



# CONNECTIONS

COMMUNITY OUTREACH THINK TANK NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2016

## VOLUNTEERS IN AMERICA

The nonprofit sector could not exist in its present form without the contributions of volunteers. They are a ubiquitous presence in every kind of charitable work. Yet they are also sometimes nearly invisible in discussions about the functioning of nonprofits.

A 2014 survey by the Corporation for National and Community Service on volunteers in America provides some startling figures to remind us how crucial a role they play in the civic life of the nation. Approximately 1 in 4 Americans (62.8 million) volunteers time to civic endeavors each year. They devote an average of 32 hours to their volunteer work, meaning that some 7.9 billion annual hours of service are donated, immensely benefitting the educational, civic, and nonprofit world each year. Those hours add up to \$184 billion dollars in services contributed to the welfare of the nation. Over the

past thirteen years volunteers have donated 104.9 billion hours of service, with an estimated value of 2.1 trillion dollars.

Thirty four percent of volunteers in 2014 worked primarily with a religious

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.”

**Arthur Ashe**

organization active in charity work. Fourteen percent volunteered their time to social service organizations. Eight percent devoted their efforts to groups dealing with health issues, and 6% donated their time to groups focusing on civic problems. The remainder were dispersed across a wide variety of issues.

Primary activities for volunteers included fundraising (24.7%) food collection and distribution (24.2%), general

labor (18.9%), tutoring (18%), and mentoring (17.2%). A study by the Urban Institute broke down types of volunteer activities into four basic roles: Direct Service (such as mentoring or tutoring); Service Work (tasks usually not bringing volunteers into direct contact with the public); Internal Administrative (filing, copying, answering phones); and External Administrative (fundraising, public relations, events). A 2014 survey of volunteer experiences found that individuals were likeliest to report satisfaction with their volunteer work when they felt that an organization closely matched the work they were assigned with their skills. Volunteering was important, but making the most efficient use of their skills in the volunteer work they sought was crucial.

Not surprisingly, given their commitment to service, volunteers don't just give time. They are more than twice as likely

as the general population to donate money to a cause (80% vs. 40%). And, thanks to the rise of social media, volunteers have become even more important as cause ambassadors, reaching out to their circles to encourage support for their causes.

The largest group of volunteers are from 35-44 years old (15.3%). The next largest group are from 45-54 years of age (14.3%). Other cohorts include those aged 65-74 (13.4%) 55-64 (13.2%), 16-19 (13.3%), 25-34 (11.1%) and 20-24 (9.3%).

New Jersey ranks 45<sup>th</sup> among the states in the number of its citizens who volunteer (1.61 million, or 22.5% of the population). They provide 225.5 million hours of service, with an estimated value to the state economy of \$5.2 billion dollars. In addition, 52.8% of residents donate \$25 or more to charity each year.

When queried as to why they donate time to civic causes, volunteers cite such motivating factors as a desire to play a part in solving local or national problems and an interest in strengthening their communities. They also note that being a volunteer allows them to connect to others, to feel that they are beneficially

impacting other lives, and to transform their own lives by doing necessary work without monetary reward and by learning new skills or using already established skills in a new way. In addition, it's worth noting that working with a nonprofit as a volunteer can have a positive impact on one's own career: unemployed volunteers have 20% higher odds of finding a job than non-volunteers, due in part to the new skills they can learn as a volunteer and the expanded social network they encounter.

Most small and many large nonprofits could not carry out their goals or achieve their mission without a regular cadre of volunteers. So it's not surprising, given the profound impact of volunteers on a nonprofit's ability to carry out its mission, that the literature on recruiting, training and managing volunteers is so large. We have surveyed some of the more recent literature on the subject in a search for new ideas on these related subjects.

Lance Trebesch, the CEO of a company offering a variety of promotional services to nonprofits, notes in a recent online post that he has had great success recruiting quality volunteers on college campuses.

Recent coverage of a variety of tawdry events at colleges and universities has tended to obscure the fact that many college students have both the energy and motivation to make excellent volunteers. In addition, the competition for jobs makes more students eager to add volunteer activities to their resumes. In addition, students may be able to use regular volunteer work as a way of fulfilling a course credit. Mr. Trebesch puts up flyers on community boards and coffee shops, and for major recruiting drives sets up a table in a campus quad or student union. He also stresses the growing importance of social media as a natural base of volunteers.

