

Working for free:
The impact of volunteer service on visual arts
organizations

By Jenny Gilmore | Spring 2009

Presented to the Arts Administration program of the University of Oregon in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master's of Science in Arts Management

Approved: _____

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University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
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Mount Mercy College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
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- Adobe Creative Suite 3
 - InDesign, Illustrator, Photoshop
- Microsoft Office Suite
- Mac and PC operating systems

Graphic Designer/Gallery Assistant

Downtown Initiative for the Visual Arts (DIVA)
January 2008 – June 2009

- Completed design of an arts calendar featuring artwork from local artists and dates of arts events in the area
- Worked closely with printers to ensure a high-quality product
- Produce posters, postcards and ads to be used to publicize accompanying events
- Maintained organization of images and dates of events on spreadsheet
- Collaborate with a committee to ensure the calendar would be accessible to a wide audience
- Created informational brochures that better convey the innovative spirit of DIVA
- Worked with artists and staff to install exhibits of artwork so to best convey a coherent theme for visitors
- Edited copy for wall text
- Created a marketing plan for a future exhibit

Interpretive Exhibit Panel Designer

Lane County Historical Society and Museum, Eugene, OR
January - February 2009

- Completed design of 38 exhibit panels and other environmental graphics for yearlong exhibit featuring changing demographics in Lane County
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- Manipulated images for use on a large scale to preserve integrity

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- Prepared lectures on topics such as beauty in art and the role of gender in advertising
- Assisted professor in research for lectures

Gallery Assistant

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June 2008-September 2008 reaching a total of 200 hours

- Collaborated with staff and volunteers to install large quantities of artwork in various sizes
- Participated on the Exhibits Committee to select and review artwork for submissions
- Greeted guests at opening receptions
- Served as the “public face” of Blue Sky during open hours
- Implemented a database of book donations through an extensive spreadsheet

Gallery Assistant

BRING Gallery, Eugene, OR

April – June 2008, 3-5 hours per week

- Worked closely with gallery manager to implement a new exhibit schedule
- Collaborated with artists to install work to convey their artistic statement
- Learned about gallery operations within a larger organization
- Learned sustainable gallery practices

Sales Associate

Younkers, Home Department, Cedar Rapids, IA

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- Customer service and sales
- Work as a team to accomplish assigned tasks

Framer & Sales Associate

Michaels Arts & Crafts Store, Custom Framing Department, Marion, IA

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- Worked closely with customers to create framing design for artwork

Intern

Legion Arts & CSPPS, Cedar Rapids, IA

October 2006-May 2007

- Organized a series of performances at small Iowa venues

Art Department Workstudy

Mount Mercy Art Department

August 2004-May 2006

- Completed upkeep and general troubleshooting of Mac and PC lab
- Scanned slides into digital database
- Optimized digital files for viewing online
- Supervised Janalyn Hanson White Gallery for public viewing

Design Intern

Mount Mercy College, Orientation Director, Cedar Rapids, IA

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- Designed t-shirts, posters and other marketing material

Intern

Creative Genes private marketing firm, Cedar Rapids, IA

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- Conceptualized themes to promote Residence Life at Mount Mercy College
- Hand-illustrated a series of cartoons for the school newspaper
- Digitally enhanced drawings for printing

Abstract

This project will examine volunteerism within small visual arts organizations and how the relationship between paid staff and volunteers effects the success of the organization. This study will also consider what success is in visual arts organizations. A case study and in depth literature review will be used to study the impact of volunteers on small nonprofits. This study will examine many facets of volunteerism including role, leadership and motivation in order to understand volunteer impact. The outcome will be a set of recommendations for both staff and volunteers in visual arts organizations.

Key Words

- Volunteerism
- Visual arts organization
- Community based art center
- Motivation
- Volunteer recognition

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1.1 Conceptual framework

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Chapter 1 | Introduction

Nonprofit organizations generally function on limited resources in terms of labor, funding, space, venue and time. When money is scarce and funding is difficult, nonprofit organizations must rely on the generosity of individuals who can afford to give their precious time at no cost, thereby providing stability in an unstable time. Most nonprofit organizations need this steady and reliable help from volunteers because staff are overworked and underpaid. For this reason, organizations utilize volunteer forces in varying degrees to perform essential tasks. These organizations must understand volunteerism and why individuals chose their specific organization in order to attract more potential volunteers and foster a successful, ongoing relationship with current volunteers.

A study of volunteerism in relation to the arts is important because it is a necessary resource for nonprofit organizations. Volunteering and community service is also an important function in American society and a large number of U.S. citizens volunteer some of their time to a nonprofit organization. In 2007, 26.2 percent of the US population volunteered at least once (United States Department of Labor, 2008). These numbers apply to all volunteers in all sectors, representing a large proportion of the public who contributed time to important social causes. Over a quarter of our population is engaging in an activity highly relevant to the success of arts organizations, making this topic a significant study.

Benefits of the arts have been studied many times by various scholars and nationally recognized organizations. Participation in the arts promotes personal growth, enhances confidence and improves social contacts. It can also contribute to networking and provide “benefits in other areas such as environmental renewal and health promotion, and injects an element of creativity into organizational planning” (Matarasso, 1997, p. 6). The problem is the gap between these two concepts of volunteering and visual arts participation in established literature, to be discussed in more detail later. Understanding the interaction between volunteers and the organization more thoroughly will allow for more successful volunteer programs.

1.1 Problem Statement

The focus in resource development regarding nonprofit organizations is on funding. As I have stated before and will emphasize again, securing monetary support is very important. But physical support and labor are also important and sometimes forgotten in the grand scheme of resource development. One key to a successful nonprofit arts organization is a dedicated volunteer group, which can also represent the support of a community in some cases, as these people become spokespersons for the organization. A crucial issue in a successful volunteer experience is the relationship that is created between the organization and its staff and the volunteers. “Understanding the role of volunteering, national service, cooperative organizations, churches, and the widest range of grassroots

organizations in addressing the challenges that await; that is, what social scientists must explain and third sector practitioners must confront" (Van Til, 2005, p. 284).

Much research has been done in both the fields of resource development in nonprofits and volunteerism, but this study focuses on the actions and roles volunteers take on and volunteers' relationship with paid staff, specifically within visual arts centers. Understanding this relationship is key to fostering a productive volunteer experience and the continuation of support from these dedicated people.

Research and established literature on volunteerism in social services organizations is prolific (see Chapter 3 for a partial review) but very little scholarly material is published studying volunteerism specific to arts organizations in this respect. The closest literature pertains to docent training and volunteering in museums (Goodlad & McIvor, 1998; Orr, 2006), but I am focusing on visual arts centers that serve a different purpose and work toward a different mission. General handbooks for volunteer coordination also exist for museums and other cultural institutions (Kuyper, 1993). While these resources don't apply directly to the types of organizations that are the focus of my study, they still offer valuable insight into volunteerism in the cultural sector. Visual arts centers have a specific service to provide to a community that relates to the motivations of their volunteers. Visual arts centers contribute to local economies, quality of life for citizens and a creative outlet for those who need it.

1.2 Purpose Statement and Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand volunteerism specific to visual arts organizations and the impact of the relationship between staff and volunteers on the success of the organization. A conceptual framework maps the interaction of themes and concepts within this study (see Figure 1.1). This study addresses the relationship between volunteers and paid staff in visual arts centers and its effect on the volunteer experience. The main question guiding this inquiry was:

- How does the relationship between the volunteer and paid staff influence the volunteer experience?

This led to other questions necessary to consider as background information or to supplement the main question. The additional questions that also influenced this study and background research are as follows:

- What are some motivations for volunteers?
- What value do organizations place on providing a good volunteer experience?
- Can the history of volunteerism inform current trends and how?
- What are effective marketing strategies in recruiting and retaining volunteers?
- How can an effective volunteer program contribute to the success of an organization?

These questions led to a deeper understanding and exploration of volunteerism in the visual arts but also raised other questions for future research, to be discussed in the final chapter.

