evaluation quickly learns that it has increased rather than lessened its burdens (Brudney in Connors, 1995, p. 38).

Organizations need to ask a few key questions in preparation: Why use volunteers and what purpose will they serve? What resources will a volunteer program need and what it will cost? And who will manage it? (Pell, 1972; Pynes, 1997)

Why Use Volunteers and What Purpose will They Serve?

Motivations for using volunteers need to be scrutinized. "At worst, volunteers are viewed as a cheap resource and are treated that way. At best volunteers are treated in the same manner as paid staff" (Clifton & Dahms, 1993, p. 75). Organizations should never use volunteers for jobs that paid staff would not do themselves – volunteers are not "free labor" (Hall, 1995; McSweeney & Alexander, 1996). Determining whether engaging volunteers is ethical and in line with an organization's mission, or how volunteers will help fulfill an organization's mission, and defining the purposes volunteers serve, is fundamental to developing goals and objectives for a volunteer program.

MABP's staff should outline motivations in order to build consensus about organizational purposes for using university students as volunteer service providers. For example:

1. Using student volunteers is in line with MABP's mission and moves towards fulfilling the original vision of a grassroots youth mentoring movement.

MABP's mission – "to empower young people to envision themselves as agents of positive social change by helping them explore and articulate their ideas for making their communities and the world a better place" – is realized through its Visual Journal Programs, which combine photography, writing, observation, and interviewing activities to help young people assess issues in their communities. The founding vision for MABP is the dream of a grassroots youth

movement that empowers young people to take active roles as leaders and agents of social change through community service and mentoring. If every student who participates in a Visual Journal Program teaches what he or she learns to another student, this vision proliferates seamlessly and exponentially

2. MABP is looking for a way to expand programming, serve more populations of young people, and grow the organization.

MABP is winning recognition for its programs, which is increasing the demand for services. The reality of having only two staff educators to teach Visual Journal programs limits how far MABP's mission can spread and how many young people can be reached. Additional staff educators are needed but there is a limited budget with which to pay new hires. Training students to teach the Visual Journal programs in school, after-school, and community center settings allows MABP to expand services with a minimal investment of resources. Other benefits include, the opportunity to recruit students as future staff members, access to university resources, increased publicity, enhanced public awareness of organizational and constituent needs, improved organization-community relations, and enhanced organizational capacity (Edwards, Mooney & Heald, 2001).

3. College aged students are young enough to build strong relationships with elementary and middle school aged youth and old enough to take on the responsibility of staffing and/or operating a Visual Journal program.

College students will bring youth, enthusiasm, and a fresh perspective to MABP programs. The minor age gap will allow student volunteers to quickly establish rapport and trust with youth clients. Teaching Visual Journal programs, students will develop leadership, mentoring, and communication skills, make professional contacts in the community, as well as learn the art and

technique of photography. Students will gain job experience they can apply to future careers, as well as earn academic credit.

Outlining motivations and purposes should result in a formal policy statement that articulates the mission and goals of the organization, describes the role of volunteers in attaining these goals, and defines the nature of the partnership between volunteers and the organization. This statement provides a foundation for all decisions made regarding the volunteer program (Fisher & Cole, 1993). It affirms the importance of student involvement to the mission, avoids trivialization of volunteer responsibilities, and maintains respect for student volunteers as integral members of MABP's staff. Linking the volunteer role to the mission will help students understand and internalize MABP's values.

The program policy statement should be translated into operational program goals and objectives. Setting goals and objectives has a number of functions: 1) to clarify what volunteers will do as contribution to the organization and its wider mission, 2) to define expectations for volunteers within the organization, 3) to track the programs progress, 4) to facilitate accurate assessment and evaluation of the volunteer program, and 5) to establish a mechanism for imparting a sense of achievement to volunteers (McSweeney & Alexander, 1996; Pynes, 1997).

What Will a Volunteer Program Cost?

