

Turn Your Organisation Into A Volunteer Magnet



Edited by Andy Fryar, Rob Jackson and Fraser Dyer

Turn Your Organisation
Into A Volunteer Magnet

This e-book has been produced as a free resource by, and for, members of the Volunteer Management community. Users may share this file with others, provided they make no changes to the content or format, and that they distribute it at no charge. All essays in this book are the property of each author, each of whom has given permission for the free distribution of the work provided the following credit line appears:

Reprinted from Turn Your Organisation Into A Volunteer Magnet, (ed. Fryar, Jackson & Dyer), 2004

Contents

Introduction	4
Lead the way Rob Jackson	11
Magnets for young volunteers Kerrie Spinks	13
If it looks like a magnet... Andy Fryar	15
Reverse polarity and the volunteer magnet Steve McCurley	18
Customer service – it’s your call Gillian Hughes.....	21
Are you passionate about the work of your volunteers? Fraser Dyer.....	24
A company is known by the people it keeps Rosemary Sage	27
Hang on... there are a number of hoops to jump through first! Rosie Williams	29
They’re attracted – now what? Margaret Robertson	32
Now you’ve got ‘em, how do you keep ‘em? Adaire Palmer	35
Attracting the differently abled Peter Heyworth	38
Inclusive volunteering Kate Power	41
Building staff capacity Rick Lynch.....	44
Creating internships Ilhame Okda.....	47
Making friends with volunteers Donna Amos.....	49
It’s all about relationships Kim Sanecki	51
The best way is through the stomach Nikki Squelch	53
Balancing the needs of volunteer and project Martin J Cowling.....	56
About the editors	59

Introduction

Andy Fryar, Rob Jackson & Fraser Dyer

It's been over a year since we began our search for contributions to this book. Ultimately we wanted a neat little free resource that was fresh, accessible and could be dipped into by readers when in need of inspiration (rather than be read from cover to cover).

We are proud to present a resource that was both commissioned and produced by volunteer managers at the grassroots level. This project was a learning experience for all of us and we are grateful to everyone who contributed their writing, opinions, ideas, and suggestions.

What We Set Out to Do

There are many people who manage volunteers who are 'silent experts' – they have years of accumulated knowledge, insight and experience about how to run great volunteer programmes and bring the best out of their volunteers. Yet their expertise is not always seen outside of their organisation, and sometimes not even valued within it. It is like a vein of gold that runs through the profession which has not, as yet, been uncovered. Even if these silent experts wanted to share their insights (and too many don't even acknowledge their own expertise), it's not always easy to break into the established volunteer management networks, conferences and journals to make one's voice heard.

With *Turn Your Organisation into a Volunteer Magnet*, we wanted to create a resource that gave an outlet to these silent experts. It wasn't important for contributors to be good writers. We even said they could simply give us outlines or list bullet points if they preferred and we would write their final piece for them. What we did want was *The Stuff They Knew*; their unrefined gold that – if necessary – we would polish up so that its brilliance could be seen more easily. And for budding writers who really wanted to get published, here was an opportunity to submit something that would be accepted not on the basis of 'who are you?' but on 'what do you have to say?'

There are some more established voices in this collection too, familiar names who have done the conference circuits, had books and articles published. They gave their time for free just like everyone else, to help support a project founded on the principle of giving something back to the profession and providing an 'open mike' for anyone who wanted to speak.

Because of the organic nature of the project, we never imagined that the book would say everything there was to say, nor that it would necessarily be representative of the wide range of practice in our field. Instead, we wanted to provide an outlet to some new voices to share their experiences with others. Each chapter therefore represents someone's passion, and we hope that will convey itself to readers and inspire them.

Why an Electronic Book?

An ebook fits well with the purpose of this project: it's simple to produce; it avoids print and distribution costs and therefore can be made available for free; and it can be as short or long as the contributions received.

One of the valuable aspects of this form of publishing is that the book need never be finished; rather it will continue to grow and evolve over time, and new contributions can be added easily. Accessibility is a key factor, too. Anyone, anywhere can get the book and use it – so long as they have a computer. And, at a click of a 'send' button, people can pass the book on to others (the joy of “viral emarketing”).

The book got started by posting invitations to contribute on the OzVPM¹ and UKVPMs² newsgroups, so it seems fitting that it ends with a resource that can be accessed through the same medium. Although we initially targeted our Australian and British colleagues, we of course received contributions from North Americans, too. The power of the Internet is that we can cast a wide net. Since we wanted to encourage people to write who may not usually have (or be encouraged to exercise) that opportunity, we achieved what we set out to do on a number of fronts, including presenting first-time writers.

So the project was win/win. It supported and extended the type of dialogue we are trying to encourage through newsgroups like OzVPM and UKVPMs, while providing another valuable resource to the volunteer community.

Why the Theme of a Magnet?

Each of us responded to this question with feeling. Fraser shared:

When I used to play with magnets as a kid I was fascinated by finding that point between them when you just couldn't hold them apart – the ping point, where they slam together. I'd spend ages trying to bring two magnets as close to each other as possible without them connecting, and of course always failed. What was this mysterious and invisible force that made attraction unavoidable?

It is this idea of being 'powerfully compelled' that we wanted to bring to volunteer recruitment. Rather than trying to find the right way of reaching out to people, what factors would have to be present in an agency for it to draw volunteers towards it – almost without trying? A magnetic approach to recruitment won't push people through your door, but will draw them in because of the compelling environment and opportunities on offer.

Rob discussed the implications of physics:

A magnet attracts. When it finds the right material, that attraction can be pretty strong. As volunteers managers we have to attract people to our programmes as volunteers. When those people's needs match closely with what we need, we have a stronger attraction and recruitment is easier.

A magnet repels. If a material doesn't have the right properties to be attracted to a magnet it feels a force pushing it away. When recruiting, this is exactly what we want if people are not going to make a difference to our organisation's mission and vision.

Once attracted, *a magnet holds fast.* It is hard to break the link between a magnet and something stuck to it. Likewise, when our recruitment and management of volunteers is working effectively, it can be hard for either side to break off and retention becomes easier.

Finally, *magnets are a key aspect of producing electricity* (Physics 101). And when volunteers are really having an impact on the lives of people, that can be as powerful, impressive and inspiring as any display of electric power nature can show us.

Andy agreed and added these thoughts:

Volunteering when it works best is organic in nature. Despite the best efforts of some it can't be compartmentalised, contained, and turned into processes and rules. Whenever we try to do this, volunteerism changes to escape those constraints. It is in essence about *people* – people uniting behind a common goal with a shared desire to change the world in some way for better or, in some cases, for worse. That's why word of mouth is our most effective form of recruitment, because it is an honest reflection of the people-focused nature of volunteerism.