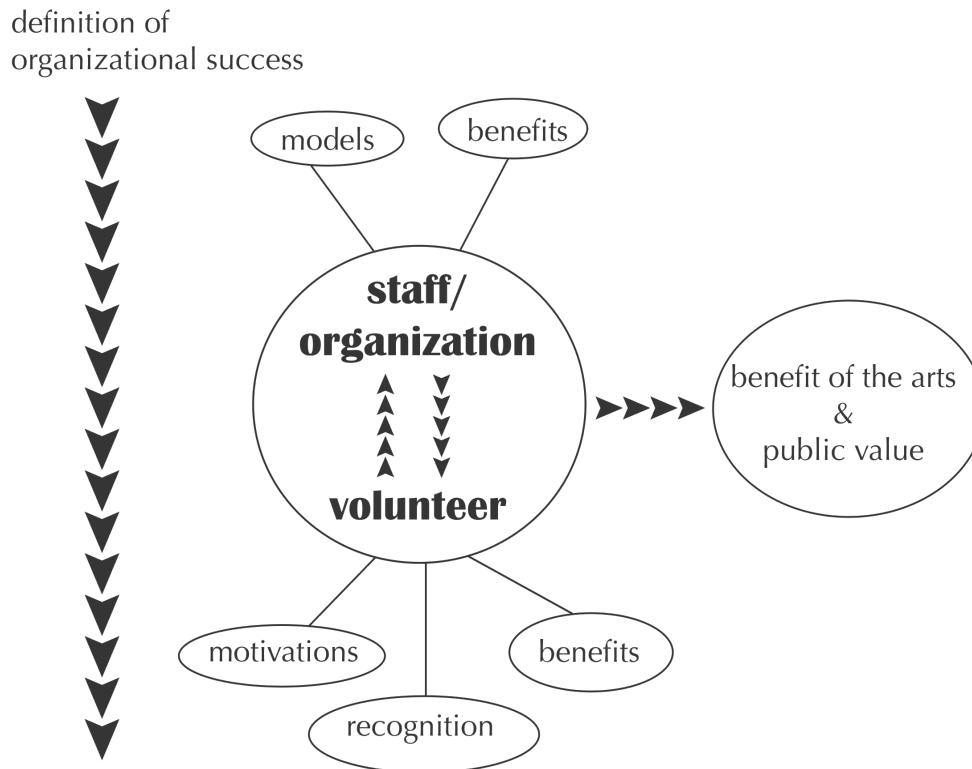


Figure 1.1 – Conceptual framework

1.3 Assumptions and Biases

As the researcher, I approached this study with some basic assumptions. The first assumption is the importance and benefit of the arts to the entire population and that this topic is worth studying for the future success of arts organizations. The expected outcomes in data collection were reports from staff at the case study organizations that they highly value their volunteers and feel a strong commitment to satisfying their needs to continue the support. Data analysis from this study was

expected to guide recommendations and general knowledge in volunteer management and reflect published literature on volunteerism. I also expected to hear that great volunteers are the key to an organization's success.

Both organizations examined for this study are visual art centers that I have volunteered at. I have had many other experiences at other visual art centers that were not as successful. The combination of both good and bad experiences led me to study this topic. Certain things, such as the relationship created between myself and the staff, connect my successful and unsuccessful volunteer experiences in various organizations and in this study I hoped to discover other commonalities among successful volunteer programs in arts organizations.

I also strongly believe in the ability of community art centers to influence and affect those with whom they come in contact. For this to happen, art centers must stay open and running, and to stay functioning, I believe volunteers must be involved. Many of these successful organizations can fit into the category of "grassroots" organizations.

1.4 Definitions

Certain terms and phrases will appear frequently in this study. Many are being used in very specific contexts with very specific definitions:

- Visual arts organization: For the purpose of this study, research will focus on non-profit organizations that have a 501(c)3 tax exempt status with programming that focuses on the visual arts.
- Small organization: This study will focus on organizations with fewer than 5 full time equivalent (FTE) paid staff.

- Grassroots: Many arts organizations begin as entirely volunteer based and are driven solely by the constituents who see a need to be filled or addressed.
- Volunteerism: Volunteerism is the belief in donating time and efforts in supporting a nonprofit organization without the expectation of monetary compensation.
- Community: Arts organizations operate within a specific geographical area with constituents that reside in that area and are invested in it.
- Internal Marketing: A strategy within the workplace to improve functionality and relationships between staff (and volunteers, for the purposes of this study).

1.5 Delimitations

By focusing on arts organizations that primarily work with visual art, this study will be narrow in scope. I will focus on small organizations for my case studies, and study participants will be from a very small geographical region. Specifically, these organizations are the Downtown Initiative for the Visual Arts in Eugene, Oregon and Blue Sky Gallery in Portland, Oregon.

1.6 Limitations

Due to the small scope of the study, it cannot be generalized to apply to all visual arts organizations or nonprofit organizations but may be applicable to other small visual arts organizations in Oregon or the Pacific Northwest. The final recommendations will be specifically for my case study sites but will also inform my future professional practice in volunteer coordination. Another limit will be the

researcher bias. As mentioned earlier, my bias will be inherent and the findings may be interpreted differently if the study were to be repeated by someone else. Case study sites were chosen due to previous experience and personal relationships, which may also effect the findings.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Volunteer work forces are necessary for the success of nonprofit organizations, especially in uncertain economic times. "Reduced funding has been reflected in the nature of the workforce, with volunteers accounting for an increasingly large proportion of staff" (Orr, 2006, p. 194). For this reason, staff at nonprofit organizations need to understand many facets of volunteerism like recruitment, retention, internal marketing and volunteer motivations. Organizations must be careful not to put all emphasis on monetary resources and not to discount the dedicated human resources they have.

While volunteer program handbooks and guidelines exist for various types of organizations, it is important to understand the volunteer as an individual. A published handbook will not always have the answer and a more holistic and personal approach to a volunteer work force may be more useful. As mentioned earlier, there is a significant gap in established literature regarding volunteerism and arts centers. The research regarding volunteerism generally does not examine the effect of the relationship between staff and volunteer, which I feel is highly influential. My research will contribute to future research on volunteerism in the

arts by questioning the difference of the visual arts from all other social sectors. One goal of a book titled *Values of Volunteering* is to “contribute to the recognition of volunteering as an interesting topic for further social research.” (Dekker & Halman, 2003, p. vii as cited in Van Til, 2005, p. 284). Further research, including this study, will promote awareness of an issue pertinent to all professionals working in the nonprofit sector.

There is also personal significance in conducting this study. By studying volunteer relations, I will position myself with useful background research as a professional to enter a field that is made up of highly motivated volunteers. It is highly likely that I will be supervising volunteers, and will continue to be one myself. The scope of this study is too focused for generalization, but this will give me an understanding of volunteer coordination that could be helpful in a variety of non-profit organizations with strong volunteer support.

This study will hopefully benefit the entire population in encouraging more volunteer service to any type of organization. It will also make clear all the important things that arts organizations do; they are essential for a better quality of life.

Chapter 2 | Methodology and Research Design

Studying volunteer and staff relations within arts organizations requires a carefully structured research design. Without a plan, any study risks becoming too large and unfocused. This chapter will outline the methodology and design that forms the backbone of this study.

2.1 Methodological Paradigm

This study was conducted through an interpretivist lens. Interpretive social science is an approach that “emphasizes meaningful social action, socially constructed meaning and value relativism” (Neumann, 2006, p. 87). To study volunteerism is to study social action. This study also addressed the meaning of volunteering and how volunteers help to construct success. The driving force of this study was to understand the interaction between the volunteer and staff. Understanding interaction is an essentially interpretivist characteristic. Through interviews, I looked for what made participating in an arts organization (as a staff member or volunteer) meaningful as well as the relations between these two essential parts of the arts organization labor force.

The topic of volunteerism is in itself a “meaningful social action” with “socially constructed meaning” so, to conduct a study on this topic without acknowledging that would be leaving out important ideological contexts. This lens

provided for a way of interpreting and also coding data collected both in literature and case studies.

2.2 Strategy of Inquiry

The purpose of this study, as mentioned earlier, will be to understand the staff and volunteer relationship in visual arts organizations and its effect on volunteer experience. A literature review on methodology reveals the advantages and preference of using a case study strategy of inquiry in part to pursue this research question. Literature published regarding qualitative case study methodology and practice reveals that case studies are used when a general understanding is needed to answer a focused research question (Stake, 1995). Case studies are also particularly helpful for specific types of research questions. "In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (Yin, 2003, p.1). As the researcher, I have no control over the interaction between staff and volunteer or the reasons why someone decides to volunteer.

A case study is defined as research done on a specific, complex, functioning phenomenon, program, or organization (Stake, 1995). Case study research is defined by Neuman (2006) as "research that is an in-depth examination of an extensive amount of information about very few units or cases for one period or

across multiple periods of time” (p. 40). In a case study, the emphasis of analysis is on the interpretations of the researcher (Stake, 1995).

Although case studies are unlikely to be a strong representation of other examples (Stake, 1995), cases can be chosen to build theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Building a theory regarding arts organizations and volunteerism will require a selection of a case or cases “which are likely to replicate or extend the emergent theory” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537).

Case studies involve an analysis of multiple forms of data and data collection (Canning & Holmes, 2006; Yin, 2003). Multiple forms of data take shape in this study through interviews and document analysis from the selected case study organizations.

The two sites for this research project were purposively selected to “best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (Creswell, 2009, p. 178). Purposive selection is a characteristic of qualitative research as opposed to random sampling that takes place in quantitative research (Creswell, 2009, Neumann, 2006). These sites were also chosen due to their accessibility for the researcher through previously established relationships.

2.3 Human Subjects Compliance

To conduct this study and ensure minimal risk to participants, it was approved by the Office for Protection of Human Subjects at the University of Oregon on January 16, 2008. All research instruments (see Appendices A-E) were

approved by a committee that examines research proposals for possible risks to participants.

2.4 Recruitment

Every nonprofit visual arts organization manages and organizes volunteers differently. Because a comparison was necessary to gain a fuller understanding, two organizations were chosen for this study: Blue Sky Gallery in Portland, Oregon and Downtown Initiative for the Visual Arts (DIVA) in Eugene, Oregon. These sites were chosen because of established relationships and successful volunteer programs. For the purpose of this study, a successful volunteer program is defined loosely by consistent volunteer hours, personal testimony and a large number of long-term commitments from volunteers. Letters of recruitment were sent by mail to staff members who work closely with volunteers in each organization.

