

Brown Bag Networking Lunch Notes - Mar. 8/18

Topic - Managing Time to Manage Volunteers Effectively

Attendees:

SSI Visitor's Centre - Laura (Lorna?)
SSI Farmers' Institute, and, Comfort Quilts - Marguerite
SSI Community Services - Food - Simone
SSI Water Preservation Society - Maxine
SSI Literacy - Stella
SSI Library - Nicky
SSI Transitions - Dennis
SSI Archives - Chris chrismarshall2406@gmail.com

What are the elements of a strong volunteer program?

- Recruitment strategies, including advertising, screening of applicants, background and reference checks
- Training and Orientation
- Making volunteers feel valued and appreciated
- Communication, including staying in touch, formally or informally, sending out newsletters
- Having Policies and Procedure written down and organized into handy manuals. This ensures that volunteers are treated equally, fairly and consistently. Find the time to do this and make sure you have a hard copy of these materials to pass along to the next volunteer who takes on the task.
- Scheduling can be done when you have a specific task to be done at specific times - most organizations don't have this. They might have an event or special task that they need volunteers for.

All participants acknowledged that there are big demands put onto volunteer managers, including the emotional aspects of keeping volunteers happy.

Visitor Centre has a steering committee that is responsible for Volunteers.

Library has trained volunteers to do their orientation and training sessions, from shelving to the front desk jobs.

Transitions has both Leadership and Front Line volunteers who take their own initiative to set up an event.

Most organizations have an application form or a personal screening process in place. Most offer a chance for a new volunteer to 'shadow' another volunteer to learn the job.

What challenges are you facing?

- Scheduling can be time consuming with people away or ill and those time slots needing to be filled.
- Succession planning and Recruitment - This is a perpetual challenge on Salt Spring with our aging demographic which results in a constant hunt for new volunteers. The SSEXchange \$9.00 feature ad is worth the money. Send newsletters and information about the new

positions you have available to your volunteers and ask them to pass this along to their friends and other people they are in contact with who might be interested.

- Discover what motivates your volunteers. Many organizations hold potluck dinners or volunteer meetings to socialize and get to know other volunteers in the same organization. Some may not see or know others because they are working in isolation or on different shifts. Marguerite recently attended a workshop in Port Alberni where it was suggested that we assess our volunteers and give them something that is meaningful to them as a reward. Some want a hug, some want a gift, some want help with the task. There is an online quiz to determine what an individual's reward preferences are at: uquiz.com\1Rzjih. Make sure that your volunteer recognition activities are covering a variety of rewards.

Time Management Tips - see Handout

- Know your goals, write them down and stay focussed.
- Tell the volunteer that you appreciate his/her problem but can they come up with some of their own suggestions for how the issue can be solved. This gives the volunteer ownership, empowerment and a chance to show leadership.
- Create a daily plan on paper that has time limits on the tasks you want to complete. (This could be a simple To Do List.) Block off specific time to check emails, and, keep your email replies brief.
- Learn how to say "No". Set up boundaries for the times you are unavailable and don't want to be interrupted. Nicky puts a sign on her Library office door, or she finds a quiet corner to work, that is out of the public view.

Reminders:

VCR has a website that posts your volunteer opportunities for free and for six months at www.vcrsaltspring.org.

VCR, along with our coffee sponsor partners in the community, are providing you with *It's Coffee Time Coupons* for you to distribute to your volunteers to redeem during National Volunteer Appreciation Week in April.