

ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS—Part 3

Recruiting Volunteers

Finding people to volunteer at school is often the most challenging task of volunteer coordinators. It is for this reason that having a plan in place for volunteer recruitment is essential. Lay out a plan of action for recruitment that can guide your efforts. Based on the volunteer roles you have identified as needed, make a list of the pools of potential volunteers that may meet the specific qualifications outlined in the job descriptions.

❖ **Invite Participation**

- **Be engaging—use your imagination.**
 - Market the significant impact and fun volunteers can have.
 - Think about other methods in addition to a blurb in the weekly newsletter or the annual participation survey.
 - Use pictures and graphics.
 - Incorporate catchy titles.
 - Find new places to promote volunteer opportunities.
- **Avoid the Guilt Approach!**
 - Frame your opportunities positively.
 - “Here is what we are planning if we can find several people to assist us” works better than “We won’t be able to go if you don’t volunteer.”
- **Be Specific about roles you have to fill, time commitments and qualifications.**
 - Be upfront about the needs.
 - Make sure the prospective volunteer understands the commitment and can make it work.
- **Offer ongoing, short-term and one-time opportunities.**
 - Plan these in conjunction with your priority volunteer roles.
 - Honor the commitment of the volunteers by respecting their time limits.
- **Delegate contacts with prospective volunteers.**
 - Identify other people who can make some of your strategic contacts.
 - Have a computer-savvy person identify and update Internet listing opportunities.
- **Seek out groups of people and approach qualified individuals.**
 - Large audiences save time.
 - Some people respond well to personal invitations that recognize their capabilities.

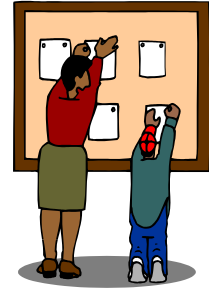
Recruiting Methods for Volunteers

- ❖ Letter to parents of the children in your class or program
- ❖ Hang posters
 - Outside your classroom
 - At the local community or senior center
 - At community gathering places
- ❖ Connections with your parent-teacher organization
- ❖ Phone calls or personal notes sent to likely candidates for specific jobs
- ❖ Fliers/Brochures
 - In the school/office area
 - Targeted at local businesses or organizations
 - Handed out at child-centered events like little league games, festivals, etc.
- ❖ Announcements/Ads
 - On your website
 - In community newspapers
 - Public Service Announcements on the radio
 - On Volunteer Opportunity web sites (like VolunteerMatch and United Way)
- ❖ Contact local community partners who might place volunteers in schools



Recruitment Ideas

- ❖ Offer slide-show programs illustrating students being served by volunteers.
- ❖ Never walk away from a meeting where you have given a talk about your school without getting the name and contact information of everyone who was interested. Get back to these people within one week if possible.
- ❖ When you are going to make a presentation to a group, take volunteers with you to talk about their own experiences.
- ❖ Get lists of organizations in your area to see if they can help your recruitment effort by advertising your program, offering you time on their meeting agendas, distributing written information to their membership, posting notices on bulletin boards.
- ❖ Work with other volunteer groups in your community to sponsor a Volunteer Fair at a shopping mall or a company.
- ❖ Ask your community newspaper to donate space in their classified ad section for volunteer job openings.
- ❖ Contact high school and college service learning programs to see how you offer your opportunities to their students. (Make sure you can offer service learning as opposed to volunteer hours).
- ❖ Talk to personnel directors of companies, explaining volunteer opportunities and ask if they can direct retirees and current employees to you.
- ❖ When trying to recruit a group, look up their creed or mission and use some of the wording in your presentation. But don't overdo it.
- ❖ Always tell why you are personally committed to your work when enlisting others, this personalizes the job you are seeking to fill.
- ❖ Always recruit volunteers on the basis of the service to the students.
- ❖ Ask grocers to stuff flyers about your program into grocery bags.
- ❖ Don't recruit until you know what you are doing and what the volunteers are going to be doing.
- ❖ Have a year-round recruitment plan.



