



Recruiting and Managing Volunteers in Museums



*A Handbook for
Volunteer Management*

KRISTY VAN HOVEN AND LONI WELLMAN

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY BOOK SERIES

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Kristy Van Hoven and Loni Wellman

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Rowman & Littlefield

A wholly owned subsidiary of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Van Hoven, Kristy, 1983– author. | Wellman, Loni, 1981– author.


Title: Recruiting and managing volunteers in museums : a handbook for volunteer management / Kristy Van Hoven and Loni Wellman.

Description: Lanham, MD : Rowman & Littlefield, [2016] | Series: American Association for State and Local History book series | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015039816 | ISBN 9781442262508 (cloth : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781442262515 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781442262522 (electronic)

Subjects: LCSH: Volunteer workers in museums—Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Museums—Management—Handbooks, manuals, etc.

Classification: LCC AM121 .V45 2016 | DDC 069/.63—dc23 LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015039816>

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

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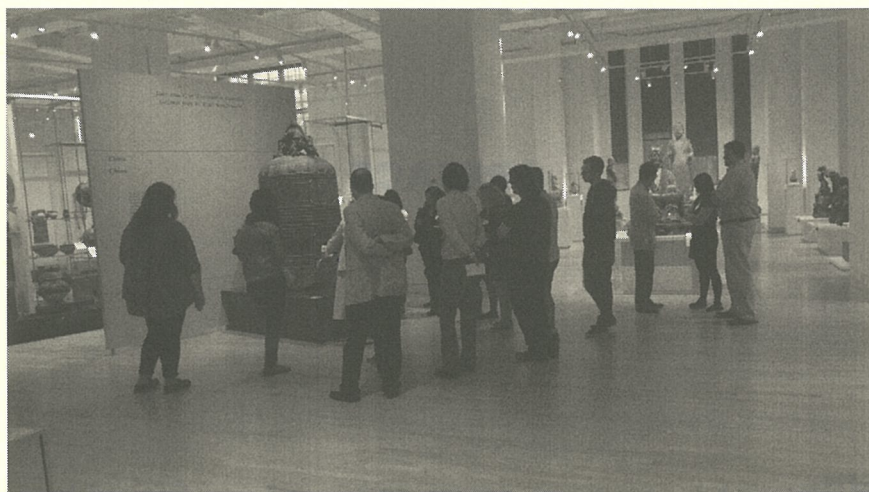
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PREFACE

Volunteers bring experience, passion, energy, and even financial benefits to the museums and galleries in which they are associated. Volunteers provide crucial support for tours, special events, on-site and off-site programs, and administration. Freeing staff for vital duties, volunteers are the backbone on which an organization can grow. Through engaging projects, regular communication, and regular recognition for a job well done, organizations can foster growth and build long-term relationships with their volunteers and their community, which in turn helps foster more community engagement and stronger relationships with supporters, members, and donors. Building a healthy, vibrant volunteer program will ensure the long-term health of any nonprofit organization.

Museums, galleries, research institutions, zoos, and gardens, as well as other nonprofits, recruit volunteers of all ages and experiences to help with routine tasks and special projects. Offering opportunities to use a volunteer's talents and knowledge or providing them with the chance to engage with collections or their communities is one of the biggest rewards an institution can offer any volunteer. From hosting events to office filing to outreach to education, there are a number of roles for volunteers in any organization.

The work of a volunteer can range from special events to routine daily tasks. Special projects are a great way to introduce people to your organization, its mission, and day-to-day work. Both routine and long-term projects allow volunteers to feel invested in an organization. Long-term projects give the volunteer a chance to develop lifelong relationships with



Leading tours is one of the traditional volunteer jobs.

the museum or gallery, the staff, and other volunteers, creating a second family for many volunteers, while routine projects allow volunteers to help “run” their local or favorite museum. Understanding your volunteers, their motivations, and their needs will lead to a successful volunteer management program.

As volunteer coordinators, we started this project by asking ourselves some questions about museum volunteers and how they fit into our institutions. Drawing on our background in volunteer management, we started reflecting on some questions that are commonly asked by museum leadership and volunteer managers: Where does a museum start to develop a volunteer program? How can an institution seek out exceptional talent within (or outside) the community? What does it take to nurture (or bring out) the best in volunteers? Are there tricks to building a successful volunteer relationship? What happens when a volunteer goes rogue or doesn’t follow through on commitments? What should a museum do if a volunteer leaves your institution under less-than-favorable conditions? These questions are just the beginning, and they more are likely to arise during department development, program management, and volunteer and project evaluations. However, with a bit of guidance any institution can create a great volunteer management program that both supports the institution’s mission and fulfills volunteers’ needs and expectations.

