live *more* of your life

VALUING
VOLUNTEERS

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Invitation to become a 'Life. Be in it.' CREW MEMBER

VOLUNTEERING IN AUSTRALIA

Many people choose to donate gifts of time rather than money. In Australia, gifts of time are estimated as being more than twice as valuable as monetary donations to the sector as a whole.

While there has been concerns over a perceived decline in the number of volunteers and members of community groups, data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics - ABS - suggests that volunteer rates have in fact been on the rise.

WORKING AS A VOLUNTEER

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) identifies the following distinctive characteristics of the voluntary and community sector (VCS):

- self-governing organisations, some being registered charities, some incorporated non-profit organisations and some outside both these classifications
- a great range of size and structure of organisations
- work delivered for the public benefit, beyond the membership of individual voluntary and community organisations (VCOs)
- independence of both formal structures of government and the profit sector
- an important reliance on volunteers to carry out its work.

This work includes:

- delivering services
- advocating/lobbying on behalf of community causes
- facilitating international, community and economic development
- raising funds
- providing financial support to other voluntary organisations.

WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?

Social capital has been defined as increasing the confidence and capacity of individuals and small groups to get involved in activities and build mutually supportive networks that hold communities together.

Social capital consists of the networks, norms, relationships, values and informal sanctions that shape the quantity and co-operative quality of a society's social interactions.

Social capital can be measured using a range of indicators but the most commonly used measure is trust in other people."

The three main types of social capital are:

- bonding
- bridging
- linking.

Bonding

Relates to common identity, for example ties among people who are similar to each other.

Type of participation: within communities.

Role in civil society: shared common purpose, for example members of families, ethnic groups, clubs.

Bridging

Relates to diversity, for example ties among people who are different from one another.

Type of participation: across communities.

Role in civil society: dialogue between different interests and views in the public sphere, for example associations, fellowships, trade unions.

Linking

Ties with those in authority or between different social classes, between communities and organisations and with structures outside communities.

TEN RULES FOR SUCCESS.

1. Find your own particular talent.
2. Be big.
3. Be honest.
4. Live with enthusiasm.
5. Don't let your possessions possess you.
6. Don't worry about your problems.
7. Look up to people when you can - look down to no one.
8. Don't cling to the past.
9. Assume your full share of responsibility in the world.
10. Strive to be happy.

THE GOOSE STORY.

In the fall, when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in v-formation, think about what science has learned about why they fly that way.

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a v-formation the whole flock can fly at least seventy-one per cent farther than if each bird flew on its own.
Perhaps people who share a common direction can get where they are going more quickly and more easily if they co-operate.

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it feels the resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of flying with the flock.
If we had as much sense as a goose, we would work with others who are going the same way as we are.

When the lead goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies on the point. The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up the speed.
It pays to take turns doing hard jobs for our group.

Finally, when a goose weakens or is wounded and falls out of formation, two geese fall out and follow the weakened goose down for help and protection. They stay with that goose until it is either able to fly again, or is dead. Then they set out on their own or with another formation until they catch up with the group.
If we had the sense of a goose we would stand by each other like that.

* In 1958 a Native American Micmac Indian woman told this story in response to a question of how her people used to live.

THE SIX MISTAKES OF MAN.

1. The delusion that personal gain is made by crushing others.
2. The tendency to worry about things that cannot be changed or corrected.
3. Insisting that a thing is impossible because we cannot accomplish it.
4. Refusing to set aside trivial preferences.
5. Neglecting development and refinement of the mind, and not acquiring the habit of reading and studying.
6. Attempting to compel others to believe and live as we do.

VOLUNTEERING

Some people spend half their lives telling what they are going to do, and the other half explaining why they didn't do it.

Volunteering has been a part of virtually every civilization and society. Defined as a non-profit, non-wage and non-career action that individuals carry out for the well-being of their neighbours, community or society at large. Volunteering takes many forms from traditional customs of mutual self-help to community responses in times of crisis and effort for relief, conflict resolution and the eradication of poverty.

Voluntary service features prominently in the activities of NGOs, professional associations, trade unions and civic organizations. Many campaigns in areas such as literacy, immunization and protection of the environment are crucially dependent upon volunteer effort.

The underlying premise underlying volunteering is that, more than ever before, more people are needed to offer their services as volunteers. For this to happen, there is a need for greater recognition and facilitation of volunteer work and greater promotion of such service, drawing upon the best initiatives and efforts - the "best practice" - of volunteers networked to the greatest effect.

A first objective is increased recognition, the second objective is increased facilitation, the third objective is networking, and a fourth objective is promotion.

Volunteering is not just an activity to keep yourself busy while you're out of work. It can further your career by allowing you to learn new skills. Where to begin? Volunteer for something related to what your career is or will be: Director of Marketing for a non-profit? Public relations person? Charitable organizations often need help getting their group into the news.

Would your skills would make you a great salesperson, fund raiser, or membership drive coordinator?

When selecting an organization for which you'd like to volunteer, choose one that does work close to your heart.

Are you concerned with the issue of uninsured families? Worried about the fate of animals in local animal shelters? Volunteer to work with those agencies that address those issues.

Remember, even though you are volunteering, you are making a commitment to the organization. The most mutual benefit will be achieved when you volunteer for a group whose mission is important to you, and for which you deliver an honest effort to assist.

Many non-profit paid jobs require previous experience in the non-profit sector, but volunteers usually need no previous experience. If you are not sure which volunteer group needs help, here are some places to begin your search:

1. **Research the causes or issues important to you.** Look for a group that works with issues about which you feel strongly. You might already be giving money to one of these organizations, and that might be a good place to begin your volunteer experience. If you can't find such an organization, here's a challenging and intriguing thought: why not start one yourself?

You can rally your neighbours to clean up that vacant lot on the corner, patrol the neighbourhood, paint an elderly neighbour's house, take turns keeping an eye on the ailing person down the street, or form a group to advocate for a remedy to that dangerous intersection in your neighbourhood. There is no end to the creative avenues for volunteering, just as there is no end to the need for volunteers.

2. **Consider the skills you have to offer.** If you enjoy outdoor work, have a knack for teaching, or just enjoy interacting with people, you may want to look for volunteer work that would incorporate these aspects of your personality. Many positions require a volunteer who has previous familiarity with certain equipment, such as computers, or who possesses certain skills, such as ability in athletics or communications.

For one of these positions you might decide to do something comparable to what you do on the job during your workday, or something that you already enjoy as a hobby.

