



Technical Aid Packet

Volunteers to Help Teachers and Schools Address Barriers to Learning

(Updated 2016)



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-- Teacher

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I had a lot of fun and I learned a lot about teaching and
kids.”*

-- Volunteer

*“Children looked forward to them coming. (They)
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-- Teacher

*“Showed me that I work well and
enjoy working with children.”*

-- Volunteer

*“The three (targeted) children were each
given individual attention. This allowed me to
spend more time with the rest of the class.”*

-- Teacher

*“Very much of a stress
reducer to be able to know
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get additional help.”*

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*“I really enjoyed working with these
students. It was my first experience with
non-English speaking children and I’m
sure if I become an elementary teacher
that I will encounter many more.”*

-- Volunteer

*“It helps to provide the
individual help for the target
children and makes it
possible to do more effective
activities because there is
more help and supervision.”*

-- Teacher

*“An extra adult to give one-on-one assistance
to the children who have a variety of problems.”*

-- Teacher

*“Working with a student and seeing
the difference I could make.”*

-- Volunteer

*“As a result of this extra attention, several students improved and unmotivated students began
to show interest.”*

-- Teacher

Volunteers to Help Teachers and Schools

Address Barriers to Learning

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I. Introductory Perspective

A. Why Use Volunteers?

Everyone knows that schools have a big job to do and too few resources with which to accomplish the work. Volunteers are not the answer to this complex problem. But they can play a role in helping schools do much more with respect to addressing barriers to learning.

From the front office to the classroom to the outside campus, before school, after school, and on weekends -- volunteers can assist with a wide range of activities. And in doing so, they can ease the burden on staff, improve the lot of students and their families, and reap a host of benefits to themselves.

Schools have always had volunteer help. However, volunteer recruitment and training usually is not approached as a major programmatic concern at school sites. This is unfortunate because, with relatively little expense, volunteers can (a) become the backbone of a school's welcoming and social support activities for newcomers, (b) assist with designated students in classrooms to minimize disruptions and facilitate positive performance, (c) help staff with before and after school recreational, enrichment, and tutorial programs, and (d) provide general assistance to staff related to the countless everyday tasks that must be done.

With the renewed interest in "volunteerism" and "service learning," schools have a wonderful opportunity to capitalize on what will be an increasing pool of talent. The key to doing so effectively is to make the ongoing recruitment, training, and daily maintenance of a volunteer force part of a school's everyday agenda.

I. Introductory Perspective

B. Using Volunteers Effectively (in many roles)

*Volunteers are an Important Part of a System of Student and Learning Supports**

Volunteers can be a multifaceted resource in a classroom and throughout a school. For this to be the case, however, the school staff must value volunteers and learn how to recruit, train, nurture, and use them effectively. When implemented properly, school volunteer programs can enable teachers to personalize instruction, free teachers and other school personnel to meet students' needs more effectively, broaden students' experiences, strengthen school-community understanding and relations, enhance home involvement, and enrich the lives of volunteers. In the classroom, volunteers can provide just the type of extra support needed to enable staff to conference and work with students who require special assistance.

– Center at UCLA

When students see adult volunteers in their schools, they see firsthand how members of their community value education and support their local school. When a community is very involved in their school volunteering, more people have a better sense of the total education picture, and see how dedicated so many people are to educating the community's youth. More involvement results in better understanding, more trust building, and a commitment to even more support. School begins to feel like family!

– Jonathan Green

I am a college student who works part time as a math tutor [along with other tutors] at a middle school. I follow the progress of 3 students all year round but I also help out the other students in class if need be. Working as a tutor at a middle school I noticed that it took a while for the students to trust me. At first most students were even shy to ask for my help or be wrong. As the students got more used to me, they started asking more questions and wanting my help. As this trend progressed, the students and I became "friends" and I saw a change in them, even if it was just a little. The kids looked more at ease and they were having fun. As far as grades, I noticed a change as well. Slowly but surely they started getting better grades. Some took longer than others and some of the grades did not change drastically, but they changed. Especially as the semester came to a close, we (the tutors) were able to aid the 8th graders to transition to high school (some were on the verge of dropping out).

– Azzurra Campioni

Volunteers can have a very powerful impact on the students and schools. What follows briefly highlights some research on the benefits and ways to use volunteers and ways for schools to move forward in implementing volunteer programs.

What Research Says

Henderson and Mapp (2002) report evidence that volunteers can be significant resources in helping create a supportive and welcoming environment at schools and facilitating students' behavior and performance. As positive role models and student motivators, volunteers are viewed as contributing to better school attendance, improved grades and test scores, matriculation, less misbehavior, better social skills, staying in school, graduating, and going on to college.

Available evidence suggests that when adult volunteers are present, students see that adults take school and education seriously and respect learning. This promotes positive attitudes toward school.

Extrapolating from a wide range of research, it seems safe to conclude that volunteers can be a valuable asset in enhancing a school's efforts to support learning and teaching. And over time, a variety of roles and functions have been identified (see Exhibits A and B).

Exhibit A

The Many Roles for Volunteers in the Classroom and Throughout the School

- I. Welcoming and Social Support
 - A. In the Front Office
 - 1. Greeting and welcoming
 - 2. Providing information to those who come to the front desk
 - 3. Escorting guests, new students/families to destinations on the campus
 - 4. Orienting newcomers
 - B. Staffing a Welcoming Club
 - 1. Connecting newly arrived parents with peer buddies
 - 2. Helping develop orientation and other information resources for newcomers
 - 3. Helping establish newcomer support groups
- II. Working with Designated Students in the Classroom
 - A. Helping to orient new students
 - B. Engaging disinterested, distracted, and distracting students
 - C. Providing personal guidance and support for specific students in class to help them stay focused and engaged
- III. Providing Additional Opportunities and Support in Class and on the Campus as a Whole – including helping develop and staff additional
 - A. Recreational activity
 - B. Enrichment activity
 - C. Tutoring
 - D. Mentoring
- IV. Helping Enhance the Positive Climate Throughout the School – including Assisting with "Chores"
 - A. Assisting with Supervision in Class and Throughout the Campus
 - B. Contributing to Campus "Beautification"
 - C. Helping to Get Materials Ready

Exhibit B

One School's Parent Volunteer Program (<http://www.palihigh.org/volunteeropps.aspx>)

Parent Outreach/Office Assistance

Attendance Office, Health Office, Library, College Center, Study Center, School Tours, Tutoring, Language Translation, Test Prep SAT/ACT Boot Camps

Fundraising

Educational Foundation, Booster Club - Fall Phon-A-Thon, Holiday Boutique, Casino Night, Silent Auction, Grant Writing, Grant Writing (Community Based)

Parent Organizations

Booster Club, Education Foundation, PTSA/PAC

On Campus

Fuerza Unida (Latino Student Union), Village Nation (Black Student Union), Music, Drama

School Governance

Board of Trustees Committees: Communications, Educational Programs, Finance & Budget, Operations & Facilities & Technology, Policy, Strategic Planning (Academic, Budget, Culture & Community, Facilities, Technology)

Hospitality

Baking/Cooking/Shopping, Graduation Reception, Senior Activities (Picnic, Breakfast, Awards), Student Events & Assemblies, Teacher & Staff Lunch/Dinners

Communication / Technology

Website Maintenance/Design, Email Communications: Writing or Editing Social Media Networking/Tech Support

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Campus Beautification/Recycling/Gardening, Health and Safety/Emergency Preparedness, Field Trip Chaperone/Transportation, Athletic Events, Educational Programs/Presentations

Research also indicates that the inequality that characterizes so many facets of schools exists with respect to volunteer availability. The paradox of financially distressed schools is that they need low-cost ways to provide supports for the school and for students, but the sparse resources associated with such schools often are a barrier to recruiting volunteers (and providing many other student and learning supports). Even parents at these schools often are not a ready source of volunteers.

Note: Mentors are a special and often popular type of volunteer. Studies suggest that when a mentor is able to develop a *close relationship* with a student, the student has better academic outcomes.

Note: As contrasted with volunteer tutors, mentors are meant to help the student have a one-to-one friendship with an older role model in hopes of “changing their lives for the better.” Interestingly, studies suggest that relationship-only mentor programs produced as good academic outcomes as those with an academic focus.

Note: Studies emphasize that volunteering also has many benefits for the volunteers – including being a pathway to employment.

Establishing a Leader for Volunteer Development

In our experience, any school that is serious about developing a strong volunteer force will need to start by identifying a lead staff person for volunteer development (e.g., a student/learning support staff member). This lead person is not expected to devote full time to the effort. Rather, s/he begins by recruiting the involvement of one or more other staff and a few non-staff volunteers to form a work group. The group both steers and carries out the various activities necessary for

- establishing policies and procedures for recruiting, training, supervising, and maintaining an effective pool of volunteers
- developing a variety of volunteer opportunities (see Exhibits A and B).

