

Recruiting & Keeping Loyal Volunteers

Dedicated Managers Cultivate Dedicated Volunteers

Ms. Shawn Steen
Director of Outreach
Literacy Network of Dane County

Why is volunteer management important?

- ▶ Volunteers add value to your organization. In 2015 more than 800 volunteers gave more than 29,000 hours to Literacy Network.
- ▶ That's around \$700,000 worth of work hours FOR FREE.
- ▶ This increases:
 - ▶ Agency capacity
 - ▶ Mission impact
 - ▶ Visibility in the Community



Why is volunteer management important?

- ▶ Volunteers add value to your organization. In 2015 more than 800 volunteers gave more than 29,000 hours to Literacy Network.
- ▶ That's around \$700,000 worth of work hours FOR FREE.
- ▶ This increases:
 - ▶ Agency capacity
 - ▶ Mission impact
 - ▶ Visibility in the Community



*which helps recruit
MORE volunteers AND donors!*

What do long-term volunteers need?

▶ Reasons volunteers stay

- ▶ Work-life balance
- ▶ Good Communication
- ▶ Professional development
- ▶ Recognition
- ▶ Feel part of the big picture
- ▶ Opportunities for feedback



▶ Reasons volunteers leave

- ▶ No communication
- ▶ Poor training
- ▶ Lack of direction
- ▶ Meaningless tasks
- ▶ Feeling disconnected
- ▶ Toxic environment

Reasons volunteers stay



- ▶ Work-life balance
 - ▶ The work aligns with their values, goals, or skills
 - ▶ They feel happier after their shift than when they arrived
- ▶ Communication
 - ▶ They are given clear instruction
 - ▶ Their supervisor is accessible
- ▶ Professional development
 - ▶ Access to further trainings
 - ▶ Opportunities for networking
- ▶ Recognition
 - ▶ Staff is positive and encouraging.
 - ▶ Never underestimate the power of just saying, “Thanks -what you’re doing is a huge help.”
- ▶ Feel part of the big picture
 - ▶ Personally invite them to events
 - ▶ Give them updates on agency work
- ▶ Opportunities for feedback
 - ▶ “How can I make your job better?”
 - ▶ Regular volunteer surveys

What do good volunteer managers need?



Marketing skills



People skills



Good planning

The greatest tool for success is TIME

Make time to

- ▶ Assess your volunteer program
- ▶ Learn new strategies
- ▶ Cultivate advocates
- ▶ Build a calendar & action plan
- ▶ Cope with change
- ▶ Help others cope with change
- ▶ Track your progress



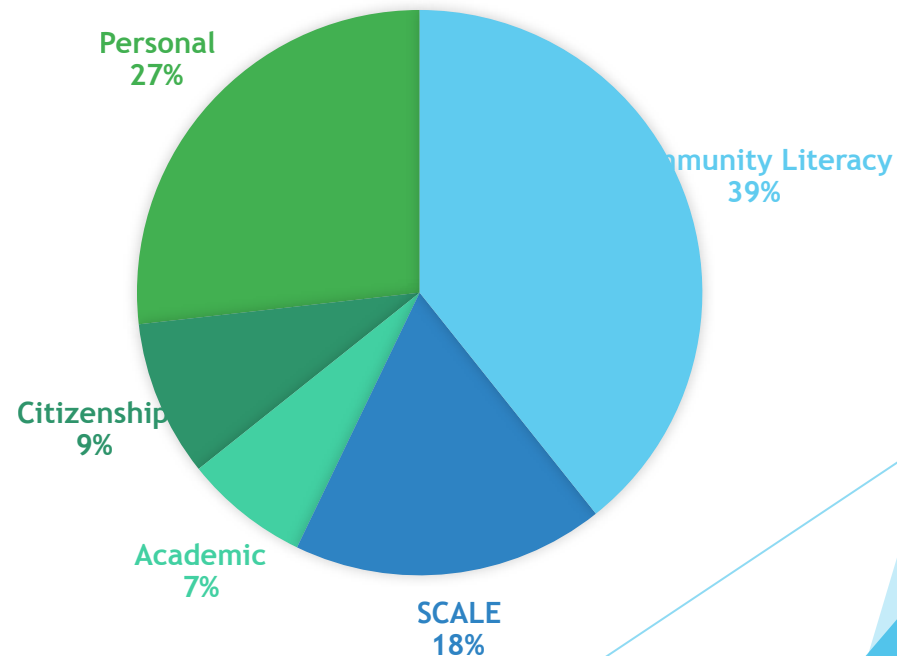
Community Literacy Model

Tutor's journey in a semester

- ▶ Recruit completes application
- ▶ Recruit screened
- ▶ Verification sent within few days
- ▶ Orientation & Training scheduled
- ▶ Orientation (video, survey)
- ▶ Training (classroom)
- ▶ 2-hour weekly tutoring sessions
- ▶ Check-in (3 weeks in)
- ▶ Potluck of Gratitude
- ▶ End-of-semester survey

