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### SEEKING VOLUNTEER INPUT

## Create a Productive Advisory Team

By Kerry Nenn

What should an advisory team look like? How can you maximize the potential of this crucial council? Nicole R. Smith, volunteer engagement professional, suggests the following parameters:

- ❑ **Size:** No more than eight, plus the manager of the volunteer program. "Always have an odd number," recommends Smith, "to avoid ties in voting."
- ❑ **Diversity:** Accurate volunteer representation. "Make sure there is representation from every segment of your volunteer force," notes Smith, "so every voice is heard. If any volunteers can't 'see themselves' on the team, they won't feel represented. The advisors should represent the overall team in regards to volunteer position as well as personal demographics. It's also helpful to always have at least one brand-new volunteer and one seasoned volunteer on the team."
- ❑ **Meeting frequency:** Monthly. "More frequent meetings get to be too much," explains Smith. "Monthly meetings are typically helpful to go over any changes from the past four weeks, and they give volunteers time to implement changes discussed at the last meeting."
- ❑ **Meeting logistics:** Conference room, virtual meeting or hybrid. "You want members to take this seriously, so don't

make the setting too informal," Smith advises. "And, for in-person meetings, always provide food if possible. This removes a barrier, since attendees don't have to worry about finding food before or after the meeting."

- ❑ **Commitment:** Three years. You want to keep the perspective of the team fresh, so allow members to serve for three consecutive years, then roll off. Also, let them know it's not guaranteed they will come back for three years. As things change, you may need to bring on someone who can represent your current population better.
- ❑ **Purpose:** Feedback and ideas. "This is the best place to test out anything before you roll it out," says Smith. "From policies to snacks to software, get feedback from this team first. Find out how things would impact them, not just whether they like the idea. This council is also a good source of ideas and fresh perspectives. Especially when you feel stuck, let your advisors do the thinking for you. They can be a wealth of inspiration." ♦

Source: Nicole R. Smith, Volunteer Engagement Professional and Author of *101 Affirmations for Volunteer Administrators*, Miami, FL. Phone (786) 548-1257. Email: [askme@nicolersmith.net](mailto:askme@nicolersmith.net). Website: <https://nicolersmith.net>

*THE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT REPORT*, (Print ISSN: 1091-3777; Online ISSN: 2325-8578), is published monthly by Wiley Periodicals LLC, a Wiley Company, 111 River St., Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774 USA.

**Postmaster:** Send all address changes to *THE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT REPORT*, Wiley Periodicals LLC, c/o The Sheridan Press, PO Box 465, Hanover, PA 17331 USA.

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**Information for subscribers:** *The Volunteer Management Report* is published in 12 issues per year. Subscription prices for 2021 are: **Institutional Online Only:** \$1965 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £1237 (UK), €1435 (Europe). **Institutional Print + Online:** \$2457 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £1547 (UK), €1793 (Europe). **Institutional Print Only:** \$1965 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £1237 (UK), €1435 (Europe). **Personal Online Only:** \$114 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £73 (UK), €85 (Europe). **Personal Print + Online:** \$159 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £100 (UK), €118 (Europe). **Personal Print Only:** \$135 (USA, Canada, Mexico, and rest of world), £87 (UK), €99 (Europe). Prices are exclusive of tax. Asia-Pacific GST, Canadian GST/HST and European VAT will be applied at the appropriate rates. For more information on current tax rates, please go to [www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/tax-vat](http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/tax-vat). The price includes online access to the current and all online backfiles to January 1, 2017, where available. For other pricing options, including access information and terms and conditions, please visit [www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/access](http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/access).

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View this journal online at [www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/vmr](http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/vmr).

**Editor:** Scott C. Stevenson.

**Production Editor:** Mary Jean Jones

**Editorial Correspondence:** Scott C. Stevenson, *The Volunteer Management Report*

For submission instructions, subscription and all other information: [www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/vmr](http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com/journal/vmr).

Printed in the USA by The Sheridan Press.