3. **Would you like to learn something new?** Perhaps you would like to learn a new skill or gain exposure to a new situation. Consider seeking a volunteer opportunity where you'll learn something new. For example, volunteering to work on the newsletter for the local animal shelter will improve your writing and editing abilities - skills that may help you in your career.

Volunteering can simply offer a change from your daily routine. For example, if your full-time job is in an office, you may decide to take on a more active volunteer assignment, such as leading tours at an art museum or building a playground. Many nonprofits seek out people who are willing to learn.

Realise beforehand, however, that such work might require a time commitment for training before the actual volunteer assignment begins.

4. **Combine your goals.** Look for volunteer opportunities that will also help you achieve your other goals for your life. For example, if you want to lose a few extra pounds, pick an active volunteer opportunity, such as cleaning a park or working with kids. Or, if you've been meaning to take a cooking class, try volunteering at a food bank that teaches cooking skills.

5. **Don't over-commit your schedule.** Make sure the volunteer hours you want to give fit into your hectic life, so that you don't frustrate your family, exhaust yourself, short change the organization you're trying to help or neglect your job.

Do you want a long-term assignment or something temporary? If you are unsure about your availability, or want to see how the work suits you before making an extensive commitment, see whether the organization will start you out on a limited number of hours until you get the feel of things.

Good advice is to start out slowly rather than to commit yourself to a schedule you can't or don't want to fulfil.

6. **Nonprofits may have questions, too.** While most nonprofits are eager to find volunteer help, they have to be careful when accepting the services you offer.

If you contact an organization with an offer to volunteer your time, you may be asked to come in for an interview, fill out a volunteer application, or describe your qualifications and your background just as you would at an interview for a paying job. It is in the organization's interest and more beneficial to the people it serves to make certain you have the skills needed, that you are truly committed to doing the work, and that your interests match those of the nonprofit.

Furthermore, in volunteer work involving children or other at-risk populations, there are legal ramifications for the organization to consider.

7. **Consider volunteering as a family.** Think about looking for a volunteer opportunity suitable for parents and children to do together, or for a husband and wife to take on as a team.

When a family volunteers to work together at a non-profit organization, the experience can bring them closer together, teach young children the value of giving their time and effort, introduce everyone in the family to skills and experiences never before encountered, and give the entire family a shared experience as a wonderful family memory.

8. **Virtual volunteering?** Yes, there is such a thing! If you have computer access and the necessary skills, some organizations now offer the opportunity to do volunteer work over the computer.

This might take the form of passing on free advice, typing a college term paper for a person with a disability, or simply keeping in contact with a shut-in who has e-mail.

This sort of volunteering might be well suited to you if you have limited time, no transportation, or a physical disability that precludes you from getting about freely.

Virtual volunteering can also be a way for you to give time if you simply enjoy computers and want to employ your computer skills in your volunteer work.

9. **I never thought of that!** Many community groups are looking for volunteers, and some may not have occurred to you.

Most of us know that hospitals, libraries, and churches use volunteers for a great deal of their work, but here are some volunteer opportunities that may not have crossed your mind:

- Day care centres, Neighbourhood Watch, Public Schools and Colleges
- Halfway houses, Community Theatres, Drug Rehabilitation Centres, Fraternal Organizations and Civic Clubs
- Retirement Centres and Homes for the Elderly, Meals on Wheels, Church or Community-Sponsored Soup Kitchens or Food Pantries
- Museums, Art Galleries, and Monuments
- Community Choirs, Bands and Orchestras
- Prisons, Neighbourhood Parks, Youth Organizations, Sports Teams, and after-school programs Shelters for Battered Women and Children
- Historical Restorations, Battlefields and National Parks

10. **Give voice to your heart through your giving and volunteering!**

Bring your heart and your sense of humour to your volunteer service, along with your enthusiastic spirit, which in itself is a priceless gift. What you'll get back will be immeasurable!

THE VALUE OF A SMILE

A smile costs nothing but creates much.
It enriches those who receive, without impoverishing those who give.
It happens in a flash, and the memory of it sometimes lasts forever.
None of us are so rich as they can get along without it - and none so poor but are richer for its benefits.
It creates happiness in the home, and fosters goodwill in business.
It cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen.
It is something that is no earthly good until it is given away.
If at some time you meet someone who fails to give you a smile, may I not ask that you give one of your own?
For none needs a smile so much as those who have none to give.

WHERE DOES VOLUNTEERING FIT?

Today, more than ever before in Australia, there are two distinct categories of workers - those who are paid to perform and those who volunteer. Our way of life would be drastically altered if volunteers ceased to exist, as one out of every four Australians fills a volunteer place in the arts, sport, welfare, environment or on managerial committees. Students should have the opportunities to examine the paid and unpaid roles performed in the home and community to value reasons for the volunteering of skills and services.

A focus of the purpose for, and roles of, volunteers will incorporate many curriculum areas. The draft of the national Studies of Society and Environment for Australian Schools has a strand entitled "Cultures and Beliefs" which explores and develops the concept of unpaid work.

Personal Development, Social Education, Language and Mathematics studies can also be given extra impetus, dimension and individual student appeal by investigating and comparing experiences, hardships and successes of past and present volunteers.

Introducing such a focus will involve brainstorming, questioning, discussing, making decisions and choosing directions. Data gathering may involve, research, collecting data, conducting surveys, interviewing, listening, discussing and participating in excursions and field trips.

Sorting material should include critical thinking, collating, ordering, graphing, mapping, classifying and arranging displays. The final presentation of a topic invariably involves debating, role-playing, dance, drama, constructing models, testing experiments, building murals, designing posters, making summaries, preparing reports and writing poetry, plays and stories. These aspects of study involves a sequence of activities that encourage the development of knowledge, skills, values and actions.

Through a study of volunteer effort the student will begin to develop a system of values and attitudes that enable successful participation in society, as well as the ability to use knowledge, skills, and values gained through participation in the program, to have a positive impact on the world.

A CLOSER LOOK AT VOLUNTEERING

TEAM work ... Together Everyone Achieves More.

'Teams in the workplace composed of people with differing personalities are 14 percent more productive than teams composed of more compatible individuals.' - Fisher, Macrosson and Wong, Journal of Managerial Psychology 1998.

Volunteering is about teamwork and building communities that share a common vision, purpose, and work collaboratively to 'make a difference'. This is done through focussing on children, young people and their families.