The question of whether a volunteer program warrants the expenses incurred rests on weighing the costs against the benefits of using volunteers as service providers (Brudney, 1990). Volunteers are offering their services without thought to financial remuneration, but there are many other direct and indirect costs associated with implementing a volunteer program. Direct costs are those that can be attributed to the program and its services: a volunteer coordinator to support and manage, recruitment and public relations efforts to attract volunteers, orientation and

training to prepare volunteers for their responsibilities, recognition events to reward and reinforce volunteers' motivation and sense of purpose. Each of these activities represents an expenditure of time and money to the organization, for facilities, advertisements, travel, materials, and staff (Brudney, 1990). Factors built-in to student populations that will affect the direct costs of recruitment and training include a high turnover rate, part year residence, and scheduling difficulties due to classes, extracurricular activities, and social life. Indirect costs include overhead and utilities such as office space, telephone usage, electricity, heating, office supplies and office support services. Because MABP's student volunteers will be working outside the organization's main office, at schools and community centers, some of these indirect costs, like supplies and support services, become direct costs of the program. Ancillary costs MABP needs to take into account are liability insurance, worker's compensation, and reimbursement of students' out-of-pocket expenses for things like transportation to and from job sites.

Who Will Manage the Volunteer Program?

A volunteer program requires the full-time effort of a dedicated individual; someone to support and supervise, someone with a personal commitment to the mission and vision of the organization, and someone with the ability to communicate that vision so that others are inspired by it (Ilsley, 1990; Fisher & Cole, 1993; Wolf, 1999). Coordinating a volunteer program "should not be just another item in the job description of a staff member with other responsibilities" (Clifton & Dahms, 1993, p. 76).

The list of responsibilities attributable to a volunteer coordinator is long and includes all of the administrative managerial tasks associated with running a program: development of policy and procedure, development of job descriptions, recruitment, interviewing, screening and

selecting volunteer applicants, orientation and training, placement and scheduling, record keeping, budgeting, arranging for insurance, supervising and delegating, evaluating, recognizing and rewarding good performance, responding to problems and complaints, terminating a volunteer's service if necessary, and generally advocating for the needs and interests of volunteers inside and outside the organization (Wolf, 1999; Fisher & Cole, 1993; Pynes, 1997; McSweeney & Alexander, 1996). In addition to these tasks, a volunteer coordinator for MABP will be responsible for building and maintaining relationships with teachers, administrators, and youth workers at schools, after-school programs, and community centers, and facilitating necessary meetings between students and those receiving their services. The volunteer coordinator will be responsible for maintaining a relationship with university administration, and for tracking and filing the paperwork necessary to officially recognize students as volunteers so that they might receive academic credit. MABP's volunteer coordinator will also be a fundraiser; writing grants, scouting local program sponsors, and soliciting in-kind donations of program supplies.

Attracting & Retaining Volunteers

Volunteer Motivations

Motivations for volunteering are dynamic rather than static and, contrary to popular stereotype, should not be confused with self-sacrifice, (Ilsley, 1990; Brudney, 1990). The rewards gained from the quality and meaning of a volunteer work experience often more than equal the value of a paid position. Having an awareness of the reasons why people volunteer can improve a volunteer coordinator's decisions about job placement and task assignment, systems of recognition and reward, and management style. Understanding what motivates volunteers helps volunteer coordinators plan programs that produce steadier performance, better attendance,

and longer duration of service from volunteers (Ilsley, 1990; Fisher & Cole, 1993). The most commonly cited reasons why people volunteer include:

1. Altruism – the desire to help, often growing out of religious beliefs or family traditions or upbringing;

2. Idealism – volunteerism accommodates political action or a personal worldview;

3. Social contact – the desire to meet people;

4. Job experience or training – volunteerism is often a route to finding a paying job, particularly for young people or people trying to change professions;

5. Education – the desire to learn about a new field;

6. Self-enhancement – volunteerism as a catalyst for personal growth;

7. Developing professional contacts – volunteering as a way to encounter important people in a community, contacts that lead to business or professional associations and opportunities;

8. Providing a "foot in the door" – for those who have an interest in serving on the board of a particular organization or having a paid staff position;

9. Social status – volunteering for prestige reasons;

10. Fun – some people have free time and an adventurous spirit.

(Wolf, 1999; McSweeney and Alexander, 1996; Ilsley, 1990; Brudney, 1990)

Young people prefer to volunteer for organizations providing services to youth (Irby et al., 2001; Rosen & Sedonaen, 2001), and most young people choose to volunteer for personal reasons – it makes them feel good, it is fun – and for altruistic reasons (Do Something/Princeton Survey Research, 1999). Voluntarism is not merely a function of altruism. It also provides direct benefit to the volunteer, such as the chance to learn something new, an opportunity to gain career

skills, or the psychological benefit of feeling virtuous or needed. The Student Director of the