Volunteer turnover is a problem to a greater or lesser extent for any nonprofit depending on volunteers. Mr. Trebesch reminds us that there is a persistent need for nonprofit managers to recognize and praise hard work. A volunteer who feels unappreciated will likely leave you and keep looking for an organization that acknowledges and appreciates her contributions. Volunteers are also often looking for social engagement in their work: a chance to meet people with

similar interests and widen their circle of acquaintances. Volunteers who work in groups are likelier to be more positive about the volunteer experience. Regular “volunteer nights,” when many of the volunteers can gather for a chat and pizza also fosters satisfaction and group cohesion. Allowing volunteers to take an extended break during any event they have helped put together, to spend time with family or friends, gives them a chance to more fully appreciate what their hard work has helped accomplish. It’s worth noting the findings of a report by the UPS Foundation on volunteers; it found that two-fifths of the volunteers they surveyed had stopped working for a nonprofit at some time because they did not feel that they were recognized for their work, felt that the organization failed to make good use of their time or talents, or failed to clearly define what the volunteer’s tasks were.

Joe Gareth, of The Fundraising Authority, stressed in a recent post the economic importance of training volunteers to maximize their impact on your mission. Capable volunteers reduce your personnel costs “leading to a much smaller overhead budget and thus a

smaller amount of fundraising needed to meet your goals for the year.”

Even a volunteer well versed in the job you have asked them to do, he notes, will need time and training to grasp your organization’s procedures and protocol in such matters. Every volunteer requires a firm grounding in your mission, vision, and plans. He suggests creating a curriculum that can be used whenever new volunteers join your organization.

The first element of training required is a basic introduction to nonprofits and nonprofit work: what a nonprofit is, why they exist, what role they play in society, how they are organized and run, how they are funded, and what the ethics of nonprofit work require. The second element would include a grounding in your nonprofit: its history, the need or needs that it addresses, how it has evolved over the years, the manner in which it carries out its goals, and its plans for the future. These generalized introductions are followed by job-specific training. A point made repeatedly in recent nonprofit-related blogs is that jobs for volunteers should be as well-described as jobs for full or part-

time employees: every volunteer should have a clear and concise written job description covering all duties and objectives. And while time is always at a premium, a corollary of that point is that an effort must be made to match a job with a volunteer’s interests and talents. Simply slotting them into a task, whether they have expressed an interest in it or not, heightens the likelihood that they will become dissatisfied and either leave or turn in work that is of only sporadic value. Along with a written job description every volunteer should receive a code of conduct, explaining the ways in which an individual associated with the nonprofit is expected to behave.

Mr. Gareth joins Mr. Trebesch in stressing the need to keep volunteers motivated and to provide regular support in the form of “constant feedback, positive reinforcement, and recognition for the work.” Offering volunteers “tickets to your events, pizza nights, gift cards and simple ‘thank you’s’ will go a long way to making them feel appreciated.” It’s also essential to make certain that they know to whom to turn about any questions or concerns. Because volunteers are a crucial element in the

pursuit of your mission, it's important that they feel an integral part of your organization, and that "their concerns and problems are a priority for the organization."

Implicit in these pieces, and in much of the recent literature on nonprofits and volunteers, is the realization that the effort expended in recruiting, training and supervising volunteers, while it can be time-intensive, is vital if an organization is to derive maximum financial benefit from its volunteer program. A study by the Private/Public ventures organization documented the need for a nonprofit to assign management to consistently oversee volunteers, and to make clear to volunteers to whom they report. "No matter how well intentioned volunteers are, unless there is an infrastructure in place to support and direct their efforts, they will remain ineffective at best or, worse, become disenchanted and withdraw."

There's another reason that nonprofits need to expend effort on volunteer training, as explained in the "Charity Lawyer" blog. "Inadequate training or supervision of volunteers can expose nonprofits to liability. Accordingly, it's important for a

nonprofit to include in a job description for a volunteer an explanation of any potential risks." A concise job description "will likely help insulate the nonprofit from liability in the event that a volunteer goes beyond the scope of clearly defined duties and injures someone, or if they are injured but were aware of/waived liability as to the risks." This raises a vexing question for small nonprofits. Large charities can afford liability coverage or insurance protection for volunteers, but small nonprofits cannot, which means that they must be even more diligent in supervising volunteers and anticipating potentially dangerous situations.