Each semester we have over 200 volunteer tutors

Tutors by Program



Volunteer Management 101

RECRUIT

- Position Description
- Application

TRAIN

- Agency Orientation
- Job Training

MAINTAIN

- Regular check-ins
- Gratitude

Volunteer Management FTW

RECRUIT

- This can be the most time-



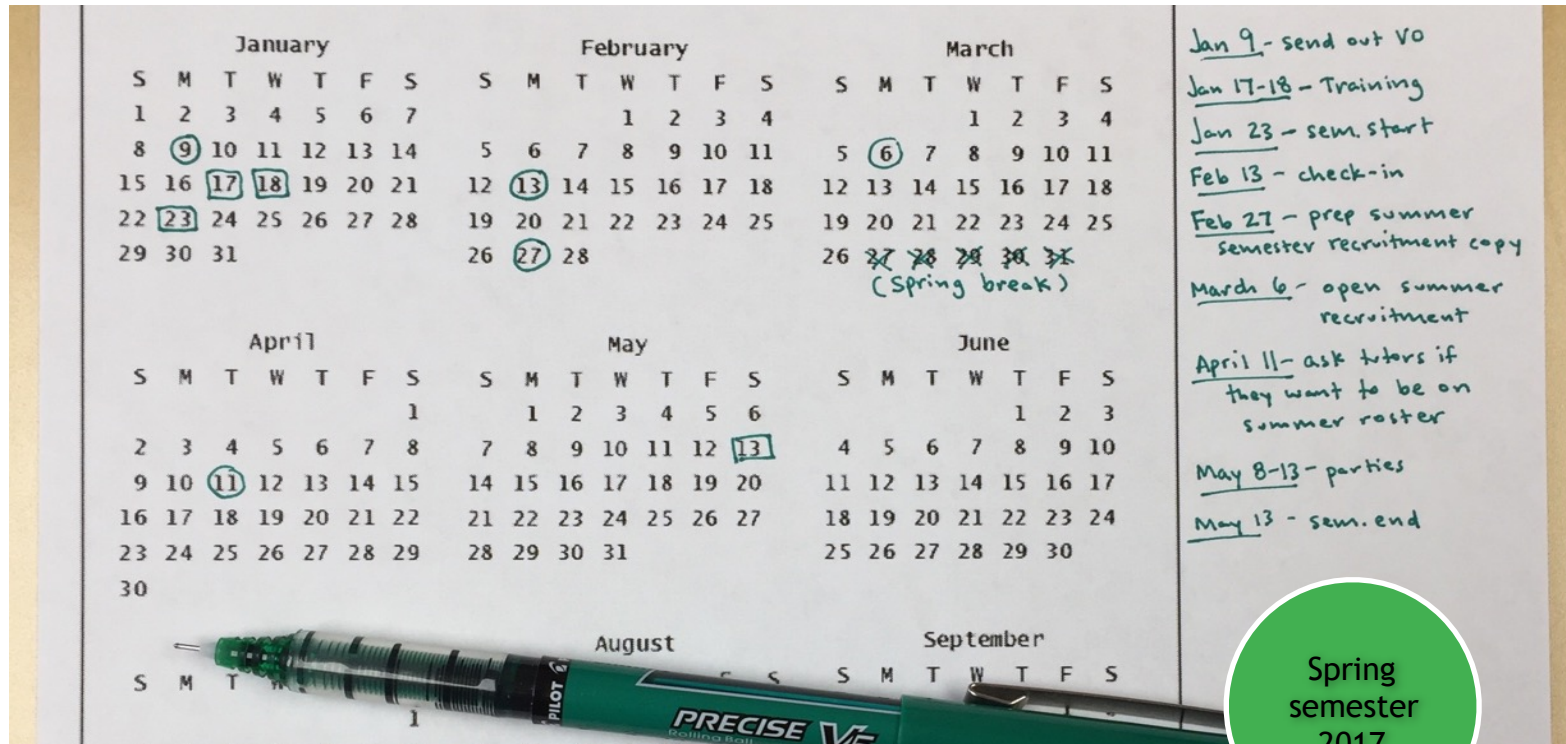
TRAIN

- Training should evolve



MAINTAIN

- Communicate, communicate



Planning ahead

By the time fall semester starts, Literacy Network staff has put together our volunteer program planning calendar for next year, starting with the start and end of each semester. From there, we fill in dates for recruitment planning, recruitment, Volunteer Orientation (VO), trainings, and the rest of our major management tasks.

What has not worked

- ▶ Intake volunteers as they inquire
- ▶ Generic application for all positions
- ▶ Trusting that all volunteers need is a 37 page manual, which we read to them during an 8hr training
- ▶ Keeping bad volunteers because we're afraid of upsetting them
- ▶ Neglecting them until we need something from them (their required reports; donations)
- ▶ Merely ignoring volunteers if they are being high-maintenance
- ▶ Spending time on recruitment tactics that don't work (volunteer fairs, social media)
- ▶ Forgetting to involve input from longtime volunteers when revamping programs
- ▶ Letting people with little or no management skills oversee volunteers

AGAIN: The greatest tool for success is TIME

Make time to

- ▶ Assess your volunteer program
- ▶ Learn new strategies
- ▶ Cultivate advocates
- ▶ Build a calendar & action plan
- ▶ Cope with change
- ▶ Help others cope with change
- ▶ Track your progress



Change starts with YOU!



Recruiting & Keeping Loyal Volunteers

Dedicated Managers Cultivate Dedicated Volunteers

Ms. Shawn Steen

Director of Outreach, Literacy Network

Email: shawn@litnetwork.org