Office of Community Internships at the University of Oregon cites the benefit of gaining job

experience, resume building, feeling they have an impact on the community, and the opportunity

to build relationships with others as the top motivations for student volunteering (Personal

communication, 2003). The strongest predictor for volunteering among university student

populations is a prior history of volunteering in high school or before, and it is reasonable to

assume that students who volunteer in college will become community volunteers later in life

(Edwards et al., 2001). The important thing for the volunteer coordinator to take into account is

that the reasons students will join the volunteer program may differ distinctly from the reasons

they stay (Ilsley, 1990). While altruism is shown to be an important initial motivator, self-

interested motivations, such as social interaction and job skills, often become more important

and have a significant effect on a volunteers' continued participation (Ryan, Kaplan, & Grese,

2001). MABP's volunteer coordinator will need to concentrate on how students develop during

their volunteer experience, how the experience changes their interests, and be flexible enough to

deal with these changes.

<div align="center">*Systems for Recruiting*</div>

The most recent U.S. Bureau of Labor census reports that 40% of people who volunteer

do so because they are asked (2002). Individuals who are asked to volunteer are 63% more likely

to say "yes" than those who are not (Independent Sector, 2001). The most effective method of

reaching and recruiting potential volunteers is the direct approach and the best source of

advertising is volunteers who share positive experiences with others (Pell, 1972; Brudney, 1990).

Recruitment can also be approached as a direct marketing process involving research and

planning; "a targeted approach designed to reach segments of the population whose interests, needs, and goals are likely to match those of an organization" (Fisher & Cole, 1993, p. 96).

MABP can use advertisements in campus newspapers and on local radio or television, websites, flyers posted on campus/community bulletin boards, or a direct mail campaign to recruit students. Committed Partners for Youth (CPY), a nonprofit providing adult mentors to youth in Eugene, recruits University of Oregon students by setting up information tables at campus job fairs and other campus/community events. MABP can also submit volunteer program information to university community service, service-learning, and internship offices. The University of Oregon Office of Community Service Internships maintains volunteer opportunity binders that students browse to find organizations and programs of interest.

No matter what mechanism is used for recruiting, it is crucial to accurately portray the Visual Journal Program and the volunteer position. A good job description helps volunteers judge whether the opportunities afforded by an organization are likely to meet their needs and skills (Brudney, 1990). The job description must outline the title for the position, the responsibilities involved, the qualifications needed, the training and supervision provided, the degree of commitment expected, the time requirements necessary, the means of measuring performance, the benefits of the job for the volunteer, and a clarification of how the job contributes to the goals of the organization (Clifton & Dahms, 1993; Fisher & Cole, 1993; Pynes, 1997). A well-designed job description will give student volunteers a better sense of their contribution to MABP and its programs. Job descriptions also define standards of quality and help ensure a level of consistency in service provision (McSweeney & Alexander, 1996).

Applications, Interviews, & Contracts

Providing an application form increases the efficiency of the volunteer selection process. Applications that solicit a candidate's interests, skills, and availability allow a volunteer coordinator to make preliminary assessments of volunteers' qualifications prior to an interview. It also helps match volunteer interests with job tasks and identifies potential training needs (Fisher & Cole, 1993; Pynes, 1997; McSweeney & Alexander, 1996) An in-depth application process is necessary for organizations that recruit volunteers to work with vulnerable populations like children. MABP's volunteer application form should ask for basic information like name, age, contact information, details about past employment and relevant experience as a mentor or youth worker, as well as request references. CASA of Lane County, a nonprofit organization that recruits and trains volunteer advocates for children in the Juvenile Dependency Court system, includes questions about group affiliations and biases about children's issues, language proficiency, mental health history, and criminal record. Their application asks applicants to describe special skills or applicable training and motivations for working with children. CASA also requires letters of reference from those who have knowledge of the applicant's work with or interactions with children.