Fundraising is essential, applying for grants is necessary, enhancing your revenue stream with effective events or collaborative efforts is very useful. Small nonprofits must do all of this to survive and carry out their mission. But it's worth remembering that the presence of volunteers makes all of those other efforts possible. They are the invisible bond holding nonprofits together, benefitting their communities in incalculable ways, and exemplifying one of the

earliest and best of American traits, the willingness to help one's neighbor.

**Richard Nicholls**  
*People for People Foundation of*  
**GC**

## THE NUMBERS GAME: REGULAR FUNDRAISING AND RETURN DONORS

An investigation of the giving habits of alumni of British universities might seem, at first, of little value to small nonprofits an ocean away. But “The Truth About Regular Giving,” a summary of the project, actually makes stimulating reading, and not just because of the unstuffy, droll tone of the piece. The recently released report, prepared by More Partnerships, analyzes data on fundraising practices and results from 33 universities. More sifted through the records of 3.8 million solicitations made over the course of ten years, which resulted in 1.1 million gifts from 161,000 donors. The conclusions emerging from their sample have great relevance for *any* nonprofit dependent on donor-driven fundraising.

Their first discovery? “If you contact 100 alumni who have never given and ask them nicely, you may get one gift. But if you ask 100 *who donated last year for the very first time*...you’ll get 24 gifts.” (Thus the fact that while 1.1 million gifts were made during the decade under study, they came from just 161,000 donors.)

Their conclusion? “Focus on donor retention as well as acquisition.”

The importance of the point is underlined by the fact that while first-time retention is 24 donors in 100, for those who have given two years in a row it’s 45 in 100, and for those who have given three years in a row the retention rate jumps to a very impressive 58 donors in 100. After five years, the rate climbs to a staggering 78%. Fundraisers, it would follow, should work harder to retain donors than to constantly solicit new prospects.

The second point to emerge from their data analysis is equally startling. “Loyal donors aren’t just more likely to give again. They also tend to give *more*.” Half of the money donated by alumni to these British universities comes from individuals who have made donations for three years in a row. It isn’t so much that you need more donors: you need to cultivate loyal donors who identify with your cause.

Additional discoveries include the fact that while a greater percentage of people may give

during a phone campaign, donation amounts received from a direct mail campaign are larger. The analysis also revealed that “the peak age for both number of donors and size of gift is 66 to 67 years young,” suggesting that it might be a worthwhile use of limited resources to focus on the age group proven to be most responsive to your appeals.

The concept that nonprofits relying on donations need to work hard on building lasting relationships with donors (by thanking them immediately, sending regular updates on how their donations are being used and the impact they have made, and by keeping them informed of initiatives and accomplishments) is not new. But the crucial importance of the bonus yielded to organizations doing so is vividly illustrated by this study, and its lessons should hold up whether you are launching a large appeal or focusing on individuals and businesses in your community.

**Richard Nicholls**  
*People for People*  
*Foundation of GC*

## RESOURCES

### Upcoming Webinars: Free and Fee-based

#### Performance

**Measurement Issue: Models and Components of Great Nonprofit Dashboards.** Wednesday February 17<sup>th</sup> 2-3:30 p.m. FREE. Sponsored by the Nonprofit Quarterly. Go to <http://nonprofitquarterly.org> and click on the webinars page in the contents list on the homepage.

#### Perfecting Your Organization's Elevator

**Pitch.** Thursday Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> 2-3:30 p.m. \$95.00. Sponsored by Grant Space, a division of the Foundation Center. Go to: <http://grantspace.org>. Click on the heading for Training, and then click on the "online" link in the contents list for webinar courses.

**How to Craft a Proposal to a Foundation.** Thursday Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, 2-3:30 p.m. \$89.00 Sponsored by Grant Station. Go to:

<https://www.grantstation.com>, and click on the link for webinars.

**Turn Donors into Fundraisers with Peer-to-Peer.** Tuesday Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup>. 1 p.m. FREE. Sponsored by Network for Good. Go to:

<http://www.networkforgood.com>. Click on the link for webinars at the top of the page.

**How to Use Crowdfunding to Take Your Special Event to the Next Level.** Wednesday Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>. 1 p.m. FREE. Sponsored by 4Good. Go to <https://4good.org/4good>. Scroll down the homepage for a list of upcoming webinars and registration information.

**Logic Models: More Than Just Extra Work.** Wednesday Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2-3:30 p.m. \$89.00. Sponsored by Grant Station. Go to:

<https://www.grantstation.com>.

**Write Smarter: Grant-Seeking Strategies and Time Savers.** Thursday Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>. 2 p.m.-3 p.m.; \$75.00 before Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, \$96.00 thereafter.