For me, this project is about creating something of benefit to volunteering managers that epitomises those characteristics of the nature of volunteerism. It is about VMs speaking to each other to share best practice, ideas and passions (word of mouth). It's about something that is different, escaping the constraints of how we normally pass on and share good practice. And, in being this, it is hopefully a reminder of our need to reflect the values and nature of volunteering in the work we do and keeping volunteering about people not processes.

We all hope that you'll not only be inspired by the contributions here, but that you might look at some and say "I could have written that." If you do, then we hope it will help you to value your own expertise. And if you think there is something missing here, do let us know. It's not too late to make your voice heard. You can contact us at volunteermagnet@myworkinglife.com

If you *want* something to evolve from this – even if you have your doubts that it might happen – please try to express your vision with us all.

Fraser Dyer, Andy Fryar, Rob Jackson
London and Adelaide
November 2004

¹OzVPM

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ozvpm>

An active listserv dedicated to discussing volunteer management issues -- particularly as they relate to the Australian/Australasian scene..."but of course we are happy to discuss issues with our colleagues from elsewhere, too." To subscribe, send a blank e-mail to: ozvpm-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

Turn Your Organisation Into A Volunteer Magnet

²UKVPMs

<http://www.onelist.com/community/UKVPMs>

UKVPMs mission is to increase the scope, scale and quality of both voluntary activity and the management of volunteers. UKVPMs seeks to achieve this by bringing Volunteer Programme Managers together in a virtual community to develop their skills and knowledge for the purpose of taking action towards our common goal. To subscribe send an e-mail to:

UKVPMs-subscribe@yahogroups.com

Lead The Way

Rob Jackson

As volunteerism professionals we spend sizeable chunks of our time advocating to staff, management and others about the value and benefits of working with volunteers. Whether we're trying to get a reluctant colleague to work with volunteers or to get our CEO to support the volunteer programme beyond mere rhetoric, advocating for the benefits of working with volunteers is a significant part of our role in turning our organisations into volunteer magnets.

Yet do we practice what we preach? Do volunteers make a meaningful contribution to the management and oversight of the volunteer programme we lead? If your answer is 'no' ask a supplementary question – 'Why don't we involve volunteers in the management and oversight of the volunteer programme we lead?'

Is it because we don't have the time? Is it because we don't trust volunteers with that kind of responsibility? Is it because a volunteer couldn't do the job as well as us? Is it because a volunteer wouldn't be reliable enough to take on that kind of responsibility?

Now just stop and think. Aren't these the same kind of reasons colleagues give us for not working with volunteers when we are out there trying to get their support?

In other words, if we don't involve volunteers in the management and oversight of the programmes we lead, why should anyone listen to us when we start trying to influence them about the potential value of volunteers to their own work?

**We must become the
change we want to see.**

Mahatma Gandhi

Here are some examples of how you could engage volunteers in your own work, modelling good practice in successful volunteer involvement and taking a big step towards turning your organisation into a volunteer magnet:

- Recruit one volunteer to oversee orientation and another to specific aspects of your training programme for new volunteers.
- Source one person to prepare recruitment messages, another to do recruitment talks and maybe another to identify target markets for each volunteer role - NB this brings the added benefit of involving the very people you want to attract to your organisation in the process of drawing others in.
- Practice good succession planning within your volunteer team. For example, get each of the volunteers working alongside you to identify and train another person to be trained to work alongside them. This brings two benefits: a replacement should the primary volunteer leave & the primary volunteer has a sense of ownership and responsibility over the tasks you have delegated.

Magnets For Young Volunteers

Kerrie Spinks

As the Manager of a Volunteer Resource Centre my job is to resource and support volunteer involving organisations over a large region. A constant refrain I hear is, "Young people don't volunteer." My answer is always, "Yes they do – just not necessarily in the traditional ways."

During 2001 I was on an advisory committee with a young woman who said, "Don't expect the young people to be enthusiastic volunteers if they are treated without respect and are constantly told what to do, how to do it and when to do it, without having any input into the decision making processes within the organisation."

The question I would pose is *how many of us are really brave enough to involve young volunteers in decision making within our organisation?*

In many cases the reality is that older volunteers are not involved in decision making, so the young people are certainly not going to be. In most cases young people have had enough of being told what to do during their years at school – why would they return to that situation in their leisure time? We keep hearing that young people are our future and the leaders of tomorrow; well why not start tomorrow early and let them do some leading now?

Each organisation could consider these issues:

- what is the average age of your committee/board members?
- has anyone ever approached a young person to be on the committee/board?
- have you analyzed the volunteer tasks to make them more attractive to young people?
- have you considered breaking your volunteer tasks down in to small 'chunks' that can be completed in a short time frame (thus giving opportunities for short term volunteering)?
- have you considered the existing skills of your current team and then looked for skills gaps (i.e. web page development, brochure development) that could be appealing areas for young people?
- have you looked for intergenerational opportunities for skill sharing amongst your volunteers (such as matching a technologically-challenged older person who has excellent organisational skills with a young person who has the technological skills - both individuals learn during the process!)
- have you ever asked young people why they have never considered volunteering at your organisation?

It will take time and energy to make changes in your organisation, but if you don't the organisation may meet the same fate as the Dodo. Instead of becoming extinct why not be inspired by the multitude of creatures that have managed to adapt to their ever changing environment and found a niche for themselves? By listening to your volunteers and to their recommendations you can join the many other projects whose success lies in ensuring that each volunteer gets as much out of volunteering as they give.

Kerrie Spinks has been a Volunteer Resource Centre Manager in the Central West (regional New South Wales Australia) since August 1998 – working with volunteers and volunteer involving organisations across about 80,000 square kilometres. Previous experience and qualifications in the child and adult education sector.

If It Looks Like A Magnet...

Andy Fryar

The way any organisation is perceived by potential volunteers is just as important as the quality of volunteer opportunity that awaits them once fully inducted into your volunteer program. After all, what use are the greatest support and recognition systems if you don't get potential volunteers past first base in the first place?

So what are the major considerations that you may need to consider?

Firstly, take the time to analyse your organisation. How well do the general public understand the nature of your business? Does your organisation have a strong public profile? Is there likely to be any sort of stigma or misunderstanding associated with the nature of your organisation's business or client group?

For example, most local hospitals would generally have very little difficulty in attracting volunteer inquiries, as most community members would believe that they have a good understanding of the hospital's core business. A clinic serving the needs of mental health patients however, may find that attracting volunteers is not so easy, primarily due to the stigma and misunderstandings that surround mental health issues.

The key here is to give consideration to the way you believe that a potential volunteer views your organisation. Viewing your program through their eyes is of paramount importance, as it allows you the opportunity to tailor your recruitment methods and messages around the perceptions that individuals may have of your organisation.