A personal interview is an essential next step that clarifies expectations for volunteer workers and gives applicants the opportunity to learn more about the benefits of being a volunteer. Interviewees should be encouraged to ask questions and raise any concerns they might have about the volunteer position (Wolf, 1999; Clifton and Dahms, 1993; Brudney, 1990; Fisher and Cole, 1993; Pell, 1972). Interviewers should assess skills, temperament, and motivations, to determine if the prospective volunteer is a good match for the position and able to make the commitment required. The depth and content of an interview should be tailored to the associated

risk category of the client with which the volunteer will be working. Because MABP provides programs for children, a volunteer's interest in working with youth should be explored. Questions during the interview process should help elicit any improper motivations (Brudney in Connors, 1995; Fisher & Cole, 1993). Volunteer coordinators should be trained to recognize potentially harmful characteristics or inappropriate behavior. Unfortunately, MABP cannot assume that youth equals innocence. Nor should MABP rely on a university's academic application and interview process as a screening device.

Interviews should end with a discussion of a written agreement, which confirms what MABP expects of its student volunteers (time commitment, service provision, standards, grounds for dismissal) and what will be offered in return for their service (support, training, academic credit). Some students may be intimidated or equate contracts with bureaucracy, but a contract can be explained as a required professional document and a measure of security; a clarification of the conditions of service that ensures students will be respected, not exploited.

Risk Management & Effective Screening

The application, interview, and contract are part of the screening process, an essential component of risk management. Screening applies to identifying and selecting qualified volunteer candidates and weeding out unsuitable ones. Aggressive screening of volunteers may cause good candidates to lose interest or withdraw applications because of perceived distrust or invasion of privacy. But hazarding possible offense to protect vulnerable clients, who could be at risk from a volunteer with improper motives or a criminal background, is an organization's responsibility (Fisher & Cole, 1993). Fingerprinting or running criminal background checks on applicants is a common practice. If MABP decides to run background checks, students should sign a document granting permission.

Another form of risk management is programmatic "risk reduction" (Merrill, 2002). Techniques for risk reduction include proper training and supervision, detailed job descriptions, a system of policy and procedure, and evaluation and feedback from clients (Fisher & Cole, 1993). Supervision is critical to ensuring safety and volunteer quality. Both CASA and CPY require volunteers to meet monthly with a supervisor to debrief. Volunteers for SMART, an organization providing reading tutors to children in the Oregon public school system, are directly supervised by classroom teachers. MABP's volunteer coordinator should make similar provisions by enlisting the aid of staff at the locations where students are working. The volunteer coordinator will want to check-in with both site supervisors and student volunteers on a regular basis to make sure the program is running smoothly and volunteers are fulfilling their duties.

MABP should seek legal counsel to determine which forms of risk management are appropriate and necessary to protect against liability. The Volunteer Protection Act (1997) protects organizations against frivolous lawsuits and many states limit the liability of nonprofit boards and directors outside of gross negligence or intentional misconduct. However, a nonprofit is liable for damage caused by a volunteer if the nonprofit's negligence puts the volunteer in a position to cause harm, or if the volunteer is acting within the "course and scope" of his or her duties to further the organization's mission (Cumfer & Sohl, 2001). A nonprofit is also liable for injury caused to a volunteer as a result of the nonprofit's negligence or another volunteer's negligence. The largest bodily injury exposure often comes from accidents or incidents caused by volunteers (Denton & Lally, 1998) and only 48% of colleges and universities who support community service initiatives provide liability insurance for students (Campus Compact, 2003). A solid liability insurance package, which usually includes coverage for bodily injury, damage to property, personal injury, and legal defense for lawsuits, may be necessary.

Volunteer Commitment & Retention

Retaining volunteers begins with effective planning, recruitment, and screening. The first determinant of a student volunteer's commitment will be an understanding of how his or her service promotes MABP's mission (Clifton & Dahms, 1993). Explicit documents and agreements, like job descriptions and contracts, that specify organizational expectations, volunteer roles, and logistical commitments make volunteers feel secure and valued. A student volunteer whose needs and interests are accurately assessed and appropriately matched to job tasks, and whose changing interests and motivations are accommodated, will have a continually satisfying work experience.

Volunteer retention will also be dependent on management practices that increase students' feelings of ownership and pride in MABP and its programs. Work autonomy, involvement in decision-making and planning, and positive feedback are strong predictors of volunteer commitment (Fisher & Cole, 1993; Pynes, 1997; Pell, 1972). Integrating student volunteers into the organization so fully as to inspire feelings of ownership needs to be an initiative supported at all levels of MABP's organization, including board, directors, and staff.

