

Diversity and Volunteerism: Deriving Advantage from Difference

Editor's Note: This month's Lunch and Learn features several local experts in the volunteer management profession in a panel presentation discussing the important issue of diversity in volunteer programs (see page 3 for more information about this program including registration instructions). To help you think about this topic, we provide the following article with some thought-provoking ideas to bring to the Lunch and Learn. We hope you find this useful; for a more in-depth discussion on this topic, we hope you'll join us on July 21 for our program, "Diversity: What Meaning Does This Have for Your Volunteer Corps?"

By Santiago Rodriguez

Voluntary organizations in the United States and globally are faced with the growth of an increasingly diverse population. Methods and approaches that have worked effectively in more homogenous settings may not be as useful in more diverse environments. We need to identify new ways to reach potential volunteers in a manner comfortable to their cultural styles. The future success of voluntary organizations will depend in large part on how different value systems can be incorporated into ongoing programs and in how well we can help new groups of people with the acculturation process

What is "diversity"? What can we learn from it?

"Diversity" is a much bandied-about term that to many people smacks of trendiness and a corresponding lack of substance. In part, this syndrome is due to the observation that many who use the term fail to define it, or use it as a substitute "buzz word" for traditional human rights terminologies that have become too emotionally charged. In addition, diversity as a concept remains an intellectual abstraction to many because a great number of its advocates have failed to tie it to an effective organizational rationale.

Diversity as a concept and program has a major utility of its own. While related to the older concepts of equal opportunity and affirmative action, it goes well beyond the parameters of earlier programs.

Equal opportunity is a merit-based program in which only accurate and clearly measurable instruments may be used in evaluating an individual's ability in competition with others. It is a fine concept, and great progress has been achieved, but the dilemma remains that people are not always measurable nor do all measuring techniques assess everyone accurately. This is particularly true when cultural differences impede traditional measurement and assessment techniques.

Affirmative action, on the other hand, gauges the progress of different racial/ethnic/gender constituencies in given arenas and attempts to find solutions for greater inclusion and representation. Affirmative action, however, does not mean "lowering standards" in favor of race or gender but is, rather, a technique for reaching specific segments of society and increasing the previously limited competition. Its limitation is that it is not all-inclusive of all possible human differences, running the risk of creating an "us/them" dynamic.

Diversity not only assumes that all individuals are unique, i.e., different, but that difference is indeed value-added. While all societies and organizations have a need to establish common rules and modes of operation, the assumption in diversity is that if an organization learns how to harness individual differences, it will be more effective and competitive than those organizations that are not able to do so. It is, in

other words, an effectiveness argument. In personal terms, the other component of a diversity approach requires a finely tuned process for self-examination. Rather than learning about other groups—and that, indeed, may be important—diversity requires an individual to assess what one's personal values are, and how these values affect our individual behaviors with other people. What we value will affect how we behave with other people. We need to be consciously aware of our values.

For operational purposes, culture is a set of values held by a group of people and, importantly, the behaviors that stem from those values. Diversity arises from this multiplicity of cultures. Cultures are not only national in nature. They may be regional, urban, rural, suburban, or based on age, religion, class, professional affiliation and many more. One's own life experiences may affect cultural values. Being "minority" or "majority" in any larger culture will also affect values, how one views the world.

Perhaps paradoxically, diversity should result in supreme individualization: treating an individual as uniquely different from any other person and thereby avoiding stereotypes based on actual or perceived group memberships.

All organizations, including those of a voluntary nature, essentially perform three things: they develop products and services, they market them, and they deal with issues of customer/client satisfaction. These tasks subsequently are performed by managing human resources. The critical question to ask in the context of diversity is: How does difference, or absence of difference, affect how we design products and services, market the same, or deal with questions of customer/client satisfaction? Do all cultures, for example, provide voluntary services in the same way? Does one market goods and services uniformly around the world, or within diverse societies like the United States? And how do you please a customer/client if you don't know what he or she values? Values, of course, are all about culture.

Volunteerism occurs in all human cultures, but is often performed differently from culture to culture. In the United States we have developed a great number of community-based organizations focusing on volunteer activities. This phenomenon may not be representative of many other societies where extended family groupings, religious organizations, and government may play greater roles. The challenge for volunteer organizations in an increasingly diverse U.S. population is, on the one hand, to learn how to tap into networks different from those customary here and, toward greater dependence on community organizations.