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## RECRUITMENT APPROACHES

# Focus on Recruitment Strategies That Work for You

By Kim Pawlak

Here nonprofit volunteer professionals share their most successful strategies for recruiting capable volunteers:

Forbes Ellis, director of volunteer services for Hospice of Santa Cruz County (Scotts Valley, CA), says he was able to grow their pet therapy program from 2 dogs to 10 dogs by holding an event at the local park. "We had 25 people show up who were interested in volunteering for the program, and, of those, we ended up adding eight dogs to the program," he says.

Ellis says he also holds six to eight "informationals" a year at a local coffee shop, where community members can come and learn more about volunteering for the hospice.

The hospice's senior director of marketing, Kathleen Malone, says highlighting their volunteers across several channels has been a great way to showcase

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*"When they have a great experience, they tell their friends."*

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Debra Brook

their volunteer program. They do that via a volunteer section on their website, in a "ways to volunteer section" in the resource and event guide they publish twice per year (<https://bit.ly/3716TKd>), in blog articles (<https://bit.ly/3kKVW7L>) and through featured volunteer videos they share on their website and social media.

Karen Zussman, director of volunteers for the Boys & Girls Club of Rockford (Rockford, IL), whose volunteers serve to assist tutors, says her most successful strategy has been responding to prospective volunteers in a timely manner. "I try to respond to any outreach within 24 hours," she says.

Since individuals ages 16 and older can serve as volunteers at the club, she also reaches out to the principals and student clubs at the local public and private schools in their community. Many schools and clubs have community service expectations for students. Her agency has also formed a partnership with an instructor at the local community college whose students need observation hours and choose to volunteer at their clubs to fulfill these hours.

Debra Brook, director of volunteer services for Kate's Club (Atlanta, GA), says their number one volunteer recruitment strategy is word of mouth, which is a testament to the great experience they provide their volunteers, she says, "When they have a great experience, they tell their friends."

She's also had great success posting volunteer opportunities on VolunteerMatch (<https://www.volunteermatch.org>) and through a local matching service called Hands On Atlanta (<https://www.handsonatlanta.org>), which has also expanded the gender and racial diversity of their volunteer pool. ♦

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Sources: Debra Brook, Director of Volunteer Services, Kate's Club, Atlanta, GA. Phone (404) 347-7619. Email: [debra.brook@katesclub.org](mailto:debra.brook@katesclub.org). Website: <https://katesclub.org>

Forbes Ellis, Director of Volunteer Services, and Kathleen Malone, Senior Director of Marketing, Hospice of Santa Cruz County, Scotts Valley, CA. Phone (831) 430-3045. Email: [fellis@hospicesantacruz.org](mailto:fellis@hospicesantacruz.org). Email: [kmalone@hospicesantacruz.org](mailto:kmalone@hospicesantacruz.org). Website: <https://www.hospicesantacruz.org>

Karen Zussman, Director of Volunteers, Boys & Girls Club of Rockford, Rockford, IL. Phone (815) 972-5973. Email: [kzussman@rockfordboysandgirlsclub.org](mailto:kzussman@rockfordboysandgirlsclub.org). Website: <https://www.rgreatfutures.org>

## VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

# Create a Menu of Engagement

There are many ways for people to support your organization. Creating a menu of engagement lets you compile all the ways to get involved, so volunteers can decide which levels will suit them best.

“When we think of recruiting volunteers, two of the big concerns should be providing information about opportunities and removing as many barriers to engagement as we possibly can,” says Kristan Allen, director of marketing and development at The Mentoring Partnership of Southwest Pennsylvania (Pittsburgh, PA). “If you have a variety of ways people can plug into your work, a menu of engagement can be a great way to share this information.”

A menu of engagement can be general or created for specific projects or events. It can live on your website and social media channels. Share it with board members, staff and current volunteers, and ask them to share it on their networks.

“It can be a great resource to leverage as you build ambassadors for your organization because it equips them with talking points about how others can get involved and support your efforts,” explains Allen.