This book was written for the volunteer manager, museum staff, and organizational leadership. We will provide tips, tricks, and examples of volunteer management programs and scenarios that will help guide museum and gallery staff to build a successful and flourishing volunteer program. The best-laid plans often require flexibility, and these chapters allow the reader to pick and choose information and strategies that are most helpful to their institution. This book is broken down into seven chapters to help the reader quickly address needs and potential issues as they arise, and we hope they will be referenced often.

The first chapter introduces volunteers. Who are they? What is their motivation? What will they look like in the next five to ten years? We will identify what volunteers mean to museums and what the future holds for museum volunteers in general. Volunteers can bring so much to an organization; we will explore all the traditional roles as well as the new roles volunteers can fill in today's museums and galleries. We are also aware of the fact that community demographics are in flux. Over the next decade, communities will continue to grow and develop in new ways. We will examine how various demographics can bring their unique experiences to your organization and how a diverse volunteer program will provide stability for the future of the organization.

In the second chapter we will identify the major demographics that make up a majority of museum volunteers. From retired professionals to students to the emerging pool of virtual volunteers, we will review demographics that will bring a variety of expertise and service to museums and galleries now and into the future. We will also address the needs, motivations, and types of projects that are best suited for each volunteer demographic, as not all volunteers are created equal. In the last section of the book (chapter 7), case studies will illustrate the principles addressed in each section and help get any volunteer manager thinking about how they can effectively recruit, train, and retain volunteers in each of the identified groups. Keep in mind there may be more special interest groups than those we have identified, but this section will provide insights and raise questions that will be helpful when evaluating a variety of volunteer groups within an organization.

The third chapter looks at specific types of institutions and the special needs they have when recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers. Some museums, zoos, and galleries require special considerations when developing, mentoring, and maintaining relationships with volunteers. Risk

factors in zoos and aquariums, for example, will require different types of training and policies than risks associated with a historic house. Science museums differ in their layout and education programs compared to art galleries, which leads to special considerations for visitor traffic, docent tour patterns, and emergency response procedures. Although our list is not exhaustive, we will pose some questions that should be addressed when developing policies and projects for volunteers working with special collections and sites.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will provide guidance in developing policies, procedures, and forms for a new or existing volunteer management program. This section includes sample material from forms and policies to other items that may be helpful when developing a volunteer management program. Items such as internal request forms, volunteer job advertisements, project outlines, time management forms, and evaluations and recognition tips help volunteers and their managers communicate expectations and interests. We have also included a list of volunteer management associations that will prove to be valuable resources to both volunteers and their managers. The samples in this section are generic in nature and should be used to guide volunteer managers in creating their own site-specific forms and procedures. Having specific documents that reflect the museum's needs and institutional policies will encourage volunteers to feel like a part of the organization and help the volunteers know they are held to the same standards as other museum staff. This feeling will help build a strong organization team consisting of leadership, staff, and volunteers.

Our final chapter will merge the ideas, principles, and tips introduced in the book with applicable, real-life scenarios. The case studies will explore issues that volunteer managers and their volunteers face on a daily basis. Each study will examine a different museum as well as volunteers from different demographics. You will see a working woman volunteering at a historical society, a retired volunteer in a science museum, a family volunteering through their vacation at a maritime museum, a teen volunteer in her first role of responsibility at a children's museum, an intern finding his way in an art museum, and a college student on the cutting edge of e-volunteerism at a botanical garden. The cases are designed to help you make connections between the lessons in the book and real-life applications that you will deal with day to day. Through the review of volunteer groups, their motivations, and special site considera-

tions, you will be able to develop a concept for your organization's volunteer department. This publication is designed to be used in its entirety as an introduction to volunteer management programs and planning, or it can be used in parts to strengthen areas in an already established volunteer department. With our experiences in volunteer management and a sampling of documents we use in our institutions, you will have the tools necessary to develop a world-class volunteer program for your museum, gallery, zoo, or organization.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As we embarked on this project, we were excited to explore all the roles and possibilities for volunteers in museums, galleries, historic sites, and zoos. We want to thank our colleagues who share with us what their volunteers do, how they contribute to the organization, and what the organization does for them. Our conversations inspired us to create this book as a reference for anyone who works with volunteers. Volunteers truly are the heart of any organization!

Personally, I would like to thank all the volunteers I have had the honor to work with over the years. Our time together has been an inspiration. I also want to thank my family, especially my husband, and the friends who made sure I kept to my schedule and helped me celebrate small milestones throughout this process. A special thank you to Deb Guthrie, Chris Scott, Laura Lipp, Katie Whipple, and Meghan Bold, who have been my biggest supporters during this endeavour. —Kristy

I would like to thank Kristy, who was the driving force behind this book. Thank you for keeping me on task! Thank you to my lighthouse family—especially Barb—and all the staff and volunteers, who are my ultimate cheerleaders. A huge thank you to my parents, Ray and Deb Wellman, who have allowed me to follow my dreams. I am so lucky that you both raised such an awesome daughter. Finally, thank you, Justin Gurnsey, for your patience, humor, and music, all of which have saved me. —Loni

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS TODAY

WHO ARE MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS?