More specifically, the first tasks for the workgroup are to

- elicit input from a critical mass of the school's leadership to guide initial planning and ensure their support
- clarify existing district and school policies and resources related to recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers
- inform all stakeholders (staff, parents, community leaders) about plans and invite any who are interested in joining the work group
- recruit one or more volunteers (e.g., parents, persons from the community, college students) who are willing to be co-leaders for initial implementation (e.g., helping to plan and then recruit, select, and train other volunteers)
- arrange for capacity building for the work (including staff development for all on the work group) and establish a strategic action plan for initial implementation
- begin volunteer recruitment (using all the ways the school communicates with parents and the community; eventually recruited volunteers also can become recruiters)
- select and train volunteers and also those who will be supervising them; eventually experienced volunteers can help induct and train newcomers)

(As a beginning set of resource aids for developing school volunteers, see the documents listed in the Center's Quick Find on *Volunteers in Schools* <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/volunteers.html>.)

About Virtual Volunteering

Virtual volunteering is done online via computers, smartphones, or other hand-held devices. While online volunteering apparently has been going on for decades, schools have yet to embrace this form of engaging people who can contribute skills via the Internet.

See *The LAST Virtual Volunteering Guidebook* by Jayne Cravens and Susan J. Ellis
<http://www.energizeinc.com/store/1-222-E-1>

Concluding Comments

Everyone knows that schools have a big job to do and too few resources with which to accomplish the work. Volunteers are not the answer to this complex problem. But they can play a role in helping schools enhance equity of opportunity by adding their contribution to addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

From the front office to the classroom to the outside campus, before school, after school, and on weekends – volunteers can assist with a wide range of activities. And in doing so, they can improve the lot of students and their families, ease the burden on staff, and reap a host of benefits to themselves.

Here are some concluding comments the Center has gleaned from volunteers and teachers:

Every kid in every grade needs need to know that no matter what there will always be someone there for them. Volunteers can help fill this need. – Volunteer

The children were able to feel special and were able to work on a project or skill longer than normal. – Teacher

The general overall experience has been great! I had a lot of fun and I learned a lot about teaching and kids. – Volunteer

Children looked forward to them coming. (They) assisted with small groups and one-on-one tutoring . . . relieved some of the pressure from targeted students. – Teacher

I found out that I work well and enjoy working with children. – Volunteer

A real stress reducer knowing that the ‘slow’ learners got additional help. – Teacher

Three targeted children were each given individual attention. This allowed me to spend more time with the rest of the class. – Teacher

I really enjoyed volunteering. It was my first experience with non-English speaking children and I’m sure when I become a teacher I will encounter many more. – Volunteer

It helps to provide the individual help for the target children and makes it possible to do more effective activities because there is more help and supervision. – Teacher

As a result of the extra attention, several students improved and unmotivated students began to show interest. – Teacher

A Sample of Resources Used in Developing this Document

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- Spera, C., Ghertner, R., Nerino, A., & DiTommaso, A. (2013). *Volunteering as a pathway to employment: Does volunteering increase odds of finding a job for the out of work?* Washington, DC: Corporation for National and Community Service, Office of Research and Evaluation. http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/upload/employment_research_report.pdf
- Note: Our Center's online clearinghouse Quick Find on *Volunteers in Schools* has links to resources developed by the Center (see examples listed below) and from other online resources. Access the Quick Find at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/volunteers.html>.
- Note: In 2012, *Education World* provided a two part discussion of (including resources for) working with school volunteers entitled: *Schools Recruit, Recognize Contributions of Volunteers*
- >Part 1 – http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin420_a.shtml
 - >Part 2 – http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin420_b.shtml
- Note: Federal policy supports the importance of volunteer opportunities – see the *Corporation for National and Community Service* – <http://www.nationalservice.gov/>
- Note: For more on mentoring in schools, see:
- >The National Mentoring Resource Center – http://www.mentoring.org/program_resources/national_mentoring_resource_center
 - >Tutor/Mentor Institute, LLC (T/MI) – <http://www.tutormentorexchange.net/>

Volunteers can be used in many ways:

- **in the classroom**
- **to welcome newcomers**
- **in enrichment and recreation programs**
- **to enhance a positive climate**

School volunteer programs can be designed to enable teachers to personalize instruction, free other school personnel to meet students' needs more effectively, broaden students' experiences through interaction with volunteers, strengthen school-community understanding and relations, and enrich the lives of volunteers.

I. Introductory Perspective

B. Using Volunteers Effectively (cont.)

Volunteers can be especially helpful working under the direction of the classroom teacher to establish a supportive relationship with students who are having trouble adjusting to school.

Volunteers Helping with Targeted Students

Every teacher has had the experience of planning a wonderful lesson and having the class disrupted by one or two unengaged students. Properly trained volunteers are a great help in minimizing such disruptions and reengaging an errant student. When a teacher has trained a volunteer to focus on designated students, the volunteer knows to watch for and move quickly at the first indication that the student needs special guidance and support. The strategy involves the volunteer going to sit next to the student and quietly trying to reengage the youngster. If necessary, the volunteer can take the student to a quiet area in the classroom and initiate another type of activity or even go out for a brief walk and talk if this is feasible. None of this is a matter of rewarding the student for bad behavior. Rather, it is a strategy for avoiding the tragedy of disrupting the whole class while the teacher reprimands the culprit and in the process increases that student's negative attitudes toward teaching and school. This use of a volunteer allows the teacher to continue teaching, and as soon as time permits, it makes it possible for the teacher to explore with the student ways to make the classroom a mutually satisfying place to be. Moreover, by handling the matter in this way, the teacher is likely to find the student more receptive to discussing things than if the usual "logical consequences" have been administered (e.g., loss of privileges, sending the student to time-out or to the assistant principal).

Volunteers may help students on a one to one basis or in small groups. Group interactions are especially important in enhancing a student's cooperative interactions with peers. One to one work is often needed to develop a positive relationship with a particularly aggressive or withdrawn student and in fostering successful task completion with a student easily distracted by peers.

Volunteers can help enhance a student's motivation and skills and, at the very least, can help counter negative effects that arise when a student has difficulty adjusting to school.

- » The majority of people who seek out the opportunity to volunteer at school are ready, willing, and able to get into the classroom and interact well with students. These individuals are *naturals*.

All they need is a clear orientation about what is expected, as well as ongoing supervision designed to help them learn to be increasingly effective in working collaboratively with teachers and dealing with problems.

- » There are some volunteers who are not naturals. Many of these individuals can learn rapidly and be extremely helpful with just a bit of investment of time and effort. The following are some guidelines that may help to avoid losing or prematurely giving up on a potentially valuable volunteer resource.
 1. *Take some time to appreciate what a volunteer can do.*

In some cases, it takes a while to see the positive qualities a volunteer can bring to the classroom. Try to work with a volunteer for a few weeks before deciding what (s)he is or isn't able to do.
 2. *Watch for the need to re-clarify points made during the initial orientation.*

Volunteers have a lot they are trying to learn and remember when they first start. If they are not following-through on points made during the initial orientation, it may be that they didn't assimilate the information.
 3. *Initially, some volunteers will need to spend more time observing than working with students.*

It usually does not take long before most of them will be comfortable with the students and class routines.
 4. *Initially, some volunteers (like some students) need a little more support and direction than others.*

At first, they may need to be told specifically what to do during the class. After they have a little experience and with a little encouragement, they can be expected to show greater initiative.
 5. *All volunteers need to know the teacher's plan for helping a particular student and to feel they can play a positive role in carrying out that plan. It is important for them to feel they are part of the teaching team.*

Volunteers who do not understand a teacher's plans tend to get confused and upset, particularly when the teacher must deal with the misbehavior of a student the volunteer is helping. Clarifying the plan and even including a volunteer in planning helps them to feel they are working collaboratively with the teacher.
 6. *Volunteers need a maximum of positive feedback and a minimum of evaluative criticism.*

Although they may not be clear about what specifically they are doing wrong, most volunteers are aware that they are not well-trained to work with students. Thus, they tend to interpret the lack of positive feedback from the teacher as an indication that they are not doing very well and often interpret relatively mild negative feedback as severe criticism. Volunteers respond well to daily appreciations; in place of critiques, what seems to work best are comments from the teacher that recognize how hard it is for

even trained professionals to deal with some problems -- along with suggestions about what to try next.