Volunteering initiatives can
- Enable organisations to become involved in new and broader issues without having the sole responsibility for managing or developing them,
- Demonstrate and develop widespread public support for issues, actions, or unmet community needs.
- Maximise the power of individuals and groups through joint action.
- Minimise the duplication of effort and services.
- Help mobilise more talent, resources and approaches to influence an issue, than any single organisation could achieve alone.
- Provide an avenue for recruiting participants from diverse constituencies - such as political, business, human service, social and religious groups - and less-organised grassroots groups and individuals.
- Exploit new resources in changing situations.

Mobilisation of any kind begins with a catalyst. The catalyst can be a person or an event. The mobilisation process may begin with two citizens conversing in a cafe or office, or with a single person who wants to improve the community response to the needs of children, young people and their families.

Community mobilisation is a process of dialogue among members of the community to determine who, what, and how issues are decided and addressed. It provides an avenue for everyone to participate in decisions and actions that affect their lives, and the lives of others. Volunteering is a catalyst and a resource for a sustainable society by promoting innovative, empowering and collaborative actions.

Volunteering
- Promotes sustainability and sustainable development at a local, regional, national and international level.
- Helps to solve fundamental development problems using a system-based framework that involves stakeholders and interested parties in the creation of sustainable solutions.
- Inspires others to make sustainability work, helping them put sustainability into practice by developing and sharing ideas, tools, and frameworks as well as convening community-based projects.
- Fosters long-term social change through policy advocacy, education and civic action

Volunteering emphasises using 'the head, the heart, and the hands' to develop community benefits that include
- The creation of a community-wide agenda for change.
- The development and delivery of strategies that are effective in reaching under-serviced populations.
- The building of a solid foundation of mutual accountability
- The mobilisation of the community's collective assets to produce results for children, youth and families.
- The promotion of community ownership and a subsequent expansion of the work support base.
- Increased access to preventative programs and services.
- The demonstration of measurable, community-wide change - and the celebration of same.

THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering by young people has identified two main types of benefits:
- outcomes of primary benefit to the community
- outcomes of primary benefit to the individual volunteers.

Volunteering can improve:
- their awareness of the needs of different groups in society;
- their personal and political efficacy – by taking action they were able to influence political and social events;
- their political awareness;
- their socio-political thinking and awareness;
- their personal skills, e.g. research and presentation skills.

Five main categories of individual benefits are:
- satisfaction and affirmation
- social engagement
- personal growth and development
- acknowledgement and appreciation
- career benefits

FACTORS THAT HELP TO MAKE THE VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE EITHER POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE

Positive
- Working with or for other people, especially young people.
- Being able to work in teams rather than alone.
- Having a variety of interesting tasks.
- Having some control over what tasks are done and how they are done.
- Having input into goals and objectives and being able to work toward them.
- Having opportunities to use skills and creativity.
- Having opportunities to gain new skills.
- Being given appropriate levels of responsibility – not too much to be stressful but not so little that they are under constant direction.
- Being given opportunities to move upwards through an organisation to new responsibilities.
- Being welcomed into an organisation by other workers or volunteers.
- Being able to see the results of their efforts.
- Being appreciated and rewarded.

Negative
- Being given repetitive, mundane or boring tasks with no obvious rationale.
- Having no opportunities to use skills and creativity.
- Having no input into goals, objectives or activities.
- Being over-directed.
- Being given too much responsibility leading to stress.
- Working in isolation or alone.
- Having few opportunities for interaction with other people.
- Not being trusted.
- Being given dangerous or demeaning tasks.
- Being asked to conform to rigid regulations or traditions that have no apparent meaning or purpose.
- Not being acknowledged or appreciated.
- Being rejected by a community or volunteer organisation.
- Being unable to see any impact of their efforts.

ASSESSING COMMUNITY POTENTIAL

If you were taking a complicated route out of town, you would write down the directions. But if you were considering the future path of your life - your goals, and what you needed to achieve them - you probably wouldn't write any of it down. Think of it - the most significant journey of your life, and you probably won't put a word of the directions on paper.

Writing down your plans, goals and ideas makes them more real for you. Every step you take to define what you want, and what you need to get it, increases the chances that you will actually pursue these goals and someday achieve them.

Goals
Recruit and maintain the right leadership. Successful community mobilisations identify a formal leader who has name recognition, credibility, passion, and a reputation for getting things done. Leadership must be effective in brokering and building bridges among those involved in planning, and implementing the mobilisation work.

Recruit and organize school and community assistance and support
- Present the volunteering philosophy to inform, encourage and recruit parent and community support.
- All volunteer and staff leaders of the mobilisation should be the first among equals.
- All leadership, both staff and volunteer, should be skilled at building and maintaining relationships, and at building bridges to foster collaborative work towards a shared vision.

Staff and volunteers should reflect the diversity of the community.

A volunteer may be anyone with
- the desire to 'make a positive difference'.
- a fondness for children and a sense of enjoyment in working with them.
- a sincere desire to help.
- time available on a regular basis.
- dependability, reliability, friendliness, flexibility.
- good health and high ethical standards.
- a willingness to learn and to follow directions.
- special talents to help enrich the school program.
- and who can
- accept an assignment as a serious commitment.
- maintain strict confidentiality regarding 'what happens' at school.
- recognize and accept the ethical and legal responsibilities involving the privacy of students' records.

A comprehensive mobilisation requires a variety of partners since no one entity can accomplish outcomes alone.
- Identify interests, talents, times of availability, and individual needs of volunteers.
- All stakeholders must be involved in the decision-making processes, rather than   merely serving as advisors.
- Organize the initial projects.
- Equip a common room/meeting area for volunteers.
- Develop communication structures for all stakeholders.

Challenges

- Strategies should balance long-term with short-term, big with small - and consider sustainability issues if volunteering is to measurably impact on the community in the long term.
- Instead of an 'us-them' mentality volunteers adopt 'we' as the primary mechanism for getting things done.
- A balance of power in relationships is needed in order to move forward with collaborative planning and action.
- Inform, encourage and recruit volunteers widely so that all know that their time and talents are welcome.
- Develop flexible schedules to enable volunteers to participate at times, and in activities, suited to them.
- Organize volunteer work, provide training, match time and talents with project needs, and recognize efforts so that participants are productive.
- In order to sustain volunteers it is essential that processes be reviewed on an on-going basis. It is imperative to establish a formal tracking and monitoring plan.
- Celebrations, either private or public, allow collaborators to take time to recognise their achievements, use their successes to make a statement to the community, reflect on the path to the present status, and ponder future challenges that may be faced.