Tips on Inviting People to Volunteer

- ❖ Be motivated and excited yourself. Sincerity wins out over technique every time.
- ❖ Be clear on what you want people to do. Use written volunteer job descriptions.
- ❖ Use titles. The word “volunteer” is a pay category, not a function.
- ❖ Tell prospective volunteers what the work entails, even if you think it may sound like a lot. Avoid minimizing the work.
- ❖ Share deadlines up front. When does the work have to be finished?
- ❖ Remember that it is better to live with a vacancy a little while longer than to convince the wrong person to become a volunteer.
- ❖ Define the training and supervision or support the volunteer will have. This isn't sink or swim.
- ❖ Identify or express the benefits to the volunteer from accomplishing a task. The best volunteering is when the giver benefits as well as the recipient.
- ❖ Explain why you decided to ask this particular person to help—what skills or personality traits make him or her a good candidate for the position?
- ❖ It may be just as important to discover what a prospective volunteer wants to *learn* or *try* as a volunteer as it is to know his or her official credentials.
- ❖ Keep in mind that you can rarely insult people by asking them to volunteer. In fact, you are usually flattering them by implying that they have the talent to do the job.
- ❖ Paint an upbeat picture of the work. Volunteering should be fun.
- ❖ Consider that you are giving people the marvelous *opportunity* to participate in an important project. You don't want them to be left out!
- ❖ The best way to recruit volunteers is to *ask* people to help.

From: *The Volunteer Recruitment Book* by Susan J. Ellis. 1994, Energize Inc.

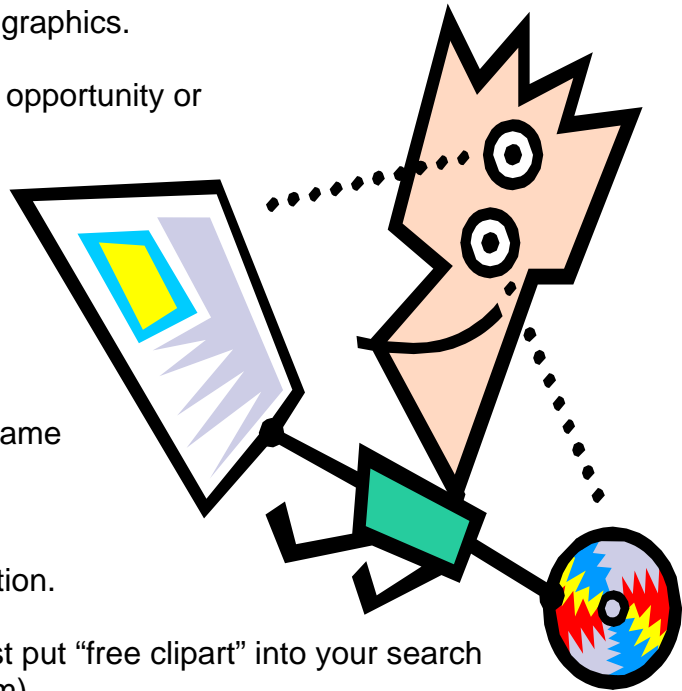
Sources of Volunteers to Consider...

Ideas from Seattle Schools Volunteer Coordinator Meeting 2/5/02

- ❖ Parents (send home info, call)—Brainstorm some new ways to invite parents and some new ways for them to help, especially parents who have not traditionally been active at school.
- ❖ Higher Ed partners (Work Study-Pipeline at UW, SSCC, SU, etc.)—For work-study, go to the financial aid office. For Pipeline, contact U.W. Some private schools (like SPU) have required volunteer hours. Seattle U. Children's Literacy Project. Community volunteer offices at schools.
- ❖ High School and Middle School Students need service learning hours—go in person or put info in bulletins. Talk to service learning counseling office.
- ❖ People who live/work in the community (uwkc.org, volunteermatch.org, election day bake sale, community center postings, newspapers).
- ❖ Potential teaching students (observation hours)—contact education programs.
- ❖ Alumni—keep in touch.
- ❖ AmeriCorps (write a grant).
- ❖ Sororities/Fraternities (contact school).
- ❖ Faith Communities.
- ❖ Businesses (go talk one on one and establish relationships).
- ❖ Elders
 - go to retirement homes.
 - Intergenerational Innovations (write a grant).
 - Foster Grandparents (Catholic Community Services).

Tips for Creating a Flyer

- ❖ Look at other flyers you like and see if you can incorporate some of those elements.
- ❖ Throw in some quotes from students or teachers.
- ❖ Use borders or shapes as easy graphics.
- ❖ Be specific if possible about the opportunity or qualifications.
- ❖ Always put your contact information.
- ❖ Use Bold and Italics and experiment with different fonts.
- ❖ Have a template that uses the same images and format for different purposes.
- ❖ Photographs make a great addition.
- ❖ Use clipart from the Internet (just put “free clipart” into your search engine such as www.google.com).
- ❖ Brightly colored paper is cheaper than color copies, and much more attractive than black and white.
- ❖ Ask school staff or the PTA if anyone can make a decent flyer.