To pick up on our earlier example, many of the volunteers who approach the local general hospital for volunteer opportunities may in fact know very little about the opportunities that await them. The point is that local hospitals have a ready-made image that can easily be played on when volunteer numbers need to be boosted.

We don't see things as they are,
we see things as we are.

Anais Nin

Conversely, the mental health clinic may in fact need to embark on an educational message for potential volunteers as a part of any recruitment spiel. What good is a message saying 'we need you', when a large portion of potential volunteers are too afraid of what may await them, to take that first step.

A more appropriate approach is to try and address the barriers that stop people from volunteering in your organisation. For instance, if you believe fear is a major barrier to volunteering, embark on a promotional campaign that educates your audience about the safety aspects of your program and allays any fears that they may have. Once you have done this, the 'we need you' message will be far more effective.

Creating a strong perception of the work that your organisation does and the roles that volunteers play will become the magnet that draws potential volunteers through your door. Once people properly understand your organisation and its core business, you'll begin to attract the volunteers you require.

The final step is to ensure that your volunteer program is also geared up to meeting the expectations of new volunteers. After all, it is no good proclaiming your desire to attract new volunteers to your organisation if new volunteers are made to feel unwelcome, or are greeted by a disorganised volunteer program once they make their way through your door.

Remember - a potential volunteer's perception may not always be accurate – but to that person it is the reality!

Reverse Polarity and the Volunteer Magnet

Steve McCurley

Magnets attract. They also repel, as anyone who has watched a child attempting to put together two similar poles of a bar magnet can attest.

Making your charity a magnet for volunteers is a good goal, but it is important to realize that small things can make an important difference in whether you are perceived as attractive – or as repulsive.

Here's an example from one of my favorite research projects on volunteer involvement; a 'favorite' because, while simple, it produced very practical information about why some volunteer programs are successful at attracting volunteers and others fail without ever understanding why they were unsuccessful.

In 1999 Charles Hobson and Kathryn Malec* undertook a quick study of 500 charitable agencies in the metropolitan Chicago area of the United States. These charities were not novices in volunteer involvement; each received funding from the United Way charitable system and part of what they were evaluated on in that funding process was their involvement of volunteers. You would think, then, that these charities would demonstrate some proficiency in appealing to potential volunteers.

The study worked as follows: students were recruited to call the central phone number of each

charity, posing as a potential volunteer, and asking for assistance in becoming a volunteer to the first person who answered their call. The students were straightforward and articulate in voicing their interest – no tricks involved.

Now you'd think this would result in a relatively simple process of connecting the caller to the charity's volunteer manager, who would then quickly initiate the process of engaging them further.

Unless, of course, you've ever worked in a charity and seen the chaos that swirls around the front desk and the rather harried fashion in which over-worked staff tend to respond to callers.

Hobson and Malec recorded the responses given to the students and the degree of help provided by whoever answered to their phone in connecting the students to proper channels for becoming a volunteer. Here are some of their results:

- only 49.3% of the callers received an offer of assistance (“May I help you?”)
- 69.3% did not receive the name of staff person answering the phone
- 26.4% were not referred to the appropriate contact person
- when the contact person was not available, only 48.7% were asked for name and phone number
- only 30% actually received callbacks
- in 16.1% of calls, prospective volunteers were not thanked for contacting the agency

Pretty repulsive, wouldn't you say?

Turn Your Organisation
Into A Volunteer Magnet

* If you want to read the whole thing: Hobson, Charles and Kathryn Malec, “Initial Telephone Contact of Prospective Volunteers with Nonprofits: An Operational Definition of Quality and Norms for 500 Agencies,” *Journal of Volunteer Administration*, Summer/Fall 1999.

Steve McCurley has been a US-based consultant on volunteer involvement for over 30 years.

Customer Service – It's *Your* Call

Gillian Hughes

The following is based on my own personal experiences as a potential volunteer and supports the study mentioned in Steve McCurley's article (above).

Is your organisation thriving or does it merely *exist* due to lack of volunteer assistance? Your answer could lie in the way your organisation handles the all-important initial enquiry of potential volunteers.

I am currently a volunteer Recruitment Officer for the Lyell McEwin Regional Volunteers Association (LMRVA) based in South Australia. The decision to volunteer here was a very easy one for me. It all came down to *first impressions* and *customer service*.

When I decided to do some voluntary work I began to contact numerous, well-known organisations, including some who said they were 'desperately seeking volunteers'.

Sadly, I noticed a trend emerge:

- My initial enquiry was often greeted in a rude or abrupt manner;
- The receptionist / telephone operator was either not focussed on my call or not knowledgeable about their organisation;

- If I did succeed in being connected to a recruitment extension, my call was often met with voicemail, or just left to ring unanswered.

In nearly all cases, my phone calls were eventually returned – generally between a week and month later, which was much too late for me.

So why did I choose to volunteer with the LMRVA?

Firstly, they had a web presence with just enough content to get me hooked.

When I followed up with a phone call, a very cheerful and polite Scottish accent gave me all the relevant details about their next volunteer information session. True to their word an informative brochure and covering letter appeared in the mail the next day.

Not only did this initial feedback give me the information I needed, it also confirmed my gut instinct that I wanted to volunteer here because they were taking my enquiry, and me, seriously.

I attended a well-organised Information Session with an exceptional PowerPoint presentation, where I filled in a quick questionnaire on why I wanted to volunteer and the area of particular interest to me. A day or two later I was sitting in a Volunteer Program Manager's office being interviewed. The office was warm and inviting and so were the staff and volunteers alike – how could I refuse?

Turn Your Organisation Into A Volunteer Magnet

Customer service and first impressions go hand in hand. Just who in your organisation is going to be *that* first contact? Does the potential volunteer hear a friendly voice over the telephone, or see a warm and welcoming smile when they enter through your front door? Are your volunteers and staff focussed on the task at hand and knowledgeable of your organisation's operation? And is a request for further information dealt with promptly?

With careful recruitment and some simple customer service training, your frontline staff have the potential to be *a magnet!* And by the way, when did you last telephone your own organisation and inquire about becoming a volunteer?

As well as raising three young children, studying Community Services (Leisure and Lifestyle) and volunteering for the LMRVA (www.lyellmcewinvolunteers.org.au) in the capacity of newsletter editor/publisher and recruitment team member, Gillian Hughes has a huge interest in mental health so you'll also find her volunteering as an activities assistant in the dementia unit of two nursing homes.

Are You Passionate About The Work of Your Volunteers?

Fraser Dyer

By 'passionate' I mean are you excited about the *opportunities* you are offering to volunteers and about the *difference* they will make?

I remember a woman on a recruitment workshop who was really struggling to come up with a strong recruitment message for an advertisement. We talked for a bit about the work her volunteers did and the ways in which it was rewarding. It wasn't long before she said, in frustration; "The real problem is that I feel embarrassed asking volunteers to do this work. And I don't really believe we should be asking people to do this for nothing – the government should employ people to provide this service."