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President's Report

Elaine Glowacki, Wisconsin Nonprofits Association,
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Dear DCAVS member,
Happy Summer! For some that might mean a brief lull, which can give you a chance to brush up on your professional skills and get more involved in DCAVS. For others, your season is in full swing so you are really testing your knowledge of professional volunteer management. Whatever your summer is like, remember that your professional DCAVS network is here for you.

In May we saw many of you at the Wisconsin Volunteer Coordinators Association annual conference in the Dells. It was fantastic to learn from colleagues from around the state with such a variety of experiences. In this issue we've compiled highlights from some of the workshops.

And now, for a big announcement about an updated member benefit: actually, I'll let you read it from the Membership Committee elsewhere in this issue. We are stoked!

We hope to see you at the July 21 Lunch & Learn on Diversity in Volunteer Programs. Remember: register and arrive on time and you could win a free Lunch & Learn. Also, mark your calendar for our Annual Conference, co-hosted with the United Way Volunteer Center, on September 29 from 8am – 2pm at the UW-Madison Arboretum Visitor Center. Stay tuned for details.

And finally, we bid a fond farewell to Mark Fetzko, our droll and able DCAVS board secretary since 2008. He's leaving volunteer management (for the time being) to enter law school in the fall. Best wishes, Mark, and a huge thank you for your contributions to DCAVS.

New! Online DCAVS Membership Database and Directory Now Accessible Through DCAVS Website!

As of mid-June, the DCAVS membership database and directory are now available to current DCAVS members through the DCAVS website, www.dcavs.org.

A very big THANK YOU goes to DCAVS Membership Committee member, Database Manager and Personal Essentials Pantry Volunteer Coordinator Christine Thompson, as well as one of her pantry volunteers, Michael Rolfsmeier, for all of their time and expertise to get this information and accessibility set up on the website!! This development helps move DCAVS further along technologically which in turn is a new, improved benefit to current members.

The access provides representatives with the opportunity to check their membership status and look up other current members for networking or other purposes. In addition, the database will have the capability to automatically generate membership renewal reminders to representatives as to when it will be time to renew, and provide various reports for the DCAVS board of directors, treasurer and select committee members based on necessary information that needs to be acquired from the database by those individuals.

An e-mail announcement was sent to current DCAVS members last month announcing this wonderful, new development. If you did not receive the e-mail and would like more information about how to access the database and directory, please contact Christine Thompson at 608.244.1847 or pantrycoordinator@zionmadison.org.

Kim Viney, Diane Jones & Ella Benson
DCAVS Membership Committee Co-Chairs

Local Conference: Enhancing Your Professional Skills to Optimize Volunteer Engagement

September 29, 2010; Arboretum Visitor Center

Mark your calendars to attend the annual half-day conference for local administrators of volunteer services. This event, co-sponsored by the United Way of Dane County Volunteer Center and Dane County Administrators of Volunteer Services, includes valuable networking opportunities for leaders and managers and provides quality professional development opportunities focusing on creating vibrant, sustainable volunteer services. This valuable conference is designed to present ideas and strategies to help meet the needs of those who are responsible for the recruitment, retention, and engagement of volunteers in their organizations. Our keynote speaker, Laura V. Page, is an independent management and organization consultant with extensive experience in team building, conflict resolution, and quality improvement; she is also a frequent conference speaker and seminar instructor. For conference details and to register, go to the DCAVS web site, www.dcavs.org or open the document that accompanied the email you received along with this newsletter. For questions, contact Kathy Martinson, kathym@uwdc.org



Member Profile: Madison Children's Museum

Since 1980, Madison Children's Museum has been providing hands-on, educational programs and exhibits to Madison-area families. Throughout this history, the museum's purpose has remained the same: learning through play. As part of its "whole child" philosophy, the museum seeks to nurture every aspect of children's growth. Madison Children's Museum's exhibits and educational programs embrace six key themes: arts, culture, science, health, civic engagement, and early learning.

Madison Children's Museum has occupied a number of buildings in its 30 year history. However, on August 14, 2010, MCM will open its new museum at 100 North Hamilton Street on the Capitol Square. It will serve children ages birth to 12 and their families. The museum will feature a public Community Concourse, elaborate Early Learning Gallery, an active Art Studio, a large Celebrations Room, and a scenic, four-season rooftop.

We are inviting others to join in the excitement of the reopening of the new Madison Children's Museum! One great way to get involved and share your talents is through volunteering. MCM offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities for all ages and interests. Come and care for the chicks in *Rooftop Ramble*, splash in the water hut in *The Wilderness*, or dabble on the paint wall in the Art Studio!