Due to travel limitations, sites were chosen in western Oregon. The most important difference to note between these two organizations is the size of the communities in which they are located. According to the 2006 U.S. Census, the population of Eugene was estimated at 146,356. In 2006, Portland's estimated population was 537,081. These sites also differ in years established, staff size, budget and organizational structure. These differences provide an interesting comparison of volunteer programs, to be discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

2.5 Document Analysis

Document analysis consisted of careful examination of websites, brochures and volunteer logs (if possible) from the case study sites. These documents give an insight into the organization and how they market themselves to the public. These documents will be examined to glean information that can inform the research questions. The most critical data came from interviews with personnel from the case study sites. Much of this information was not referenced directly but rather provided background and structure to the case study analysis.

2.6 Interviews

Interviews were conducted with staff and volunteers at both Blue Sky and DIVA. These interviews were semi-structured with a loose outline of questions to guide the conversation (see Appendix C). The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to one hour. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. The original audio recording was destroyed and all transcription files were kept on the researcher's computer to preserve the privacy of interviewees. Each interviewee was given the chance to read his or her section prior to publication of the final paper.

Triangulation is a process of studying something from different points of view. This process improves accuracy (Creswell, 2009; Neumann 2006). By interviewing both staff and volunteers I was able to interpret the themes from different sides.

2.7 Data Analysis

Using a coding system is an effective way to organize data around certain themes and ideas (Creswell, 2009, Neumann, 2006). The large themes were discovered both within the review of literature and as a result of previous personal experiences. These themes were key in constructing the semi-structured interview questions. After the data was collected, it was analyzed according to a coding system established by preconceived and emergent themes identified in the literature review. These main themes were the history of volunteerism, motivations and benefits of volunteers, marketing, benefit of the arts and public value and the definition of success.

This chapter provided the structure of how this study was conducted and the process of designing the research study. Understanding the data collection process provides validity to the data after it is collected and synthesized. A brief literature review on the benefit of a case study method of inquiry also provided the advantages of this approach in a study like this. The next chapter will discuss relevant literature and show the gaps I have found in the literature.

Chapter 3 | Literature Review

To provide context to the study of volunteerism in visual arts organizations, a thorough literature review was conducted on various themes guided by the original research questions and researcher biases. In this review of literature I looked at volunteerism as a general term in all sectors, marketing strategies for volunteer recruitment and retention in nonprofit organizations, previous studies of volunteer motivation and benefits, and organizational success and public value of the arts. Because very little established literature exists relating volunteerism and the visual arts specifically, many of these sources stem from various other sectors of social service. Obviously money is a necessity in running a nonprofit, but funding is not the only important resource in need of research and development. A large percentage of the US population has either volunteered or worked with volunteers in some capacity. In 2007, 60.8 million people in the United States volunteered for an organization. The proportion of the population who volunteered was 26.2 percent, down 0.5 percent from 2006 (United States Department of Labor, 2008).

There are a number of reasons why organizations use volunteers in their organizations. Volunteers can improve the community image of an organization, certain funding sources require public involvement, paid staff are often overworked and volunteers “bring added dimensions to services for clients” (Wilson, 1980, p. 113).

What is the significance of \$19.51? It is the estimated dollar value of volunteer time in 2007 for the U.S. (Value of Volunteer Time, 2007). A number is not the best way to approach the importance of volunteers in nonprofit organizations, but a tangible, fixed number creates an easy way for organizations to track the amount of time donated, which represents the amount of support from a community. But this idea of assigning a value to volunteer time is not free from criticism. For some, this number could undervalue the volunteer's time. The motivations for those who volunteer their time are intangible and the altruistic reasons cannot be ignored. Volunteers are an important resource in nonprofit organizations of all kinds. "Without volunteering, the country would need a much larger public sector or would lose considerable charitable, cultural and educational activities" (Freeman, 1997, p. S145).

3.1 Benefit of the Arts and Public Value

The arts are an important, integrated part of American life. "Participation in the arts is a treasured American activity. An overwhelming majority of Americans personally take part in the creation or presentation of art" (American Assembly, p. 65). Clearly the arts are important to American society as is volunteer service, and both have high value in the public sector.

It is relatively well-documented that participating in the arts has benefits, most of which are intangible but none the less important. I was unable to find studies that look at the benefits of volunteering in the arts, but we can say that

volunteering in the arts is considered a form of participation. Many arts organizations are nonprofits that depend on volunteers and it is important to know what possible benefits will arise from volunteering.

As stated earlier, many Americans donate their time and effort to nonprofit organizations. It is probably safe to say that those who choose the arts sector over other social services, environmental sectors or other fields do so because of a passion for the arts (see 3.3 for more on volunteer motivations and benefits). By examining the benefits of participating in the arts, we can begin to understand what volunteering in the arts can provide and better understand how to create an outstanding volunteer experience.

A study conducted in Britain between September 1995 and March 1997 found many benefits to arts participation. "Participation in the arts is an effective route for personal growth, leading to enhanced confidence, skill-building and educational developments which can improve people's social contacts and employability" (Matarasso, 1997, p. 5). These benefits align with many of the altruistic and intangible motivations for volunteers.

3.2 History of Volunteerism

The act of volunteering goes back to early US militias. Many fire departments to this day are still made up of volunteers. This may not seem relevant to the study of volunteerism in visual arts organizations, but it is necessary to look at the history and ethics of what we now call volunteering. The decade of the

1960s in the United States was witness to a growth in volunteerism. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy initiated the Peace Corps, and five years later VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) was established in the US (Blatchford, 1974). This may be the beginning of the political involvement in volunteerism and community service that lingers today in political campaigns.

Two terms refer to the act of voluntary service. Voluntarism, an older term, refers to anything voluntary or not required by law (Ellis, 2007). For example, higher education and religion are under that category of voluntarism. Volunteerism is a more modern term that relates to the act of donating time and effort regardless of setting (Ellis, 2007). It is difficult to pin down a definite history on volunteerism except to say that it has probably been around for as long as history has been documented.

In December 2006, the Corporation for National and Community Service released a report looking at trends in volunteer service since 1974. The study showed volunteering among adults was at a 30 year high of 27% in the United States compared to 23.6% in 1974. Three main age groups have influenced this spike the most: older teenagers aged 16-19, mid-life adults aged 45-64 and older adults 65 and older.

3.3 Motivations and Benefits

Individuals are motivated in a variety of ways to give their time to a cause they find worthy.

Additional insight into volunteer motivation can be gleaned from the fact that substantial numbers of volunteers are recruited through personal contacts, and volunteers are significantly more likely than employees to report that friendly co-workers are important in their decisions to remain with their organizations (Pearce, 1993, p. 11).

There are many benefits to volunteering that can contribute to motivation. The Corporation for National and Community Service recently sponsored a study that shows the link between health and volunteering. Older volunteers are most likely to receive greater health benefits from volunteering. Considerable amounts of volunteering also provide greater life satisfaction and lower rates of depression (Grimm, Spring & Dietz, 2007). While this study applied specifically to older adult volunteers, it might be assumed that volunteers of all ages would feel the effects of greater satisfaction in life. "Volunteering to gain work experience and enhance job prospects has a long tradition within museums" (Orr, 2006, p. 198). Youth and students often volunteer for specific work experience.

Benefits also exist for participating in the arts. The arts are important in education (Ruppert, 2006) but can the benefits for students transfer to adult volunteers in the arts? I expected to find in my study that the benefits apply to general well being in adults who may not be students, but are life-long learners. Volunteering in the arts specifically may lead to great benefits from both volunteering and participating in the arts, but this depends greatly on the needs of the individual.

A previous study looked at volunteerism and the interaction between volunteer and organization. "Research also indicates that what motivates individuals to volunteer may differ depending on the local or national context in which activities occur" (Taylor, Mallinson, Bloch, 2007, p. 392). There are a large number of factors that motivate people to volunteer in the arts and these can be effective tools if used properly.

Motivations for volunteering in the arts have generally stayed the same over time. "They reflect on an individual's values, needs, interests, and desire for self-fulfillment" (Korza, 2003, p. 101). Volunteering is also a way to learn new things and develop new skills. The benefits of the arts align with these motivations. "Certain arts activities promote growth in positive social skills, including self-confidence, self-control, conflict resolution, collaboration, empathy and social tolerance" (Ruppert, 2006, p. 14). These are the benefits that apply to students participating in the arts, and future studies will support or disconfirm that these benefits can apply to non-student volunteers participating in the arts.

Motivation of a volunteer can be compared to the motivation of a consumer to purchase something. Most volunteers are motivated by internal factors, like a desire to give something back to benefit the community, gain new skills, and meet new people (Karl, Peluchiette & Hall, 2008, p. 73). One theory to consider in volunteer recruitment is the social identity theory, which addresses these "non-material outcomes, such as feelings of self-worth, as motives for group attraction" (Boezeman et al, 2008, p. 1013). It is really the individual's decision to find an

organization that can suit their altruistic needs. "More often than not, the consumer will not be influenced by any stimulus, regardless of the pressures applied" (Colbert, 2007, p. 98). So how do organizations market to volunteers if there seems nothing can be done? The key is for organizations to find those individuals who have the motivation to do something but are not sure how to start.

3.4 Marketing

The key to a successful volunteer relationship is for it to be mutually beneficial. The organization must prosper from the work of the volunteer but the needs of the volunteer must be met as well. A mutually beneficial experience must be at the core of a successful marketing plan for recruiting and retaining volunteers. The theme of volunteer marketing is very closely related to motivations and benefits of volunteering as it is a good marketing tool to make public the benefits a volunteer can potentially receive.