And there was her recruitment problem – not that she couldn't find people, but that she felt awkward about asking for help *and* that she was ideologically opposed to the role her volunteers undertook. No wonder she couldn't find the right words to put in her ad.

If you lack passion or belief in the work of your volunteers you're not going to feel energized, motivated or creative enough to engage properly with the task of recruitment. But where you have genuine enthusiasm for your organization and the work volunteers contribute to it, you will more easily be able to convey the right message to prospective volunteers. Tap into your natural

excitement about volunteering and let it infuse your recruitment activity.

ACTION

1. What is exciting about the work your volunteers do? Take a sheet of paper and list numbers 1 to 25. Against each number write down one positive aspect about your volunteers and the work they do.

2. Can you think of any aspects of your volunteer programme that you feel disappointed, awkward or embarrassed about? If so, you need to fix these before you can really be enthusiastic about asking people to volunteer. Take time to list any issues that come to mind, and put together an action plan that will address these problems. Even if you haven't got them completely fixed you will start to feel more enthusiastic about recruitment when you know you are taking action to make things better.

Your passion for volunteering doesn't need to end with the work they do for your organization. Your recruitment and management of volunteers will benefit if anchored in the context of wider community and social involvement.

I'm excited about the work of volunteers in society for lots of reasons. Here are just a few:

- It is democratic. The individual can take direct action to address a need or cause they feel strongly about. They don't have to wait for a law to be passed or a government agency to solve the problem. They can go out right now and do something about it.

- I believe that people find a sense of meaning, purpose and fulfillment from the work they do – whether paid or unpaid. Volunteering (if well organized) offers us the opportunity to get more out of life while at the same time making a positive contribution to the needs of others.
- It is inclusive. Many people who feel marginalized by society have been given the opportunity to get involved and be accepted. They might be people who have made mistakes in the past and are seeking rehabilitation. Or they might be people who have been made to feel different, unwelcome or seen as having little to contribute – seniors, people with disabilities, gay and lesbian volunteers, troubled young people, and so on. Volunteering builds communities and encourages cooperative relationships between people who might not otherwise interact.

When you are clear about your volunteer programme's contribution to society you will be better placed to sell the volunteering opportunities you have available. If, say, part of your philosophy is about being inclusive you will be more focused on recruiting people from the margins of society. This will open up your recruitment activity to a wider audience and will encourage you to look in places you wouldn't perhaps have considered when seeking volunteers.

So tap into your own enthusiasm and passion for volunteerism and make your recruitment activity truly magnetic.

'A Company Is Known By The People It Keeps'

Rosemary Sage

For the most part magnets are used to hold, separate, control, convey and elevate products and to convert electrical energy into mechanical energy or vice versa.

The key words for me are magnetism, attraction, polarity and creative energy. If we apply them to an organisation let's see how we can use these principles.

To create a magnetic field within an organisation there has to be some attraction, energy or excitement to make a person want to volunteer. So what draws people to each other?

The image of any organisation is paramount. People will not be drawn to an organisation that is perceived as being old fashioned and out dated, or where volunteer jobs are viewed as dull, colorless and boring.

Volunteers can and do have lots of energy, so it is up to the Manager of Volunteers to harness that energy and direct it into something creative. Volunteers tend to have lots of ideas about how to do things and how to make things happen. It takes skill to direct the energy into volunteer work without losing the momentum or vitality.

Organisations tend to develop their own ambience and culture. If there is a can-do atmosphere, a willingness to make things happen and some allowance for spontaneity, energy and enthusiasm, volunteers will want to return to see what's new. Where there is a warm welcoming feel about the place people will want to stay and enjoy it, while if it is difficult to get accepted, or people form cliques, volunteers won't want to return.

**Innovation is simply group
intelligence having fun.**

Michael Nolan

Humour in the workplace is also very important. As someone once said, "Humour is a great lubricant for teamwork." While humour should not be used against people, it can be effective in helping to build a sense of fun and spark off creativity and imagination. In our office we cut out topical cartoons from the paper and place them on the notice board.

It is also good to share your passion for the work you do with one another. So many volunteer programs started with a person who had a passion, and passionate people will go to extra ordinary lengths to make things happen or to forward the vision of the organisation. People with a passion often seek each other out and help to encourage and support collective activities, so take time to nurture that passion.

Rosemary Sage has worked closely with volunteers for over 24 years; previously with local government community services and more recently in the volunteer sector as Executive Director of Volunteering SA, the peak body for volunteering in the state of South Australia: www.volunteeringsa.org.au

Hang On... There Are A Number Of Hoops To Jump Though First!

Rosie Williams

As the years pass, the expectations on volunteer programming continue to expand with increasing requirements to work within standards, to operate within the constraints of appropriate policies and practices, to manage risk, to work within a 'best practice' environment, to meet funding expectations and to protect our consumer groups.

Although all these issues are really important, do these ever-increasing processes scare potential volunteers away?

Are we becoming too rigid?

Several years ago I was fortunate enough to be able to undertake a work exchange from Adelaide, Australia to Alberta, Canada.

There were several volunteer opportunities I applied for whilst I was there. One role in particular was a new venture that I had not heard of in my country and so I was very motivated and really excited about the possibility of participating in and learning more about this program.

I spoke with the Manager of the service asking if I could apply to volunteer. I was disappointed to learn that they had just completed their training program (*literally the night before!*) and would not be running the training again for another six months.

I was unable to be considered for this role until I had undertaken the training program and as I was scheduled to return home to Australia a few weeks prior to their next formal training date there was nothing I could do to take part in this venture.

Because I had missed the training no further discussion was entered into about the possibility of my becoming a volunteer. My extensive work experience in the human services field or my tertiary studies in Social Sciences were not recognised and there was no flexibility within the 'policies' to consider such things.

Fair enough you might say? Rules are rules!

So how flexible can we be when we are engaging potential volunteers?

- Are we recognising prior learning and life skills?
- Are we offering training within a flexible learning model?
- Have we really considered what training is absolutely necessary before a volunteer can begin their role and what could be undertaken on an ongoing basis?

- How flexible can we be whilst still maintaining standards and working within best practice principles?

Training is just one example of the many processes I can think of that a new volunteer might need to complete before they can get on with the business of volunteering. Could it be a possibility that we lose some really good potential volunteers because of the inflexibility of these processes?

The argument is often offered that completing the set intake process shows commitment to the organisation and a willingness to accept its practices. As my example indicates it was a problem with time lines rather than an unwillingness to comply which lost a potential volunteer for the organisation.

And do you know what? Although I applied to volunteer in a number of organisations whilst in Canada the end result was that I never did get an opportunity to experience working as a volunteer in another country.