For more information on how to get involved, visit our website at MadisonChildrensMuseum.org and click on the "Support" menu for more details. You can also contact the Volunteer Coordinator via e-mail at ckrecak@madisonchildrensmuseum.org or by phone at 608-256-6445, ext. 552. We look forward to having you be a part of the museum community!

2010 Wisconsin Volunteer Coordinators Association Conference Recap

At the conclusion of this year's conference, we asked attendees to share what they learned:

Keynote Speaker/Breakout Session: "Energize Yourself" and "Team Building", Carl Olson

In order to brain implant a process/procedure you must repeat it 6 times

Read books to help you be better at what you do

SNOW: Set your sights high; Never compromise your values;

Overcome setbacks, Work

Look for each person's specialness

Keep 'sharpening your saw' (be a life-long learner)

Practice the 'Fish' philosophy (from Seattle's Pike Place Market): play, make their day, be there and choose your attitude

Breakout Sessions: "Taming Difficult People" and "The Value of Relevant Feedback", Moni Demers

With a problem volunteer, get to the point when trying to explain how they can improve or do a different job

Do everything you can to help volunteers be successful because of what they do rather than in spite of it

Have clear and accurate picture of what is required and how performance compares with requirements

Be careful with praise/give analytical feedback with simple praise otherwise can leave open to other interpretation

Breakout Session: "Understanding the Rainbow", Paul Ohlrogg

Leadership is also followship, just not management

Provided great information about how to communicate with someone who is a different 'color' than you and how to get the most from each style is beneficial in working with volunteers and work place colleagues

Breakout Session: "Online Social Networking", Jody Weyers

Have a plan; how do you want to use it; who is going to going oversee it; what tools/equipment do you need; what do you want to say; how often will you update it; how are you going to reach your intended outcome

Cut and past is a time saver

Keynote Speaker: "I'm not Tense . . . just terribly Alert!", Adele Alfano

The average person has 15,000 thoughts per day

Combat stress with Communication, Celebration, Commitment, and Connection

Thank you Susan, Kim and Diane for your submissions.

DCAVS had a display at the conference exhibiting our mission and activities. DCAVS members had the opportunity to put their names in the drawing to win a copy of *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Successful Volunteer Involvement* by Susan J. Ellis. Congratulations to Margie Ries, Henry Vilas Zoo Society, for winning this prize.

WVCA conferences provide attendees the opportunity to network and share ideas with colleagues from around the state along with strengthening and renewing the true spirit of volunteerism. Start thinking about attending next year's conference, May 5-6, 2011 in Milwaukee, featuring two well respected national/international speakers, Martin Cowling and Steve McCurley.

Reminder: You can join DCAVS at any time and receive a discounted affiliate rate for next year's state conference. Contact: Diane Jones at: dianej@westmadisonseiorcoalition.org or Kim Viney at: kim.viney@oakwoodvillage.net.

July Lunch and Learn

"Diversity: What Meaning Does This Have for Your Volunteer Corps?"

What do we mean when we speak of diversity among our volunteer corps: age, gender, ethnicity, skills, experience, ...? Does it matter that we have diversity: to other volunteers, our organization, our customers, our wider community, to ourselves? What level of diversity do we need, desire, are able to obtain to address our organizational and volunteer goals? Are there any cultural or social issues to consider when recruiting, placing, or supervising a diverse corps of volunteers? Please join panelists Katie Kluesner, Volunteer Coordinator, North/Eastside Senior Coalition; Annie Dutcher, Volunteer Coordinator, Centro Hispano; a youth volunteer coordinator; and moderator, Rick Orton, Madison Senior Center as we explore the answers to these questions, and more!

Please come prepared to discuss the above questions as they relate to your work and organization during lunch with your table-mates at the DCAVS Lunch and Learn, Wednesday, July 21st.

Day/Date: Wednesday, July 21, 2010

Time: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Location: Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton Street. Participants are responsible for their own parking expenses.

Registration Deadline: Thursday, July 15, 4 p.m. Register by contacting Ella Benson at 608.237.1163; bensone@gsbadgerland.org. Registrations will be closed after 4 p.m.

The cost for this DCAVS Lunch and Learn Program is \$10.00 for members and \$15.00 for non-members. The cost includes meal and seminar fee. Payment is required, once registered, whether you attend or not. Everyone registered by the deadline and in attendance at the program by 11:45 a.m. is eligible to win a free Lunch and Learn Program certificate for a future program. A meal cannot be guaranteed to those arriving past 12:10 p.m.