The feelings of pride a volunteer can feel can be based on the success of the organization, which is quite an investment on the individual's part. "The success of an organization in achieving its mission can be considered an indicator of the status of that organization because it signals the relative standing of the organization in terms of its central defining feature" (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008, p. 1014). If this concept of success is in question, what reason does a volunteer have in continuing to donate time and effort? This can also work in the opposite

way. If an organization is already successful, a volunteer may not feel needed (Boezeman et al, 2008).

In many nonprofits, volunteers make up a large portion of the workforce and these people are representing the organization whether they realize it or not. It is necessary for nonprofits to create a brand image just like for-profit companies. Well-prepared volunteers can change and enhance the public's perceptions of any given organization (Ratje, 2003). The staff and volunteers must work together to create a unified image or brand.

Segmentation

Now we have established that most of the reasons individuals volunteer are altruistic and intangible, much like the missions and goals of the organizations they work for. Can segmentation help to identify the groups of individuals that are potential volunteers? Most organizations could utilize product differentiation to attract volunteers (Colbert, 2007). A local art center can attract volunteers and patrons by defining what makes it unique and different from others in the same geographical region.

The process of segmentation can be a time-consuming and costly process for many small nonprofits, but may be worth the resources if it can effectively define who is best suited for volunteering.

Recruiting volunteers is an important task where strong marketing is necessary. "Charities need to reach out to people they might otherwise overlook,

and at the same time, make sure they are providing opportunities that people will want to make time for” (Blum, 2008, p. 21). Korza (2003) thinks differently on recruitment of volunteers. “ Effective recruitment first targets the people you believe have what you’re looking for and how might be interested in volunteering with you” (p. 104). Recruiting volunteers can be a difficult task in deciding who should be targeted for service. There are many local and nationwide volunteer agencies that match up volunteers with organizations. In some cities, arts organizations and businesses are creating collaborative networks. Within these groups, businesses are paired with arts organizations in which both groups will benefit. This could lead to donations, sponsorships, volunteers or any other form of resource development.

Risk

Risk for the individual can be high. Organizations are asking potential volunteers to contribute time and effort. The paid staff are asking volunteers to take on the responsibility of representing the organization. The most substantial type of risk on potential volunteers is functional risk (Colbert, 2007). If a volunteer does not receive the benefits he or she expected, the relationship between the organization and volunteer will not last. This can be avoided or reduced by providing as much information as possible about a volunteer program at the organization so the individual is as prepared as possible (Colbert, 2007).

“A rule of thumb in North America is that 20% of the volunteers do more than 80% of the total volunteer work” (Delamere, 2008, p. 132). Volunteers in any

type of organization are at a high risk for burnout and effective volunteer management is essential for continued success of the organization or festival.

Potential and perceived risks exist as well for the organization in the selection of volunteers. "The problems of volunteers' limited time, uncertain motives and a high degree of individual independence can result in debilitating levels of uncertainty for organizational volunteers" (Pearce, 1993, p. 9). The process of choosing and hiring employees is a serious task with background checks, references, and so on. While it is impractical for every organization to dedicate that many resources on the hiring of a volunteer, some checks need to be made. "The most important check is to verify why the volunteer has chosen your nonprofit and what they hope to gain from the experience" (Ratje, 2003, p. 17). The altruistic reasons for volunteering are still the most important and these motivations need to be a fit within the organization and its mission.

Work environment

A positive work environment is necessary for retention of volunteers as well as positive reinforcement and recognition. Engagement is key to keeping these volunteers interested. Understanding roles is one way of keeping volunteers engaged and involved. Volunteers "often can't see the connection between their activities and the mission of the organization" (Blum, 2008, p. 21). Staff needs to create meaning and worth for volunteers to continue to donate their time rather than find unimportant tasks to keep volunteers busy. Giving volunteers a chance to

work in many capacities within an organization can keep them more engaged and see how everything contributes to a successful organization.

Interaction between the organization and paid staff and volunteers is important to a successful experience and will assure return volunteers. The study done by Taylor, Mallinson, & Bloch (2007) addresses this interaction and argues the importance of this concept in understanding volunteering. Their study focused on two different types of organizations. One was a no-kill cat shelter and the other provided health care and general well-being services for lesbian women. For the purposes of my study, I will be looking specifically at arts organizations, but the idea of organizational structure is an important concept to address.

Volunteers for the most part should be treated like employees who are unpaid. Training is important, both formal and on the job. "Volunteers, just like paid employees, need guidance" (Ratje, 2003, p. 17). If volunteers are left to figure it out on their own, they may misrepresent the organization and many times the volunteer is the public face of an organization. For example, in a nonprofit art center, a volunteer or docent is usually sitting at the front door answering phones, or taking donations and admission.

So, is there a way to effectively market to recruit volunteers? The research shows that it is a difficult and highly intangible process that depends on many factors beyond the organization's control. It is important both the volunteer's and organization's needs be met for a successful and fulfilling experience. The volunteer must want to donate time and the organization must minimize the risks

involved for the individual. Organizations must make an investment in these volunteers by training them as they would a paid employee.

Internal Marketing

Internal marketing is “fundamentally a process in which leaders instill into followers a sense of oneness with the organization” (Wieseke, Ahearne, Lam & van Dick, 2009, p. 123). This is perfectly suited to nonprofits in retaining volunteers and even paid staff. I believe organizations are already doing this or attempting to without realizing it.

An internal marketing plan should be in place within an organization (Karl et al, 2008). This plan should focus on increasing volunteer loyalty and commitment. Many times this takes place but is not defined as a marketing plan specifically because it is always taking place. Most organizations have some sort of recognition program in place that rewards the volunteers in ways other than monetary that contributes to the “sense of oneness.”

3.5 Definition of Success

The definition of success for a visual arts organization can vary greatly. For some it may be to simply stay open. For others success is measured by the number of grants or the quality of art it promotes and shows. For most organizations, it is a combination of all these aspects. I believe each organization needs to understand what its goals and own individual successes are and communicate this to both staff

and volunteers. The definition of success may be written into the mission. This concept was addressed more directly in my data collection and interviews.

According to Sawhill and Williamson (2001), measuring success and outcomes in nonprofits has always been a challenge. Nonprofits are very different than the private, for profit sector that have tangible monetary outcomes that can be easier to measure, although finances are still not the only way to measure success in this sector. Success in nonprofits has always related to the mission and how well the mission has been met, but this is not simple.

It appears that the technical difficulties of measuring complex missions, or the political difficulties of designing measurement systems that accommodate the various stakeholders in nonprofits, has dampened the level of mission measurement within the sector (Sawhill & Williamson, 2001, p.372).

It is difficult to measure success against something as open as a mission statement. “Articulating the values and missions of the participating arts and nonarts groups is essential to the success of the program” (Hager, 2008, p. 167). The definition of success is articulated in accordance to each organization’s mission.

Within this literature review, certain themes emerged or were expanded upon that informed data collection at the chosen case study sites. These data will also be referenced in the findings and recommendations in the final chapter. From

the many sources referenced, one theme emerged. All volunteer handbooks, research and other literature are quite general. This may be because volunteer coordination is the same regardless of sector, organization or motivation or it may be because current scholars and practitioners have yet to document the differences in publications. Literature may be general in nature also because few organizations or sectors can afford to develop their own specialized publications.

Chapter 4 | Case Study Analysis

For the purposes of this study, conducting case studies was essential in answering the research question “How does the relationship between the volunteer and paid staff influence the volunteer experience?” and how does this relationship effect the overall success or perceived success of the organization. The case study sites were chosen due to researcher access, both by geography and a previously established relationship, and a general perception of being a successful organization within their respective communities. The first case study site was the Downtown Initiative for the Visual Arts (DIVA) in Eugene, OR. Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews with one staff member and one volunteer, analysis of the website and other documentation. The second case study site was Blue Sky Gallery, also known as the Oregon Center for the Photographic Arts, in Portland, OR. In the following analysis, this site will be referred to as Blue Sky. Data collection at this site consisted of a semi-structured interview with a staff member and analysis of the website.

These sites were studied to gain a better understanding of the volunteer relationship and experience within each organization. Each organization has a very unique situation dependent on many factors and influences. However, together the two organizations provide a clearer picture of what a volunteer program within a community based visual arts organization may look like.

4.1 Case Study 1

Downtown Initiative for the Visual Arts (DIVA)

Eugene, Oregon

DIVA is a nonprofit 501©3 organization located in downtown Eugene, Oregon. DIVA is classified by staff and volunteers as a visual arts center but it has earned a strong reputation in the city as an art gallery exhibiting unique and boundary-pushing work from artists on a local and national scene. DIVA is more than just a gallery because it offers a wide array of other programming that most galleries do not, such as professional development for artists and frequent film showings from both local and international artists. The methodology for this first case study included two interviews; Sara Smith Spahn, Exhibit Co-director and Sheila Roth, Volunteer. For the purposes of this focused study, these two interviews provided a wealth of information. I was able to triangulate the two data sources because they are two different viewpoints on essentially the same role within DIVA. Smith Spahn was chosen for this project because while all staff members work closely with volunteers, she works in tandem with new and current volunteers and does most of the volunteer placement within the organization.