Sponsored by The Chronicle of Philanthropy. Go to:

<https://philanthropy.com/webinars>. Click on the heading for Webinars at the top of the homepage.

**In-Kind Contribution Programs: A Must for All Nonprofits.** Tuesday March 1<sup>st</sup> 2-3:30 p.m. \$89.00. Sponsored by Grant Station. Go to <https://www.grantstation.com>.

**10 Social Media Strategies That Increase Engagement**

**and Inspire Donors.** March 1<sup>st</sup> 2 p.m. PST. FREE. Sponsored by Nonprofit Tech for Good. Go to: <http://www.nptechforgood.com/>. Click on the heading for Webinars at the top of the homepage.

**Branding Basics for Nonprofits.** March 8<sup>th</sup> 2-3:30 p.m. \$69.00. Sponsored by Grant Space. Go to <http://grantspace.org>.

### Online

The website "About Money" features a number of subsidiary websites, including one for nonprofits. Go to <http://nonprofit.about.com> for links to a lengthy series of brief articles on actions and procedures for nonprofits, all of them having an emphasis on practical low-cost ideas.

### Print and Digital Publications for Nonprofits Periodicals

The periodicals devoted to the field of philanthropy are a great resource, covering not only news about the nonprofit field but fresh ideas, explained in depth, about how charities can more effectively and efficiently carry out their missions. All of them have

websites which include some free content.

**Chronicle of Philanthropy.**

\$81.00 a year for print/digital editions.

<https://philanthropy.com/>

The Chronicle provides regular in-depth coverage of the entire philanthropic field, including both news and analysis pieces and how-to articles and “toolboxes” of resources for nonprofits. .

**Nonprofit Quarterly.**

\$49.00 for an annual print/digital subscription.

<http://nonprofitquarterly.org/>.

Also offers a mix of news, analysis and practical procedural pieces for the nonprofit community.

**Nonprofit Times.** Print

edition \$49.95 Digital edition \$39.95 for an annual subscription.

<http://nptimes.com/> Directed toward nonprofit management issues and concerns.

**Philanthropy Journal.**

Online. Free.

<http://philanthropyjournal.org/>.

Published by the Institute for

Nonprofits. Essays, opinion pieces, and research on the nonprofit field.

*Richard Nicholls  
People for People  
Foundation of GC*

**COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF CONNECTIONS**

- How to Find a Grant Writer Part II
- Roundup of new books on poverty in America
- Storytelling for nonprofits



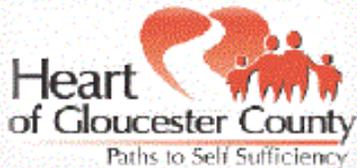
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**COMMUNITY OUTREACH THINK TANK**

People for People Foundation of GC \* PO Box 256 \* Mullica Hill, NJ 08062  
856-579-7561 [phone] \* 856-579-7568 [fax] \* [ricknichollspfpf@gmail.com](mailto:ricknichollspfpf@gmail.com) [email] \* [www.pfpfoundation.org](http://www.pfpfoundation.org) [website]



# COTT



## Event Details



EIRC  
107 Gilbreth Pkwy #200  
Mullica Hill, NJ 08062  
February 25th, 2016  
2:30 PM - 4:30 PM



Preferred Funding Solutions Group  
**Bob Dalessandro**, President

- Are you out of ideas for generating royalty revenue for your organization? There is an option that can create a sustainable royalty stream with no associated selling, or cost
- SHOP.COM, an award winning comparison shopping site, has launched a fund raising program with benefits for your organization and your supporters
- Explaining the ROI benefits through the SHOP.COM platform and it's comparison with the AmazonSmiles fund raiser
- U.S. e-commerce sales are projected to reach \$414 Billion by 2018, a 57% increase over 2013 (\$263 Billion actuals). Learn how your organization can benefit from this powerful trend

"You can raise more money if you can reach more people. You can make a greater impact if you have a greater awareness."

- Dan Pallotta, Founder of AIDS Ride

ClearBridge Media Consulting  
**Kevin Pustizzi**, Vice President  
**Doug Landon**, Marketing Account Manager

- Explaining the Google Grants program for local nonprofits
- ClearBridge Media Consulting works with local nonprofit organizations to help reach their full potential in the digital world
- Google Grants drives traffic to your website which directly correlates with increasing donations, volunteer opportunities, and brand awareness