United Way
of Dane County



Professional Development Training For Volunteer Managers, September 2010 – January 2011

This 7-part series, presented by the United Way Volunteer Center and DCAVS, will empower you to create a highly effective, motivating and dynamic volunteer program or bring your current program to a new level! Each session will provide opportunities for learning and sharing, and will focus on a key component of volunteer management and program development. From the novice to the experienced volunteer manager, this series will have something for you and your work with volunteers... and within your organization.

The sessions will be 3½ hours in the morning and will be held at the United Way of Dane County. Everyone who completes the series will receive a framed certificate for their accomplishment.

Here are the topics for the series:

- Understanding Volunteering
- Plan for Success
- Recruiting & Placing Volunteers
- Orienting & Training Volunteers
- Supervising Volunteers
- Evaluating Your Volunteer Program
- Sharing Volunteer Program Improvement Plans

Watch for the registration brochure to arrive this summer.

Continued from page 1...

on the other hand, to assist in the acculturation of groups new to the United States. Community-based volunteerism, for example, is relatively rare in the traditional Hispanic and Asian contexts—families and churches may play a greater role—yet these populations once here in the United States are exhibiting a trend

That is clearly an example of acculturation. From a more traditional perspective, it behooves every organization to identify key players in each community who can then assist in carrying out the mission of voluntary organizations. Activities such as fund raising, how people are managed, and how decisions are made within groups are affected by different cultural norms. Diversity, then, is about learning to include different perspectives and processes so that the work of the organization can be as effective as possible.

The argument about diversity really centers on how to be more effective personally, professionally, and organizationally. It is not a value judgment about "right" and "wrong"—although each individual has the right (and obligation) to determine his or her own values—but, rather, what approach is most effective in a given setting. In essence, then, diversity is knowing what you don't know coupled with the knowledge that the way we measure people may not always be accurate due to the filters created by our own individual set of values.

Santiago Rodriqez is a diversity management and marketing consultant. He has been a university affirmative action officer at Stanford University, director of multicultural programs at Apple Computer, the director of intergovernmental relations for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, assistant director of the national Hispanic Employment Program at the U.S. Civil Service Commission, and assistant to the chairman at the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

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A Volunteer Is Worth \$20.85 An Hour

The value of a volunteer hour during 2009 was \$20.85, an increase from \$20.25 per hour in 2009, according to Washington, DC-based Independent Sector (IS). The valuation of volunteer time provides one way to measure the impact millions of individuals make with each hour they dedicate to make a difference.

More than a third of nonprofit organizations surveyed reported increasing their use of volunteers between September 2008 and March 2009 and almost half expect to use more volunteers in the coming year, according to IS.

Nonprofits employ approximately 12.9 million workers—almost 10 percent of the American work force—and account for about 5 percent of gross domestic product. In 2008, volunteer labor produced an estimated 6.8 million full-time equivalent employees, increasing total charitable impact by more than 50 percent. About 61.8 million Americans, or 26.4 percent of the adult population gave 8 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$162 billion in 2008; estimates for 2009 will be released this summer according to IS.

Every other year, IS also calculates a value for each volunteer hour state by state and that information has just been updated, as well. Wisconsin came in at \$17.79 per volunteer hour. To learn more about the hourly value of volunteer time, including information about how these values are calculated, visit www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time

As managers of volunteer services, we all know that it is very difficult to put a dollar value on volunteer time. Volunteers provide many intangibles that can not be easily quantified. For example, volunteers demonstrate the amount of support an organization has within a community, provide work for short periods of time, and provide support on a wide range of projects. The value of a volunteer hour is only one way to show the immense contribution volunteers provide to an organization.

Part of this article is from *The Nonprofit Times*, May 1, 2010; part of this article is from Independent Sector, www.independentsector.org

The Network is published bimonthly by Dane County Administrators of Volunteer Services (DCAVS) as a benefit to its members. DCAVS promotes successful volunteer administration by facilitating the professional growth of its members through networking and training opportunities, as well as providing support through advocacy for the profession of volunteer administration in specific, and volunteerism in general. Visit us on the Web at <http://www.dcavs.org/>

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We welcome your contributions, comments and suggestions. Next deadline: August 5. Contact editor at sminkoff@wisc.edu or 608.263.7760.