What a missed opportunity – not only for myself but also for the agencies I applied to.

Ask yourself – just how flexible are your organisation's intake processes to cater for potential volunteers who might need to be recruited outside your established routines?

Rosie Williams has worked in a range of positions in the area of volunteer management since the late seventies; she has been a presenter at both international and national conferences and continues to advocate strongly for the sector.

They're Attracted - Now What?

Margaret Robertson

One of the great traps in recruiting volunteers is to be solely focused on the role that we need to fill now. So we advertise, someone applies and they have the right skills. Terrific!

But is it necessarily the right role for that person? Do they have other skills and abilities they would like to use, and that could be of huge benefit for us, if we think further than our immediate needs?

A case study: A branch office wants a volunteer to type up, format and distribute their quarterly newsletter. We advertise on the internet (an especially good recruitment source for any role that needs computer skills) and Matthew applies. At the interview, I find he certainly has the skills for the role – and more. He is a graphic artist who no longer works full time, and would produce an excellent newsletter. But when I ask the standard question, “What would you like to gain from your volunteering? What is it that will make you say *I'm so glad I did this?*”, his response broadens my focus immediately.

Matthew says, “I need to be creative and involved in worthwhile projects. I want the satisfaction of contributing in a way that's similar to when I was working, but different.”

Matthew is now designing new brochures for various programs we operate, producing professional products that we can print in-house for small numbers, or send to printers for large runs. They can be up-dated by the program when required, they look fantastic and they fit the *brand image* of our organisation. (Thank you, Matthew!)

As Volunteer Program Managers, the more we know about our organisation and the more we talk with staff from other departments, the better. If we are aware of what is happening where, what challenges people are facing, what they would like to do “if only there was time” we can help to meet those needs and provide satisfying placements for our volunteers.

We all know that programs work best when we have the right people in the right places. Don't be afraid to expand your volunteer placement opportunities when someone with different skills and interests arrives. Can you create a role for them that matches their skills and interests with something useful for your organisation? It does mean some extra work: you will need to plan the role, do the risk analysis and risk management, write a new role description, create or revise procedures if required etc.

But the rewards for you, your organisation and the volunteer are worth it. You get the kudos for recruiting the volunteer and initiating the project, the organisation receives a significant contribution - and the volunteer enjoys the role and stays.

Turn Your Organisation
Into A Volunteer Magnet

PS The newsletter? Well, Matthew would have done it but someone else turned up for whom that was the ideal role. Unfortunately for us, she then got a job, so I'm back to the recruiting stage. Umm, Matthew, would you have some free time next month...?

Margaret Robertson manages a constantly expanding state-wide volunteer program that is an integral part of St Luke's Nursing Service, a not-for-profit community health care service in Queensland, Australia: www.stlukesnursing.org.au

Now you've got 'em, how do you keep 'em?

Adaire Palmer

Working with a vast number of volunteers across a huge geographic spread, in South Australia's emergency services sector, one common theme continues to arise.

New recruits are waiting...

...waiting for their criminal records check clearance

...waiting for their basic training

...waiting to get onto a fire truck

...waiting to be included in what everyone else does

...waiting to feel like their contributions are being valued by other members

...waiting to feel like they are fully-functioning team members

When a potential recruit walks into your organisation, what do you do? How fast do you get them involved in meaningful tasks and feeling like a member of your team?

An article by Paul G Landreville in a recent emergency services magazine highlights some interesting points.

“To some firefighters, adding new recruits means more hands to help wash trucks, repack hoses and to clean the station bathrooms. To others, it’s another opportunity to take willing men and women and transform them into firefighters.”

While Paul's comments refer directly to volunteer firefighters, the applications are universal in any volunteer program. If you keep new recruits out of the action and 'cleaning bathrooms' for any length of time (*particularly without pitching in yourself*), you are unlikely to keep them for very long.

Landreville suggests that a mentoring program would assist in overcoming some of the issues that a new recruit faces. I don't disagree. There are also other things an organisation *can* do to make sure their new recruits fit into the scheme of things as quickly and as neatly as possible.

Here are some hints on keeping your new recruits:

- Make sure you process their paperwork as soon as its filled out
- Make sure you have training organised as soon as practicable following the return of their approval letter to join your organisation
- Make sure ALL volunteers share in the jobs that are not seen as all that important (*such as cleaning the bathroom, sweeping the floor etc*)
- Once trained, make sure every person has an equal opportunity to be involved in the more important and cutting edge work – even the 'newbies' need to gain experience somehow!

Turn Your Organisation Into A Volunteer Magnet

- Make sure new recruits are included in any communications and information sharing that goes to the rest of the group
- Ensure the contributions of new recruits are recognised and valued by each member of the organisation. This means listening to their suggestions and ideas, despite the fact they haven't been around for 15 years!
- Make sure your new members are included in every aspect of their area of volunteering - even new recruits bring life-skills, experience and knowledge that can be valuable if recognised and harnessed.

By addressing the way new recruits are brought into your volunteer agency, you'll reduce their waiting and increase their attraction to you and your organisation.

Adaire Palmer is a Volunteer Management Consultant with the South Australian Fire and Emergency Services Commission.

Attracting The Differently Abled

By Peter Heyworth

Does your organizational ‘magnet’ attract or repel people with a disability?

Here in Australia, more than one in every six people have a significant disability of some description. Unfortunately, we all too often label people with disabilities unfairly. I am reminded of an advertising campaign written several years ago that included the title *‘Don’t judge what I can do by what you think I can’t.’*

How could this statement challenge us to investigate better ways to attract people with disabilities into our programs? Firstly, let’s explore some of the barriers facing disabled persons wishing to volunteer.

Statistics. We sometimes forget that each ‘statistic’ is actually a living, breathing person. It is important to understand that each person is unique – for instance, just because two people are deemed to be ‘legally blind’ does *not* mean that they have the same level or degree of functional sight.

Views of people with a disability. Focusing only on the perceived difficulties a disabled volunteer may bring, rather than the reality and positives of each involvement, will only ever succeed in setting a new volunteer up for failure.

People with a disability are often seen to be more appropriate as service recipients. The ability of people with disabilities to provide services is often completely overlooked. It is important to ensure that everyone on your team sees the involvement of disabled volunteers positively.

Perceived difficulties (such as the cost of changing physical environments to suit disabled persons). Stating that a vision-impaired person is unable to be involved in administrative work forgets that there is a wide range of vision aids, software programs and hardware readily available.

Despite disability discrimination legislation, there are still many barriers to people with disabilities being involved in the wider community. So what can we do to better tap into this significant resource?

Role outlines are still important. Look at the role required and the potential volunteer and create an appropriate 'fit' between with the person and their abilities. You might even like to look at your current volunteer roles and imagine how they would suit a person with a disability.

Treat each person as an individual and determine realistically whether they can do the job.