4.1.1 Organizational Profile

DIVA opened in November of 2003 in its current space at the corner of Olive and Broadway in Eugene, Oregon. The space is open from noon until 5 PM most days of the week for public visitation and other events. Frequently events such as film screenings, receptions and openings take place after hours. The public face of DIVA is its gallery space and exhibitions, which feature a large variety of media and topics ranging from bookmaking to experimental film clips to traditional painting and photographs. Exhibits change each month on average, creating a dynamic “see it while it’s here” publicity buzz used as a marketing tool. Each month, approximately 1,000 people visit DIVA for events and special exhibits. DIVA participates each month in the First Friday Art Walk organized by the Lane Arts Council which draws in a sizable crowd. These events also provide the public with a chance to speak directly to the artists.

DIVA has a very small staff of 2 full time and 2 part time employees, which explains their heavy dependence on volunteer labor. The volunteer board at DIVA is currently made up of 12 individuals. Volunteers also make up many other committees involved heavily in programming and operations at DIVA (DIVA, 2008a), such as artist services, exhibits, and fundraising committees.

DIVA’s widespread programming is represented in its mission statement, which encompasses or attempts to encompass all that happens at the center:

DIVA's mission is to act as a catalyst for visual arts activities in downtown Eugene. It promotes the talent of artists and public appreciation of the arts

by scheduling a diversity of programming that advances its mission as a multi-use visual arts center.

The Center exhibits traditional visual art and newer time-based forms such as film, video, digital, and multimedia installations. It offers a wide range of workshops, classes, and special arts related presentations and programs.

DIVA collaborates with other arts organizations such as the University of Oregon, Maude Kerns Art Center, and the Jacobs Gallery in scheduling a diversity of programming (DIVA, 2008c).

DIVA's mission gives insight on what the organization accomplishes with a small budget, limited staff and a large amount of dedicated volunteer hours. The vision is about "how [we hope] we are being understood by the community so [that we] make sure people understand what our mission is here." (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). Certain terms within this mission stand out as exemplary defining terms for DIVA. As a "catalyst" DIVA brings new and sometimes controversial shows from both new and established artists. Some of the artists shown are not established yet and DIVA offers programs through the Artist Salon to teach artists the business and professional side of being an artist. DIVA also promotes a broad definition of art through its mission. Art of both traditional and new media are exhibited in the gallery spaces along with installation and unique site-specific pieces.

“Collaboration” is another strong word in DIVA’s mission statement. In a city the size of Eugene with a population of 146, 356 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006) with such a strong arts community, collaborating with other organizations is absolutely necessary. Collaboration rather than competition is an important part of DIVA’s success, and is also something staff and volunteers are continuing to improve upon.

As in many nonprofits, DIVA is a “membership and donor supported center” (DIVA, 2008b). The center offers various levels of membership as well as opportunities for volunteers to earn a membership from donated hours. Members receive various benefits including discounts on workshops and seminars at DIVA, a chance to exhibit in members only shows and free admission to the Artist Salon among others. (DIVA, 2008b). Memberships to DIVA provide a source of revenue and income on an irregular and limited basis as do the workshops and seminars that members receive discounts on. Another source of income are donations. Hosts at the front desk routinely ask for donations from visitors but admission is not required.

Long range goals are, as in many nonprofits, to be stronger financially but still be a place that is volunteer and member driven. “I’m hoping that we can secure more long range funding, but that we would continue to be a place that volunteers could weave in and weave out depending on where their they are in their realizations as artists or people interested in the arts” (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). A more financially stable organization

does not mean that volunteers would be any less valued and DIVA will continue to be a volunteer supported organization. The goal here is to create more steady streams of revenue to sustain an organization with such extensive programming that serves a broad range of interests and populations.

4.1.2 Volunteer Program

One aspect of DIVA's success is its very active volunteer population. Some staff and board members claim that its greatest asset is the dedicated people who volunteer. There are "25 to 30 regular volunteers active within a three-month period [and DIVA offers] about 40 hours a month for volunteer opportunity" (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). The coordination of the volunteer work falls under all staff members due to the size of the organization, but it is an especially important part of day-to-day management of DIVA for Sara Smith Spahn, Exhibit Co-director.

What is most striking about the volunteer program is the rather intense and time consuming intake system. Smith Spahn goes to great lengths to ensure a potential volunteer is a good fit. "I try to meet the new volunteer one on one sitting down looking over our paperwork looking at all the different things DIVA does [and] hearing about that person's background" (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). She also says its important "right from the start getting a sense of where I need to meet this person [in terms of background and motivations]" (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). By

taking this time to thoroughly interview each individual, Smith Spahn explains that she will be better equipped to place him or her into a good fit within the organization without having to “do a lot of backpedaling to get them into something that is a better fit” (Personal communication, March 20, 2009). She is able to find a suitable project or role that caters to both the needs of DIVA and the interests of the individual.

After each volunteer is interviewed, there is a training process that is required within the first six months (DIVA, 2008d). This means that unfortunately, there may be some time between actually volunteering and receiving training, but limiting training sessions saves on precious staff hours. This training consists of an introduction to DIVA but it is also a time for the volunteers to meet each other. DIVA is lucky to get many volunteers that are well trained in most aspects of volunteer work and the arts. Sheila Roth, a volunteer since September 2007, came in the center with a wealth of experience. “And really I come with a lot of training... I used to train people, and she [the staff member] acknowledged that” (S. Roth, personal communication, April 3, 2009). These training sessions are easily adapted to fit the needs of that particular group of volunteers.

Volunteers are an essential part of DIVA and this gratitude and acknowledgement is reflected in the thoughts of staff. “I certainly try to create an atmosphere where their insight and their experiences are incredibly meaningful to furthering our organization” (S Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). Although not paid staff members, volunteers have great influence on

programming at DIVA through committees, the board of just being a member. Roth feels she influenced the organization by instituting a more conversational tone and welcoming candor for visitors (S. Roth, personal communication, April 3, 2009). The volunteers are who make the many programs at DIVA happen and keep any programs from falling through the cracks.

There's so much happening within so many components of DIVA that for staff working part time it's very very difficult to keep track of all of it and it makes me feel really good that someone is. That our volunteers are I think keeping really good track of it (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009).

The volunteer labor force is invested in DIVA and DIVA has clearly invested in them. Multiple forms of recognition are in place at DIVA to acknowledge volunteers. DIVA provides an opportunity to be recognized as "Volunteer of the Month" during which the volunteer is featured at the front desk with a picture and a short bio. The volunteer also receives a small gift from DIVA which is usually a gift card to a local business. Also, each year DIVA also hosts a reception as a large thank you for dedicating time and energy to keep the center running smoothly. But the true recognition is much simpler but more meaningful. "Beyond that I try to recognize volunteers every opportunity I get. And that can be just a simple thank you" (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). Smith Spahn makes this recognition a priority. "I try to prioritize that before anything else.

Because I know that if I don't prioritize that then I really can't prioritize the jobs that are being done either" (personal communication, March 20, 2009).

Recognizing the precious time spent is important to consider. "My time is very valuable and if I think that of my time then you know I certainly should think that of others" (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009).

Volunteers at DIVA come from many walks of life with a varied background and interest level. For example:

I begin every meeting I have with a new volunteer by saying it's a very diverse group [of volunteers]. We have retired professionals. We have students. We have people with their MFAs. We have people that have always wanted to be an artist or wanted to pay more attention to art and went into a completely different field because it wasn't practical and now they're really wanting to prioritize this for themselves. We have people that live a block away and like the energy that they get when they come into DIVA, and proximity is the reason they're here or a big part of why they're here. It really runs the whole gamut. That's how it was translated to me and that again is one of the reasons I meet each volunteer one on one. I have to really find out as much as I can about them. (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009).

A really diverse group of individuals making up the volunteer group seems to make DIVA stronger. So many people bring a wealth of knowledge to DIVA and can contribute so much great experience and ideas.

I'm thinking of a population of volunteers here that are retired professionals and how much incredible life experience they bring to this organization. And if you were to think of all their experiences that they are bringing here cumulatively speaking we wouldn't be able to afford them for fifteen minutest of their time mean really (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009).

Roth, for example, brought her experience fundraising for other causes and owning a retail art gallery among many other things.

In any nonprofit, regardless of its genre, staff must be trained to work with volunteers. So how does one approach effective volunteer coordination? Smith Spahn says:

I think back to my volunteer experiences. The best education for me preparing myself for this part of this work was to think back on what volunteer experiences made this work fantastic and which were horrible... it's really thinking back to your own personal experiences that give you a lot of information. I feel really fortunate that I've had both in my life. (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009).

Smith Spahn also mentioned the importance of using common sense and “humbling yourself” in coordinating volunteers from a professional standpoint.

Depending on volunteers is sometimes strenuous and can be a gamble. But at DIVA the volunteer presence is so strong that this risk doesn't really exist.

We always seem to get the people we need the times we need them and for the most part we get a really productive happy job done. It's a feel good. It isn't drudgery. Placing value on the time and the tasks are all in the same boat for me (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009).

This statement also speaks to the idea of a good working environment and good staff and volunteer relations. Staff at DIVA does their best to keep volunteers content and happy. “The staff here is great. I couldn't possibly work here if it weren't. Everybody here has the sense that they're here doing a job that's important” (S. Roth, personal communication, April 3, 2009. Volunteers want to do a variety of tasks and be involved in different projects according to personal interests.