Anticipated Outcomes

For Students
- Increased skill in communicating with adults.
- Positive reinforcement of skills that receive targeted attention from volunteers.
- Further awareness of many skills, talents, occupations, and contributions of parents and other volunteers.

For Volunteers
- Understanding teacher and school perspectives; increased comfort in school interactions and a carry-over of school activities at home.
- Increased self-confidence in ability to work in school and with children, or take steps for own education or work.
- An all-family awareness that families are welcomed and valued at school.
- Further development of the specific skill sets.

For Educators
- An increased readiness to involve families and community/industry volunteers in new ways.
- A greater awareness of parent and volunteer talents and interest in school and children.
- Greater individual attention to students.

CONSIDERING THE HOME AS THE ESSENTIAL 'PLACE TO BE'

The great successes of our time are just extraordinary people on whom fate smiled, aren't they ...

No, in reality, they are not. Successful people get where they are by following a strategic plan. They learn what it takes to get ahead.

We understand that to build a house it takes a plan, a blueprint, but we sometimes forget that to build a successful life, it also takes a blueprint.

Goal
Help all families establish home environments, and community organizations to undertake projects, which support children as students.
- Provide suggestions for home and neighbourhood conditions that support action-based and age-appropriate learning.
- Provide workshops for, and/or print/electronic materials on, parenting and child-development.
- Provide opportunities which will expand the skill-sets of parents and community members,
- Arrange family support/assistance programs to help families with health nutrition, and other perceived problems.

Challenges
Provide information to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building.
- Enable families to share information about culture, background, children's talents and needs in the appropriate forums.
- Assure that all information for and from families is clear, usable, is able to achieve positive outcomes, and is kept confidential.

Anticipated Outcomes

For Students
- A greater awareness of family concerns, and further respect for parents
- Positive personal qualities, habits, beliefs, values, 'caught and taught' by family.
- Balance in time on chores, other activities, and homework.
- Awareness of importance of making the most of self-improvement opportunities.

For Volunteers
- Understanding and confidence about parenting, child and adolescent development, and changes in home conditions as children grow.
- Awareness of own and others' challenges in parenting.
- Feeling of support from school, other parents and community organisations.

For Educators
- Understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, concerns, goals, needs, and views of their children.
- Respect for families' strengths and efforts.
- A greater understanding of student diversity.
- An awareness of own skills to share information on child development.

COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

If you were making a sandwich, you would do it in order. First a slice of bread, then the fillings, then the seasonings, then the other slice. It wouldn't make any sense to change the order. Even if you really liked mustard, you wouldn't put it on the plate first.

When we are pursuing our goals, however, we see the steps we want to take and sometimes want to skip the steps that are less exciting. But stepping out of order is ultimately frustrating and futile.

Take your goals one at a time, and appreciate the process as you move forward. Otherwise you won't.

Goal
Design more effective forms of school-to-home, home-to-school and community communications.
- Positive interactions with every parent at least once every month weeks, with follow-ups as required.
- Language translators or 'trusted friends' are available to assist families as needed.
- Weekly or monthly folders of student work are sent home and reviewed, parental comments returned to the school.
- A regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications is developed.
- Clear information on all school policies, programs reforms, and transitions is available on request.

Challenges
Review the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and non-print communications.
- Consider parents who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need other assistance.
- Review the quality of major communications such as the schedule, content, and structure of conferences; newsletters; report cards and others.
- Establish clear two-way channels for communications from home to school, school to home, and school to community.

Anticipated Outcomes

For Students
- Awareness of own progress, and actions needed to maintain or improve performance.
- Understanding of school/community expectations and procedures.
- Awareness of own role in partnerships, serving as courier and communicator.

For Volunteers
- Understanding school/community programs and policies.

For Educators
- Increased diversity and use of communications with families/ community, and awareness of own ability to communicate clearly.
- Appreciation and use of parent/community networks for communications.

IDENTIFYING HOME AND COMMUNITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Researchers have found that a fascinating change takes place in schoolchildren. When they begin their studies, strong and weak students show an equal willingness to ask questions when they do not understand.

However, as they get older and begin to notice their relative positions in class, students - especially weaker students - become reluctant to ask questions and reveal what they do not know. - Butler, R. Developmental Psychology, 1999

Goal

Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students allocate time for their curricular-related activities and their family/ social activities.

- Information on home activity policies and how to monitor, and discuss schoolwork at home.
- Information on how to assist students to improve skills on various class and school assignments.
- Regular schedule of activities that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what their involvements are.
- Calendars with activities for parents and students at home.

Challenges

- Design and organize a regular schedule that gives students responsibility for discussing important things they are learning, and helps families stay aware of the content of their children's learning.
- Involve families with their children in all-important curricular-related and community-related decisions.

Anticipated Outcomes

For Students
- Gain skills and develop new abilities linked to class work and community opportunities.
- An increased, positive self concept.
- Awareness of own role in decision making in real life situations.

For Volunteers
- Know how to support, encourage, and help student at home.
- An understanding of instructional programs.
- An appreciation of teaching skills.
- An awareness of child as person, and as a learner.

For Educators
- Respect of family time.
- Recognition of equal helpfulness of single parent, working parents, and less formally educated families to motivate and reinforce student learning.
- Satisfaction with family involvement and support.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Goal
Include parents and other volunteers in school decisions, developing community leaders and representatives.
- Active parent involvement in school advisory councils, school committees and community groups
- Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school/ community reform and improvements.
- Networks to link and include all families in school and community decision-making.

Challenges
- Include parents and other volunteers from all of racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and other groups in the school.
- Offering training to enable leaders to serve as representatives of other parents, with input from and return of information to all parents.
- Include students as well as parents in decision making processes.

Anticipated Outcomes

For Students
- Awareness of representation of parents in school decisions.
- Understanding that students' rights are protected.
- Specific benefits linked to actions taken by parent and community organizations .

For Volunteers
- Input into policies that affect child's education.
- Shared experiences and connections with other families.
- Awareness of school, district, and state relationships and policies.

For Educators
- Awareness of parent perspectives in policy development and decisions.
- View of equal status of family representatives on committees and in leadership roles.