Since the dawn of the cabinets of curiosity, museums and galleries have depended on the goodwill of others to develop collections, promote ideas, and foster civic pride. Early museums usually consisted of rooms or galleries in private estates and universities. The exhibitions at these early museums featured exotic specimens mounted behind glass in awe-inspiring poses, and galleries of carved stones and marbles from ancient lands. Visitors wandered the galleries gazing into foreign places with a sense of wonderment and childish excitement for the world outside. Patrons of these early museum collections traveled regularly to new and faraway lands and acquired exquisite objects during their journeys. Upon their return home, patrons installed their newly acquired treasures in their museums. These exotic objects helped promote a family's standing within society, as it was through their gallery patronage that the society would know the family's wealth and value. By the nineteenth century, museums transitioned from the exclusive status symbols into larger, public institutions. Their doors were opened to all types of visitors from scholars and students to working-class families. Museums and galleries shifted their focus from gathering general curiosities to scientific collecting and from casual visitors to public education. Through this shift, museums and galleries became centerpieces of their communities. The vast galleries became alive with tours and lectures. Visitors would travel to museums to learn about science, history, and the arts from expert curators and trained

docents. Museum staff told the tales of ancient civilizations and helped visitors explore the natural world around them. Masters and students of the arts would come to the museum galleries to practice their crafts, while an eager public watched them create their masterpieces.

By the dawn of the twentieth century, museums were hubs of community activity. Museums continued to reach out to their communities by developing special weekend programs and civic celebrations. As these programs became popular, more community members were drawn to museums and galleries, and looked for ways to become involved and support their local museums. Mission statements and exhibit plans became an important part of gallery development and interpretive planning, and, as a result, they opened up the world of the professional museum curator and administrator. The museum staff quickly recognized the need for a robust and dedicated volunteer force to help with day-to-day operations of the museum. Volunteers became pivotal to the success of tours, gallery programs, and visitor services. Museum administrators also recognized the value in volunteers assisting with special projects, such as exhibit construction, special event planning, and marketing projects.

"Friends of" and other auxiliary groups, traditionally made up of civilly involved women, quickly emerged as additional support groups for museums and galleries. The mission of these groups was to support their museum or gallery by providing financial support and manpower for a variety of projects, and to help cultivate community interest in their organization. Many of these museum auxiliary groups worked like an exclusive club. Members would be recruited, expected to pay dues to the group, join working groups, and promote volunteerism among the group and the outside community. The groups tended to recruit new members who excelled in skills needed to benefit their parent organization. They were proficient at organizing and training docents that provided general museum gallery tours and programs, as well as organizing hosts for special events. Through their extensive social networks, auxiliary groups were able to cultivate additional financial support and collection pieces for their museum or gallery.

"Friends of" groups emerged as civil advocates, and they promoted museum missions within their communities. These groups were often less exclusive and allowed anyone who was willing and able to pay the membership dues to join. Members were also expected to be active participants in the group's activities. In addition to directly working with the



Volunteer docents are the backbone of any museum.

museum on special projects and events, these groups organized their own fund-raising campaigns to support projects and initiatives in the museum. By the mid-twentieth century, auxiliary groups were leading fund-raisers and were the number-one source for museum volunteers.

Noting the increased importance and activity of volunteers, museums created volunteer coordinator positions and developed departments dedicated to volunteer management in the late twentieth century. The American Association for Museum Volunteers published their Standards and Best Practices for Museum Volunteer Programs in 2011. In it, they outlined the importance of a volunteer coordinator by stating that a museum or gallery must ensure “that the volunteer program has staff support and resources needed for its success” (AAMV, 2011). It also stated that each museum or gallery must have at least one dedicated employee responsible for managing or coordinating the volunteer program.

Volunteer coordinators worked with auxiliary groups to provide support for a variety of museum activities, to foster community interest in the museum, and to align missions and activities between the auxiliary

groups and their museum. Volunteer coordinators also took on the management of interns and students, as well as other volunteers such as Scout groups and civic clubs. Today, volunteer coordinators (or those who wear the volunteer coordinator hat on occasion) oversee the vast majority of museum volunteer activities across all museum departments and activities, while auxiliary groups work closely with museum leadership on development, special projects, and events.

Today's volunteers represent all segments and demographics of the community. In any healthy volunteer pool, you will find high school and college students, professionals, retirees, and civic or corporate volunteers. Students who apply for volunteer positions are looking to fulfill community service requirements for classes. University and graduate students seek out volunteer opportunities to develop skills necessary for the job market, while professionals look to broaden their skills through unique volunteer opportunities. Retirees have traditionally been the largest group of museum and gallery volunteers. Most retirees look for opportunities to engage with others socially and give back to their communities in meaningful ways. Other volunteers come from civic clubs, such as the Rotary, Masons, Scouts, and corporate groups. These volunteers look to help local institutions with specific projects reflective of the group's mission and usually volunteer as a group. While these are not all the possible sources for volunteers, these groups form the foundation of any museum or gallery volunteer programs.