Don't underestimate a person with a disability. They might exhibit a higher level of commitment and dedication than someone without a recognized disability. Face your own 'fears'. Be honest with yourself, and try to admit preconceived ideas or 'black spots' in your thinking which may restrict your placement of a person with a disability.

It may be appropriate to do some preparation with other staff and volunteers before introducing a person with a disability into their new role. Also consider the value of having another volunteer mentor the person with a disability when they first get started.

Make good use of organizations and colleagues who already work with people who have disabilities. They will have skills and depth of knowledge which you may not be able to access normally, and may also be able to offer you training, disability awareness sessions, support staff or even provide adaptive equipment or assistance in other areas.

Making your program more attractive to people with disabilities not only has the potential to provide a rewarding experience – it will also ensure your program is more closely representative of the community in which you work.

Peter Heyworth is the Coordinator of Volunteer Services for the Royal Society for the Blind (SA) in Adelaide.

Inclusive Volunteering

Kate Power

Disabled people have as much to give and gain from volunteering as anybody else, but sometimes face barriers that can make volunteering very unattractive for them.

For example, disabled people may need adjustments or assistance to enable them to volunteer – including specially adapted equipment – and buildings need to be physically accessible and conveniently located near appropriate public transport routes.

But it's not just the physical obstacles that discourage disabled people from volunteering. Organisations sometimes send out messages that put potential volunteers off, such as images of volunteering that show disabled people as passive beneficiaries rather than active volunteers with skills to offer. And encountering the negative beliefs and stereotypes about the ability of disabled people to volunteer can be a real turn-off.

Scope's London Volunteer Network (LVN) is fully inclusive and we involve volunteers from the whole community. Most of our volunteers are disabled people so we asked them what makes our project so magnetic. They came up with the following points:

We pay for *all* out of pocket volunteer expenses (including taxis, lunch, costs of carers or assistants, equipment, interpreters etc).

Our building is accessible *and* we make ongoing improvements at the suggestion of volunteers. For example we installed colour-coded signs, which not only makes a practical difference but also encourages volunteers when they can see they have been listened to and their ideas implemented.

Volunteers feel safe: this is particularly important for vulnerable people who are not used to voluntary work. Our volunteers are often involved in carrying out risk assessment, which promotes an understanding of health and safety issues and helps people feel more secure.

Our service users and volunteers are involved in every level of the volunteer programme – from coming up with ideas and chairing meetings, to setting up a working group to help with the planning and delivery of the project.

When we have meetings our venues provide appropriate support, such as cups with handles, drinking straws, and people to write for you. We avoid voting by show of hands, and make time to listen to people with speech impairments. Minutes of meetings are pictorial so they include as many people as possible, including those with learning difficulties.

We also do what we can to actively aid and simplify communication. We use plain English and provide interpreters where needed (including sign language). Information is given in a choice of formats,

Turn Your Organisation Into A Volunteer Magnet

including email, letters and telephone. Letters of invitation use large print, and reply cards are printed in black on yellow to make them easier to read – they are already addressed and stamped, so that disabled people don't have the hassle and expense of getting envelopes and stamps nor have to queue up in the Post Office.

Working with a very diverse range of people can be hard – don't be afraid to ask for guidance and support, and share your successes with others!

You can request a copy of this article in an accessible format by emailing kate.power@scope.org.uk

Kate Power is the National Volunteer Coordinator for Scope (www.scope.org.uk), the charity for people with cerebral palsy (formerly the Spastics Society) based in the UK.

Building Staff Capacity

Rick Lynch

In today's larger charities, volunteers are supervised by various members of staff rather than by a single volunteer coordinator or Director of Volunteer Services. One of the keys to making volunteering attractive, therefore, is to ensure that members of staff have knowledge of at least the basic principles of volunteer management. Following are seven principles all staff should be able to put into practice.

Make sure the volunteer has something to do.

Volunteering is done in a person's discretionary time. Increasingly, our discretionary time is quite precious to us. If volunteers arrive at the organisation's doors and find that staff do not have anything for them to do, they will feel that their time is not respected by members of staff. As a consequence, they may decide to do something else with their discretionary time.

Losing a volunteer because a staff person did not have anything for him or her to do is tragic. But the worst thing is that the volunteer will tend to tell others of their experience, discouraging others to volunteer there.

Thank them for doing it.

By far the most common management mistake is the failure to express appreciation to people for the work they do. This mistake is particularly critical when it comes to volunteers. If they sense that others do not appreciate their gift of time, they will take it elsewhere.

A simple “thank you” (preferably with a smile) when the volunteer leaves can do wonders to keep them coming back. In addition, you might consider suggesting that all staff who work with volunteers keep these other easy methods of recognition in mind:

- Smiling when you see them.
- Thanking them for coming in.
- Writing them a note.
- Telling them they did a good job (but only if they did).
- Forwarding any positive feedback about them from the people the charity serves.

Have a plan B.

Sometimes volunteers will finish their work early or volunteers will not be able to do what was originally planned. In order for volunteers to have a sense that you value their time, you should have back-up activities for them to perform.

Be prepared when volunteers arrive.

When volunteers have to wait for staff to get ready for them, they again feel that members of staff don't value their time. Being there when they show up for work, having their work ready for them to do, and making sure that the right equipment is available will give volunteers the sense that you respect them.

Have a place for them to work.

Similarly, volunteers feel that they and their role isn't valued if there is no proper place for them to do the things they have volunteered for the organisation.

Call them by name.

Although it can be difficult to remember the names of all the volunteers the charity involves, it will help volunteers feel included. When volunteers sense that members of staff don't know their names, they tend to feel that staff members don't value them.

Ask for their ideas.

Volunteers may agree to do some pretty routine, uncomplicated tasks, but this doesn't mean they don't have ideas that can profit the organisation. Ask them if they see opportunities for improving the way things are done. You might be surprised at the good ideas they have been keeping to themselves.

Rick Lynch is the co-author of [Essential Volunteer Management](#), and runs workshops on the subject in USA, UK and Canada.

Creating Internships

Ilhame Okda

Gaining experience and putting into practice the theoretic approach to a subject has now become an entire part of universities' requisites. This practical approach is being concretised through the regular involvement of students in the professional arena, where they will often seek a placement by applying for one of the many options that the university suggests (often called apprenticeship, training course, stage, 'Praktikum' etc).

Many students interested in working in the Human Rights field or general NGO sector will contact the organization of their choice and apply for a placement. These candidates will often be referred to the existing voluntary or internship program, but these may not always correspond to the students' expectations or university requirements.

Although the concept of volunteerism has been poorly explored by the education system in Europe, more and more students are considering volunteerism as a way to gain practical experience while assisting the organization of their choice. Consequently, it becomes imperative for the receiving organization to offer a more challenging role to the students. The university's requirements might dictate length of stay, support expected by the organization, type of work provided etc. This emphasises that the student should be provided with consistent, challenging tasks as well as regular monitoring to ensure their integration into a welcoming professional environment.