Menus of engagement should include:

- ❑ **Involvement options that don't include time.** Allen says if a supporter is not able to currently volunteer, he or she might donate instead. Donations include not only making financial contributions but also providing supplies, hosting events and helping the organization tell its story.

- ❑ **Different levels of engagement.** “Think about the different ways volunteers can get involved with your day-to-day work. Maybe there's an opportunity to volunteer in a group setting before graduating to one-on-one support.”
- ❑ **A volunteer description.** A good volunteer description sets expectations. Allen advises to define the length of the opportunities and outline qualifications and expectations, including any background checks and clearances required.
- ❑ **A consistent point of contact.** Let volunteers know whom to contact with questions and concerns. Choose one person who can address these issues.
- ❑ **Being clear and upfront about time commitments, roles and the clearances required.** This helps volunteers get on the same page as far as expectations and outcomes.

“Prepared volunteers feel empowered and able to make an impact, and volunteers who feel like they're making an impact stick around,” adds Allen. ♦

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Source: Kristan Allen, Director of Marketing and Development, The Mentoring Partnership of Southwest Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh, PA. Phone (412) 281-2535. Email: [kallen@mentoringpittsburgh.org](mailto:kallen@mentoringpittsburgh.org). Website: <https://www.mentoringpittsburgh.org>

## ABOVE AND BEYOND RECOGNITION

# Benchmark Award Recognizes Extraordinary Volunteers

Every year, the board of directors for The Connecticut Audubon Society recognizes one or more volunteers whose service has significantly enhanced the organization's mission. The Dave Engleman Volunteer Benchmark Award, created in 1993 but renamed in 2007 after a long-term, dedicated member of the board of directors who lost a courageous battle with cancer, recognizes those volunteers who have gone above and beyond. Years of service is considered but isn't the only deciding factor, says Patrick Comins, executive director.

Award winners receive not only a plaque at the annual

meeting but also a full write-up about their service that appears on the organization's website, and news about the winners is shared on social media and in newsletters. The appreciations are written by the person nominating the volunteer, either a member or staff and Tom Anderson, the director of communications, organizes it all, explains Comins. ♦

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Source: Patrick Comins, Executive Director, The Connecticut Audubon Society, Fairfield, CT. Phone (203) 259-0416. Email: [pcomins@ctaudubon.org](mailto:pcomins@ctaudubon.org). Website: <http://ctaudubon.org>

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## SERVICE-LEARNING APPROACHES

# Service-Learning Partnerships That Work

By Erin Sandage

Student volunteers can be an incredible asset for nonprofit organizations. Students' energy and passion can invigorate a program, helping an organization further its mission. Student volunteers bring awareness, and they may become future donors, supporters or even employees. Engage student volunteers early with service-learning partnerships.

Bradley Wolfe, southwest Minnesota regional coordinator for the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, works with students

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*"If you are looking to build a partnership, many colleges have a community engagement center that is a good place to get started."*

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Bradley Wolfe

as a college instructor and did his doctoral dissertation on service-learning partnerships. He says service-learning partnerships can help connect student volunteers with nonprofit organizations. These partnerships open the door to volunteering for

students while providing nonprofit organizations with ongoing support.

"If you are looking to build a partnership, many colleges have a community engagement center that is a good place to get started," he explains. "You may also want to reach out to a specific department or program on campus."

When implementing a service-learning partnership, or working with students in general, Wolfe says there are two

volunteer management models that work best: internships and a low-commitment model.

He notes internships are longer relationships where a student may work with your organization for a set number of hours per week for a semester or school year. "This longer relationship allows organizations to train students while also getting the full value of their time in the organization."

The low-commitment model or serendipitous model of volunteer management, as described in *Multiple Ways of Coordinating Volunteers with Differing Styles of Service*, requires that only minimal training is necessary so volunteers can walk in (expected or not) and complete their volunteer hours. "These tasks have flexible hours that work well for students. The minimal training allows the program to be time-positive for supervision staff."

Wolfe says taking the time to plan out your service-learning partnership will help ensure its success.