THE MUSEUM VOLUNTEER OF THE FUTURE

According to the "Museums & Society 2034: Trends and Potential Futures" report from the Center for the Future of Museums (CFM), "museums will take the lead in reshaping civic involvement" through their collections, programs, and community outreach (CFM, 2008). Throughout their history, museums and galleries have been a place for people to come together for learning, socializing, and civic involvement. In the twentieth century, museums and galleries shifted their focus from displaying collections to developing interpretive strategies and formal learning opportunities, which in turn developed a huge need for volunteer docents, educators, and volunteers who could provide a variety of visitor services. During the late twentieth century, museums started opening up



Volunteers are important extra hands at special events. (Courtesy of the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum)

their collections and access to curators and archivists, allowing for more volunteer opportunities in the “back of house.” Looking toward the future, museums will continue to be places of community gathering and education, as well as providing new and exciting volunteer opportunities through virtual and digital engagement. Essentially, museums are moving “from an inward concentration on their collections to a newly articulated outward concentration on various publics and communities that they serve[d]” (Anderson, 2004), and they will continue to grow into community hubs of activity for learning and socialization.

With the general population becoming more diverse, museums will continue to grow in their role as places for cultural exchange. The Center for the Future of Museums predicts there will be major demographic changes in museum visitorship and staff by 2034. With the shift to greater ethnic diversity in communities surrounding museums, it will fall to curators, educators, and museum volunteers to develop and implement exhibits, programs, and other outreach activities that reflect the museum’s or gallery’s growing community diversity. This trend is being realized across the country with the opening and planning of community museums that explore and celebrate the cultural diversity of their communities. Museums such as the Peralta Hacienda Historical Park in Oakland provide tours and programs that appeal to their local communities. Commu-

nities are proud to support and participate in museums that address issues such as racial division and historic struggles, as well as celebrating mixed cultural heritage. Other groups, like the Smithsonian Institution, have spent years growing their collections to represent the growing diversity throughout the United States; as their collections have grown, they have developed independent museums that reflect cultural identities important to the history of the country. Other museums have grown out of commemorations for historic people or places that changed the course of history and illustrate the diversity of the country and its local communities. Regardless of the topics covered, museums and galleries will continue to foster diversity among their collections, staff, volunteers, and community in the years to come.

Along with the shifting ethnic diversity, gender roles in many communities are continuing to change at a rapid rate. More women than ever are entering the workforce and achieving executive-level careers, more men are opting to work part time or stay at home with the family, while other households are dependent on all the adults' income to support the household. The Center for the Future of Museums reports that gender and parenting roles will continue to evolve in the future, leading to a wider range of family definitions that make up any one community. In addition to the traditional family, single-parent homes, and families with two working parents, a growing number of households are comprised of extended families and are part of every community. Each of these unique family make-ups affects their communities and the institutions providing services to the community. Grandparents may have more time to shuttle children to various activities, including school, summer camps, and weekend events. Students and some working adults may have time to attend special lunchtime or early morning tours and lectures. Of the adults who may not be available for weekday programs, many are able to attend events in the evening. Understanding the gender and generation roles in the community will help drive museum programming and exhibitions, highlight potential areas for volunteer opportunities, as well as highlighting those demographics most likely to commit to volunteer projects at a museum, art gallery, or other community cultural institution.

As more men and women seek higher education in preparation for careers outside the home, the number of university and postgraduate students is rising, and it will continue to rise in the future as employers look for highly trained applicants in the job market. Many students will turn to

museums and other nonprofits as a way to help engage in their community while learning and honing skills necessary for their career. Skills in business, marketing, and project management will be high among employer's wish lists, and museums and galleries can foster learning opportunities that will prepare students for roles in business, education, and civil service while benefiting from the students' work.

Museums, galleries, and zoos as well as animal shelters and community welfare groups will also develop lifelong relationships with volunteers through their early volunteer opportunities. Individuals who have volunteered with nonprofits early in their careers are more likely to continue volunteering and supporting those organizations as they progress professionally. These early career and student volunteers become lifelong donors of time and money, as well as huge advocates for the organization and its mission. According to the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund's Volunteerism and Charitable Giving in 2009 Executive Summary, "volunteers donate ten times more money to charities than those who do not volunteer." On average, those who did not volunteer in the last twelve months donated only \$230 a year to charity, while volunteers donated \$2,593 a year. Of those who volunteered, 67 percent claimed that they donated money to the same charities where they volunteered.