It is interesting to note that with this new approach to volunteerism, the status of the volunteer can change as well as the future needs of the organization. The creation of a new role type, which might carry the title of *Intern*, can transform the expectations of the team in the future. As they become more dependent on the intern's contribution they will expect a similar candidate to be recruited to work on the project or tasks that were newly created for the previous student.

This enhances the perceived value of the volunteer intern, who becomes regarded as a long term, professional and regular assistant to the team. And students regard such internship programs as a professional volunteerism experience and, although they are not paid, such placements are highly regarded and attract a wider pool of applicants. As such, well-structured internship programs become a volunteer magnet.

Ilhame Okda is Volunteers Coordinator at the International Secretariat of Amnesty International, based in London.

Making Friends With Volunteers

Donna Amos

Can a volunteer member of your team also become your friend? Or, by doing so, do they cross a boundary into an area where volunteers have not traditionally been permitted to enter?

I believe volunteers should be as included as paid staff. As with any team member, if a friendship develops it will develop of its own accord regardless of whether or not the people in question are paid or unpaid. Therefore I had no qualms about hearing how one volunteer working in the critical unit team of an acute care hospital had become very friendly with the rest of the team.

For several months this committed volunteer worked alongside the nursing, medical, clerical and allied health staff assigned to the unit. He became a team player. He remembered their birthdays. He was invited to out of work functions. They rang him at home if he missed a shift due to illness. He even joined in on the Footy Pools at the unit's insistence. All the 'niceties' were fulfilled and as a Volunteer Program Manager I couldn't have been happier.

So why did I get a call from the Unit Manager one day saying that the volunteer had overstepped the boundary between volunteer and staff? Oddly enough, I didn't know there was a boundary. So what was his crime? He had dared to ask a salaried staff member out for dinner – something any team player might do from time to time, colleague to colleague. Why, then, was he told he was “only a volunteer” and needed to remember his place?

I was soon to learn that the staff and Unit Manager had never worked so closely with a volunteer in such an intense environment. They believed it was important to make the volunteer feel at one with the team so that he would continue to work with them; but they also believed he understood where the boundary between volunteer and friend was. In spite of all the niceties, the staff perceived a natural progression into friendship as the volunteer slowly seeping across the boundary line.

So it seems being a good Volunteer Manager is not only about training your volunteer staff in all matters of best practice but to also inform the salaried staff about the need to truly include volunteers in their teams and not to create boundaries where there need not be any.

So where are they now? The volunteer became disillusioned with the whole idea of volunteering and the unit decided volunteers were more trouble than they were worth. Thanks to many hours spent convincing this volunteer of the benefits of volunteering, he still works with the organization to this day and is dedicated, sincere and focussed on making his role an important one.

The unit, meanwhile, are as busy as ever and still searching for ways to help ease their heavy workload without volunteer help.

Donna is currently the Program Manager for the Lyell McEwin Regional Volunteer Association in Adelaide, South Australia, and for the past 3 years the Secretary for the Australasian Association of Volunteer Administrators (AAVA)

It's All About Relationships

Kim Sanecki

One thing I have found in building a Volunteer Program and retaining volunteers is that it's all about relationships.

I'm not just talking about those treasured relationships with the volunteers themselves. I'm talking about building and nurturing relationships with volunteers, staff who supervise volunteers, upper management and possibly – dare I say – politicians who support your program (or even those that don't).

If you take the time to get to know these key people and work on building and nurturing those relationships you will reap amazing benefits, plus its fun and you may even make a few good friends in the process.

Volunteers need to be valued, and by valuing the person that they are and recognizing that each and every one of them has something to give, you validate their existence in your organization. I have an inquisitive nature which is quite helpful as I naturally want to learn about people, their families, how they got to this part of the country and what they have a passion for. We send out birthday cards, call if they're under the weather and always make contact with them if there is a death in the family. It only takes a few minutes to make a phone call or drop a card in the mail.

Now for the others...check in with staff and find out if this partnership with a new or seasoned volunteer is working – thank them for being a great supervisor of those volunteers assigned to them, but be honest. Thank them only if they genuinely are a great supervisor of the volunteers. If they need help in a pinch, give it to them...go out of your way to help them out...why not? It feels good and makes the program look good. Have you made friends or enemies with upper management? It's much easier to get what you need to do the job if you have nurtured relationships with the managers in your organization. They (hopefully) want what is best for the organization and want to look good, so the volunteer program will be a reflection on them and the organization. Politicians...it may be a “no-no” in your situation, but I think it's important to back the champions who support your program...be careful in this area – enough said.

In his book *The Spontaneous Fulfillment of Desire*, Deepak Chopra writes, “Nurturing relationships is the most important activity in my life.” Make it the most important activity in YOUR life!

Kim Sanecki has worked in volunteer management for ten years. She is Volunteer Coordinator for the City of Coral Springs, Florida, where she manages a volunteer program for 150,00 residents – including putting *lots* of volunteers to work after the hurricane with clean up efforts.

The best way is through the stomach...

Nikki Squelch

Successful volunteer programmes can build on their strengths by constantly being open to new opportunities. I want to illustrate this through a story of a small, but popular, charity that works to improve the lives of older people.

The charity had a strong membership base of people aged 60 years and over, covering a small geographic area. The members ranged from very active to very frail, and all the services reflected these varying needs. There was also a strong youth volunteering project, attracting 16-24 year olds. Attracting younger volunteers had become easy.

As an organisation we assessed ourselves as being good at all aspects of volunteer management and service delivery. However, we always had the feeling that we could do more and that there were people we were missing. Although we collected monitoring data on demographic issues we never got around to analyzing it. Just as we were thinking about doing this something special happened.

One day I walked passed a community centre and saw a whole bunch of older people leaving that I had never seen before. I greeted them, took a mental note of the day and walked on. Next week at the same time I walked by again, and there they were leaving the community centre. This time I introduced myself and had a couple of information leaflets to pass on. There was a little communication problem as I found out they were new migrants from Eritrea.

I walked into the office one morning to have a daughter of one of the Eritrean people waiting for me. She told me her family's story and asked how we could help her father. We talked and listened to each other and I gave her information about our organisation. The next day she phoned and invited

When we learn to taste there will be more conversation... and more honest conversation, work and creativity.

Jill Duplex

me to join the group of 'Eritrean Elders' for lunch. Fantastic! I'll do a presentation and recruit them all as members and won't our monitoring statistics look fantastic and won't the funders love us! But, something happened around this cultural feast... they didn't want me to talk, they didn't want my leaflets, guide book or membership forms.

