

# Developing Management Volunteers

## CHANGING ROLES

As salaried staff members begin developing management volunteers, staff roles need to change. As management volunteers share the program's coordination, two significant changes occur. One is a shift that the salaried staff member becomes a volunteer administrator/educator, and the second is the shift to a more collaborative program management approach with the delegation of more responsible program implementation to management volunteers. These changes and the possible implications are described in "Key Volunteers Strengthen the 4-H Program" by Snider. The conclusions apply to any voluntary organization.

## SHIFT TO COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT WITH VOLUNTEERS!

As the role and relationships of salaried staff members and volunteers are studied, a major issue emerges, "Who has authority over the program?" The more involvement volunteers **have** in program management tasks, the more they feel responsibility for the program. They also become more committed to the program and to its parent organization. Studies have shown the correlation between ownership and commitment. Peters and Waterman in **In Search of Excellence** point out,

"Psychologists study the need for self-determination in a field called 'illusion of control.' Stated simply, its findings indicate that if people think they have even modest personal control over their destinies, they will persist at tasks. They will do better at them. They will become more committed to them."

When volunteers feel more ownership of the program, one of the main concerns salaried staff members face is "letting go of the program." A basic concept of Extension as is true with most volunteer organizations is **to help people help themselves**. One could therefore argue that it should be required that salaried staff members develop a volunteer-centered program.

Allowing volunteers to take control, to take management responsibilities, and to have the authority to complete program management tasks is an indication of shared ownership of the program. There is a dynamic tension between the salaried staff member and volunteers for shared leadership of the program. When both salaried and volunteer staff members share leadership for the program, there is a balance in their working relationships.

The more time, energy and resources that a person puts into the program or activity, the more he or she benefits by it. An important role for salaried staff members is to work with volunteers, to provide an organization and atmosphere which causes people to be involved in their program. It is also important to help them to be successful. If the volunteers made program decisions and saw the benefits and impacts of the program, they were highly committed to program it.

The role of salaried staff member serving as volunteer administrator becomes one of working with management volunteers in the program development process. They share leadership of the program.

The steps of the program development process include:

- ? develop a needs assessment system;
- ? identify program goals or objectives relating to the needs;
- ? create a plan to meet the goals;
- ? develop a staff development system;
- ? establish a support system
- ? evaluate the relationship and the progress



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## BE AN EDUCATOR

The salaried staff member becomes a volunteer administrator through expanded volunteer staff. Two of the key components of the volunteer administrator include leading volunteer efforts and educating volunteers. The salaried staff member's educational influence becomes greater due to the multiplier effect that results from an effective volunteer program. Program leadership is developed through education.

Education is a very important role for a leader of volunteers. Wilson shares one of Walt Disney's ideas about the job of leadership, in **Survival Skills for Managers**.

"He compared the job of an effective leader/manager to that of a superlative mother. In his estimation, they both spent all of their time training. One-half of their time is spent nurturing their people...and the other half...spent on 'recycling people' with new challenges and assignments so they can be nurtured again."

The salaried staff member is an opportunist in education for three reasons.

1. Salaried staff members must teach volunteers how to teach including educational design and curriculum development. For volunteers to be educators of adults, they must understand adult education principles so effective education programs can be designed.
2. There is a higher pay-off when volunteers in management roles are effective. It is important that the volunteer understands and is able to accomplish his or her role. Salaried staff members influence the role of volunteers through their selection, education, support, and recognition.
3. With volunteers doing more of the activities, salaried staff members have more time available to train management volunteers who then can train other leaders.

Salaried staff members who avoided the "activity trap" were able to step back and look at the total program and give the program the direction and leadership desired by volunteers. A process Extension 4-H educators seem to find helpful is to focus on these four basic questions.

- ? **What are the strengths of the program?**
- ? **What are the areas that need strengthening or dropping?**
- ? **What are the priority goals?**
- ? **What plans will accomplish priority goals?**

These questions aren't to be addressed in a vacuum but by a team of salaried staff members and management volunteers. The salaried staff member's role as program leader is accomplished by giving leadership through the process, by "educating" the team or committee over a period of time. The content of the education (based on needs and interests of the learners) may be group process, current social trends affecting youth and adults, program delivery modes, priority determination, an educational system design for adults and/or youth, or evaluation of activities.

The teaching methods used may be one-half hour presentations to the group, questioning strategies during on-going committee meetings, counseling, advising, and one-on-one consultations. Other methods include: writing letters, brief idea sharing, facilitating committee meetings, or inviting "a visiting expert" (Extension staff or volunteers from another county), or consultants from other volunteer groups to share.



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When management volunteers are added to the organizational staffing model, two definite opportunities are provided. One is that salaried staff members can provide more overall program leadership and direction, with a broader based program management group sharing the load for planning, conducting, and evaluating the county program. With others carrying out many time consuming tasks, salaried staff members will have more discretionary time which can be prioritized for high impact tasks. Salaried staff members can step back from the program more and ask futuristic questions. This may also be the time for salaried staff members to consider adding additional volunteer roles to the program and consider strategies to better engage volunteers in the overall volunteer delivery system. Other possible tasks include: long range planning, developing new programs, starting programs with new audiences, or organizing new or revamping established leader education systems.

The second opportunities relate to just getting more educational work done through others. The educational staff will be increased as more management volunteers are involved as resource leaders, leader trainers, activity leaders to name a few. Also salaried staff members, through teaching volunteers, can improve the understanding of what our program is and how it works.

The drawback for many salaried staff members to improving volunteers in management roles is that it may take the salaried staff member away from much of the hands-on involvement with volunteers or clients that provide enjoyment and recognition for their position. The positive side of empowerment is "growing" volunteers, developing a stronger program, and freeing the staff's time to develop new avenues for program growth.

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Adapted from *Green TAXI, Developing Management Volunteers*, with permission of National 4-H Council.



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