A lot of people don't want to sit up in front, and that isn't really what I wanted to do. I wanted to be more active but as it turned out there were so many people [coming] in here with their own agenda where they really need to get some experience that I was more useful up front than I was in other things (S. Roth, personal communication, April 3, 2009).

DIVA has not needed to market itself to draw in more volunteers. On a regular basis, visitors enter looking for ways to become more involved at DIVA. Staff has learned that actively seeking volunteers does not work. “In my experience with that kind of work [it] has not been rewarding [to actively recruit volunteers]” (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). Potential volunteers must take the first steps into a place that already suits their interests, relating to the motivations discussed in chapter 3. Most individuals first entering DIVA to volunteer say they heard from a friend that great things are happening at DIVA and want to become more involved. DIVA depends on this type of marketing and advertising. “It's a cliché. Word of mouth is your best advertisement and I really do believe that” (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). She says it's important to understand “that they'll go tell someone else about what it is they're doing here and that only grows our reputation” (Personal communication, March 20, 2009).

4.1.3 DIVA Case Study Summary

DIVA is an excellent case study because of its status as a volunteer run organization and its dedication to providing good volunteer experiences. Smith Spahn explained her dedication to finding a good fit with these individuals. DIVA has an energy that volunteers and staff alike have been able to harness. As in many organizations, funding is difficult and challenging at times, but there are always enough people who donate their time to keep the door open. The interviews

conducted gave great insight into the organizational structure and volunteer program. Document analysis consisted of a thorough inspection of the website as this was more pertinent than other documents of the organization. This organization is known locally for its success in programming. "DIVA has done an incredible job of offering exhibits, education and more,' Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy told [board president Randall] Stender and [director Mary] Unruh" (Steffen, 2007).

4.2 Case Study 2

Blue Sky Gallery/Oregon Center for Photographic Arts
Portland, Oregon

Blue Sky Gallery, also known as the Oregon Center for Photographic Arts is also a nonprofit organization with a 501©3 tax status. It is located in the trendy Pearl District in Portland, Oregon near many other galleries. Blue Sky began as an artist co-op and still continues in that vein today.

4.2.1 Organizational Profile

Blue Sky Gallery was founded in 1975 by a group of photographers that were dissatisfied with the local resources and gallery spaces available and dedicated to photographers and photography in general. Blue Sky is dedicated to showing work from both local and national artists (Blue Sky Gallery, n.d.). The

gallery has changed locations a number of times and most recently moved to their current home in July of 2007.

Success is defined at Blue Sky by achieving their mission which is:

To educate the public about photography through exhibitions & publications, to further the careers & artistic development of the artists shown, to create a dialogue among artists & between artists & the public, & to leave a concrete permanent record of their work through print & digital publications (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009).

Blue Sky also creates a large number of publications each year, the largest being an annual yearbook with one to two images from each artist that has shown in the past year.

Memberships are the most consistent form of revenue and they rely heavily on volunteer labor to make the benefits of the membership happen. As stated on the Blue Sky website,

If you had been a member of Blue Sky for the last 20 years...You would also feel the deepest gratitude of more than 20 volunteers who plan and prepare the exhibits, keep the doors open during viewing hours, mail the oddly shaped plastic stuff, donate prints for raffles, and think up ways to lure you into becoming a member (Blue Sky Gallery, n.d.).

A majority of Blue Sky's programming consists of a monthly exhibit schedule. New work is installed in the galleries for an opening reception the first Thursday of every month. Each month, two to three artists' work are shown.

Volunteers at Blue Sky are granted great responsibility in guiding the organization towards success. The exhibit committee is made up of dedicated volunteers with an interest in photography. Everyone has the chance to voice an opinion on each submission. Each artist is also looked at for their relation to Blue Sky's mission.

Blue Sky recognizes the limitations of only showing artists two at a time so they instituted a project called the Northwest Drawers. This is an innovative way of showing the work of many artists. This additional exhibit space is made up of large flat drawers. Inside each drawer lie two artists' work of about 10 prints each. A piece of clear plastic covers the top of the drawer to protect the art. Visitors can ask the volunteer at the front desk to get out the other prints if they want to see more. This gives the volunteer a great chance to interact with visitors. Blue Sky also places trust in their volunteers to handle relatively unprotected artwork and interact with the public as a representative of the organization.

4.2.2 Volunteer Program

Blue Sky is a volunteer and member run organization with a very small staff of one full time staff member and one part time. They rely on volunteers to do a lot of the necessary work to keep the gallery open. "Every aspect of Blue Sky's

operations, from finding artists to show, reviewing their portfolios, producing exhibitions, catalogues, lectures, to staying open 6 days a week is accomplished through volunteer assistance” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009). Blue Sky is dependent on volunteers to enable the gallery’s success.

“Volunteers contribute countless hours of unpaid labor and their enthusiasm of photography to assist in carrying out the gallery’s mission. Volunteers are crucial to the success of our organization” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009).

Blue Sky Gallery receives many submissions each week from artists seeking a show at the gallery. During my volunteer experience at Blue Sky in the summer of 2008, we had boxes and boxes of submissions to review. The large number of submissions may only take place in the summer months, but this is speculation. It is the responsibility of volunteers to catalog each packet that comes in, check the digital files to see if they are readable and enter the information into a spreadsheet.

Blue Sky Gallery has a steady stream of dependable volunteers. The gallery has not had to actively pursue volunteers. “Because Blue Sky has been in existence for 33 years we have long standing relationships with the colleges and art schools in the area” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009). Most new volunteers come with the referral of a past volunteer or intern or instructor. “We also have instructors from various educational institutions on our Exhibition Committee” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009) who encourage student volunteers to become involved at Blue Sky.

The relationship between staff and volunteers is “a very positive and rewarding one” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009). The mutual interest in the success of Blue Sky creates a positive working environment that is an equal exchange rather than one of hierarchy. “Both the director and I are open to including our volunteers in decision making and encourage an individual’s approach in carrying out the task at hand” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009). This trust is also evident in the Exhibition Committee as mentioned earlier. “Their opinions and participation determine our exhibition scheduling” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009).

Blue Sky’s volunteer program has been unstructured in the past but staff are in the process of formalizing some volunteer positions. “We are creating handbooks for each of the positions so that we can provide consistent training for new volunteers. We currently have an Exhibition Committee volunteer, a membership volunteer and a development volunteer” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009).

Because Blue Sky is a specialized gallery in one specific medium, the volunteers have similar backgrounds and interests. Most volunteers have a love for photography. “Many volunteers are fine art and commercial photographers, photography teachers, current or former students of photography and hobbyists” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009). Being involved at Blue Sky provides a community of photographers and photography enthusiasts to share ideas and interests.

Benefits for volunteers at Blue Sky are many. The most notable one is “surrounding oneself with art and artists” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009). Volunteers have the chance to meet and exchange ideas with many other photographers. “Blue Sky in particular has a long history of photographic artists and an impressive list of alumni. Meeting other photography enthusiasts is yet another benefit” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009).

Blue Sky has a formal way of recognizing its dedicated volunteers. A staff member hosts “an annual appreciation party in which we have a print choosing. For every 40 hours of volunteering with Blue Sky, volunteers earn a signed photographic print” (L. Martel, personal communication, March 26, 2009). Board members, volunteers and friends of the gallery contribute prints for the party. Volunteers take turns choosing prints depending on the number of hours they have contributed. It is more a party than a structured recognition system. Anyone can contribute quality prints for the party. This provides a social opportunity for volunteers to meet each other as well.

4.2.3 Blue Sky Case Study Summary

Blue Sky is a significant case study organization because of its dedicated volunteer staff. Blue Sky is unique because it has been in operation for 33 years. In those 33 years they have developed a following of highly trained and dedicated volunteers. What brought this community together is a common interest in

photography and that strong interest has kept many involved for many years. Blue Sky places great trust and respect in the volunteers, which is especially evident in the Exhibition Committee where volunteers decide what will be shown in the gallery. Volunteers become more invested in the gallery knowing that they can take some ownership in the excellent programming and exhibition choices.

4.3 Findings and Comparison

At both organizations, it was evident that paid staff truly appreciate what volunteers bring to the organizations. DIVA takes time to do thorough intake interviews to match each individual volunteer to the right match in a project or task. Blue Sky draws in volunteers interested specifically in photography, creating a tight-knit community of photographers and photography enthusiasts. Neither organization exerts much effort in attracting volunteers because they simply don't need to. Volunteers hear about these organizations by word of mouth in most cases.

Both volunteer programs have their own unique structure. DIVA has intense intake interviews that result in long-lasting volunteers who are placed in roles that fit. Blue Sky is in the process of creating volunteer positions and written handbooks to provide better training and stability, but Blue Sky is unique because so many volunteers have already been there for so long and are there because of a lifelong passion for photography. By creating positions Blue Sky can offer potential volunteers more than a community of photographers and photography enthusiasts

but a chance to develop skills to further professional potential. This could reflect a change in leisure time and approach to occupations and careers in the arts.

Individuals looking for a career in the arts are likely to volunteer in organizations as a networking tool.