- Despite the best of intentions on everyone's part, some volunteers do not work well with students who are having trouble adjusting to school. If a volunteer continues to demonstrate an inability to work appropriately with such students, (s)he may be willing to help with other students (e.g., those who are doing well at school) or with tasks that do not involve interacting with students (e.g., preparing and organizing materials).
- Obviously, if a volunteer is completely inept, there is little point in keeping him or her on, and steps should be taken to kindly redirect their good intentions.

School-Based Mentoring Impact Study

USING VOLUNTEER MENTORS TO IMPROVE THE ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF UNDERSERVED STUDENTS: THE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIPS

A. Bayer, J.B. Grossman, & D.L. DuBois (2015). *Journal of Community Psychology*, 43, 408–429. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jcop.21693/abstract>

Abstract: Schools can benefit from understanding how to use community volunteers to achieve academic goals. A randomized control evaluation, involving 1,139 students from 71 schools, of the school-based mentoring program of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America found modest but statistically significant improvements in the teacher-rated academic performance and self-reported scholastic efficacy of mentored students. The present study explores the causal mechanism behind these effects. We find that a close relationship between mentor and protégé appears key to better academic outcomes. Because relationship closeness is not randomly assigned, we use two-stage least squares and other methods to control for potential selection bias. The role of emotional closeness as a mediator of program effects is evident across mentoring relationships of various lengths and statuses. Students were more likely to feel close to their mentors in programs that included weekly meetings and opportunities for mentor–protégé pairs to interact outside of a large-group setting.

II. Organizing & Implementing a Volunteer Program at a School

A. Starting

Any school that is serious about developing a strong volunteer force will need to start by designating a staff person to initiate the process. Such a volunteer "coordinator" plays a key role in leading the way to establishing and maintaining policies and procedures for recruitment, training, supervision, and so forth. This lead person is not expected to devote full time to the effort. Rather, the coordinating staff member initiates and guides the process. By recruiting the involvement of other staff on a steering committee, the coordinator ensures a critical mass of leadership for the effort. By initially recruiting a few non-staff volunteers to be co-coordinators, the steering committee ensures there are personnel with enough time to carry out the various activities necessary for establishing and maintaining an effective pool of volunteers.

As the lead for volunteer development, the coordinating staff member

- meets with the school's leadership team and others who play a special programmatic role (e.g., principal, assistant principal, drop-out prevention coordinator, Title I coordinator) both to ensure they are supportive of the effort and to involve them in initial planning as much as is feasible
- clarifies what resources are available from the district and at the school site to help recruit, train, and supervise volunteers
- clarifies district policies about the use of volunteers
- informs the rest of the school staff about plans and seeks other staff who may want to help develop a strong volunteer force and establishes a steering committee
- recruits one or more volunteers (e.g., parents, persons from the community, college students) who are willing to be co-coordinators for developing a strong volunteer force (helping to recruit, select, and train other volunteers)
- works with co-coordinators for several weeks to develop a clear understanding of their functions (as described in this guide) and develops a specific plan of action for the first month
- begins volunteer recruitment (see flyers in *Resource Aids* section).

II. Organizing & Implementing a Volunteer Program at a School

B. Coordinating

The overriding responsibility of the co-coordinators is to understand what is involved in making the program work and to take initiative in working with teachers and other staff to ensure volunteers are used productively.

The following list of co-coordinator functions is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive. Such personnel

- clarify which school staff want to have the assistance of volunteers
- take the lead in recruitment of volunteers (e.g., identifying and calling sources, preparing letters and flyers, talking to interested groups, signing up interested persons)

Initially, volunteer recruitment will take about 6 hours per week. Once an adequate pool is recruited, it is important to continue to devote 1- 2 hours a week to recruitment activity in order to find replacements for volunteers who cannot stay throughout the school year.

- help to orient and place (i.e., match) volunteers with participating teachers and other staff
- assist in providing volunteers with additional training opportunities, support, and guidance
- monitor and trouble-shoot to ensure mutually beneficial experiences for staff, students, and volunteers

II. Organizing & Implementing a Volunteer Program at a School

C. Recruiting

To make the effort worthwhile, recruit volunteers who will commit to giving *at least* three hours a week.

>> Sources include:

1. *Parent Volunteers*

Because of their special interest and proximity, recruiting parents may be the best place to begin.

2. *Student Volunteers*

In many locales, student volunteers will be a good source, especially those from local colleges, universities, occupational centers, etc. In addition, some high school students can be recruited (e.g., from private prep schools, classes for pregnant teenagers, continuation schools).

3. *Community Volunteers*

Subsequently, recruitment can focus on expanding to community volunteer organizations and to senior citizen groups.

>> The general steps used are:

1. *Identification of specific sources of volunteers*

Ask individuals who are familiar with local resources and look through reference materials -- including local phone directories.

2. *Initial calls to determine programs and persons who may provide access to potential volunteers*

for example, check with the school principal for names of the PTA president and other parent leaders; get names of university/college faculty who teach courses involving a practicum (e.g., contact Departments of Education, Psychology, Social Work, and Child Development Programs, as well as field work offices); call high schools, continuation schools, occupational programs for names of counselors, principals, and teachers; call association for retired citizens.

3. *Calls to specific offices and persons to explain the project, as well as the opportunity for volunteer participation*

4. *Sending written information -- including flyers to be posted*

5. *Sending out volunteer coordinators to provide additional information*

If possible, presentations should be made directly to potential volunteers (e.g., during classes or special meetings).

6. *Ongoing, regular contact by volunteer coordinators*

For example, to keep high visibility, the volunteer coordinators should continue to post flyers and make presentations.

II. Organizing & Implementing a Volunteer Program at a School

D. Screening and Placement

- *Screening:* Brief interviews can be conducted to explain the program and to determine whether the volunteer understands and is willing to commit him or herself to the time and goals of the endeavor. Information about previous experience and career interests also help to identify the best applicants. (See *Resource Aids* section for a sample Volunteer Information Sheet.)
- *Placement:* If more than one teacher or staff member is participating in the program, placement involves making judgments about how well a volunteer's interests and experiences match with the specifics of the situation (e.g., a particular classroom teacher and population).

Helping a Teacher Identify Students who Might Benefit from Volunteer Assistance

- Extensive assessment is not necessary to identify a group of students who are having trouble adjusting to school, as every classroom teacher has several students whom (s)he is greatly concerned about.
- To be certain that some students who are having adjustment problems (e.g., the quiet ones) are not ignored, it is well to begin by listing a range of students who are of concern and then narrow the list down to three who are of greatest concern.

For example,

1. *Start by listing up to three students who might fit into each of the following five categories (if no student fits under a particular category, leave it blank):*

aggressive: _____

shy: _____

underachieving: _____

overactive: _____

unmotivated: _____

2. *List any other students who are of concern but do not fall into the above categories:*

3. *Of the students listed above, circle the three who are of greatest concern at this time.*

4. *This process of identifying three students can be repeated periodically (e.g., every 2 months). This will ensure that volunteers spend time with students in greatest need.*

II. Organizing & Implementing a Volunteer Program at a School

E. Training

Obviously, the intent of initial training and ongoing supervision is not to develop professional level competence. The aim is to develop awareness and skills appropriate to paraprofessional functioning. Volunteers must already have at least a minimal level of competence. Additional skills can be learned at the initial orientation and during *on the job* supervision.

- Volunteers who are relatively inexperienced can start off with students who are relatively easy to relate to and/or simple tasks. Such volunteers should be given a high degree of supervisory support over the first few weeks of participation.

Training and supervisory activities for volunteers working with a program to assist in addressing school adjustment needs must

- clarify the program's rationale and procedures
- facilitate awareness of models for conceptualizing child learning and development, teaching, and the causes and correction of learning and behavior problems
- facilitate acquisition of basic interventions skills
- prepare the volunteer to work effectively with the teacher
- transition the volunteer into the classroom
- provide ongoing support related to performance as a volunteer (e.g., improve knowledge, skills, attitudes; deal with performance anxiety).

With respect to understanding student problems, the emphasis should be on prevailing views of the causes and correction of behavior and learning problems. Particular stress should be placed on understanding group (cultural, ethnic) and individual differences.

With respect to fundamental intervention skills and attitudes, the emphasis should be on basic interactional techniques and concerns (e.g., communication skills including active listening, responsiveness, establishing and maintaining working relationships with students; techniques for dealing with adjustment, psychosocial, and learning problems; ethical and legal concerns).

The training process also allows for further screening of individuals who might prove to be ineffective volunteers. If necessary, volunteers can be tested on their mastery of material using criterion referenced measures.