"I recommend thinking through how much staff time and resources it will take to manage the program," he says. "How will you ensure the program enhances your mission in a way that is worth the effort? I like mapping out all the inputs and outputs of the program. Some organizations have shut down their service-learning programs because the work they put into managing the students wasn't worth the small impact on the mission. It's a balancing act to get the biggest return on investment." ♦

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Source: Bradley Wolfe, Southwest Minnesota Regional Coordinator, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, Nicollet, MN. Phone (507) 216-6292. Email: [bwolfe@minnesotanonprofits.org](mailto:bwolfe@minnesotanonprofits.org). Website: [www.minnesotanonprofits.org](http://www.minnesotanonprofits.org)

## MARKETING YOUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

# Recruitment Slogans You Can Use

Here are some tried-and-tested slogans to consider as you prepare for your next volunteer recruitment campaign:

- Now More Than Ever.
- If You Don't Help, It Won't Get Done.
- Have a Heart — Give a Hand.
- You're One in a Million (Whose Help We Need).
- Make a Difference: Volunteer.
- Volunteer, It's the Natural Thing to Do.
- Something Ventured, Something Gained. Volunteer.
- It Can't Happen Without You.
- Show You Care ... Share Your Care.

- Volunteering — A Gift That Comes Straight from the Heart.
- It All Begins With You!
- Volunteer — Somebody Needs You.
- Have a Heart — Give a Hand.
- We Know Someone Who Needs You.
- You Really CAN Make a Difference.
- Want Some Fun? Volunteer!
- One Hour Each Week Will Make a Difference.
- You're Special — Share Your Talents.

Slogans can provide a way to grab the public's attention and inject enthusiasm into your recruitment effort. ♦

# Establish Performance Measurements For Your Volunteers

Volunteers genuinely want to make a difference and don't want their time wasted, says Rob Jackson, director of Rob Jackson Consulting Ltd. (United Kingdom). Without having some type of performance measure in place to demonstrate the impact volunteers are having on the mission, and the value of how they're spending their time impacting the mission, he says, it's difficult to fulfill those basic motivations.

"It can be incredibly powerful for recruitment, because you're saying, 'We don't just need you to come and volunteer, we need you to make X kind of tangible difference in the organization,'" says Jackson. "That's also really helpful for holding people to account."

One example of that is giving volunteer fundraisers a financial target to reach each year, something that he says is incredibly motivational whether they reach it or not: "It gives them something to aim for and strive for."

Measuring volunteer performance is dependent on context, he says, so for something like fundraising, it's relatively easy if volunteers are given a pay income target and a profitability target, but for something like serving as a volunteer for a vulnerable client, the measurement is not quite as tangible.

In those volunteer roles, Jackson advocates for involving the volunteers and the client or beneficiary in the performance measurement process by asking them questions such as, "What progress does the beneficiary want to make?" and "What progress does the volunteer want to see made?" And then ask yourselves what you as an organization want. "These can be set in place of performance and then be measured accordingly," he says.

He encourages organizations to move away from what looks like the obvious or simple volunteer performance measures, like how many volunteers they have, and how many hours they give, and start looking at leading indicators that are a bit more complex and paint a truer picture.

"In a fundraising context, sit down at the start of each financial year and ask yourselves, 'What's your target? How many volunteers do you have? How many do you think you'll need to meet your income target, and how many do you anticipate losing or dropping during the course of the year?'" recommends Jackson. One of the top organizations in the UK measures volunteer performance using a volunteer recommendation score. "Put quite simply, they ask themselves, 'What percentage of our volunteers would be prepared to recommend volunteering with our agency to their friends and family?' If we're delivering a good experience, they're going to want to tell the people they know and love the most that they should go volunteer there. And if we're giving a bad experience, they're not going to do that. If we know they're happy, not only will that help with recruitment, but it will help them be more effective in their volunteer role." ♦

Source: Rob Jackson, Director, Rob Jackson Consulting Ltd., UK.  
Email: [rob@robjacksonconsulting.com](mailto:rob@robjacksonconsulting.com). Website: <http://www.robjacksonconsulting.com>

Visit [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com) for additional resources

## Give Your Event The 'Drawing Card Appeal' Test

Want to attract large numbers of guests to your volunteer-driven event? Then analyze its "drawing card appeal."