Leading & Managing a Volunteer Program

Teams & Shared Decision-making

Volunteers will only function in a limited capacity if not guided properly. However, conventional hierarchical systems of authority are not likely to inspire them to perform. "Hierarchical authority, as it has been used traditionally in Western management, tends to evoke compliance, not foster commitment" (Senge, 1995, p. 43). Teamwork is a much more effectual strategy for leading and managing volunteer programs (Brudney, 1990). Student volunteers should be involved in developing the processes, procedures, and systems they will use while

teaching and working for MABP. Collaboration builds community and cooperation, and enhances a sense of ownership and commitment, because "people support what they help to create" (Glaser & Associates, 1999). Empowering student volunteers by sharing with them the management and leadership responsibilities of the volunteer program will result in higher job satisfaction and better performance (Fisher & Cole, 1993). "When people feel empowered, they are more likely to use their energies to produce extraordinary results" (Kouzes & Posner, 1992, p. 11) Involving students in developing the volunteer program will integrate them into MABP's organizational processes in a meaningful way that fosters a "commitment culture" (Brudney, 1990) – a mutual loyalty between the volunteer and the organization.

Orientation, Training, & Volunteer Development

A well-structured orientation process also builds volunteer commitment (Ilsley, 1990). Orientation should make students aware of MABP's mission, philosophy, values, history, policies, procedures, and programs. It should define the roles of paid staff and volunteers and review the jobs for which they will be responsible (Ilsley, 1990; Pell, 1972). The volunteer coordinator should arrange for students to tour schools, community centers, or other facilities where they will be working and meet the key staff members, teachers, and youth workers they will be interacting with frequently (Wolf, 1999). During orientation students should receive an orientation packet or volunteer handbook that covers the rules and regulations of the facilities they will be working in, as well as MABP's organizational information: mission, history, contact information, and all policies and procedures relating to volunteers. Other topics appropriate for a volunteer handbook include: an organizational code of ethics and conduct, procedures for reporting problems, safety and evacuation procedures, and staff names and phone numbers. Assigning a seasoned student volunteer to a new recruit as a mentor who can answer questions

during orientation will help solidify the experienced student's grasp of MABP's programs and operations (Pell, 1972).

Training for student volunteers goes hand in hand with orientation as a way to fully integrate them into MABP's operations, as well as prepare them for teaching the Visual Journal Program. "Training gives [volunteers] a clear understanding of job assignments, information about standards and expected levels of performance, and instruction in how to do the job" (Fisher and Cole, 1993, p. 125) The volunteer-based organizations interviewed for this report require anywhere from 12 to 72 hours of training depending on a volunteer's duties and responsibilities. In addition to Visual Journal training, student volunteers will need skills training in teaching and presentation methods, dealing with conflict, and working with at-risk and special needs youth, and youth with disabilities. Thorough training reduces job insecurities, which will help student's perform better and contribute to their satisfaction with the volunteer experience. Good training will also result in student volunteers who represent MABP accurately and positively when dealing with clients, who are knowledgeable about the resources available to them for their job activities, and who are highly motivated, socialized to MABP's culture, and committed to its cause (Fisher and Cole, 1993; Pell, 1972) Organizations with comprehensive training programs have the least amount of turnover in their volunteer programs (Pynes, 1997). The depth of training programs for student volunteers is positively correlated to an increased involvement in providing services and predicts increased involvement in planning and coordinating services (Edwards et al., 2001).

Providing training for volunteers recognizes them as willing and able learners who have the potential to make significant contributions. Training should take into account a volunteer's background, job skills, and previous training. MABP's volunteer coordinator should determine

the relevant and applicable knowledge students already possess and use that as a launching point for new instruction (Pell, 1972). Appropriate training is the best training, and depends on the complexity of the assignment given. The volunteer coordinator must be wary of wasting students' time with training that either does not pertain to the job they will be doing, or that is redundant to knowledge and skills they already have. "Treating everyone as universally uninformed may so disillusion people that they do not wish to stay with the organization" (McSweeney & Alexander, 1996, p. 58).