THE TRAINING PROCESS

Initial Orientation: A general orientation for volunteers can be provided in group sessions when feasible or on a one-to-one basis. Such initial training involves approximately 2 hours. To save time, a videotaped presentation may be used. Volunteers often are willing to do some brief assigned reading. If time allows, role playing can help volunteers anticipate students' reactions. Initial training stresses (a) the role of the volunteer, (b) general expectations of school staff regarding volunteer performance and demeanor, (c) other specific program requirements, and (d) introduction into the assigned school and classroom. Each participating classroom teacher will have specific orientation concerns.

Supervision: Supervision is provided daily by classroom teachers, and on a regular, as needed, basis by volunteer coordinators. This supervision takes the form of general discussions of daily events, problems, and specific students, as well as feedback regarding the volunteer's performance. In addition, a weekly supervision group can be provided for all who want to augment their learning; this group can be led by the teacher and/or volunteer coordinator or even by special resource professionals such as a school psychologist, school social worker, or special education teacher. In all supervisory contacts, special emphasis is given to the two major topical themes guiding volunteer supervision and training activity: (a) building working relationships, and (b) problem-solving steps and strategies. (See *Resource Aids* -- section on training)

Training Workshops: If feasible, periodic training workshops are worth considering to discuss volunteer experiences and to place such experiences in the context of the two major training themes. The workshop process includes sharing, discussion, lecture material, and handouts covering content relevant to the training themes.

***AN ASSET-BASED APPROACH TO VOLUNTEERING: EXPLORING
BENEFITS FOR LOW-INCOME VOLUNTEERS***

J. Benenson, & A. Stagg (2016).

Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 45, 131S-149S

<http://nvs.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/09/15/0899764015604739.full.pdf+html>

Abstract: Research demonstrates that volunteering provides many benefits for individuals and communities. However, research has not adequately addressed the potential significance of volunteering as a mechanism for low-income individuals to improve their own lives and support their communities. To account for the benefits volunteering could generate, research must shift from an emphasis on what low-income volunteers lack to an approach that uncovers the strengths and wealth present among low-income volunteers and their communities. The purpose of this article is to present a theoretically informed asset-based framework for analyzing volunteerism research. Through an examination of four nonfinancial assets—social capital, human capital, cultural capital, and political capital—we illustrate how an asset-based approach offers an opportunity to explore the ways low-income individuals could build and leverage assets through volunteering. Implications for future research that frames volunteering as an asset-building strategy are considered.

II. Organizing & Implementing a Volunteer Program at a School

F. Guiding and Supporting Volunteers

Volunteers can be especially helpful working under the direction of the classroom teacher to establish a supportive relationship with students who are having trouble adjusting to school.

Volunteers may help students on a one to one basis or in small groups. Group interactions are especially important in enhancing a student's cooperative interactions with peers. One to one work is often needed to develop a positive relationship with a particularly aggressive or withdrawn student and in fostering successful task completion with a student easily distracted by peers.

Volunteers can help enhance a student's motivation and skills and, at the very least, help counter negative effects that arise when a student has difficulty adjusting to school.

The majority of people who seek out the opportunity to volunteer at school are ready, willing, and able to get into the classroom and interact well with students. These individuals are *naturals*.

All they need is a clear orientation about what is expected, as well as ongoing supervision designed to help them learn to be increasingly effective in working collaboratively with teachers and dealing with problems.

There are some volunteers who are not naturals. Many of these individuals can learn rapidly and be extremely helpful with just a bit of investment of time and effort. The following are some guidelines that may help to avoid losing or prematurely giving up on a potentially valuable volunteer resource.

1. Take some time to appreciate what a volunteer can do. In some cases, it takes a while to see the positive qualities a volunteer can bring to the classroom. Try to work with a volunteer for a few weeks before deciding what (s)he is or isn't able to do. (Obviously, if a volunteer is completely inept, there is little point in keeping him or her on, and steps should be taken to kindly redirect their good intentions.)

(Note: Despite the best of intentions on everyone's part, some volunteers do not work well with students. If a volunteer continues to demonstrate an inability to do so, [s]he may be willing to help with other tasks such as preparing and organizing materials.)

2. Watch for the need to re-clarify points made during the initial orientation. Volunteers have a lot they are trying to learn and remember when they first start. If they are not following-through on points made during the initial orientation, it may be that they didn't, assimilate the information.

3. Initially, some volunteers will need to spend more time observing than working with students. It usually does not take long before most of them will be comfortable with the students and class routines.

4. Initially, some volunteers (like some students) need a little more support and direction. At first, they may need to be told specifically what to do during the class. After they have a little experience and with a little encouragement, they can be expected to show greater initiative.

5. All volunteers need to know the teacher's plan for helping a particular student and to feel they can play a positive role in carrying out that plan. It is important for them to feel they are part of the teaching team. Volunteers who do not understand a teacher's plans tend to get confused and upset, particularly when the teacher must deal with the misbehavior of a student the volunteer is helping. Clarifying the plan and even including a volunteer in planning helps them to feel they are working collaboratively with the teacher.

6. Volunteers need a maximum of positive feedback and a minimum of evaluative criticism. Although they may not be clear about what specifically they are doing wrong, most volunteers are aware that they are not well-trained to work with students. Thus, they tend to interpret the lack of positive feedback from the teacher as an indication that they are not doing very well and often interpret relatively mild negative feedback as severe criticism. Volunteers respond well to daily appreciations; in place of critiques, what seems to work best are comments from the teacher that recognize how hard it is for even trained professionals to deal with some problems -along with suggestions about what to try next.

II. Organizing & Implementing a Volunteer Program at a School

F. Evaluating the Impact and Expressing Appreciation

There are basically two reasons for evaluating the volunteer program:

1. *To decide whether having volunteers is effective*

and if so,

2. *To determine whether the volunteers are satisfied with their experience (and therefore likely to continue volunteering and/or recommend that others do so).*

The intent here is not to propose a comprehensive evaluation of these matters. Rather, the idea is to encourage gathering some data that can help you determine if the program is going in the right direction and, if not, what to do about it.

Are volunteers effective?

- Any teacher who continues to use volunteers does so because (s)he finds them helpful. In one sense, that's all the evaluation that is necessary to justify continued use of volunteers (assuming that the volunteer program is inexpensive to run).
- However, because volunteers are helping students who are having trouble adjusting to school, it is helpful to have at least some data on the progress of the students identified as needing help.
- Periodic ratings of student progress can be provided independently by volunteers and the classroom teacher. If feasible, similar ratings might be made by parents and even by the students themselves.

Are volunteers satisfied? Do they feel appreciated?

- Give volunteers regular opportunities to formally rate their level of *satisfaction* and sense that they *feel appreciated*.
- In addition, it is well to get an indication of what
 - >aspects of the experience have been most positive
 - >problems and concerns have arisen
 - >recommendations they have for improving the volunteer experience.

Developing and Managing Volunteer Programs

<http://managementhelp.org/staffing/volunteers.htm#anchor1403754>

This resource provides links to sections that are organized in the order in which they might be needed in an organization that is starting a volunteer management program – the order of the links themselves suggest the systematic nature of a well designed volunteer management program. Organizations that already have established programs can use this overall topic by going directly to the sections that are relevant to current priorities in their current program. The links below present a wide variety of perspectives and materials about volunteer management programs/systems. Here are the sections:

I. Planning Your Volunteer Program

- >Considerations in Establishing or Modifying Volunteer Management Systems
- >Online Tutorial About Volunteer Management Programs
- >Role of Volunteer Managers
- >Staffing Analysis (Deciding Whether Volunteers Are Needed)
- >Legal and Risk Considerations
- >Policies and Procedures
- >Volunteer Job/Task Descriptions

II. Operating Your Volunteer Program

- >Volunteer Recruitment
- >Screening Volunteers
- >Selecting ("Hiring") Volunteers
- >Orienting and Training Volunteers
- >Supervising (delegating, evaluating, addressing issues, rewarding, etc.)
- >Volunteer and Staff Relations
- >Assessing Your Volunteer Management Practices

III. Additional Information

- >Virtual Volunteering
- >General Resources

Also See the Library's Blogs Related to Volunteers and Volunteer Programs: The blogs have posts related to Volunteers and Volunteer Programs. Scan down the blog's page to see various posts. Also see the section "Recent Blog Posts" in the sidebar of the blog or click on "next" near the bottom of a post in the blog. The blog also links to numerous free related resources.