Ask yourself these questions:

- ❑ Why would I want to attend this event as it presently exists?
- ❑ What existing components could I enhance to make the event more desirable?
- ❑ What one (new) component could I add that would "blow their socks off"? — anticipated celebrity in attendance, the pre-announcement of a major announcement, a drawing for a major prize, and so on.
- ❑ Who, among those invited, could we advertise as planning to attend, that would in turn, attract others?
- ❑ What other events in this community have drawn large crowds and why? ♦

## Recruitment Methods

Looking for new ways of enlisting capable and committed volunteers? Turn to "concentric circles" recruitment.

Identify those individuals and organizations that already have a direct link to your nonprofit: current and former clients (e.g., patients, students), friends and family of clients, friends and family of employees, board members, donors and more. Also examine those associated with businesses, civic organizations, faith-based organizations and more that have any sorts of ties to your nonprofit.

It makes far more sense to build outwardly from those who know your work most intimately than it does to contact those with no affiliation to your cause. ♦

## IDEAS YOU CAN ADAPT

# Organize a ‘Celebration of Service’ Ceremony

For more than 10 years, Brandeis University (Waltham, MA) has recognized graduating students who have logged volunteer service hours with an in-person recognition ceremony. Because of COVID restrictions on in-person events, the university held its first-ever Virtual Celebration of Service Ceremony on the evening of May 2 with an in-person Commitment to Service Award Bash on the following day.

The two-day celebration honored 56 students who donated more than 300 hours of service to the community during their four years at the university. Twelve students received gold medals, 13 received silver medals and 31 received bronze medals based on their total hours of service. This year’s medalists donated a total of 34,304.4 hours of service, which, based on calculations the university made through The Independent Sector’s Value of Volunteer Time calculation tool (<https://bit.ly/2TrUKW>) is equivalent to \$974,245 in volunteer labor.

More than 150 students and their friends and families, faculty and staff attended the two-day event. See a video of the virtual ceremony at <https://bit.ly/2UfyHYB>.

The virtual celebration included remarks from Director of Community Service Lucas Malo, a “Year in Service Review” video created by one of their community engagement

ambassadors, reflections from a student speaker on how volunteer service has impacted them, the medal ceremony and closing remarks. At the drop-in, in-person event the following day, students were given their medals in mini-ceremonies on a stage in front of a university-logoed backdrop. Each recipient also received a certificate, a goodie bag and a letter that described the program and the number of volunteer hours they completed that they could share with graduate schools or employers.

Planning for the event typically begins each year in January with a call for students to join the planning committee, which is led by a staff member. The committee decides on the theme, plans the decorations, decides on the menu, does the marketing and social media, prepares a reflection activity and gathers items for the grab bags that each medal recipient receives. The expenses for the event, which this year were around \$1,000, are covered by student organizations and the university’s department of community service, says Malo. ♦

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Source: Lucas Malo, Director, Department of Community Service, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA. Phone (781) 736-3237. Email: [lmalo@brandeis.edu](mailto:lmalo@brandeis.edu). Website: <https://www.brandeis.edu>

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## USEFUL RECOGNITION RESOURCES

# Recognize Long-Term Volunteers During National Volunteer Month

Volunteer appreciation month will be here before we know it. Use the entire month of April to say thank you and celebrate your volunteers.

Staff at Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity’s International Headquarters (Indianapolis, IN) launches an appreciation campaign during National Volunteer Month.

“Our communication plan includes over 30 communications, each with several elements and released across a variety of communication vehicles. We include social media, website, online articles, Slack messages, podcast episodes, handwritten letters, video/YouTube, social webinar sessions, email messaging and word-of-mouth efforts,” says Garrett Thomas, director of communications.