Educational opportunities for student volunteers should not end with the initial training. Opportunities for learning, such as professional development workshops or increased job responsibilities, provide powerful motivation for volunteers and are closely linked with leadership, level of commitment, and duration of volunteer service (Ilsley, 1990; Brudney, 1990). Highly committed and experienced students can assume responsibility for volunteer program processes like conducting orientations, training and supervising new volunteers, fundraising, and developing new programs.

> As programs expand it is not at all unusual for volunteers to act as mid-level supervisors for other volunteers. Training is necessary to take on these tasks, but experienced volunteers may have immediate knowledge as well as a rapport that lends a special validity and effectiveness to their efforts. (Brudney, 1990, p. 31)

The volunteer coordinator should meet one-on-one with students, on a regular basis, to stay attuned to their needs, interests, and willingness or desire to take on greater responsibility. To determine if a student volunteer is ready to take on greater responsibility his or her skills and performance must be evaluated.

Evaluation & Recognition

Organizations are often reluctant to criticize the effectiveness of volunteer efforts, thinking it will affect retention, future recruitment, and public relations with the community, but evaluation is a necessary component of any volunteer program. Evaluation indicates to volunteers that their work is meaningful and deserves the attention and review of their supervisors (Brudney, 1990; Clifton & Dahms, 1993). For students who are looking to develop job skills, evaluation is essential to learning and professional growth.

The primary objective of evaluation is to provide and solicit feedback from volunteers for the purpose of improving performance by both the volunteer and the organization (Pynes, 1997; Clifton and Dahms, 1993). Evaluations can be conducted through questionnaires and surveys, group discussion, or individual interviews. In addition to individual evaluations, the volunteer coordinator should institute a process whereby students and MABP staff can both evaluate the volunteer program as a whole. Based on evaluation, if a student volunteer is not meeting expectations one or more of the following steps should be taken:

1) Retrain – some students may need more time or support in learning the skills needed to teach and mentor;

2) Reassign – the interests or skills of a student may have been misread and thus the volunteer has been badly matched to the position;

3) Revitalize – if the student has been working for MABP for a long time they might be suffering burn-out, in which case a sabbatical might be suggested;

4) Refer – help the student find another position with another organization that might be more appropriate for their needs and interests.

(Pynes, 1997)

An important outcome of the evaluation process is the recognition of volunteers' good service. Recognition is crucial to keeping the morale high, the turnover rate low, and the benefits of the volunteer program at a maximum level (Hall, 1995). Recognition of expertise and/or a job well done inspires volunteers to continue in the same pattern. Asking for input, inclusion in staff meetings when appropriate, and assignment of real and relevant responsibilities are all ways MABP can recognize student volunteers and convey to them that they are as essential as paid staff members. Other forms of recognition include awards, letters of appreciation, and commendatory articles in MABP's newsletter. General encouragement and praise is also an important form of recognition, and sometimes the most meaningful. When giving praise the volunteer coordinator should remember to 1) look for opportunities for sincere praise – catch students doing things right, 2) be specific about the reasons for it, and 3) keep encouragement pure – do not mix praise with correction (Glaser & Associates, 1999; Pell, 1972).

Maintaining Quality

Quality and accountability is the right of the client, as well as an ethical imperative. In theory, if an organization does a thorough job, planning, recruiting, screening, training, supervising, supporting, and evaluating student volunteers, maintaining a high quality of service provision should be easy. But no system for recruiting or screening is infallible, client needs and volunteer motivations will change, and program structure will need consistent review and updating. The volunteer coordinator needs to conduct regular evaluations and solicit feedback from clients, staff, and students, watch for structural holes, and make the necessary adjustments.

Specific policies and procedures for soliciting and responding to feedback from school or community center administrators and staff, and youth clients, through surveys or interviews