Technology is growing and developing at a rapid rate, a trend that is expected to continue. For museums and galleries, this can be a scary thought, as technology growth usually leads to more expensive, yet necessary, pieces of equipment. Nevertheless, museums and galleries can benefit greatly from technological advancements in many areas. Among the most vital areas of importance to any nonprofit are exposure and accessibility. Developments in technology are making the on-site gallery space more visible to a global audience and more accessible to visitors and volunteers around the world. People with physical and geographic limitations are now able to visit museums large and small through virtual tours, museum apps, webinars, and other digital outreach programs. Museums are opening their doors to a new type of visitor and subsequently a new type of volunteer, and, as technology continues to develop, museums and galleries will be able to reach an even larger audience through digital engagement.

Using video conference calls, group chat rooms, social media, and digital online databases, museums and galleries can partake in a larger, more diverse volunteer pool and develop innovative ways to engage their

volunteers in their collections and programs. A quick Internet search gives the potential volunteer a number of digital volunteer options, including “back of house” tasks such as artifact identification and cataloging, program development, and online chats and lectures. Among the most popular projects in museums are cataloging and transcription projects. Digital copies of documents and recorded oral histories are posted online to be transcribed by volunteers through controlled-access workspaces. Museums around the world are using closed websites to catalog archival material such as research logs, travel journals, and transcribed oral histories, which can then be uploaded or linked to a collection database or research software used in the museum and archives. Other museums are posting collections in open-access sites such as Flickr and asking for the public’s help in identifying and tagging collection pieces and historic photographs. Although it may be scary to ask for help from anyone, most museums have reported receiving many great contributions that have helped open the collections to new audiences, as well as inspired new ways of exhibiting pieces that appeal to a larger community. Public projects such as these allow potential volunteers to try volunteering without committing to a specific project and the training that the project may require. Open-access volunteer opportunities can be a museum’s first step toward recruiting and weeding out potential long-term volunteers. Regardless of the type of activity, museum cataloging and artifact identification projects have always been a staple in the list of volunteer opportunities. With more technology, we are, for the first time, able to take these opportunities out of the back rooms and curatorial centers of museums and place them front and center in the eyes of the public.

Another emerging area of digital engagement is educational programming. Museums and galleries are taking their visitors out into the field with archaeologists and biologists. Curators can live stream visits to various museums and collection storehouses, bringing the visitor on a behind-the-scenes tour of museums across the world. Educators and program facilitators can develop online courses and lectures that bring participants up close to works of art and artifacts they would otherwise view from afar (if they were able to view them at all). So how can volunteers assist with these types of projects? Traditionally, the volunteer’s roles in programs have been the extra hands that provide assistance to visitors or serve as wayfinders and crowd control. Digital program volunteers assist in these

projects by providing research for collection items that are slated for use in the program, or by serving as the museum's technical support in the galleries where they help connect those in the field or "on assignment" to the visitors in the museum. Volunteers can provide guidance to areas around the museum and perhaps even provide context during the online chats, or offer tours of the museum that help connect visitors to the collection on a deeper level. Some volunteers prove themselves as subject matter experts and may serve the museum best by providing digital tours and lectures on behalf of the institution. No matter the program, digital engagement will continue to become an important outreach tool for any institution, which will continue to open new doors to the museum for visitors and volunteers.

Museums have a responsibility to their communities to provide educational and entertaining opportunities for engagement in culture, history, the arts, and sciences, but museums and galleries operate on a limited budget that seems to be shrinking just as more demands are being placed on the institution and its staff. The Center for the Future of Museums reports that budgets and funding will continue to be an issue moving into the future. Growing demands on finite financial resources will require everyone to look for ways to increase engagement while maintaining a stagnant, if not shrinking, bottom line. In this realm of community service, volunteers can be "worth their weight in gold" by providing exceptional museum visits and programs, connecting with local advocacy groups, and reaching out to their extensive social networks to promote the museum's mission, programs, and development campaigns. Volunteers will encourage others in their community to participate in the museum through passionate and emotional appeals that reflect their personal experiences. These personal appeals help connect people to each other and the institution on a personal level, which will serve the museum well in future projects and recruitment campaigns. But the most valuable role for passionate volunteers can be during an institution's marketing and development campaign. When a volunteer shares their experiences with others, they do so in a heartfelt and genuine manner. Passionate volunteers will donate time and money to causes they are proud of and believe have a future both in their personal lives and in their community. They will challenge others—their friends, family, and other community members—to join the cause as well. Through drives, match grant programs, and personal appeals, development campaigns that involve volunteers tend to

yield more returns than a campaign purely driven from the staff or an outside development firm while costing the institution very little in resources or cash.