WORKING IN, AND WITH, THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Goal
Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.
- Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services.
- Information on community activities that link to skills and talents, including other community/vacation programs.
- Planned service integration of school in partnership with businesses, civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation, and other agencies and organizations.
- Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g., art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others, etc.)
- Link to past students, past parents and past teachers.

Challenges
- Solve problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities.
- Inform families of community programs for students, such as mentoring, tutoring, business partnerships, and other programs.
- Assure equity of opportunities for students and families to participate in community programs or to obtain services.
- Match community contributions with school goals; integrate child and family services with education.

Anticipated Outcomes

For Students
- Increased skills and talents through enriched curricular and curricular experiences.
- Awareness of careers, and options for future education and work.
- Pride in community, and in own service to the community.

For Volunteers
- Knowledge and use of local resources by family and child to increase skills and talents, or obtain needed services.
- Family pride in and contributions to community.
- Interactions with other families in community activities.
- Awareness of school's role in the community, and community support and contributions to the school.

For Educators
- Awareness of community resources.
- Openness to and skill in using mentors, business partners, community volunteers, and others to assist students and teaching practice.
- Pride and participation in community.

VOLUNTEERING AND YOUNG PEOPLE

When young people consider participating in a volunteer activity most of them look for three aspects in particular:
- activities that engage their passions and interests and give them opportunities to put their values and convictions into action;
- activities that involve other young volunteers and/or young people as the object of the volunteer activity, e.g. youth programs, camps, care for young people with disabilities; and
- activities where they can see that their help is needed and their efforts have an impact.

Within the broad framework of these three major considerations the specific volunteer activity that each person undertakes (and some participate in more than one) reflect their individual characteristics and circumstances including:
- where they live;
- their age and skills;
- their language/cultural background;
- the church or religious community they belong to;
- their personal development needs and goals;
- their career goals;
- the time they have available to devote to voluntary activities;
- their gender;
- previous community service or involvement; and
- the information they have about volunteering opportunities.

The young people also indicate that they obtain considerable benefits from their participation in community/volunteer activities. More specifically they identify five main types of individual benefits:
- satisfaction and affirmation;
- social engagement;
- personal growth and development;
- acknowledgement and appreciation; and
- career benefits.

They also indicate that most benefits are gained when the volunteering experience is a positive one. Positive experiences are those that include:
- working with or for other people, especially other young people;
- being able to work in teams rather than alone;
- having a variety of interesting tasks;

- having some control over what tasks are done and how they are done;
- having input into goals and objectives and being able to work toward them;
- having opportunities to use skills and creativity;
- having opportunities to gain new skills;
- being given appropriate levels of responsibility – not too much to be stressful
- but not so little that they areunder constant direction;
- being given opportunities to move upwards through an organisation to new responsibilities;
- being welcomed into an organisation by other workers or volunteers;
- being able to see the results of their efforts; and
- being appreciated and rewarded.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Community organisations see involvement in community activities such as volunteering as a way for young people to learn about themselves, to develop their skills, confidence and capabilities while also contributing to their communities.

These organisations value young volunteers because:
- they provide energy and enthusiasm;
- they have useful skills and ideas;
- they help to build relationships with the community, particularly with young people;
- they help to renew and re-invigorate the organisation; and
- they are future community leaders.

Organisations that are the most successful in attracting and retaining young people appear to be those that:
- recognise the lifestyle issues that young people face, particularly the demands on their time;
- keep training short and provide opportunities for young people to move quickly from training to active involvement;
- offer young people opportunities to participate in activities that suit their skills and enthusiasm;
- talk to young people in language that is familiar to them and that they can understand; and
- have charismatic leaders with a high media profile or offer opportunities for young people to meet and work with high profile groups or individuals.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE YOUNG PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER

The reasons people volunteer are as diverse as the volunteers themselves. Young people volunteer to make contacts, learn new skills, gain work experience and build their self-esteem. Volunteering allows volunteers to maintain and gain new job skills, return something to the community, explore new career paths and basically help someone else

Volunteers fit into six categories:
- a value function – people volunteer to express or act on values they think are important;
- an enhancement function – to enhance their self-esteem and psychological development;
- a social function – to interact with others;
- an understanding function – to increase their knowledge of the world and develop and practice skills;
- a career function – to gain experiences that will benefit their careers;
- a protective function – to cope with inner anxieties and conflicts.

The factors that encourage young people to volunteer seem to be as varied as the young people themselves. Young people seek many different returns from volunteering and sometimes an individual will take on a number of different volunteer activities, each for a different reason or combination of reasons.

Young people understand that some restrictions on volunteering are imposed for safety or security, but are more concerned about restrictions imposed for no obvious reason, or because of mistaken views about the capabilities and skills of young people. Three main factors which discourage young people from volunteering are
- lack of time;
- lack of interest;
- not being asked.

When young people consider participating in a volunteer or community service activity, most of them look for three types of activities in particular:
- activities that engage their passions and interests and give them opportunities to put their values and convictions into action.

- activities that involve other young volunteers and/or young people as the object of the volunteer activity, e.g. youth programs, camps, care for young people with disabilities.
- activities where they can see that their help is needed and their efforts have an impact.

A voluntary activity is potentially attractive to them only if it meets these three basic criteria.

The kinds of volunteer activities that young people prefer are those that engage their passions and interests, that give them opportunities to meet and work with other young people and that have an obvious impact.

FURTHER FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE YOUNG PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER

In addition, when they choose a specific volunteer activity, young people are influenced by a number of further factors. Their personal characteristics, such as their age, gender, skills, beliefs and social/cultural background are important - but their choices will also reflect the information they have about volunteer options, their career aspirations and goals, the time commitment an activity requires, their previous volunteering experience, the involvement of friends and family and how the volunteer activity fits in with other aspects of their lives.

Gender appears to play an important role among young people. For young males the 'uncoolness' of volunteering can be outweighed – and peer status earned – through involvement in activities that are seen as traditionally masculine, such as those that involve sport or working with emergency services.

By contrast they appear generally much more reluctant to take on activities that they believe their peers might see as feminine, such as those involving 'caring' for others.

These gender-based effects tend to be tempered by membership of a cultural or religious community, or career aspirations and goals. For instance, a young male aiming toward a career in medicine may be more likely to consider 'caring' roles than his peers, if he sees it as providing him with opportunities to learn useful skills and gain appropriate experience.

Similarly, notions of 'acceptable' behaviour for young males appear to differ within different cultural and/or religious communities so that while participation in some activities is deemed 'uncool' in one context, it is desirable in another.