III. Resource Aids

- A. Surveying What a School Does To Enhance Volunteer Resources**
- B. Recruitment Flyers**
- C. Welcoming, Orientation, and Training**
- D. Appreciation and Evaluating**
- E. A Look at What's Happening**

III. Resource Aids

A. Surveying What a School Does To Enhance Volunteer Resources



Community outreach for collaborative engagement and support is one of six intervention arenas of a unified, comprehensive, and equitable learning supports component for addressing barriers to learning and teaching. This arena encompasses volunteers.

A self-study survey that includes a focus on enhancing volunteer resources at schools can be accessed at

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/communityoutreachsurvey.pdf>.

Self-study surveys are useful aids in mapping and analyzing student and learning supports and making decisions about priorities for improving the system for addressing barriers to learning and teaching and re-engaging disconnected students.

Working with a group to review the survey is a good way to understand what parent/home involvement might look like.



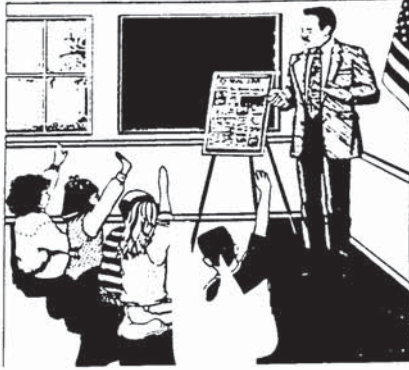
III. Resource Aids

B. Recruitment Flyers

This section includes:

- 1. A general recruitment flyer**
- 2. A flyer to recruit parent volunteers**
- 3. A Spanish-language version of the parent flyer**

VOLUNTEER



in the schools

THE PROBLEM:

- *Kids are dropping out of schools at alarming rates*

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- *Early intervention is the key!!*
- *Classroom volunteers help young children feel better about themselves and about school by being a special friend*

CAN YOU HELP?

- *Just spend 3 hours a week in a classroom being a buddy to little ones. No experience necessary; we provide training!*

WHY VOLUNTEER?

- *Because these kids need you!*
- *Because the experience can benefit you by providing:*
 - *Course credit*
 - *Career experience*
 - *Personal satisfaction!!*

CALL: _____

To say you are interested in volunteering with the: _____

LITTLE KIDS ARE WAITING FOR YOU!!!

Thank You

PARENTS -- VOLUNTEER

***DO YOU HAVE A FEW HOURS TO HELP
KINDERGARTEN & FIRST GRADERS
GET OFF TO A GOOD START?***



Under supervision, you can volunteer in the morning or afternoon to work with students who need a little extra help, support, and direction.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED

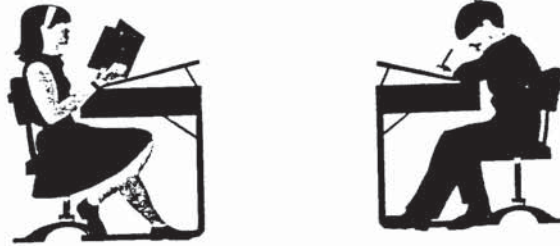
CALL:

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Thank You!!

PADRES DE FAMILIA

***QUEREMOS VOLUNTARIOS PARA TRES HORAS
A LA SEMANA EN LAS CLASES
DE KINDER Y PRIMER GRADO.***



Ayuda a los niños que necesitan un poco de tiempo especial,
apoyo, y atención personal para tener éxito en la escuela.

SI QUIERE ASISTIRNOS, LLAMA A:

Gracias!!

III. Resource Aids

C. Welcoming, Orientation, & Training

This section includes:

- 1. Sample Volunteer Information Sheet**
- 2. Sample Volunteer Assignment Sheet**
- 3. “Welcome” Sheet**
- 4. Materials to Aid in Building Working Relationships**
 - a. Being an Effective Volunteer**
 - b. Beginning the Adult/Child Relationship & Building Rapport and Connection**
 - c. Working Against Producing Dependency**
 - d. Getting Off to a Good Start & Problem-Solving**
 - e. Exercise in Differentiating Descriptions and Judgements.**

Volunteer Information Sheet

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Sex: () Female () Male Birth date: _____

Race and/or Ethnic Origin:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White (Not of Hispanic Origin) | <input type="checkbox"/> Black (Not of Hispanic Origin) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Highest Grade in school attended : _____

Born in U.S. () Yes () No

If no, place of birth: _____ Length of time in U.S. _____ yrs.

Other Languages spoken at home? _____

How many hours per week will you be volunteering ? 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 10+

Please indicate your reason for volunteering?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Course related: Name of School _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre job experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Like to volunteer |

How did you hear about this program? _____

Have you worked with young children before? () Yes () No

If yes, in what capacity?

- () Your own children () As part of a program (specify)

What did you do? (e.g., parenting, child care, arts and crafts, recreation, tutoring)

Approximate length of experience:

- () Under 6 months () 7 months to 1 year () 1-2 years () More than 2 years

What are you current vocational goals? _____

How likely is it you will seek a job working with children in the future?

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Not at
all | Not
much | Only a
little bit | More than
a little bit | Quite
a bit | Very
much |
|---------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|

How strongly do you feel that a job working with children in the future would be right for you?

- | | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Not at
all | Not
much | Only a
little bit | More than
a little bit | Quite
a bit | Very
much |
|---------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|

Volunteer Assignment and Agreement

Thank you for your interest. We are pleased to accept you as a volunteer and have assigned you to:

School _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Contact Person _____

Teacher _____ Grade Level _____ Rm# _____

Days/Times for participation

The following outlines what you have agreed to and emphasize some specific protection for you, the student, their families, and their teachers.

Please read each point carefully, and if you have any questions, please feel free to ask the project staff for further clarification.

1. You have agreed to start volunteering on _____ and continue to _____
2. The extent of your participation is **IN THE CLASSROOM** with students; it does not involve contact with parents or with students away from school.
3. Should an emergency prevent you from attending, please call the school so office personnel can advise the teacher and students who are expecting you.
4. The staff wants this to be a positive learning experience for you and is interested in your needs, comments, and any concerns that arise. Please contact the on-site coordinator _____ immediately about all such matters.
5. For safety reasons and record keeping, please sign in and out at the school in the place indicated.
6. In order to serve as a good role model for the children, please follow the school dress code (e.g., no halter tops, no short shorts etc.)

WELCOME !



INSERT SCHOOL NAME
AND ADDRESS
HERE



Thank you so much for your participation as a volunteer. We appreciate your service to our children.

YOU ARE ASSIGNED TO TEACHER _____

ROOM # _____, GRADE _____, DAY _____, TIME _____

Reminder: Please come regularly. If you must be absent, call the school and ask the staff to leave a message for the teacher.

LITTLE KIDS ARE WAITING FOR YOU!!



Thank you!



BEING AN EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER

The overriding responsibility of a volunteer is to work toward understanding what is involved in helping a student who is having trouble adjusting to school and working with the teacher(s) to ensure appropriate action is taken. The following brief description is meant only to convey a sense of what this might involve.

Be Reliable

Schedule your volunteer hours for times that you are certain you can maintain. Plans will be made with students that are dependent on your presence; if you don't show up, it will be disruptive and harmful to student progress. If you will be late or cannot be there because of an emergency, it is essential that you inform the teacher at the earliest possible moment.

Become Part of the Team

You are joining a team. It is essential that you:

- » *Create a positive impression*: the impression you create depends in part on how well you understand your impact and your ability to accentuate the positive and minimize the negative. You know what makes people like each other, and you know what upsets people and puts them on the defensive. Decide to be seen by *both* staff and students as a very positive and special resource and then act in ways that makes this happen.
- » *Avoid premature conclusions and judgements*: you have your good and bad points. Teachers and students have their good and bad points. School programs have their good and bad points. Take time in arriving at conclusions and making judgments. You'll want to hear that you are doing a good job; teachers and students like to hear they are doing a good job. Share your appreciation of the positive things you see going on in the classroom, and avoid comments that can be seen as criticisms.
- » *Develop a working relationship*: understand that what you do and how you do it affects the students, the teacher, and others working in the class. The expectation is that you will try to understand what has been planned, what is and isn't appropriate, and why some school rules have been made. Find some time to talk informally with and get acquainted with the teacher and other staff when the students aren't there.

Be a Learner

It's O.K. not to know. It's O.K. to make a mistake. Ask for help when you need it.

Be a Problem-Solver

When you're working with a student and a problem arises, sit down next to the student and talk with (not at) him/her and try to understand what the student is feeling and thinking and explore with the student ways to make things better. When you're not working with a student, find out what needs to be done if the teacher is busy, circulate and be observant. Watch for and anticipate problems so that you can help prevent them or at least deal with them quickly. There almost always is a student who could use some help.

