

How Does Your Organization Rate?

# 12 Key Actions for Successful Volunteer

Marty Petillo

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

# Volunteer Involvement

*“A volunteer program will not make it if the executive director and management do not walk the talk. Don’t bother with a volunteer program unless you truly believe in the value added to your agency. It absolutely must come from the top.”*

Tina McKenzie, CEO  
Six Rivers Planned Parenthood  
Eureka, CA

# Caution: No judgments

- **Staff:** Not trying to transfer work from you to execs
- **Execs:** Not trying to scold you for not doing more

Rather:

- Create awareness of the significant impact of CEOs attitudes and actions on the success of nonprofit volunteer efforts — usually not taught or even acknowledged

# Volunteer Engagement

Session objectives

Participants will:

- Learn why CEO/Executive support is crucial
- Review what nonprofit execs with successful vol programs have in common
- Identify one action step for immediate implementation

# Research by Betty Stallings

- People working with volunteers nominated executives as *“Volunteer Champions”*
- 50 identified were sent written surveys; 28 responded
- Through content analysis, 12 key actions shared by “champs” that define organizational environments

# Volunteer Champions...

- 1 ... serve as volunteers themselves & have positive philosophy of volunteer engagement
  - First-hand experience translates into high (or low) priorities
  - If past experience negative, challenge this stereotype by learning more about effective volunteer engagement

# Break stereotypes

- Who are volunteers?
- Are men volunteering?  
Yes — but use other terms: fireman, lay minister, coach





Wednesday, October 30, 13



# Broaden your definition

A volunteer is someone who provides time, services, and talents to your organization without going on your payroll.

# Broaden your definition

- Volunteer engagement is tapping the community for skills and talents to direct at meeting your mission or furthering your cause.

Community service

Student internship

Civic engagement

Donated professional services

Citizen participation

Pro bono work

Lay ministry

Neighborhood action

# Volunteer Champions...

2 ... act on the belief that volunteers are essential to accomplishing mission.

Evidence that volunteers are essential:

- Job description of Volunteer Manager and placement in organization
- Evaluating management and staff support
- Nature and scope of volunteer positions in org
- What happens to volunteers during tight budgets?

# Volunteer Champions...

3 ... hire and support a skilled manager of volunteers and their role is to empower the organization to be successful in engaging vols.

Paid v. unpaid volunteer manager?

# Paid v. Unpaid

- 3 of 5 nonprofits have a paid vol manager
- Among paid volunteer managers, 50% spend  $< 1/3$  of their time on volunteers
- Of those with a paid staff, only 1 in 8 devotes 100% of his/her time to volunteers

# Paid v. Unpaid

- The greater the % of time a paid staff spends on volunteer administration, the less likely a nonprofit is to report problems recruiting

# Paid v. Unpaid

In nonprofits:

- No one in charge of fundraising = 5%
- No one managing vols = 24%
  
- Raising money never leaves the agenda, why not value time and skill donors too?

# Paid v. Unpaid

- Volunteer engagement is not one-size-fits-all — for all organizations
- While advantages to paid staff, there are many staffing models, depending on nonprofits size, budget, infrastructure, etc



# Models of Staffing Vol Engagement

## No additional budget

1. Vols are self-led with officers, committees
2. Executive Director leads vol engagement and supervises unpaid and paid staff
3. Executive Director assigns current staff member to implement volunteer involvement (in addition to regular duties)
4. Volunteer management function decentralized to all staff who recruit and supervise vols

# Models of Staffing Vol Engagement

## With budget

5. Part-time staff is hired with focused but limited time devoted to volunteers
6. Full-time Vol Manager recruits, screens, orients vols and deploys them to depts; day-to-day supervision by frontline staff
7. Admin/clerical staff hired to support FT volunteer manager as volunteer crew grows

# Volunteer Champions...

- 4 ... place the Manager of Volunteers on their Management Team.
- Member of team or
  - Participant at meetings when issues impacting volunteer engagement discussed

Org structure communicates to staff the relative importance of volunteer engagement

# *Discover, Explore & Enjoy the World of Plants*

# Volunteer Champions...

- 5 ... contribute to a strong written philosophy on the organization's volunteer engagement.
  - In mission statement or strategic plan
  - Establishes value that will endure over time

# Statement of Philosophy

*“Carlsbad City Library is best served by providing citizens fulfilling opportunities to use their skills to enhance the quest for knowledge and the enjoyment of reading in the community. Citizen engagement is a major part of the library.”*

*Carlsbad City Library  
Carlsbad, CA*

# Statement of Philosophy

*“Volunteers are integral partners in the fight against multiple sclerosis. Volunteers across the country contribute resources — time, knowledge, skills and leadership — that infuse the organizations with energy and passion that will end the devastating effects of multiple sclerosis.”*

*National Multiple Sclerosis Society*

# Volunteer Champions...

6 ... know that volunteers are not free.