The appreciation specifically recognizes long-term volunteers, those who have served for 10, 25 and 50-plus years. Those benchmark volunteers are applauded on a news release that appears on the website. The volunteers who served 50-plus years also receive a bio that contains information requested from the volunteer and data pulled from the systems.

Thomas shares, “I worked in collaboration with our alumni engagement director, Chris Niles, and our whole communications and information teams to create the bios and other messaging used in the campaign.”

Versions of these bios have been used in other places on the website as well. Social media posts were also dedicated to volunteer years of service. Multiple posts were sent per week for about five weeks, all linking back to the website or encouraging volunteer appreciation and engagement on the posts.

Because Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity has chapters across the United States and Canada, Thomas says they provide chapters with a kit of graphics and suggested prompts they can use to “thank their volunteers at a local level as well — encouraging further appreciation and awareness of the untold hours of service provided by our volunteers.” ♦

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Source: Garrett Thomas, Director of Communications, Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity, Indianapolis, IN. Phone (317) 872-6533. Email: [gthomas@tke.org](mailto:gthomas@tke.org). Website: [www.tke.org](http://www.tke.org)

## VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

# Give Volunteer Leaders the Freedom to Achieve

There are two types of volunteers — worker bees and leaders — and both are essential to any program's success. Don't be afraid to give volunteer leaders bigger roles; they'll be more engaged and your organization will reap the benefits.

"A volunteer leader really is no different than a leader in the business world," says Becky Lunders, consultant and trainer with teamWorks (Loomis, CA). "It's someone who shows initiative, who asks tough questions, who has ideas and they want to see them through to fruition. In the nonprofit sector, that person wants to make a difference and is willing to give their time, energy and treasures to make this happen."

Volunteer leaders can take on roles that support staff, like managing other volunteers, raising funds and securing sponsorships. Lunders says building an infrastructure that relies on volunteer leaders not only helps organizations further their missions but also gives the volunteers meaningful work while developing leadership skills.

Lunders acknowledges it may be uncomfortable for organizations to allow volunteer leaders to take on responsibilities. But she says putting volunteers in leadership positions allows them to be even more passionate about your cause, raising money and the outreach you're doing.

"You're giving them an opportunity, a meaningful opportunity to engage and have to do this purposeful work,"

says Lunders. Without this level of engagement, a volunteer leader will get bored and look for opportunities somewhere else.

Lunders says a good starting point for a volunteer leader is to put him or her in charge of one project you don't have the bandwidth to complete. "That's a great opportunity for a volunteer leader because they can start to develop it, and staff doesn't quite feel like they're supposed to be doing it because they never had the time before."

Recruit volunteer leaders by reaching out to upper management at affinity organizations or businesses and asking them to pitch the position as a leadership opportunity for their up-and-comers. "This will give them a chance to manage other people and to build something concrete," says Lunders.

Targeted recruitment can also build more diverse and inclusive committees and boards that mirror the communities you serve. "If the committee can reflect the community, with volunteer leadership you have a pretty good chance of achieving what you're trying to accomplish," adds Lunders. ♦

Source: Becky Lunders, Consultant and Trainer, teamWorks, Loomis, CA. Phone (707) 799-1237. Email: [becky@totalteamworks.com](mailto:becky@totalteamworks.com). Website: [www.totalteamworks.com](http://www.totalteamworks.com)

## VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

# Help Your Chairperson's Job Run Smoothly

Once you have identified and enlisted the best individual as chairperson, it's equally important that you provide him or her with the level of training and support to carry out responsibilities with confidence and ease.

Following are some suggestions that may help you be the person who makes your chairperson's job run smoothly:

- ❑ Give them solid guidelines and procedures to follow but give them the freedom necessary to be innovative and creative so the event or project has impetus for growth.
- ❑ Encourage them to enlist the help of other individuals who have not been involved in your organization before. They may bring ideas and knowledge from other successful events.
- ❑ Be candid when alerting them to difficult situations that you can anticipate, or about past failures that you don't wish to repeat. Warn them about potential pitfalls but encourage them to have their own backup plan ready for such occurrences.
- ❑ Be diligent about answering questions they will have

quickly and completely, as they are not involved in the day-to-day operations of your institution but may be affected by them.