Recognition of volunteer service was a theme in both case study sites. What is interesting is that the volunteer interviewed from DIVA did not necessarily mention being officially recognized as a reason for volunteering there. What she did highlight was being treated as an equal and an individual with a great deal to contribute to the organization, or informal recognition. An important aspect of Blue Sky's volunteer programming is the Exhibits Committee responsibilities to choose what will be shown in the galleries. An expected finding was that volunteer recognition is a large component of the experience, but from one volunteer's point of view, it was not. The staff member at DIVA felt very strongly about recognition in a small way by simply acknowledging the contribution. Recognition is not always noticed when it is present, but it is definitely noticed when it is missing. Staff members follow common courtesy and may not consider it recognition like nominating a volunteer of the month.

The importance of participating in the arts was also a previously established theme, although not much emphasis was placed on it in the case study data collected. A love of the visual arts is what brings both staff and volunteers together but does not necessarily make the organization run differently than any other sector of nonprofit organizations. Most participants in arts organizations are part of the

creative class that is unique, ever changing and adapting to social and economic environments. This could explain the success of arts organizations as a whole. Arts organizations do not provide a service necessary for life but are necessary for individuals who thrive on a place for creativity.

All respondents understood the importance of studying volunteerism in the arts. All involved felt passionately about either their paid positions or volunteer contributions. One respondent also mentioned a lack of scholarly work reflecting volunteer work in the arts but that so much is common sense and practical knowledge that it can be difficult to articulate in an academic way. The next and final chapter will review the research questions and discuss each one by synthesizing the literature reviewed and case study data collected. Since the research questions guiding this study were very open-ended, definitive answers were not the goal. The goal was to better understand volunteerism in visual arts organizations. In the following chapter I will also make some recommendations for case study sites and things to consider when working in volunteer coordination.

Chapter 5 | Discussion and Conclusion

The final stage in this project was to synthesize data collected from case studies and the literature review to discuss and answer the original research questions. Both case study data and literature review data are necessary to substantiate the findings and recommendations. This portion will conclude with recommendations for further study. The scope of this study was quite small and limited so the findings cannot be generalized to apply to the wide range of visual arts organizations that vary in size, location and focus. Given more resources, more interviews with a larger pool of volunteers would have provided more data to support findings. Further study by myself or other researchers will be necessary to gain a broader understanding of the volunteer-staff relationship in visual arts organizations. This project suggests areas of research within this rather broad topic that would be most important and necessary to pursue.

5.1 Restating the Purpose and Research Questions

This inquiry began with questions that arose from my personal experience in arts organizations. The original main research question was:

- How does the relationship between the volunteer and paid staff influence the volunteer experience?

Other questions influenced this study as there were many interconnected ideas necessary to address before and while discussing the main research question. These other questions were:

- What are some motivations for volunteers?
- What value do organizations place on providing a good volunteer experience?
- Can the history of volunteerism inform current trends and how?
- What are effective marketing strategies in recruiting and retaining volunteers?
- How can an effective volunteer program contribute to the success of an organization?

These questions provided a way to keep focused in a topic that could become large and unmanageable. The answers to these questions many times overlapped and were difficult to differentiate and some questions were not pertinent to the study or did not contribute to the main research question. The goal was to understand volunteer experiences in visual arts organizations and to understand the effect these volunteers had on the organization. This study began with a literature review looking at published sources on volunteerism, marketing, public value of the arts and the definition of success in nonprofit organizations.

Case studies were conducted on two small visual arts centers. Research at these sites consisted of interviews, organizational material analysis and published press material. The interviews provided a wealth of knowledge and an insight into the inner workings of these organizations.

Both the literature review and case study data informed certain findings and recommendations to follow in the next two sections.

5.2 Synthesis

The implications from this study lie in the answers and discussions of each supporting research question and ultimately inform the main research question. The findings derive from both the literature review and case study analysis. These are combined to create a synthesized response that answers the question as completely as possible.

What are some motivations for volunteers?

This project showed that motivations varied from one individual to the next depending on the organization and personal goals. Motivation, whatever it may be, is mostly altruistic and self-serving in some way (Karl, Peluchiette & Hall, 2008) but these altruistic goals can change after a volunteer is emotionally invested in the organization. Motivations can change to reflect the relationship with those in the organization and a personal passion for success through the mission statement. Emotionally invested volunteers may continue to do so to help the organization survive and because they understand that the organization needs them. Generally though, these original motivations have stayed the same over time and reflect individual values and interests (Korza, 2003). In the case of Blue Sky, most volunteers are there because of an interest in photography and the desire to be surrounded by individuals with similar interests, creating a community. Volunteers

at DIVA are motivated by the organization itself and the energy and location of the place (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009, S. Roth, personal communication, April 3, 2009). Volunteering at DIVA is also a way for artists to embed themselves into a strong and supportive artists community.

Another important motivation is the desire to reap certain benefits. Literature showed that older adults could experience health benefits (Grimm, Spring & Dietz, 2007). At DIVA, volunteers can earn a membership with a certain number of volunteer hours per year. With this program, no one is excluded from membership benefits regardless of income.

What value do organizations place on providing a good volunteer experience?

Both case study organizations stress the importance of volunteer labor and work hard to make the experience a successful one. A good volunteer experience means that they will return and potentially encourage other people to volunteer, creating a word of mouth marketing strategy.

The value of volunteer time in the U.S. in 2007 was estimated at \$19.51 per hour (Value of Volunteer Time, 2007). The literature points out the benefits of having a dollar amount to assign volunteers so nonprofits could apply their budget to a more typical business model. During interviews, some staff did not see the advantage in having a dollar figure to assign individuals. The work they do is priceless. So many volunteers come into organizations with a wealth of knowledge and background experience. \$19.51 would be selling those people short and if

they were paid what they should earn, most places wouldn't be able to afford fifteen minutes of those talented volunteers' time (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009).

I found this question difficult to address in the literature review. The answer to this is highly subjective and qualitative and a definite gap exists in the literature regarding qualitative studies in volunteer contributions to arts organizational success, but participants from both case study sites highlighted the importance of volunteer participation. This anecdotal data cannot be generalized, but in the confines of this study, it is easy to see how important volunteer contributions are to organizational success.

Can the history of volunteerism inform current trends and how?

I was not able to answer this question through this study. Since there was no literature specific to volunteerism in the visual arts, the only reference is a general history on volunteerism. In the simplest terms, numbers show that volunteering is an important and essential social activity in the United States. I found that the history of volunteerism is not overly helpful to the study of current volunteerism trends and shifts. This history does not provide any memorable insight into the coordination of volunteers today regardless of organization or sector. Although no specific recommendations or conclusions came of this research subquestion, the literature still provided a necessary background to understand volunteerism as it exists today.

The term volunteer still refers to the act of donating time and effort (Ellis, 2007) regardless of the sector or area in which the volunteering takes place. National organizations study volunteerism trends like the fluctuation in the percentage of people who volunteer. The Corporation for the National and Community Service (2006) saw an increase in the number of people volunteering in 2006 as opposed to 1974. So from this I can infer an increase of volunteers in all sectors and highlight again the importance of studying volunteer coordination.

Historical national trends can give some background information to volunteerism today, but more influential is direct family influence. Sheila Roth, two year volunteer at DIVA, explained her influence on volunteering and community service. "I grew up with parents who were always working out in the community helping somebody do something. My mother and father were both union organizers... I do it because of a philosophy that I grew up with... in Hebrew its called tikkun olam. It's part of a mosaic philosophy of repair the world, heal the world" (Personal communication, April 3, 2009). This singular anecdote cannot be generalized but is a good example of one person's reason to volunteer regardless of organization. It is likely that she is not the only individual who volunteers because of her family influences and religious beliefs.

What are effective marketing strategies in recruiting and retaining volunteers?

Both the literature review and case studies revealed that actively recruiting volunteers would be unsuccessful because a volunteer experience would not be positive unless the individual volunteer had personal motivations. This question

relates as well to motivations because motivation is very important in a successful volunteer experience.

Both organizations have the luxury of a steady stream of willing volunteers and have not had to conduct any external marketing strategies for more volunteer labor. Smith Spahn at DIVA stated she never had much luck in marketing plans to attract volunteers and the organization's mission, programming and involved individuals tends to bring in volunteers without active recruiting. "In my experience with that kind of work has not been rewarding" (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 20, 2009). Dedicated and truly interested individuals must be motivated to approach someone at the organization and express interest in volunteering.

Although it's not something done by the organization itself, word of mouth was an effective strategy in attracting volunteers. There's "something that we're doing is going back into the public and going back into someone's memory while talking to someone else" (S. Smith Spahn, personal communication, March 2009). DIVA's best marketing strategy is to create positive volunteer experiences so that those volunteers will tell others to volunteer.

How can an effective volunteer program contribute to the success of an organization?

Both organizations cited the importance of volunteer labor in staying open. Volunteers contribute greatly to the day-to-day operations in both case study sites.

In many nonprofit visual arts centers and nonprofit galleries volunteers sit at the front desk, answer the phone and answer any questions. These people are essential to these places staying open because most organizations cannot afford to pay someone to do this job. At DIVA, volunteers coordinate programs and keep them running. Programming is so diverse and far reaching that volunteers must help keep track of things. Four part time staff members cannot take care of such an extensive calendar without any help. Blue Sky volunteers have kept the organization going for the past 33 years and will continue to be the heart of the organization.

Volunteers also provide moral support and in a way validate the existence of the organization. By this I mean that if people are interested in dedicating time to DIVA or Blue Sky, both places are doing something right and adequately fulfilling their missions. An unsuccessful organization will not attract volunteers.