- Dedicated budget or integrated into organization's budget
- Project expenses realistically:
  - Staff salary biggest cost: hire the best person you can afford!!!
  - Recognition, postage, printing, supplies



# Volunteer Champions...

- 7 ... give clear staff expectations for partnering with volunteers and provide support for staff training, recognition, & evaluation of work.
- 8 ... believe that volunteers should be involved extensively at all levels of the organization.
- 9 ... foster an integrated approach to volunteer engagement and encourage team efforts between key functions such as development, outreach, advocacy, and personnel—all of which interface with volunteers.

# Expectations of Staff

- Include volunteer management in all staff job descriptions; when possible, hire staff who have experience working with volunteers
- Provide staff training in supervision and supervising volunteers specifically
- Execs should be role models: find ways for volunteers to support their work
- Acknowledge and reward staff who work well with volunteers

# My Job Description

## Orientation, Training, and Supervision

- Assist staff in developing training for the vols
- Provide staff learning opportunities in how to effectively supervise vols
- Handle indirect supervision, supporting staff to whom vols are assigned
- Be a liaison, available to all vols and staff, as back-up in “chain of command”
- Counsel staff on providing constructive feedback to vols; if vols are unable to do their assignments, redirect them to a different assignment or end their tenure at Olbrich

# Volunteer Champions...

10 ... involve their Board of Directors in key issues that impact volunteers.

- Some board members don't see themselves as volunteers nor do they see their role with the organization's volunteers
- Based on past experiences, they bring their own attitudes/philosophy about volunteers

# Volunteer Champions

## Interaction with Board

- Nominate prospective board members who volunteer in your organization
- Provide orientation to new members about volunteer program when start
- Include volunteer accomplishments in regular board reports from staff
- Present at board meeting
- Invite them to participate in organization

# Volunteer Champions...

1.1 ... effectively attract financial resources to support the volunteers.

- Focus on funding to cover budget
- Emphasize leveraging asset of volunteers who extend the organization's capacity to carry out functions to reach the mission

# Your Gift + Talented Staff + Dedicated Volunteers = Spectacular Public Gardens!



*Chris Harper is one of Olbrich's eight outdoor professional horticulturists. Here he is (far right) with his Monday Morning Crew. Volunteers work with all professional staff to multiply many times the work they do each day to keep Olbrich beautiful! Monday Morning: 1 Professional Staff + 4 Volunteers = 15 hours of gardening*



*Tuesday Morning: 1 Professional Staff + 4 Volunteers = 15 hours of gardening*

**W**hen you make a gift to support the Gardens, you help pay for the staff, the plants, and the supplies that keep the Gardens and Conservatory so beautiful and our education programs so inspiring.

But that's just the beginning. At Olbrich, the work of the professional staff is multiplied by more than 600 volunteers! Every department has volunteers who work under the direction of staff. It's a group effort! And it all starts with your gift of financial support.

You recently received a letter asking you to make a year-end gift. Your gift will help us sustain the staff that manages the volunteers who together keep our gardens a place of beauty, learning, celebration, and inspiration for you, your family, and our entire community!

If you need more information, call Development Director Connie Beam at 608-246-4583. If you'd like to make your gift online, visit [www.olbrich.org](http://www.olbrich.org) and select "Donate." Or donate \$10 by texting "Plants" to 20222.

Thank you for helping to keep our Gardens free and beautiful!



*Wednesday Morning: 1 Professional Staff + 4 Volunteers = 15 hours of gardening*



*Thursday Afternoon: 1 Professional Staff + 4 Volunteers = 15 hours of gardening*

# Volunteer Champions...

12 ... see the value of the volunteers as extending services, strengthening the funding base (volunteers = donors), etc, not just as "saving money."



# Value of Volunteers

If you had enough money to hire staff to do all the work being done by volunteers, would you still want to engage volunteers?

# Value of Volunteers

- Perceived credibility because unpaid
- Receiving assistance from a volunteer makes a difference to recipient
- Insider-outsiders
- Luxury of focus
- Extension of your sphere of influence
- Valuable as objective policy makers
- As private citizens, they can lobby
- Freer to criticize

# Value of Volunteers

- Great ambassadors in the community
- Energy and positive moral support
- Bring diversity and inclusiveness
- Catalysts for new programs and testing out new ideas
- Involved volunteers become financial donors
- Bring skills that may not be high priorities when hiring staff
- .....
- .....
- .....

# Value of Volunteers

Volunteers are  
much more than  
unpaid labor!!

# Using Vols v. Involving Vols

- Do not save money but help use money in the most effective/efficient way
- Provide excellent value for money, understanding that vols are not free
- Must invest in this valuable resource to get the best value out of it

# Emerging Nonprofit Trend

- Changing “business” environment regarding volunteer engagement in nonprofits
- Building research base for full integration of community resources into organizations

# *Reimagining Service*

- National coalition of multi-sector reps from nonprofits, gov't, education, faith, funders, corporations
- Inspiring organizations to leverage vols more fully and engage vols as part of core operations

# *Reimagining* Principles

1. Volunteer ecosystem more effective when all sectors participate.
2. Make volunteering a core strategic function, not an add-on.
3. Focus volunteer engagement on true community needs.
4. To get a return, you have to invest.

[www.reimagingservice.org](http://www.reimagingservice.org)



# We can all improve....

Where to start?