BEGINNING THE ADULT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP

(Examples for Volunteering in Elementary Schools)

The following outline of suggested activities serves as a guide to planning the beginning of your relationship with children. Adult/student relationships in the school setting are very important and can be extremely helpful to students in learning that they can succeed in school, that it is a safe and happy place, and that they are understood and valued just as they are. Only when students feel good about themselves, know that the adults care about them, and that they will not be hurt or criticized, can they be free to try their best.

This is your objective in working with students -- to give them warmth and understanding, your confidence in them, and your complete attention and concern. What you do, your techniques, are less important than your regard for each child. Share your plans with the teacher before you begin.

GET ACQUAINTED ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to initiate a small group experience for students so you can observe their behavior in various activities. In this way, you will learn more about each student and his or her style of working and playing. Introductory activities with students frequently require that you assume the more active role and allow them to respond naturally and to take their time in relating. The activities are presented as suggestions and depending upon the availability of materials, numerous similar activities could be substituted.

1. Read or tell a story which would allow for some participation by the students or would be a kick-off for conversation.
2. Suggest to the students that they draw a picture of themselves or others and tell a story about the picture.
3. Develop conversation among the students, helping each tell his or her name, names of brothers and sisters, about pets, or about what he or she likes most to do. The activity is designed to build an identity for each child in the eyes of the other students as well as in his or her own eyes. Encourage the students to listen to each other and ask questions.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

The Shy Child: Start with manual activities which don't require the child to talk, such as clay modeling, construction blocks, jig-saw puzzles, scissor work, school materials already mastered. Outdoor play could be solo work with play equipment with which the child feels able to cope. These activities are designed for "loosening up" the fearful child. Later activities will be directed toward increasing the child's participation with others. (This will be a very gradual process). Such activities as puppets, acting out stories in pantomime, imitating animal sounds, role playing child's own experience or observations, such as going to the store, going on a field trip, a visit with grandmother, etc.

The Very Active Child: Start with large muscle activities such as marching, skipping to music, foot races, use of playground equipment, action games. Indoor activities which require physical movement, such as making flannel board stories or acting out stories permit the active child to have energy release. Subsequent activities should be directed to moving the child toward more organized activities and increased verbal expressions, such as performance blocks, mural painting, puppetry, and role playing.

The Angry Child: Start with activities that provide immediate personal gratification, such as easily accomplished tasks, solo activities like painting, crafts, tether ball. Give the child immediate recognition of accomplishments, including displaying work for others to admire. Since this child has difficulty with close interactions with others, plan activities which are non-competitive, such as helping a younger child accomplish a task. Move toward activities which require sharing and taking turns. Support these children in staying with the activity even when it is frustrating. You will probably need to take a very active part in doing the activity to help sustain effort.

The Child Who Is Experiencing Difficulty Learning English: Start with activities which require only simple instruction. Give instructions in English. Be alert to the child who does not understand the instructions. Help the children indicate to you when they don't understand. Then repeat the instructions in another way and use the child's first language when possible. As the children try to gain mastery of English it is important that they feel comfortable in asking for further information when they do not understand .

BUILDING RAPPORT AND CONNECTION

To be an effective helper you need to build a positive relationship around the tasks at hand.

PROBLEM: How to build a working relationship with a student, especially with shy or avoidant individuals

PROCESS: Necessary ingredients in building a working relationship are (a) taking time to make one to one connections, (b) increasing confidence in yourself and your skills, and (c) not losing sight of the purpose of the relationship.

With specific respect to *relationship building*, three things you can do are:

1. *Convey empathy and warmth* (e.g., the ability to understand and appreciate what the individual is thinking and feeling and to transmit a sense of liking)
2. *Convey genuine regard and respect* (e.g., the ability to transmit real interest and to interact in a way that enables the individual to maintain a feeling of integrity and personal control)
3. *Talk with, not at, the individual -- active listening and dialogue* (e.g. , being a good listener, not being judgmental, not prying, sharing your experiences as appropriate and needed)

WORKING AGAINST PRODUCING DEPENDENCY

- **Principle:** The goal of all helping is to enable the individual to increase their sense of autonomy and independence (e.g., personal control and direction). This is best accomplished when students work for internal reasons and when feedback is provided in the form of information and confirmation rather than rewards, praise or punishment.
- **Problem:** When a helping relationship is developed with a student, s/he may come to over rely on the helper, may only work when the helper is available, or may only work in order to please the helper.
- **Process:** The necessary ingredients in minimizing dependency are (a) to maintain the student's focus on the internal reasons s/he has for working on the tasks at hand and (b) to use encouragement and avoid overuse of external reinforcers (including social reinforcement in the form of praise).
- With respect to minimizing dependency, five things you can do are:
 1. Provide only the degree of support and direction a student needs in order to work effectively
 2. Encourage rather than praise
 3. Help the student identify personal reasons for what they are doing
 4. Help the student to self-evaluate products and progress with reference to personal reasons for what they are doing (e.g., to tune in to his or her own sense of accomplishment and satisfaction rather than being overly concerned about whether you are pleased with the effort)
 5. Help the student identify when it is appropriate to seek support and direction and a wide range of ways to do so when it is appropriate

From: H.S. Adelman & L. Taylor (1986), *An Introduction to Learning Disabilities*.
Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.

GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START & PROBLEM SOLVING

- **Understanding Your Initial Impact**

1. *With the teacher and other adults:* It's important to develop a positive relationship with the teacher and aids to become part of the staffing team.
2. *With the children:* It's important to be seen as a special resource, a helper, someone the children look forward to sharing their experiences with.

- **What To Do To Get Off To A Good Start**

1. *With the teacher and other adults:* Find time to let the teacher know you and what to expect from you. Find a time to talk informally with the teacher when children aren't there. Share your appreciation of what you have seen and avoid comments that might be perceived as critical.
2. *With the children:* Find the time and opportunity to sit down and get acquainted. Begin to appreciate who they are and what they're doing, showing how and praising good attempts helps build a relationship.

- **Observation as an Important Tool and Starting Place**

Understand the difference between describing what you see and making judgments about what it means (see next section).

- **Specifics for the First Day**

Observation is the first task and you can do this as a participant-observer. During the observation phase, be certain to assist the teacher as per expectation of role. If a child has been identified, begin building a working relationship. Look for strengths and see the child as a whole person.

- **Some Problems to Anticipate and How to Deal With Them**

Typical pitfalls that might be avoided:

1. Seeing things that worry you or make you feel uncomfortable
2. Feeling put on the spot and not knowing what to do
3. Feeling uncomfortable with your level of competence

Processes for problem-solving:

1. Keeping notes on information needed, problems identified to share with your supervisor (or onsite coordinator or teacher)
2. Requesting supervision when you need it and using it effectively

EXERCISE IN DIFFERENTIATING DESCRIPTIONS AND JUDGMENTS

It is easy to fall into the trap of arriving at premature judgements about those who are having problems. This exercise is meant to help you avoid such a trap.

Choose any specific aspect of what you see in the classroom (e.g., a specific activity, the physical environment). Naive observers often make the error of not separating their value judgments when describing what they have observed. Practice separating descriptions from judgements.

First, write down all your observations in the column labeled *Descriptions*. Then, read what you have written; look for words that are judgmental. For example, you may find a statement such as “The student is not paying attention to the lesson.” Not paying attention is a judgement. The behavior observed probably was that the student was not doing an assigned task. In the column labeled *Judgements*, put a checkmark next to all statements that, on reflection, you see as a premature judgement,

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Descriptions</i> (In this column, write down what you see but try to avoid interpreting motivations and assigning value judgements)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Judgements</i> (In this column, you can make your interpretations and value judgements)</p>

III. Resource Aids

D. Appreciating and Evaluating

This section includes:

- 1. Certificate of Appreciation**
- 2. Letter of Appreciation**
- 3. Volunteer Evaluation of Program**
- 4. Teacher Rating of Volunteer**

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

*For Participation
in the Early Assistance
for Students and Families Project*

THIS CERTIFICATE IS AWARDED TO

In recognition of dedicated
volunteer service and unselfish
contributions to the welfare of
children at

INSERT SCHOOL NAME



RE: VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROVIDED IN
THE 1997-98 ACADEMIC YEAR

To Whom It May Concern:

_____ has successfully completed several months of volunteer work to provide support personnel to teachers by working with at-risk students. These students are vulnerable due to social, emotional, or developmental problems. Many are shy, withdrawn, unmotivated, overwhelmed or overly active. This volunteer's role has been to work with the teacher to identify such youngsters, analyze the problem and plan an intervention support system that will enable the child to succeed in the mainstream program.