How does the relationship between the volunteer and paid staff influence the volunteer experience?

This was the main research question guiding the study. “ The key to a successful volunteer program is the administrator’s attitude toward it” (Wilson, 1980, 113). The importance of the relationship between paid staff and volunteers was reflected in personal communication with staff and volunteers. Roth said she wouldn’t volunteer at DIVA if the staff didn’t treat her well. She has stayed partially because of her relationship with the director and staff and she says she is treated like another staff member, which makes her feel good and like part of the family (S.

Roth, personal communication, April 3, 2009). Speaking from biased personal experience, this is not common amongst all visual arts organizations. Martel at Blue Sky explained the importance and ownership and trust volunteers are given to choose what work is shown in the gallery space each month.

Of course the relationship between the volunteer and the paid staff influences the volunteer experience, but this study was addressing the subtleties of this issue. These subtleties included giving responsibility, appreciation of their time and most importantly respect for the volunteers and the important function they serve in the success of the organization. Really treating volunteers like staff was so important to fostering a good relationship within the organization. This conclusion comes mostly from the interview findings and not from literature. This question is closely tied to the question of volunteer contribution to organizational success.

To thoroughly discuss this question, a larger study over a broader range of organizations would need to take place. This will be addressed in the recommendations for further research.

5.3 Recommendations

From these findings and themes established in the literature review, certain recommendations can be made. These are far from the only recommendations and will not apply to all organizations in the same way. These recommendations are also quite general and could probably apply in any sector.

Create positions for volunteers just like staff with handbooks and separate specialized training.

By making positions with job descriptions, volunteers feel a sense of belonging and appreciation. Volunteer positions also provide a method of accountability for both the organization and the individual and hopefully reduce the risk for both sides. This also will benefit the organization with a sense of continuity during changeover of volunteers. Blue Sky is in the process of creating “job descriptions” for volunteers to step into complete with specific handbooks and training. The process at DIVA is more organic and could benefit from some structure similar to Blue Sky’s process.

Give volunteers responsibility.

Giving responsibilities to volunteers shows trust and their necessity. In nonprofit organizations there are always things to be done regardless of who does them, paid staff or not. Trusting individuals who are unpaid but highly dedicated most likely will give them an increased personal confidence. Also, by giving responsibilities to volunteers they are inadvertently training them for a future in the arts administration field which is always positive.

Make the work environment an enjoyable one.

Creating a happy work environment is absolutely necessary. This happy work environment will result from all the other recommendations. There are many

components to creating a positive environment. Treating volunteers well, giving them responsibility, and conducting thorough training will create an environment more like a community rather than a hierarchy of power. An unhappy stifling work environment will quickly lead to a loss of volunteer labor and possibly an end to the organization.

If possible, dedicate one staff member to the organization of volunteer efforts.

Coordinating volunteers is an important and all consuming task. If the budget allows, one staff member should be in charge of organizing volunteer labor. This will also create some continuity and prevent confusion, which could lead to a poor volunteer experience.

Treat volunteers as you would like to be treated.

This is by far the most important recommendation for anyone in a paid position working with volunteers. Using common sense should be a given, but it is not always the case. Volunteer handbooks exist for almost every type of organization but most of the things written in these handbooks are general and don't address the importance of the personal relationship between the staff members and volunteers. For example, the book *Volunteer Program Administration* (1993) highlights the importance of communication between staff and volunteers. While this book explains the importance of volunteers, it also gives the impression that a hierarchical volunteer program structure is the best way for organizations to

organize volunteers. A possible explanation could be the timeliness of the book, written fifteen years ago. Shifts in the nonprofit sector have taken place since then, placing more emphasis on treating volunteers as unpaid staff and approaching the relationship as a partnership between two parties interested in the success of the organization. Reading a book might not teach a staff member how to best handle volunteers, but using common sense will always serve the coordinator well.

5.4 Further Research and Concluding Statements

Arts administrators and volunteers would both benefit from further research in this area. This study was limited both geographically and by time constraints. A larger number of case studies should be conducted on both successful and unsuccessful organizations to get a better understanding of volunteer influence. An in depth study of these organizations according to work environment theories could also be helpful in better understanding the relationship between staff and volunteers.

A comparison case study of volunteerism in the arts and another sector like healthcare could provide a better insight to the motivations for arts volunteering. Knowing these motivations could help arts organizations retain volunteers better. Other sectors may also be coordinating volunteers in a way that could be useful to the arts. A model of workplace psychology would also be helpful in understanding the influence of the staff and volunteer relations on success and the volunteer experience.

If I were to conduct this study again or to expand and continue in the same vein, it would be important to interview more volunteers and all involved staff at each case study site. Due to time restraints and availability, this study was small in scope and focus.

As a whole, the findings for this study were not unexpected but both the literature review and case study data revealed more nuances to volunteerism in the visual arts, such as the importance of personal motivations for volunteers necessary for a successful experience. This topic is somewhat ethereal and difficult to put into words. Volunteerism is highly connected with personal beliefs and experience making it hard to apply strict rules, generalized statements and recommendations that would immediately improve practice. Also, this study only looked at two organizations that are doing many things right and have a steady supply of volunteer labor.

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Appendix A | Sample Recruitment Letter

Dear <participant>,

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *Working for Free: The Impact of Volunteer Service on Visual Arts Organizations*, conducted by myself, Jenny Gilmore, from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of volunteers on nonprofit arts organizations and how the relationship between staff and volunteer can influence the organization.

Volunteers are essential to the success of most nonprofit organizations, and keeping long-term and recruiting new volunteers is an important part of organizational programming. With this research, I hope to find tips and tools for a successful volunteer program along with a greater understanding of how to utilize the volunteer work force.

You were selected for this research because of your commitment to <DIVA/Blue Sky> and interaction with and coordination of volunteers. Your participation in this study would involve an onsite interview lasting between 30 minutes to an hour. Interview questions will be provided prior to the session for your consideration. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio recorder for transcription and validation purposes. If you consent to participate in the study, you are granting me permission to use the information you provide in the resulting document. You will have the opportunity to review and edit any of your comments before publication.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at _____ or Dr. Phaedra Livingstone, my faculty research advisor at_____. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the office of Human Subjects Compliance, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, 541-346-6224.

Thank you in advance for your interest and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jenny Gilmore

Appendix B | Sample Consent Form

You have been invited to participate in a research project titled *Working for Free: The Impact of Volunteer Service on Visual Arts Organizations*, conducted by myself, Jenny Gilmore, from the University of Oregon's Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to understand the impact of volunteers on nonprofit arts organizations and how the relationship between staff and volunteer can influence the organization.

You were selected for this research because of your service commitment to <DIVA/Blue Sky Gallery>. Your participation in this study would involve an onsite interview lasting between 30 minutes to an hour. Interview questions will be provided prior to the session if you so choose. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. If you consent to participate in the study, you are granting me permission to use the information you provide in the resulting document. You will have the opportunity to review and edit any of your comments before publication.

This portion of the study consists of an in-person interview. Your interview will be conducted at <DIVA/Blue Sky Gallery>.

Interview Date:

Interview Time:

Duration of interview: Approximately 30 min. – 1 hour

Please read and initial the following statement to indicate your consent:

____ I consent to the use of audio recording and notetaking during this interview.

____ I consent to the identification as a participant in this study.

____ I consent to the potential use of quotations from the interview.

____ I consent to the use of information I provide regarding the organization with which I am associated.

____ I wish to have the opportunity to review my comments and the information that I provide prior to these data appearing in the final version of any publications that may result from this study.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at _____ or Dr. Phaedra Livingstone, my faculty research advisor at _____. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the office of Human Subjects Compliance, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, 541-346-6224.

Participant name:

Participant signature:

Date:

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study.

Appendix C | Semi Structured Interview Questions

Questions for staff members:

What is the influence of volunteers in your organization?

Are there any specific programs in place for volunteer recognition? If yes, please describe.

How do you define the term *success* in regards to DIVA?

How do you feel volunteers contribute to the success of DIVA?

Can you describe the interaction between you as a paid staff member and volunteers? (ie positive, open, rewarding)

How do you market your organization as a place for volunteers to give their time?

What specifically do you do to recruit volunteers, if anything? How do people get involved at DIVA?

What are your long-term goals for the organization? How does the role of volunteers fit into that picture?

If you could give a profile of a typical volunteer, what would it be? Is there a certain demographic that volunteers here seem to fall into?

What do you see the benefits of volunteering are at DIVA?

Questions for volunteers:

How long have you been a volunteer here?

How did you hear about the organization?

What kind of volunteer training and/or orientation did you undergo?

How do you feel you have influenced this organization?

Why do you volunteer (in general)?

What kind of interaction do you have with the staff? How do they treat you?

Why do you choose to volunteer here?

What could Blue Sky/DIVA do to encourage more volunteers?

Appendix D | Interview Protocol Form

Case Study:

Key Descriptor:

Date:

Interview Location:

Interviewee Details:

Consent: Oral Written (form) Audio Recording
 OK to Quote

Notes on Interview Context:

Key Points:
CODING

INFORMATION

NOTES

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Appendix E | Data Collection Sheet for Document Analysis

Case Study:

Key Descriptor:

Date:

Document Location:

Document Type: Report, Article, Book etc
 Arts Organizations' Written Materials Job Descriptions
 Online Information Notes Other: _____

Reference Citation:

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