should be developed. The volunteer coordinator should be prepared to handle complaints and problems as easily as compliments and constructive criticism. Complaints are a quality indicator that informs an organization or program about how well it is doing (McSweeney & Alexander, 1996) Policies for handling complaints need to be well publicized to clients. Complaints should be handled swiftly, and the timeframe for action and resolution of an issue should be explicit in the policy. Client confidentiality should be respected at all times and clients should be informed of progress if resolution is not immediate. If a complaint involves the actions of a student volunteer directly, prior written policy gives the volunteer coordinator a framework within which to handle potential discipline. A thorough investigation of the complaint should be conducted and all parties involved should give their side of the story heard. It is necessary to maintain a work environment of equity and perceived fairness in order to keep motivation and morale of the volunteer corps high (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001). If discipline is called for the reprimand should be timely, and done in private without anger, argument, or sarcasm (Pell, 1972). The focus should be on the problem, not the person, and the critique should be constructive and aid the student in rectifying the problem with the full support of MABP behind them. If the complaint involves a student directly and is reoccurring there may be grounds for termination. "The old adage that a volunteer is someone who works for no pay and therefore can't be fired is not true. What is true is that the situation has to be handled with great finesse" (Wolf, 1999, p. 104). The volunteer coordinator must develop a detailed policy for handling volunteer terminations so that the procedure remains consistent, and maintain detailed records of all termination transactions and procedures.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The Value of Volunteer Programs

Planning, implementing, and maintaining a quality volunteer program is a major undertaking and a full time job. It requires adequate financial and human resources. But it is well worth the effort. America's volunteer workforce represents the equivalent of over 9 million full-time employees, donated labor that is valued at $239 billion (Independent Sector, 2001). Volunteers are also significant sources of financial backing. People who are involved as volunteers are more likely than non-volunteers to give money to nonprofit and community organizations, and the greatest predictor of a lifelong commitment to volunteering is the opportunity to volunteer as a young person (Independent Sector, 2001; Astin & Sax, 1999).

Community service and volunteering directly influence a young person's development of important life skills such as leadership ability, interpersonal and communication skills, critical thinking, and conflict resolution skills. For students, community service and volunteering bridges academic learning with applied settings, integrating theory and research with real world experiences (Roschelle, Turpin & Elias, 2000). It also has positive effects on academic development, including degrees sought after college and time devoted to academic endeavors (Astin & Sax, 1998).

Student volunteer programs foster a sense of empowerment, civic responsibility, and community by encouraging young people to work together to address common concerns and find sustainable solutions. By giving students the chance to get involved and become stakeholders in their communities, MABP is giving youth citizens a voice for social change and instilling in them a habit of lifelong service.

Recommendations

The concept of a MABP Student Volunteer Corps has the potential to be a replicable and beneficial program in communities and on university campuses across the country. The following recommendations are steps for MABP to take towards developing a model student volunteer program.

1. Hire a good volunteer coordinator.

   This is *crucial*. Operating an effective program is too big a job for an existing staff member with other responsibilities. Raise the necessary funds to hire a full-time staff member to plan, implement and manage the volunteer program.

2. Pilot the program.

   Recruit college students and a school or community center with a staff and a youth client base that are willing to be guinea pigs and collaborators. These people will be integral to developing and testing volunteer program processes.

3. Start locally.

   Recruit students from a college campus close to MABP's office, and possibly to the pilot service site. This will facilitate face-to-face communication between staff and student volunteers and proper supervision and trouble-shooting at the job site. It will also be more cost efficient.

4. Work with a familiar client.

   Choose a pilot school or community center that is already familiar with and supportive of MABP's programs and services. School or community center staff who know and love MABP already will be agreeable site supervisors and enthusiastic

partners and collaborators. Be careful to choose a client that will provide objective and unbiased feedback if possible.

5. Use high school students as volunteers.

MABP should also consider using high school students as the base for developing a volunteer corps, particularly high school students who are alumni of MABP programs.

(See Appendix A for more information.)

Appendix A

High School Student Volunteers

Volunteering statistics show that young people ages 12 to 17 mostly volunteer for organizations in which they also participate in programming (Independent Sector, 2000). Youth focused programs are "the logical hub" for efforts to increase youth service opportunities because providing volunteer leadership roles to young people is most likely in line with the mission and objectives of the organization (Irby, Ferber, Pittman, Tolman, & Yohalem, 2001). A high school student volunteer program would give MABP alumni the chance to practice the leadership, decision-making, and problem-solving skills they have learned by teaching those same skills to their peers.