For young females there may also be gender-based factors. They also may come under pressure from communities, families and friends to engage in, or avoid, some particular kinds of activities.

For volunteer organisations hoping to attract and retain young people they might, for instance:

- re-examine the structure of their volunteer programs to ensure that they offer young people opportunities to meet and work with others in their age group; to pursue their interests; and to see how their efforts are having an effect;
- remember that young people's choices of volunteer activity can be constrained by their age. There are a number of activities that are not open to young people under 18 years of age and this can be frustrating for those who would like to participate in them.
- that they understand that young people face many demands on their time and may not be able to devote a lengthy or regular period of time to a volunteer activity - they might incorporate more flexibility into their volunteer programs, so that young people are able to fit volunteer activities better into their busy lives;
- provide young people with more information about volunteer options, and consider how they could improve existing information by adding more detail and disseminate information more widely;
- recognise the difficulties that some young people face in undertaking a volunteer activity that is seen as 'uncool' by their peers and work to ensure that young volunteers have the support they need to continue and that their efforts are well-rewarded.

THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF HAVING YOUNG VOLUNTEERS

There is a distinct cost to using volunteers for any organisation.
- the cost of providing additional equipment or accommodation for new volunteers;
- the cost of staff time spent on managing the volunteers and their work;
- the costs of training to ensure that volunteers have skills required by legislation to
- perform certain tasks (e.g. occupational health and safety);
- other training costs, e.g. in skills required for certain activities, in the organisation's systems etc;
- incidental costs, such as reimbursement of expenses, travel costs;
- the cost of advertising etc. to recruit volunteers;
- costs incurred in providing some rewards to volunteers (e.g. the costs of holding a formal dinner to present volunteers with an award).

Benefits of engaging young volunteers in particular:
- ensuring the future survival and on-going renewal of the organisation (e.g. succession planning);
- building relationships with young people and with future leaders.
- without volunteers the organisation would not exist.
- it provides an opportunity to bring benefit to the volunteers themselves, and to society in general

A SUMMARY OF THE KEY MESSAGES

Young people are community-minded. The majority of young people see themselves as members of a broader community. They care about their communities and they have a positive view of organisations and activities that they believe will 'make a difference' where problems and difficulties occur.

Some young people face barriers to volunteering. Although they may have a desire to contribute to their communities, some young people are unable to participate in community/volunteer activities because they face external and internal (personal) barriers.

External barriers
- Lack of information: they don't know about volunteering opportunities.
- Peer pressure: volunteering has an image as 'uncool' among some young people.
- Restrictions on volunteers: some organisations reject volunteers below a certain age, or require a minimum or regular time commitment from their volunteers.

Internal (personal) barriers
- Lack of skills: some young people believe they do not have the skills necessary to be a volunteer.
- Lack of confidence: it can be intimidating for young people to approach volunteer organisations.
- Time constraints: study and work commitments leave young people with limited time for other activities.
- Disaffection with community/volunteer activities: caused by a poor previous experience or by inappropriate advertising.

Other than in time and energy, young people do not see costs as a barrier to participation in community/volunteer activities. Generally, where costs are highest, they are refunded by volunteer organisations. In other cases, any costs appeared to be balanced by rewards and benefits.

Young people value some types of community/volunteer activities above others and are selective about the community/volunteer activities in which they participate.

In particular they look for:

- activities that will engage their passions and interests and give them opportunities to put their values and convictions into action;
- activities that will involve other young people – either other young volunteers or young people who are the objects of the activity; and
- activities where they can see that their help is needed and their efforts have an impact.

Once these three basic requirements are met, their choice of activity will also reflect where the young people live, their gender, language and cultural background, religious affiliations, membership of clubs and associations, role models, previous experience and the time they have available.

Young people benefit from volunteering - especially when the volunteering experience is a positive one - and can gain five main types of individual benefits from volunteering:

- satisfaction and affirmation: having fun, feeling needed and making a difference;
- social engagement: interaction with other people, particularly other young people;
- personal growth/development: growth in understanding of the world and themselves, more self-confidence;
- appreciation and formal recognition: from a "pat on the back" to more formal certificates and references;
- skills, contacts and experience that will help them to secure paid work.

Some young people benefit from volunteering even when their experiences are negative ones. However, more importantly, young people seem to gain the most benefits when they enjoy volunteering. This is significant because it indicates that attempts to increase the benefits of volunteering for young people should concentrate on improving the experience.

Young volunteers are valued, and are sought after by volunteer organisations because:
- they provide energy and enthusiasm;
- they have useful skills and ideas;
- they help to build relationships with the community, particularly with young people;
- they help to renew and re-invigorate the organisation; and
- they are future community leaders.

These benefits outweigh the costs of having young volunteers, which are little different from the costs of having volunteers in general.

Some volunteer organisations are more attractive to young people than others. While some communities and organisations are very successful in attracting young people to participate in their activities, there are others that experience almost the direct opposite.

Organisations that are the most successful in attracting and retaining young people are those that:
- recognise the lifestyle issues that young people face, particularly the demands on their time;
- keep training short and provide opportunities for young people to move quickly from training to active involvement;
- offer young people opportunities to participate in activities that suit their skills and enthusiasm;
- talk to young people in language that is familiar to them and that they can understand;
- have charismatic leaders with a high media profile or offer opportunities for young people to meet and work with high profile groups or individuals.

Knowledge, skills and abilities required by Community Sector

Working in the community sector is quite different to working in a business. The main reason for this is that primary motivations of competition and profit are not driving the business forward - people are.

People who work in this sector are passionate about their work, and are motivated usually by personal, social or emotional reasons.

These people are the drivers of the organisations and groups in the not for profit and community sector.

Nonprofits need strong organisational management
• This is no different to a for profit business. Decisions need to be made strategically, time needs to be managed effectively and resources need to be properly and carefully allocated. Processes and systems need to be in place to help manage, track and evaluate the day to day operation of the business. This is particularly important in reporting to funders of NFPS.

Nonprofits require efficient and effective human resource management
• As outlined earlier, people are the driving force behind nonprofits. Harnessing the passion, the interest and the motivation of people and channelling it so it can be realised in strategic projects with tangible outcomes is a tremendous HR challenge.
• Recruitment, selection and retention of paid staff and volunteers is frequently discussed within the sector. Intellectual capital and knowledge management are becoming increasingly important as organisations lose their drivers who are headhunted by other ambitious NFP as well as the for profit sector. Succession planning and strategic HR management is essential for sustainability.