Volunteers now and into the future will prove to be one of the more valuable resources a museum can have. A healthy and robust volunteer force will ensure the museum or gallery's success in programs and community engagement, as well as a stable financial base to support day-to-day operations and special events. In many cases the causal volunteer will develop a lifelong passion for advocacy, which results in long-term volunteer service and connections for future community and financial development opportunities. Above all, volunteers recognize the importance of their role in shaping the future of the museum. With an understanding of the current trends and an eye to the future, volunteers, their coordinators, and managers will form an essential support team for museums and galleries in the years to come.

EXPLORING MUSEUM AND GALLERY VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers can bring a lot of energy and expertise to any organization. The variety of volunteer types and the experiences they contribute to museums, galleries, and historic sites are endless. Careful analysis and understanding of volunteer demographics will help volunteer managers and museum directors successfully lead all types of volunteers in projects and events that support any institution. Students and families bring unlimited energy to institutional programs. They can inspire the natural curiosity in visitors and patrons. They can contribute to the authentic feel of historical reenactments and other historic site interpretations or theatrical presentations. Child visitors often connect to teen volunteers while participating in camps, on-site activities, and festivals. And families who volunteer together usually bring other family and friends with them when they attend museum programs. Families and children can be an important advocate and source of income to any institution. When families have positive experiences, they are more likely to return with other people than any other visitor group. Oftentimes these repeat visitors also turn into active volunteers, members, and advocates. On the other hand, professional volunteers and those recently retired provide a level of professionalism to the projects they participate in. For museums and galleries, these volunteers can be crucial to fund-raising and development activities, as well as media and public relations programs. An emerging group of volunteers looking to make a difference in museums and galleries across the world are the digital or “e-volunteers.” The e-volunteer is an individual

(or group of volunteers) looking to contribute to museums through online projects and activities. The e-volunteer trend is allowing museums to reach new audiences for the first time through digital initiatives.

Regardless of who the volunteer is, or what demographic they fall into when they first join an organization, it is important to keep in mind that people's needs and activities change during their lifetimes, and a volunteer may fall into more than one demographic explored in this chapter. However, any institution can foster and maintain long-term relationships with their volunteers by creating positive personal experiences for each volunteer.

When developing a volunteer management program, it is important to take time to make some observations and reflect on the museum's or gallery's mission and role within its community. Although every museum's mission will be different, taking the time to carefully analyze the needs of the institution, research visitors, evaluate programs, and understand the core group of volunteers will ensure a solid foundation for the volunteer program. In this chapter we will introduce six major groups of volunteers, including students, families, retirees, and e-volunteers. We will answer the questions: Who are they? What is their motivation? What will these groups look like in the next five to ten years? We will explore the traditional roles for museum volunteers and examine new roles volunteers can fill in today's museums and galleries. We will also look at some effective ways to foster meaningful relationships with each demographic outlined in this chapter and inspire those who manage volunteers to create long-term relationships with each of them.

ADULT VOLUNTEERS: OPPORTUNITIES THAT BUILD CAREERS

Adult volunteers account for a large part of a museum's volunteer force. A survey of a number of international volunteers in arts and culture reports estimated that 50 percent or more of the arts and culture volunteer force are adults (ages thirty to sixty-five).¹ In this section, we will look at adult volunteers and their relationships to institutions, in addition to their needs when it comes to volunteering. Adult volunteers are defined as those volunteers who are out of school and working in a profession or maintaining a job and/or household. Generally these volunteers are be-

tween the ages of twenty-five and sixty-five. Adults may or may not be raising families, and those family members may be involved with similar volunteer activities, but the adults we address in this section are those who volunteer by themselves or independently of other family members.² Adult volunteers are mobile; thus, they are usually able to travel to various locations to volunteer. Some adults select locations for their ease in accessibility, while others choose to commute to remote locations. In either case, the ability to travel can be an asset if a museum plans outreach programs or an off-site event, which needs additional volunteer assistance.

As heads of households, adults choose activities and causes that reflect their values and the values they wish to see among their family and community. Their personal standings within their communities can also direct adults in choosing their volunteer roles. Many adults feel museums and galleries offer prestigious opportunities to get involved with their communities and routinely apply for volunteer positions at these types of institutions. Adults, both those who are still active professionals and those who have retired, are great assets to an institution and can provide a variety of services. They bring professional skills and experiences that may be lacking among regular museum staff or other volunteers. Adult volunteers can be subject matter experts in topics covered in the museum and will lend expertise and authority to programs and publications. Adult volunteers are also used to working in a variety of settings; as a result, they are able to work as team members or individually, and they usually do not require direct supervision during their normal shifts.

Many adult volunteers have a passion for the charitable work they are involved in, and they are willing to extend that involvement by serving on boards, chairing committees, and working as point people for special projects. Adult volunteers also contribute to museums and galleries through ambassador and advocate roles. They usually have extensive social networks outside of the museum field and are active in many community and professional activities. The ability of the adult volunteer to reach out to an extensive network of friends, family, and colleagues can serve a museum well during volunteer and donor cultivation activities, as well as promoting special programs and events. Inspiring adult volunteers to engage continuously with the museum or gallery is the biggest challenge faced with managing this group of volunteers.