One way to incorporate high school aged alumni is to expand MABP's current *Youth in Communities/Youth Leaders* (YIC/YL) professional development workshops for teachers to include training for students as well. Structured like a service-learning course, high school students could be trained to team-teach the *Where I Live* program to younger students, with the support of teachers to help them reflect on the experience. Within this framework MABP could facilitate students and teachers working together to develop the structure and processes of a service-learning or volunteer corps program, to evaluate its successes and failures, make necessary changes, and sustain its growth. Successful youth-adult partnerships "create a balance of power between adults and youth," allowing them to learn from each other and appreciate the strengths that each can contribute to a community project (Garza & Stevens, 2002). This partnership would also further YIC/YL's objective of establishing school as the "meaningful and productive interface between youth and the communities where they live and learn" (YIC/YL Overview, 2002).

As with the college student volunteer program, it will be up to MABP staff to foster a "commitment culture" by sharing decision-making power and working with students as equals. High school teachers will not be accustomed to working with their students in this capacity and may even be resistant to it. It will be important to provide orientation and training to the teachers and students working in partnership, including techniques for working in groups like active listening and consensus building, discussion and meeting facilitation, planning, and evaluation. There must also be a system for teachers, students, and the community to give feedback, reflect on experience, analyze performance, and recognize good service.

The concept of "youth action" – "young people making a difference in their communities, in partnership with adults, to effect change in things that are important to them and the community at large" (Irby et al., 2001) – is currently being advocated by many youth workers, community organizations, and local and national foundations, who realize that young people need to be empowered as not only the leaders of tomorrow, but also as the leaders of today.

Appendix B

Volunteer Management Resources

1) www.avaintl.org

    The Association for Volunteer Administration, an international professional association, enhances the competence of its members and strengthens the profession of volunteer resources management.

2) www.energizeinc.com

    Energize, Inc. is an international training, consulting and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism.

3) www.casanet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/index.htm

    Wide range of materials on volunteer recruitment, retention, screening and supervision, from Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).

4) www.philanthropy.com/jobs/archive/volunteerism.htm

    The Chronicle of Philanthropy – Articles on current volunteer issues.

5) www.e-Volunteerism.com

    The Electronic Journal of the Volunteerism Community – A quarterly electronic publication for volunteer leaders/managers

6) www.epicenter.etr.org

    Corporation for National and Community Service – A collection of program practices proven to work in community service and volunteering.

7) www.mapnp.org/library/staffing/outsrcng/volnteer/volnteer.htm

    Managing Volunteer Programs, assembled by Carter McNamara, PhD

8) www.cns.gov/jobs/fellowships/fellowsproducts.html

National Service Fellows Reports – Research reports on various aspects of volunteering and service-learning, with emphasis on seniors and youth.

9) www.servenet.org

ServeNet – Reports, articles and other material on all aspects of youth service, volunteer management, National service, and activity planning.

10) www.charitychannel.com/vmr.shtml

Charity Channel's Volunteer Management Review Archive

11) www.ppv.org/content/reports/mostvolunteer.htm

Making the Most of Volunteers, by Jean Baldwin Grossman and Kathryn Furano

This report summarizes Public/Private Venture's work over the years with organizations that use volunteers.

Organizations Promoting Community Service & Youth Action

1) www.compact.org

Campus Compact promotes community service that develops students' citizenship skills and values, encourages partnerships between campuses and communities, and assists faculty who seek to integrate public and community engagement into their teaching and research.

2) www.commoncents.org

Common Cents runs programs in New York City schools that give students of all ages a chance to help their communities through fundraising, philanthropy, and community service.

3) www.freshyouth.org

FYI supports and encourages young people in New York City to design and carry out community service projects, develop leadership skills, fulfill their potential and realize their dreams.

4) www.global-action.org

Global Action Project, Inc. is a media arts organization that provides training in video production and new media technologies for youth as a springboard for dialogue and action. G.A.P. provides young people with artistic, literacy, and interpersonal skills that improve their chances for higher education and meaningful careers, while they positively impact their schools, communities, and society.

5) www.young-citizens.org

Young Citizens, Inc. is a national organization that provides educators and other youth serving organizations the training, technical support, materials, and consultation they need to design and run a quality service- learning program.

6) www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/nyn/index.html

The National Youth Network is a consortium of youth leaders uniting young people and adults, through communication and action, to enable youth organizations and nonaffiliated youth to have a positive, formidable impact in communities and throughout the Nation.

7) www.yli.org

Youth Leadership Institute

YLI implements community-based programs that provide youth with opportunities for developing leadership skills in the areas of prevention, youth philanthropy, policy and civic engagement.

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