Nonprofits need to market themselves
• Nonprofits will struggle to attract volunteers and to realise their vision if nobody knows they exist. Attracting funding also is dependant on strong profiling and clear communication of vision, mission and how these will be realised. Indeed, a light marketing hand is required to pitch your cause to attract funding.
• Also, within the technologically driven environment, nonprofits need to embrace technology as much

as possible. Utilising skilled IT project volunteers is a great way of doing this.

Nonprofits depend on frugal financial management and conscientious reporting
• Nonprofits operate on minimal budgets. They are traditionally resource poor and dependant on the funding of government bodies. The funders of nonprofits are outcomes focussed and expect nonprofits to account for their contribution by demonstrating how the budget has been managed to maximise the required outcomes.

As you can see, key areas of business that you have experienced and learned about in the past are equally as important in community organisations as for profit enterprises. It is just the motivations that are different. With this in mind, it is easy to see that most of the knowledge, skills and abilities developed in the commercial world can be transferred with great benefit to the community sector.

Shifting the thinking – how project volunteers can really make a difference
One of the most important ways a project team can contribute to a community group is in creative thinking.
Many people already working in the community sector are striving towards their organisation's vision daily.
Their contributions are unfathomable. But with fresh faces come fresh ideas. People with diverse backgrounds, cultures, experience and education coming together to contribute to a vision, whether it be helping other people, animals or the environment, can be a dynamic experience. The solutions, pathways and opportunities that can be realised by such a team are limited only by the time and scope of the project, and then by the goals they are striving to achieve.

Bringing new thinking and contributing to innovative practice is one of the great gifts project volunteers can give to the community. In opening volunteer's minds to the number of ways we can work together as a community to do good, and applying experience, knowledge, skills and abilities previously acquired, it is true that visions can be achieved.

Networking in the Community Sector

While there are opportunities for workers and managers alike to network with their peers in the Community Sector there is, however, an often heard lament that there are simply not enough hours in the day to allow for time away from our fundamental responsibilities.

Perhaps a more subtle benefit of networking is the way in which partnerships, collaborative projects and the sharing of services can be identified and implemented.

Networking can be the fertiliser that fosters the development of good relationships between individuals and their organisations, and leads to collaboration between services.

Effective relationships between individuals and their organisations are more often than not the first step in sharing services and collaboration. How much easier is it to approach someone you know as opposed to a complete stranger?

So too with collaborative projects between independent organisations. Organisations that network effectively will know of other organisations with similar or complementary philosophies, consumers or services, and through good relationships with these organisations the desire to share or collaborate becomes a real possibility.

Networking can save an organisation duplication, money and time thereby allowing you to provide more cohesive and targeted services to those that use or need your organisation.

In short, effective networking can benefit an organisation and more importantly can benefit the people that rely on the organisation. With the promise of spreading limited resources further for your organisation, and improved service delivery for those that use your organisation, it becomes a little easier to see how networking and networks are in fact a pivotal part of the work that we do.

While it is sometimes difficult to block out two hours of one's day for a network meeting it might be worth remembering that the strength of our organisations relies on our ability and willingness to work together towards a common goal.

Ethics

What is a code of ethics?

Some organisations develop written guidelines or a code of ethics so that everyone has a clear understanding of what is expected, including people outside the organisation. If this code is developed by the management committee and staff, it is more likely to be relevant and useful.

Whilst people will not always have the same values, it is important that everyone can agree on a code of ethics that describes how the organisation will be managed and how services will be provided. A code of ethics provides a general understanding of the ethical or moral responsibilities that the management committee and staff are expected to meet while they are working for the organisation.

Under a code of ethics, paid staff, volunteers and management committee members might be expected to respect other staff, behave honestly and work for the benefit of the organisation and its clients. The code of ethics might also include expectations about the way that staff provide services to clients and how members of the management committee make decisions for the organisation.

What is a code of conduct?

Whilst the code of ethics will provide everyone with an understanding of the general guidelines, it may also be beneficial to develop a code of conduct or policies that describe how people are expected to behave. An example could be that staff and management committee members do not let their personal and financial interests interfere with their responsibilities to the organisation. If someone could act in their own interest rather than those of the organisation, it is as a conflict of interest.

The code of conduct or policies may stipulate that management committee members and/or staff should be open about any possible conflict of interest. Developing procedures to follow for each policy is also a good idea. For example, if the management committee or group that is responsible for making decisions about the issue decides that there is a real conflict of interest, the person might not be able to be involved in the discussion or decision-making.

By developing codes of ethics and conduct, it is clear to everyone within the organisation what is expected and will help to avoid conflict. It will also be clear to your clients, funding bodies and others external to the organisation that you are operating fairly and honestly.

Governance

Governance involves

- providing leadership and direction for the organisation.
- maintenance of appropriate controls - such as delegation, reporting and monitoring
- managing risks
- managing and planning finances
- managing people
- enhancing working relationships
- positive representation of the organisation, and
- complying with laws and legal obligations

Dealing with conflicts of interest

What is a conflict of interest?

Consult ten different sources and you will probably get ten different explanations of exactly what constitutes a conflict of interest. That is because a conflict of interest is a lot like beauty – it's often in the eye of the beholder. That is why Board members need to try to avoid even the perception of a potential conflict of interest.

Generally, a conflict of interest situation arises when a Board member's duty to his/her not-for-profit organisation clashes with their duties, obligations or interests elsewhere – their business or workplace interests, for example, or even those of his/her family or friends.

Some examples of conflicts of interest include:
• A Board member's daughter is put to the top of a long waiting list for the childcare services provided by the organisation s/he governs.
• A Board member's family business is given a contract without any other quotes being asked for.
• A Board member's sister's business bids for a Board-controlled contract and is successful, even though it's not the most competitive bid.
• A Board member's son or daughter is given a job with the organisation, despite the position not being advertised.

Such situations as described above can cause real damage to official and public confidence in the Board and the reputations of individual Board members - even those not directly involved in the conflict. Failing to adequately deal with a conflict of interest may not always be illegal, but it will almost always be unethical.

There are other situations that can give rise to potential rather than actual conflicts of interest, which can be just as serious in undermining confidence in your group and your Board. Steps you can take to prevent the potential conflict becoming a real conflict are outlined later in this help sheet.