Adult volunteers have a variety of motivations driving their desire to volunteer. In general, adults volunteer with organizations that support a community's development and well-being. They will actively engage with an organization if they feel they are making a difference. According to one American Alliance of Museums survey,³ museums drive economic development, education, and natural resource conservation in nearly every community, which then increases the overall economic and physical health of local communities. Museum volunteers are also drawn to a volunteer position because of the subjects or artifacts the museum curates. Adults interested in art tend to volunteer at art galleries, sculpture gardens, and community art projects. Those interested in history will volunteer at historical societies, historic sites, and archives. Science centers, zoos, and gardens draw those with an interest in the natural world. Sometimes professionals in a given field may seek volunteer opportunities in another field to broaden their professional capacities, while other professionals wish to hone already developed skills in their volunteer positions and will seek positions that complement their skill sets.



Volunteers can be an asset to any museum program. (Courtesy of the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum)

Regardless of their background, adult volunteers want to give to organizations that will benefit from their time. It is important to find out what the adult volunteer wants to gain from their time with the museum and match those needs to projects within the museum. It is okay to design and develop new projects to meet the needs of adult volunteers, as it is important to foster interest in new projects and allow the volunteer to take ownership of the project as soon as possible. It is not wise to keep adult volunteers waiting for projects. Adult volunteers are usually willing to work on small tasks or large projects so long as their time commitment can be flexible and accommodate any change in schedule and availability.

Adults, especially those with a professional background, will need measurable goals and outcomes. People like to be inspired by a project and know what milestones they need to reach to meet their goals. Even small projects need to have clearly stated goals and objectives. Take the following project, for instance: A small development department needs to have annual membership renewal letters sent out by the end of the week. The volunteer might need to pull the mailing list, generate labels, compile renewal packets, and stuff envelopes. Although the process may seem logical, it is worth taking the time to review all of the steps with the volunteer and further mention how this project might impact the museum. Creating excitement around a project allows the volunteer to feel more involved with the museum's activities, and their output quality will improve because they understand how the project fits into the bigger institutional picture; in addition, outlining the task will ensure that every step is completed. To help further encourage the volunteer during the project, volunteer supervisors should regularly check on the volunteer and his or her project. Asking about their progress or needs during the project will make the volunteer feel like a valued and supported member of the museum team. Ultimately, it is important for the volunteer's supervisor or manager to understand the unique needs of each of their adult volunteers and respond to those needs appropriately.

Over the next five to ten years the adult volunteer will continue to play an important role in nonprofit organizations. Many companies are starting to encourage their employees to volunteer in their communities through sponsored volunteer programs. These company-driven volunteers are creating a new group of adult volunteers who have company incentives to engage in community groups. Museums and galleries can use relationships with these companies by creating or tailoring projects to meet the

company's requirements for employee volunteer opportunities. Through continuous successful projects, a museum will build a long-term relationship with these companies, opening the door for the company to be involved in the museum in other ways, such as direct financial support or in-kind goods and services.

Adult volunteers will continue to embrace the social roles they play in an organization by participating in boards, committees, and auxiliary groups for museums and galleries. As more adults are focusing on their careers before starting families, the adult volunteer will be more accomplished and bring more professional training and skills with them to their volunteer positions.

RETIRED PROFESSIONALS: REINVENTING THE VOLUNTEER ROLE

In this section we will explore the postcareer volunteer, their motivations, and the best ways to engage the growing population of retired professionals in museum activities. Although usually identified in the "adult volunteer group" in volunteer surveys and reports, this volunteer group makes up another large portion of most museum and gallery volunteer teams. The postcareer volunteer is a person who has retired or left their professional role and now occupies most of their time with leisure activities and charitable work. These volunteers are usually over the age of sixty. Retired volunteers live a more fluid and leisurely lifestyle, which involves frequent travel, local leisure activities (such as clubs and recreation league sports), and volunteering for a variety of organizations. They generally do not have dependent children or family members at home, but they might have long periods of absence from their volunteer positions, as they may travel to see family or host their family a number of times throughout the year. Retired volunteers may choose to live in their communities on a seasonal basis, which can also lead to sporadic volunteer schedules. Recently retired volunteers have a great deal of energy for projects and tend to give more hours on a regular basis than working adult volunteers or busy families. Older retired volunteers, however, may not have the stamina to work long shifts, but might be interested in working short shifts multiple times a week. It is important for volunteer managers

to understand and adapt to limitations and needs that may arise with this group in order to ensure long-term success with the older volunteers.