In addition, this volunteer gave personal, one-to-one support and assistance to the vulnerable target children, helping them to develop self-esteem and positive feelings toward school.

This experience working with the classroom teacher and the special needs of high-risk youngsters has been of great value.

Sincerely,

Volunteer Evaluation Of Program

Volunteer Name _____

Date _____

Teacher or Staff _____

School _____

1. What aspect of your volunteer experience have been best for you?

2. What problem or concerns have occurred?

3. Rate your degree of satisfaction with this learning experience.

not at all	not much	only a little	more than a little	quite a bit	very much
1	2	3	4	5	6

If you circled 1, 2, or 3, please indicate briefly why this was so and offer any recommendations you may have so we can improve the program in the future.

Staff/Teacher Rating of Volunteer

As part of our ongoing effort to evaluate this volunteer program, it will help us to have the following basic information on each participating teacher.

Name of teacher/staff _____ Date _____

School _____ Grade or Position _____

Sex of teacher: () Female () Male

Race and/ or Ethnic origin of teacher:

() White (Not of Hispanic origin) () Black (Not of Hispanic origin)
() Hispanic () Asian / Pacific Islander
() American Indian/ Alaskan Native () Filipino

Length of teaching experience at this grade level: _____

Have you taught at other grade levels? () Yes () No

If Yes, what grade and for how long?

Have you taught in any special programs (e.g., special ed.)? () Yes () No

If yes, specify: _____

Have you supervised volunteers previously? () Yes () No

Evaluation Of Volunteer

Volunteer's Name _____

Please indicate how much **effort** s/he put into helping students (e.g., does s/he work hard)?

Very little	a bit less than average	a bit more than average	well above average
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Please indicate how much **ability** s/he appear to have for helping students (e.g., does s/he have necessary skills)?

Very little	a bit less than average	a bit more than average	well above average
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Please indicate how **effective** s/he appears to be in helping students (e.g., does his/her presence seem to help)?

Very little	a bit less than average	a bit more than average	well above average
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Other Comments:

III. Resource Aids

E. A Look at What's Happening

A School District Volunteer Program

Los Angeles Unified School District

<http://achieve.lausd.net/Page/890>

Volunteers are a vital resource for many schools. Volunteers bring much needed assistance, experience and knowledge to our school communities. LAUSD processed over 14,000 new school volunteers during the 2013-2014 school-year.

Purpose of the School/Office Volunteer Program

- Assist in classrooms, thereby allowing teachers to attend to students in need of extra help
- Support school personnel in meeting the needs of students more effectively
- Strengthen school/home/community relations by engaging parents and community as school volunteers
- Provide adult role models for students through tutoring and mentoring opportunities that broaden their educational experience
- Provide enriching intergenerational experiences for students and senior citizens that enriches students' lives.



Bulletin 6542.0: Establishing and Administering School/Office Volunteer Programs - [English Spanish](#)

Please click on [Volunteer Certificate](#) to download the template

NEW volunteer application process

Please read the following directions explaining how to process school volunteer applications.

Online Application – submitted by prospective volunteer

Any person interested in participating in a school's volunteer program, including continuing volunteers, LAUSD employees, community members and interns, must complete the online volunteer application on the School Volunteer Management System. A volunteer can access the online registration process and application at <https://volunteerapp.lausd.net>.

If a person does not have access to the necessary technology to complete the online volunteer application, the school may designate an employee to assist in completing and submitting the online application on the person's behalf. Volunteers serving at more than one LAUSD school must have a completed online application, printed and signed, for **each** school before they can begin service.

Once on the registration site, the prospective volunteers will be required to enter their names and valid email accounts. The prospective volunteer will receive email notification to complete the registration process, including the creation of an account password.

Once the online volunteer application is completed, it should then be submitted electronically. Both the application and [Volunteer Commitment Form](#) should be printed, signed and delivered to the principal or the principal's designee.

A volunteer for a single event that takes place for the duration of one day **only** does not need to submit an application but must be checked by a school administrator against the California Megan's Law online database at <http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov>.

Online Application Review – submitted by the school

The school must review (ensure required fields are completed) and submit the online application for all individuals applying to become certified volunteers. The school principal must confirm and verify that the volunteer has met all requirements, including:

- Online application, printed and signed
- Signed Volunteer Commitment Form
- Megan's Law clearance
- Tuberculosis test clearance
- Fingerprinting (when applicable)

Additional Guidelines

- The principal or certificated designee must review and approve each volunteer application by logging into the School Volunteer Management System and checking the appropriate boxes.
- The principal and/or designee must indicate the following:
 - o Where the volunteer will be assigned
 - o The type of supervision required
 - o How many hours the person will serve on a weekly basis
- The online application, printed and signed, must be kept on file at the school for five years.
- School volunteers are required to sign in at the school office upon entering the campus and sign out when they exit the campus. Schools must require volunteers to leave their volunteer badges at the school when not in use.
- The principal, the principal's administrative designee, or other assigned staff must submit the application by logging in to the School Volunteer Management System using their employee single sign-on (SSO) account and verify all clearances/requirements have been met. District approved staff include:
 - oAssistant Principals
 - oEnglish Learner Designees
 - oCategorical Programs Advisors
 - oSchool Administrative Assistants
 - oCommunity Representative
 - oParent Resource Liaison
 - oParent Resource Assistant

Our Programs

Each year, more than 5 million individuals of all ages and backgrounds help meet local needs through a wide array of service opportunities through the Corporation for National and Community Service's core programs: AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund. These programs and others, such as the Volunteer Generation Fund, support projects in six priority areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families.

AmeriCorps



AmeriCorps programs provide opportunities for Americans to make an intensive commitment to service. The AmeriCorps network of local, state, and national service programs engages more than 80,000 Americans in projects around the nation each year.

AmeriCorps State and National

AmeriCorps State and National is the broadest network of AmeriCorps programs. These groups recruit, train, and place AmeriCorps members to meet critical community needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment.

AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) provides full-time members to nonprofit, faith-based, and other community organizations, and public agencies to create and expand programs that bring low-income individuals and communities out of poverty.

AmeriCorps NCCC

AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) is a full-time, team-based, residential program for men and women ages 18–24. Members live on one of five campuses, located in Denver, CO; Sacramento, CA; Perry Point, MD; Vicksburg, MS; and Vinton, IA.

New Funding Opportunities



[Sign Up Now](#)

Current Funding Opportunities

May 4, 2016

[FY2016 AmeriCorps Indian Tribes Grants](#)

May 10, 2016

[Social Innovation Fund Classic Notice of Funding Availability FY 2016](#)

Jun 14, 2016

[2016 Foster Grandparent Program \(FGP\) Indian Tribes, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders Competition](#)

Jun 14, 2016

[2016 Senior Companion Program \(SCP\) Indian Tribes, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders Competition](#)

National Service Timeline

Learn more about our history.



[View the Timeline](#)

National Service In Your State

See the impact service has throughout our nation.



Senior Corps



Senior Corps offers a network of programs that tap the rich experience, skills, and talents of older citizens to meet community challenges.

Foster Grandparents

Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors, and friends. Serving at one of thousands of local organizations—including faith-based groups, Head Start Centers, schools, and other youth facilities—they help children learn to read, provide one-on-one tutoring, and guide children at a critical time in their lives.

Senior Companions

Senior Companions help frail, elderly citizens remain in their homes longer by providing much-needed support. Whether they help give families or professional caregivers much-needed time off, run errands, or simply provide friendship, they make a difference that strengthens and helps preserve an individual's independence.

RSVP

RSVP offers a full range of volunteer opportunities with thousands of local and national organizations to citizens 55 and older. RSVP volunteers choose how and where they want to serve, and the amount of time they want to give. And the program's flexibility allows volunteers to choose whether they want to draw on current skills or develop new ones.

Social Innovation Fund



The [Social Innovation Fund](#) (SIF) is a powerful approach to transforming lives and communities that positions the federal government to be a catalyst for impact—mobilizing public and private resources to find and grow community-based nonprofits with evidence of strong results. An initiative enacted under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, the SIF is a new way of doing business for the federal government that stands to yield greater impact on urgent national challenges. The Social Innovation Fund targets millions in public-private funds to expand effective solutions across three issue areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development and school support.

Volunteer Generation Fund

The [Volunteer Generation Fund](#) is a program authorized by the [Serve America Act](#) to support voluntary organizations and state service commissions in boosting the impact of volunteers in addressing critical community needs. The fund will focus investments on volunteer management practices that increase both volunteer recruitment and retention.

**WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT HOW VOLUNTEERS WORK?
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING FOR WELL-BEING AND CHANGE**

J. Aked (2015). *IDS Bulletin*, 46, 29–42.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1759-5436.12173/abstract>

Abstract: This article looks at what happens when volunteering goes well. It provides a theoretical and empirical grounding for understanding how volunteers enable outcomes such as participation and cooperation in complex change environments. The findings point to three important qualities of volunteer relationships, which alter how people feel about themselves, others and their situation: informality, the act of doing together and networked reciprocity. When these relational styles foster three psychosocial experiences known to support human wellbeing – relatedness, competency and autonomy – they make it possible for marginalised and poor groups to participate, initiate and share ownership in the change process. When socially as well as personally rewarding, volunteer relationships can also strengthen solidarity, a knowledge of other's strengths and social commitment, strengthening the basis for social action to continue as a cooperative process with other people. Implications for how volunteering is utilised and strengthened as a strategy for community development are discussed.

**AN INVESTIGATION OF VOLUNTEER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP
TRAJECTORIES WITHIN SCHOOL-BASED YOUTH MENTORING PROGRAMS**

J. Pryce, & T.E. Keller (2012). *Journal of Community Psychology*, 40, 228-248.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jcop.20487/abstract>

Abstract: This prospective, mixed-method study investigates the development of school-based mentoring relationships using direct observations, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires from the perspective of mentors and students. A pattern-oriented analysis of qualitative data explores the diversity observed in the life-course of mentor-student relationships. Systematic variation in developmental trends across relationships revealed four distinctive groupings. Some relationships showed progressive improvement in strength and quality. Others started well but reached a plateau and did not become particularly close. A third group struggled throughout to make a connection. Finally, some relationships succeeded after a breakthrough to overcome their challenges. These inductively derived categories are corroborated and supplemented with quantitative data regarding relationship quality. The study reveals the heterogeneity of relationship trajectories within school-based mentoring programs.

UNDERSTANDING AMERICORPS SERVICE: PERSPECTIVES FROM PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY AND RESEARCH ON VOLUNTEERISM

A. Maki, P.C. Dwyer, & M. Snyder (2015)

Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, 15, 253–281.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/asap.2015.15.issue-1/issuetoc>

Abstract: Although national service programs such as AmeriCorps share many characteristics with volunteerism (such as sustained, prosocial action aimed at community improvement), little research has examined how theory and research relevant to volunteer behavior might help understand such service programs. We used psychological theory from the volunteerism literature to test hypotheses about how the constructs of altruistic personality, role identity, and service motivations relate to AmeriCorps satisfaction, intentions, and behavior. In a longitudinal study of 188 AmeriCorps members, personality, identity, and motivation were all associated with important service experiences and outcomes. Specifically, whereas overall motivation was related to both satisfaction and intentions, altruistic personality and AmeriCorps identity were only related to intentions. Additionally, distinct service motivations were related to specific service experiences and outcomes. Finally, AmeriCorps members who felt that their motivations were satisfied during service tended to more frequently engage in additional voluntary service-related behaviors. We discuss implications of these findings for understanding AmeriCorps service, and for potentially improving public policy initiatives concerning AmeriCorps.

THE EFFECTS OF GENDER, GROUP COMPOSITION AND SOCIAL TRUST ON THE VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOUR OF LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS

U. Okonkwo Osili, D.J. Mesch, A.D. Hayat, & E. Dale (2016).

Voluntary Sector Review, 7, 67-87.

<http://www.vssn.org.uk/voluntary-sector-review/>

Abstract: Volunteering is important to study cross-nationally, as it is linked to the provision of local public goods. This article explores factors associated with volunteering across 14 countries, focusing on the effects of gender, group composition and social trust on the volunteer behaviour of members of a large, international service club. We draw on a unique dataset: a survey of Lions Clubs International members. Results indicate a significant relationship between the proportion of a club's female membership and the volunteering of its members, particularly in high-income countries. Among both middle- and low-income countries, the individual factors of gender and social trust are found to be significant for volunteering among club members. Levels of national trust are important to consider when examining volunteering from a cross-national perspective.

LEVERAGING VOLUNTEERS: AN EXPERIMENTAL EVALUATION OF A TUTORING PROGRAM FOR STRUGGLING READERS

R. Jacob, C. Armstrong, A.B. Bowdenc. & Y. Panc (2016).

Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, posted online: 06 Feb 2016.

<http://www.tandfonline.com/action/showAxaArticles?journalCode=uree20>

Abstract: This study evaluates the impacts and costs of the Reading Partners program, which uses community volunteers to provide one-on-one tutoring to struggling readers in under-resourced elementary schools. The evaluation uses an experimental design. Students were randomly assigned within 19 different Reading Partners sites to a program or control condition to answer questions about the impact of the program on student reading proficiency. A cost study, using a subsample of six of the 19 study sites, explores the resources needed to implement the Reading Partners program as described in the evaluation. Findings indicate that the Reading Partners program has a positive and statistically significant impact on all three measures of reading proficiency assessed with an effect size equal to around 0.10. The cost study findings illustrate the potential value of the Reading Partners program from the schools' perspective because the financial and other resources required by the schools to implement the program are low. Additionally, the study serves as an example of how evaluations can rigorously examine both the impacts and costs of a program to provide evidence regarding effectiveness.

EXPERIENCE CORPS: A DUAL TRIAL TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH OF OLDER ADULTS AND CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC SUCCESS

L.P. Fried, M.C. Carlson, S. McGill, et al. (2013).

Contemporary Clinical Trials, 36, 1–13,

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2013.05.003>

Abstract – Background: As the population ages, older adults are seeking meaningful, and impactful, post-retirement roles. As a society, improving the health of people throughout longer lives is a major public health goal. This paper presents the design and rationale for an effectiveness trial of Experience Corps™, an intervention created to address both these needs. This trial evaluates (1) whether senior volunteer roles within Experience Corps™ beneficially impact children's academic achievement and classroom behavior in public elementary schools and (2) impact on the health of volunteers.

Methods: Dual evaluations of (1) an intention-to-treat trial randomizing eligible adults 60 and older to volunteer service in Experience Corps™, or to a control arm of usual volunteering opportunities, and (2) a comparison of eligible public elementary schools receiving Experience Corps™ to matched, eligible control schools in a 1:1 control:intervention school ratio.

Outcomes: For older adults, the primary outcome is decreased disability in mobility and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL). Secondary outcomes are decreased frailty, falls, and memory loss; slowed loss of strength, balance, walking speed, cortical plasticity, and executive function; objective performance of IADLs; and increased social and psychological engagement. For children, primary outcomes are improved reading achievement and classroom behavior in Kindergarten through the 3rd grade; secondary outcomes are improvements in school climate, teacher morale and retention, and teacher perceptions of older adults.

ENGAGING OLDER ADULT VOLUNTEERS IN NATIONAL SERVICE

A.M. McBride, J.C. Greenfield, N. Morrow-Howell, Y. Soo Lee, & S. McCrary (2012).

Social Work Research, 36, 101-112.

<http://swr.oxfordjournals.org/content/36/2/101>

Abstract: Volunteer-based programs are increasingly designed as interventions to affect the volunteers and the beneficiaries of the volunteers' activities. To achieve the intended impacts for both, programs need to leverage the volunteers' engagement by meeting their expectations, retaining them, and maximizing their perceptions of benefits. Programmatic features that may increase volunteer engagement include supervision, flexibility, assistance, training, recognition, and stipend support. Using longitudinal data from a study of older adult volunteers in Experience Corps (N = 208), the present study tested the facilitative effects of these features on volunteer engagement. Regression results indicated that positive perceptions of supervision and assistance predicted exceeded expectations, whereas supervision, flexibility, and recognition predicted retention and benefits. Stipend receipt also predicted benefits. Results indicated that these facilitation measures are conceptually and empirically similar and have an overall positive impact on volunteer engagement outcomes when treated additively. In the context of the study's implications, findings suggest that volunteer management "basics" facilitate volunteer engagement among the sample of older adult volunteers, with implications for practice and future research.

IV. Additional Resources

A. More References

B. Quick Find for Internet Resources Related to Volunteers

C. Volunteer Management Resource Center

A. More References

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- Yamauchi, N., & Zrinscak, S. (2010). A cross-cultural examination of student volunteering: Is it all about résumé building? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 39, 498–523.

For more resources on Volunteers in Schools, see:

B. Quick Find On-line Clearinghouse

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/volunteers.html>)

And for more on establishing a volunteer program, see

C. Volunteer Management Resource Center - [idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)
www.idealists.org/info/VolunteerMgmt

**The site offers a round-up of research, best practices, tools,
and ideas in the field.**