Other examples of potential conflicts of interests include:
- An organisation needs new headquarters and a Board member believes the vacant office buildings s/he owns would be perfect.
- A Board is planning to engage a consultant and a Board member wants his/her company to bid.
- A Board is planning to engage a consultant and a Board member wants his/her sister's company to bid.
- A person serving simultaneously on two Boards, and expected to help raise funds for both, finds s/he is expected to approach the same people or organisations for donations for the two different groups.

Scenarios such as these do not necessarily have to develop into fully blown conflict of interest situations as long as correct procedures are followed and the decision that is made is truly in the best interests of the Board.

Strategies for avoiding a conflict of interest

Board members do not live within the prism of their Board work but have a range of other personal and professional interests and relationships. It is no surprise, then, that almost all Board members will come across a real, potential or perceived conflict of interest at some point.

Prevention is always better than a cure and you should check if your organisation has a policy or particular rules about how these situations should be handled. The policy or rules should stipulate when and how a Board member should disclose their personal and financial interests, how they should deal with gifts made to them in the course of their Board role, under what circumstances relatives or friends of Board members can be hired or considered for contracts, penalties for breaching the code, etc. If your Board has such a policy, read it and commit it to memory – then follow it. If your Board does not have one, speak to your colleagues about introducing one.

As a general rule, you should:

- Ensure your Board has good policies and procedures in place so that all decisions are made fairly and transparently This will help remove any perceptions that your Board processes are carried out in undue secrecy or that things are being hidden.

- It is a good idea if the Board has in place a competitive process to assess contracts and other business deals.

- Follow the rules to the letter. Some Boards will require that all members make a yearly declaration detailing all the businesses, groups and other Boards they and their family members are affiliated with. If such a document exists in your Board, ensure you fill it in accurately and on time.

- Avoid joining Boards whose interests correspond too closely with those of your business or personal life as clashes will inevitably occur in these cases. Similarly, avoid joining highly homogenous Boards. Diverse Boards are the best at guarding against conflicts of interest as members represent a range of backgrounds, views and interests, usually leading to a more vigorous decision-making process.

- Seek legal advice whenever you think you or a Board colleague may be at risk of encountering a potential, real or perceived conflict of interest.

What to do when you have a conflict of interest

Despite your best intentions, you may one day find yourself exposed to a conflict of interest situation. Again, there are steps you can take to protect yourself and your Board from damage.

- As soon as you encounter a possible conflict of interest, notify the Board immediately. Provide information about the interest and how it may conflict with your Board role.

- Ask not to be posted any Board or internal papers that discuss the matter.

- Avoid any informal discussions that might influence fellow Board members on the matter.

- When the matter is raised formally during a meeting, declare your interest and leave the room. Don't wait to be asked. Ask to be called back when the item has been dealt with. Ensure the minute-taker notes why and when you left and when you rejoined the meeting.

Seek legal advice if you are in doubt about how to handle a real or potential conflict of interest. If you feel it is impossible to resolve the conflict, consider resigning from the Board.

Current Values and Philosophies

The current values and philosophies underpinning work in Community Services in Australia are those which embrace a holistic and person-centred approach.

This means:
- Promoting the well being of staff, clients and communities
- The early identification of problems
- The delivery of appropriate services
- Being committed to meeting the needs of people
- Being committed to upholding the rights of people
- Being committed to empowering the person, client and/or the community
- Demonstrating ethical behaviour
- mplementing preventative strategies
- Exercising the responsibilities and accountabilities within the context of duty of care for clients

Person-centred Approach

Why do you think it is important to apply a person-centred approach to work in disabilities?

What do you think might happen or what problems might arise if a person-centred approach is NOT applied to work in disabilities?

What can you do specifically to ensure that you always undertake your work using a person-centred approach?

Legislation

Which legislation is particularly relevant to your work role and where can you locate it?

Where can you locate an organisation's policies and procedures?

If you are unsure of your legislative or organisational obligations, where can you go for assistance or more information?

Rights and Responsibilities

What can you do if you feel your rights are being impinged upon in the workplace?

What might be the result of not meeting your responsibilities as an employee?

PERSONAL RESEARCH A

According to the ABS, in 2006, 5.2 million people aged 18 years and over participated in voluntary work at least once in the previous 12 months. Of these, 3.1 million (21% of the population aged 18 years and over) were volunteers who worked at least once per fortnight for one or more organisations.

• These were figures from 2006.
• How might you find the current statistics?

PERSONAL RESEARCH B

In 2006, volunteers contributed 713 million hours of voluntary work.

• What are the current hours worked by volunteers?
• What would this work be worth in monetary terms?

PERSONAL RESEARCH C

In 2006, people aged 35-44 years were in the age group are most likely to volunteer.

• Is this also the situation today?
• What would this work be worth in monetary terms?

ABOUT ROBERT PALMER

When Robert Palmer began his training at Ballarat Teachers' College in the 1960's his experiences had been as a receiver of education, rather than an encourager of thinking.

The political climate at the time was all about 'individual differences' and 'thematic studies', but very few knew what these really meant. Robert certainly didn't.

While in the classroom for each 'teaching practicum' he became known as 'the magic man' by the children attending schools in Ballarat, and Robert later found there was competition among the supervising lecturers to come and see what Robert was doing next.

On graduation Robert decided that he would like to further his experience in rural, or country, locations – so that is what he did.

Early in 1980 Australia's newly-formed National Curriculum Development Centre asked Robert to trial some of the materials and approaches he had created in 1000 classrooms throughout Australia. A grant was provided to create, assemble distribute and independently assess ten teaching/learning packages, under the name of FUN ONES. Each pack contained 24 activity pages, followed a thematic approach for the numbers from 1 to 10, and addressed a wide range of individual experience levels.

The amount of funding could not address the demand – from within Australia and also from overseas – and this lead to the Curriculum Development Centre, in conjunction with the Education Department of Tasmania producing a large-format 86 page book 'The Best of FUN ONES'.

In 1985 Robert produced 4 books in a series entitled 'BRAIN FUN'. Each book contained 30 units and 20 gently-graded math questions, each for a specific area of mathematics development. These took up two-thirds of a page, and were supported by a logic puzzle. and a full-page pencil and paper activity.

The success of this series, and other publications, caused Robert to investigate the curriculum of fifteen different countries, correlate their aims and objectives, and create an A1-size chart 'The Sequential Development of Mathematics'.

The chart provided a 'road map' for teachers, children and parents – some whom considered it to be the first Scope and Sequence Matrix for Mathematics in the world.

We have much to share.