What they wanted was to host me as their guest, to enjoy their food and stories of their homeland – and then they wanted to talk some more! Feed me, they did (yum!). Eat and laugh, we did. Listen, I did!

Adjusting to life with their families in London had been difficult due to language barriers. Some went to English lessons, but felt guilty because they were taking a place from a younger person, or felt unable to partake fully in the class as they were less confident students.

Our younger volunteers (who were awaiting placement), were interested in being language support volunteers. We did a little planning, fund-raising, training and then introduced the volunteers to the older migrants. The learning partnerships were a great success.

Something else was an unexpected outcome. The adult children of the Eritrean Elders wanted to know how they could help. Our 'harder to fill' roles of driver and befriender were soon filled.

Lessons learnt?

- Building relationships through sharing food truly does work
- In the time it took me to eat three meals, eight new volunteer opportunities were created and five new volunteers had been recruited
- Volunteer recruitment is ongoing with more than one approach, so seize opportunities to ask people to help.

It seems eating with new 'friends' pays off - even if it does affect the waistline.

Nikki Squelch works for Age Concern England.

Balancing The Needs Of Volunteer And Project

Martin J Cowling

I want to begin by sharing a true story with you.

Mary* volunteered for a community project who had no real experience in engaging volunteers, but who were in need of administrative assistance. They gratefully accepted her offer of help, providing her with a desk, a telephone and a computer.

Mary found that the volunteer opportunity filled a niche in her life and soon the agency gave her a key of her own to get into the building early, bought shelves for her to store the resources she was gathering and purchased a second desk for Mary's use. Mary moved in a couch from her home, installed a food cupboard and cooked most of her meals at the centre. At this point, she was arriving at 7am and leaving between 6 and 8pm five days per week!

Some of the paid staff began to feel uncomfortable with Mary taking up more and more of "their" office space. When "confronted", she became "aggressive" and unfriendly.

The staff then began to avoid working in the office altogether, choosing instead to spend time at external locations. This accelerated the element of control Mary had over the office and she began

* name has been altered

refusing to take on additional allocated tasks and started instead to run her own projects. As the staff became unfriendly towards her, she became increasingly hostile and openly rude.

The agency felt out of control and powerless, unable to manage Mary or even 'sack' her. Their experiment with "volunteers" was relegated to failure status and they sought external expertise.

Volunteering provides a powerful opportunity for members of the community to give, grow and be nurtured. It can be a means of giving balance to lives. Volunteering can also become a haven for people whose world needs meaning in order for them to survive – this was Mary's case.

When the organisation finally had a chance to sit down with Mary, it was clear that this badly hurting individual had found something that made her feel good about herself, her life and her situation. She viewed the organisations attempt to take away a part of it from her as a direct affront on her personal well being, yet when probed it was found that the actual rewards she gained from her volunteer work were low.

Individuals often obtain benefits from volunteering which are not open to them in their everyday life; eg the opportunity to have a say, lead projects, utilise gifts, talents and skills. Somewhere there needs to be a balance between providing a volunteer with the opportunity to fully express themselves and placing limits on their time and emotional commitment. Volunteer managers need to ensure that volunteering is only one element in a person's life and that it supports their other relationships and activities.

While volunteer managers can assist individuals with confidence, skills and opportunities, we must remember that volunteer programs are not baby-sitting services or providers of therapy to volunteers. Those recruiting volunteers need to monitor volunteers who are seeking something an agency is unable to provide.

Position descriptions need to state the expectations on volunteers while giving flexibility and scope within roles. Agencies need to be clear about the days and hours that volunteers can provide, and I suggest setting an upper limit to prevent both exploitation by the agency while minimising the opportunity for volunteers to spend excessive time in one activity. By being clear about the time commitment and expectations involved in any position, volunteers will be able to accurately assess their time commitments prior to joining an agency.

Mary went on to deal with her own issues through a recommended counsellor. Her new project was successful and the agency went on to engage volunteers who were both productive and supportive but who also had very positive life enriching experiences.

Martin J Cowling, a leading Australian based consultant on volunteer management, provides training and consultancy to organisations and individuals globally.

About the Editors

Andy Fryar

Andy Fryar is the founder and Director of OzVPM (Australasian Volunteer Program Management) – a consultancy, training and resource company specialising in volunteerism: www.ozvpm.com

He has contributed significantly to the Australian volunteerism community and his achievements include serving as President of both *Volunteering Australia* and *Volunteering South Australia*. In 1998, Andy also convened the working party that later evolved into AAVA - the *Australasian Association for Volunteer Administrators*.

He is a co-author of *Volunteer Management: an essential guide – 2nd edition (2003)*, Australia's premier guidebook to volunteering, and currently serves on the editorial committee of the *Australian Journal of Volunteering*. He is also a member of the editorial team for *e-volunteerism*, the electronic journal of volunteerism: www.e-volunteerism.com

Andy has traveled extensively, conducting training and visiting volunteer programs right around Australia, as well as in Canada, India, the United Kingdom and the USA.

In 2003, Andy was awarded a Centenary Medal by the Australian government in recognition of his services to the volunteering movement in Australia. Andy can be contacted at andy@ozvpm.com

Rob Jackson

Rob Jackson has worked in volunteer management in the UK for ten years, and is now the Volunteering Development Manager with *Royal National Institute of the Blind*. He also has his own training company, *R Jackson Associates*, through which he writes, speaks and trains on volunteer programme management both nationally and internationally.

Rob is also Chair of *Employees in the Community Network*; a member of the editorial board for *Voluntary Action* (the journal of the Institute for Volunteering Research); and a member of the advisory group for *Do-It* – the national volunteering database.

He pioneers the use of the Internet as a means of networking amongst managers of volunteers and volunteer programmes in the UK through *UKVPMs* (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UKVPMs>), the first email networking resource for UK based Volunteer Programme Managers.

Fraser Dyer

Fraser Dyer has worked in the UK voluntary sector for over twenty years. Previously a consultant and trainer specialising in volunteer management, he has run workshops and courses for many different clients in the UK, Holland, Ireland, Spain, Hungary and USA. He is co-author (with Ursula Jost) of a number of volunteer management articles and publications including, most recently, the book *Recruiting Volunteers: Attracting The People You Need*.

Now focusing mainly on writing and coaching Fraser is preoccupied with what gives our work a sense of meaning and purpose. His latest book *Why Do I Do This Every Day?* (published March 2005) explores why many of today's workers feel disaffected with their careers yet at a loss over what to do about it, and looks at ways they can recover a sense of vocation.

His website is at www.myworkinglife.com, where you can subscribe to his e-newsletter or download back issues on topics such as *Managing Your Boss*, *Coping With Difficult Colleagues* and *Beating The Post-Holiday Blues*.

With grateful thanks to Susan J Ellis for generous advise, support and encouragement.