Like adult volunteers, postprofessional volunteers choose activities and causes that reflect their values and the values they wish to see among their family and community. These volunteers have raised families and have witnessed change in their communities. They have shared experiences and stories they wish to share with others in their communities, especially newcomers and younger generations. Many museums and galleries are able to provide a space for generations to connect with each other, including opportunities for older volunteers to connect with others in their communities. Those volunteers over the age of sixty enjoy active roles in museums as docents, program leaders, and special event volunteers. Many volunteers enjoy engaging with visitors on a social level and helping families explore new exhibits and galleries while sharing their stories and expertise in a variety of topics. Program volunteers, who actively engage with the public on a regular basis, enjoy their work, making them dependable volunteers for any event.

In addition to sharing their stories and life experiences, retirees also have extensive social networks that can prove to be valuable tools for marketing and development activities. Many museums and galleries have auxiliary groups that help support their parent organization through special events and fund-raising campaigns. A number of these groups are made up of retired professionals who recognize value in their organization and work tirelessly to help support the needs of the institution. Many of the members of these groups are recruited from circles of friends and become active volunteers through repeated positive experiences with the auxiliary group and the museum or gallery. It should be noted that not all auxiliary groups fall under an institution's direct supervision, but many groups work closely with museum leadership to arrange events, help with activities, and partner in campaigns for the good of the organization. Maintaining positive relationships with the auxiliary group and its members secures a steady source of volunteers and volunteer advocates for many years.

Museums and galleries are prime places to provide learning opportunities. Retirees seek out opportunities to learn new skills or gain new knowledge in a field of their interest. Many of the volunteers in this group have worked in their profession for decades and are looking to expand their experiences into new and different areas. In most cases, these volun-



Adult and retired volunteers have many useful skills. (Courtesy of the St. Augustine Lighthouse & Museum)

teers also have a passion for lifelong learning and recognize the many benefits of engaging their minds in a variety of activities. This drive to engage their mind in learning steers many of these volunteers to look for back-of-house volunteer opportunities like cataloging, database entry, and program development, as well as fund-raising and publishing. One challenge with volunteers who are motivated in learning new skills is maintaining that sense of learning throughout a project. Some back-of-house projects can easily become stale or stagnant in the mind of the active learner. Retired volunteers may easily lose motivation to complete projects in which they are no longer engaged. Supervisors should provide learning opportunities on a regular basis to ensure continued commitment by the volunteer.

Over the next decade, the number of retired volunteers will increase as the last of the baby boom generation finishes their roles in their current careers and retires from professional work. This group of retired volunteers will differ from their predecessors in a number of ways, and volun-

teen managers will have to adapt to the new needs of this group. Retired volunteers of the future will be more active than any other group of retired volunteers before them. Health and well-being concerns are an increasingly large part of adult lives, and many retirees look for ways to stay active on a daily basis. Studies have shown that participation in cultural activities prolongs health and well-being, and many organizations will develop programs and volunteer opportunities that will help their communities reach health and well-being goals.⁴ Studies over the last ten years have also shown that being active and making healthy food and lifestyle choices not only increases well-being but also prolongs lives. Many of the baby boomer generation and the following generations will continue to be more health conscious than previous generations; as a result, more people are living longer. Being healthier longer has led to more active volunteers, as health continues to be a focus of community education, and, therefore, the future of retired volunteers is promising for museums and galleries.

FAMILY VOLUNTEERS: CREATING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SERVICE

A number of institutions, including children's museums and historic homes, have embraced the younger volunteers through a family volunteer program. Young volunteers are defined as children or students ages six to thirteen who are too young to be considered a teen volunteer and legally unable to work and volunteer for organizations on their own. Children and family group volunteers can be beneficial to museums, including historic sites, especially during special events, and are able to help visitors engage with activities they might otherwise just passively observe. When families lead activities, visitors of all ages are more likely to get involved with the activity and maintain a stronger interest and engagement with the museum throughout their visit. Activities and positive engagement between visitors can result in extremely memorable experiences, which will foster more museum participation and encourage repeat visitors. Usually these repeat visitors become members of the institution, and ultimately these visitors become volunteers themselves or active community voices for the museum, and they progressively upgrade their

membership status or their financial support for museum programming as their families grow.

Families who volunteer together are key in strengthening bonds with the museum's local community. As families volunteer they get to know visitors and other volunteers, which in turn generates a close-knit community. Museums can foster these friendships through their volunteer programs and on-site activities. Studies have shown that communities that have active participants in cultural activities have lower rates of violence and school dropouts, while some communities have shown an increase in higher educational markers such as standardized test results.

Family volunteers look to create a shared experience while providing a service to an organization. Like interns and teens, families are turning to volunteer tourism as a way to engage in a meaningful learning experience as a group. According to Nancy Schretter, a vacation expert, "Families want to give back and make the world a better place . . . [where] they can make a difference."⁵ These recent trends in volunteering have proven successful for families looking for a unique experience. Museums and galleries are becoming destinations not just for their collections but also



Family volunteers can add energy to any event.