- ❑ Tell them that they need not consult you on every decision, and that you trust their judgment and respect their decisions, but make it clear that you always have time to answer their questions even if they think it's a trivial matter.
- ❑ If your chairperson makes an executive decision that is in the best interests of the event but proves to be unpopular with committee members, support the chairperson and explain to others why this was the best possible course of action.

Finally, be open-minded about approaching a promising person who has not yet chaired an event. If he or she is an effective motivator, hard worker, reliable volunteer on smaller projects, and eager to climb the volunteer ladder to a higher level of commitment, your treasure may be right before your eyes. ♦

# The Volunteer Insider

THE MONTHLY IDEA SOURCE FOR VOLUNTEERS LEADING THE WAY • OCTOBER 2021

## VOLUNTEER-DRIVEN PROJECTS

### ‘Clean Up the Lake’ Culminates After 22 Months of Planning

By Megan Venzin

After a 12-hour day of diving, Colin West wakes up feeling as though he is glued to his bed. “It’s a hard job, but everyone really cares about the lake,” he says in reference to the conservation project he oversees on Lake Tahoe in California. “We’re starting to revisit areas that we’ve cleaned before, and we can tell that we’re really making an impact.”

West, who launched Clean Up the Lake in 2018, works tirelessly alongside a group of highly skilled volunteers who aim to do exactly what his nonprofit’s namesake promises. Since May 15, he and a team of divers, boat captains, kayak drivers, safety monitors and data collection specialists have retrieved more than 5,000 pounds of trash from the lake, which is the 16th deepest in the world. By November 15, they hope to scour a total of 72 miles for discarded items, which are all weighed, categorized and, whenever possible, repurposed. “We’re looking into doing art installations around the lake and using some of the trash we’ve found to create those and drive awareness of the underwater litter issue here in the basin,” he explains.

West previously worked in film and TV, creating content for the international wine industry. A trip to Belize enlightened him to how humans negatively impact bodies of water in South America and beyond. When it became clear that this was an issue closer to home, he shifted gears and started planning.

Clean Up the Lake’s volunteer-driven project on Lake Tahoe is nearly two years in the making. While the pandemic posed some delays, another reason it took time to kickstart this initiative is the volunteer positions require exceptional aptitude. “You need to be a very experienced and talented diver when you work on the cleanup,” he explains. “Even our kayak positions require considerable knowledge and the strength to be out on the water for eight or nine hours at a time.” Clean Up the Lake received more than 800 volunteer applications, but the unique nature of the project means those selected must undergo extensive training before hitting the water. “We have begun offering Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) training courses for divers to help prepare them for becoming involved in our cleanup,” West says. “This year we’re working with Sierra Diving Center in Reno, but next year we are planning on something bigger.”



Photo credit: Clean Up the Lake Media Department

Clean Up the Lake’s sponsors include Tahoe Blue Vodka, Tahoe Fund and the Nevada Division of State Lands (Lake Tahoe License Plate Grant), plus additional grant-giving agencies.

Cleanup days range in size, sometimes activating volunteer groups of up to two dozen people — each collecting plastic bottles, candy wrappers and other refuse. West has found beer cans and tape players from the late ’70s, which proves how long this trash has been down there. “A lot of the litter comes just from us living and developing land in the region,” West says. “We really messed it up in the last 75 to 100 years.”

Those discoveries remind him of the importance of the mission. “There will always be a little bit more work than you planned, but if you’re really making a difference, it’s probably going to show,” he shares. “A lot of our team is exhausted, but we all really believe in what we’re doing and that motivates us to get the job done. You’ve got to believe in it, and at the end of the day, when you see it’s working, it’s very rewarding.” ♦

Source: Colin West, Founder and Executive Director, Clean Up the Lake.  
Phone (530) 562-7131. Email: [cleanupthelake@gmail.com](mailto:cleanupthelake@gmail.com).  
Website: [www.cleanupthelake.org](http://www.cleanupthelake.org)