

CREATIVELY & SAFELY ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS DURING COVID-19

Presented By:

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Volunteer Center
OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY

“ You make a
living by what
you get.
You make a
life by what
you give.”

Winston Churchill



Today's Program

- The Volunteer Center
- The COVID-19 Shift
- Volunteer Types
 - Welcome Back / Keeping them safe
 - Virtual Volunteers
 - Skills Based Volunteers
- What you need to know about your volunteers
- Converting volunteers to donors
- What next



Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley



Volunteer Center
OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY

- Nonprofit Resource
- Capacity Building
 - Volunteers
 - Education
 - Coordination – Days of Service, Programs
- Access to resources
 - The Morning Call
 - Supplies/Wish List/ Board
 - Opportunity to celebrate volunteers

THE COVID-19 SHIFT

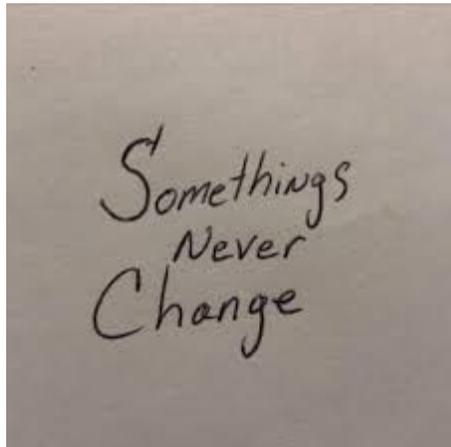
Lessons Learned Through the Pandemic



- Volunteering has shifted/ pivoted...
 - Retired volunteers were a large factor in traditional volunteering
 - Ability to accept onsite volunteers has changed
 - New protocols are in place that may impact volunteerism as we know it
 - More people want to help
 - There is opportunity to be embraced
 - Also, understand the implications of decision fatigue on volunteers

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS

The 5 Most Important Elements in Creating a Sustainable Program



Know what you need - be intentional



Know the differences between volunteer types



Be sure to have staff buy-in for the volunteer program



Plan for the program



Make it easy and follow up

Volunteer Types Expanded

- In person volunteering
 - Need to recruit new volunteers & welcome back volunteers
- Virtual Volunteers
 - Supporting nonprofits in new and creative ways
- Skills Based Volunteers
 - Thinking differently to engage specific skills in support of your organization needs



Welcoming Back (or continued in-person volunteers)

- Continued contact throughout the pandemic is important
- Keeping tabs on who wants to (and can commit to coming back)
- Providing for safe and compliant workspace
- Being flexible and adaptable (when feasible) with scheduling
- Pivoting /shifting volunteer needs when in-person is not feasible



Safely providing for your in-person volunteers



- Consider more use of technology for recruitment & orientation
- Modify sign-in process
- Communicate protocols
 - Hang posters
- Have adequate PPE on hand for the volunteers
- Require sign in and consider taking temperature
- Follow the CDC guidelines for social distancing & masks

Virtual Volunteering

- How to re-focus your volunteer needs / opportunities
 - This requires a shift in your thinking / priorities
- How to engage volunteers to support your organization from home



Virtual Volunteering Examples

- Creating videos tying in your festival concept
- Videos to promote your organization and its history- i.e. canals, parks and historic sites
- Re-posting photos from past events on social (competition)
- Online advocacy for your organization
- Making phone calls- re-connecting with past volunteers
- Hosting local drives for specific goods
- Others- what are you seeing- ideas?? Drop them in the chat...

Skills Based Volunteering

Skills-based volunteering means leveraging the specialized **skills** and talents of individuals to strengthen the infrastructure of nonprofits, helping them build and sustain their capacity to successfully achieve their missions.



Skills Based Volunteering



**SKILLS-BASED
VOLUNTEERING**

How can it work for you?

- Opportunities to leverage your team
- Nice to have projects that never get done
- Research and evaluation of opportunities
- Specifically scoped projects

Skill Based Volunteering Examples

Research

Marketing Materials Design

Social Media

IT/ Tech review

Website

Mentoring

Accounting / Financial

Handbooks – review, update or create

Project Ideas

- **Employee Handbook**

- **Description:** Improve transparency and accountability by clarifying your employees' legal rights and your Organization's benefits, policies, and other expectations for performance and conduct, in a new or revised employee handbook.

- **Tech Systems Review**

- **Description:** Improve technical and operational efficiency, support data security, and lower your overall IT costs by understanding how you can optimize your Organization's technical infrastructure.

- **Branded Digital Assets**

- **Description:** Enhance your digital marketing materials with compelling graphics designed to increase community engagement.

Ideas to remember when creating projects



Be

Be sure they have a meaningful impact

- Creating work for the sake of creating work is transparent to a volunteer



Make

Make sure that access to information is available



Ensure

Ensure that the data is not propriety and you have permission to share

- i.e. having volunteers make calls to your clients

The Connection Between Development & Volunteers



Connecting Development to Volunteering

- The importance of tracking volunteer data and having a manageable database of volunteers (many organizations do not effectively track their volunteers and their information)
- Volunteers become donors – ensure your volunteer engagement & management is effective
- Partner with your volunteer coordinators on ways to creatively continue to engage volunteers
- Communicate regularly (personalized /accurate) with easy links for ways to support
- Make it easy to understand what their support would do for your organization – i.e. \$25 / month provides food to XX families monthly
- Don't be bashful about asking

What you need to know about the volunteers

- Volunteers focus on areas that they are most interested in
- Volunteers become donors- they support organizations they have a vested interest in
- Volunteers help to share your story / mission
- Volunteers like to recruit their friends and family members
- There are generational differences in volunteers that you should be mindful about in how you communicate and connect

How do we pivot? For starters...

- Engage with your board
 - Flush out ideas for how individuals and companies can support you / your organization
- Bring staff together to brainstorm ideas
- Talk to other community development organizations to see what they are doing- you are in different markets
- Reach out to your pre-COVID-19 volunteers
 - They already have an affinity for your organization
 - They may need some ideas for how to support you / your organization

Things to consider

- Start small- consider projects that don't have a long duration for completion
 - Have clear expectations and guidelines for what is needed
 - Keep the timeline short
- Ensure that volunteers can access what they need
- Consider waivers / releases for information

Designing Successful Projects

- Successful projects include:
 - Measurable deliverables or outcomes
 - Accountabilities & Timelines
 - Planned Check-Ins
 - Clear Timelines
 - Evaluation



THANK YOU.

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