- Assess your situation
- Start (or amplify!) conversations with your “Volunteer Champions”
- Work on priorities that are important to them
- Involve volunteers throughout process

# We can all improve....

- Personal & organizational philosophy about volunteering
- Planning for volunteer engagement
- Budgeting and funding volunteer involvement
- Hiring and placing staff to lead volunteer engagement
- Creating a management team for volunteer involvement

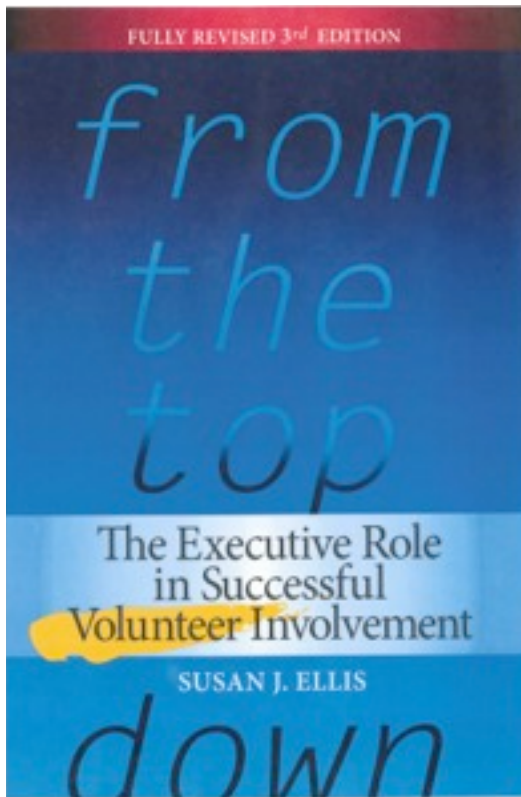
# We can all improve....

- Building staff commitment and competency to partner with volunteers
- Integrating volunteers throughout the organization
- Board's role in volunteer engagement
- Monitoring, evaluating, improving volunteer involvement

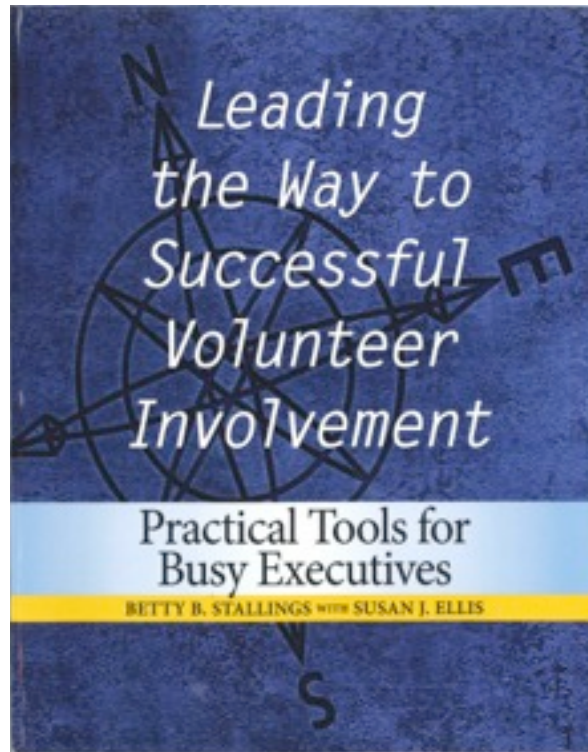
# We can all improve....

## Local Training

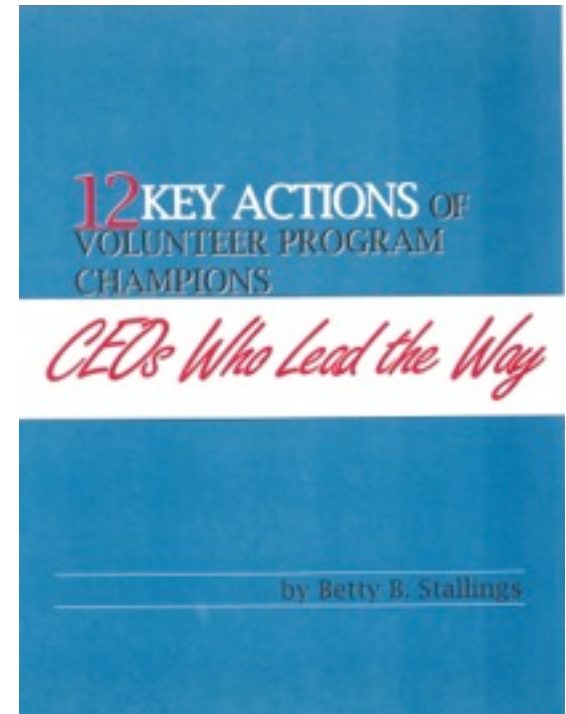
- Dane Co Administrators of Volunteer Services  
[www.dcavs.org](http://www.dcavs.org)
- United Way of Dane County
  - Leadership Development for Nonprofit Board Members
  - Prof Development for Volunteer Managers
  - *Reimagining Service* Summit, Dec 13  
[www.unitedwaydanecounty.org](http://www.unitedwaydanecounty.org)



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