- ❖ Have your students design something.
- ❖ Think about what little changes you can make to help your flyer not look like a typewriter document.
- ❖ Some common software, like Publisher, has ready-made documents, so you just type in your information.

Sample Flyer I

(Basic WORD format for posting or mailing. You can do much better with more graphics and a little design skills. Ask around for someone who is good at this.)

BE A STAR!

Seattle Elementary School

Is looking for energetic and committed people to join our team of volunteers, guiding our students and shining light on the important work they are doing at school.

Be a Learning Deputy

Activities Guru

Lunch Buddy

or other important person at our school



*For more information
contact Joan Smith, the
Volunteer Coordinator, at
252-*****

*Training Provided
Flexible Schedule
Short-term and Long-term*

Sample Flyer II

(Basic WORD format for posting or mailing)

ONE HOUR A WEEK

is all it takes
to help our students learn
and feel successful

Emerald City Middle School

If you are looking for a productive way to make a difference in our community, we have a great opportunity for you. We provide training, structure and a very positive environment.

For more information, call 252-****

OR, try spicing this up a bit with color or a picture...Inviting people to a training is something specific they benefit from.

Parents are Partners!

Winter Volunteer Orientation

Here's another chance to learn about volunteer opportunities, school programs, and volunteer policies and procedures. Bring along a friend on **November 35th**

from 2-4 a.m. in the Northwest building

Questions? 252-****

Sample Newsletter Announcements

Mastery Math: Volunteers needed to work with students who are below grade level in a computer-aided math course. Volunteers work one-on-one with students providing feedback in math problem solving. Students check their accuracy through computer use. Requires enthusiasm, but does not require an extensive math background. Volunteer any school day, morning or afternoon.

Cultural Ambassadors: Each class is beginning a cultural learning component that will encourage our students understanding of the world we live in. If you have cultural heritage or experience living in another part of the world that you would be willing to share with us, please talk with your teacher about how you can assist on a one-time or short-term basis during February-May.

Reading Partners: This year our school has placed an emphasis on bringing all students up to reading at their grade level. Our teachers would love to have assistance in their classrooms helping students during reading time. If you are available in the mornings for an hour or two per week, please contact Ms. Smith at 252-****, or talk with your child's classroom teacher.

Event Amigos: So... you like to plan parties? This year's auction will have a Fiesta Theme. If you have ideas for our Fiesta and are available to help plan this year's event, we will be meeting in the library on Tuesday evening from 6-8 p.m. Call Lois Appleton for more information.

Got Tech Skills? Short-term help is needed at school for what we think is simple technology assistance (connecting printers, installing software, troubleshooting computer problems). We are looking for a couple of technology-minded people who can meet with Mr. Lerner to go over a list of requests from staff and identify what we can complete. Please call Mrs. Premon at 252-**** if you can offer a couple of hours to this effort.

Artists Extraordaire: Ms. Aoki, our Artist in Residence is beginning ceramics and painting classes with our middle school students. If you are available on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 1-2:30 p.m., Ms. Aoki would love your help assisting students with their projects. Please call our Volunteer Coordinator, Patti, for more information. Classes begin on November 2.

Sample Public Service Announcements (Radio)

(25 seconds)

Help a child learn to read!

Just one hour per week can make a big difference in a child's life.

Many of Seattle's children are struggling to read.

Your support is critical in helping our children find success and satisfaction in school.

Volunteer your time, and together we can give children a brighter future.

For more information, visit www.seattleschools.org or call 252-0794.

(20 seconds)

Do you want to help struggling students in your community?

Seattle Public Schools are looking for volunteers to work with students on reading and other academic skills.

Times and locations are flexible.

Give the gift of literacy to students in your area.

Visit www.seattleschools.org for more information or contact your local school.

(15 seconds)

Give the gift of time and literacy to students in your area.

Seattle Public Schools are looking for volunteers to work with students at a variety of times and locations and with all age groups.

Visit www.seattleschools.org for more information or contact your local school.

(15 seconds)

Seattle Public Schools needs your help to deliver on the dream of academic achievement for every student in every school.

As a volunteer, your gift of time and knowledge can make a difference.

Visit www.seattleschools.org for more information or call 206-252-0993.

(15 seconds)

Tutoring in your local school can make a difference in the life of a struggling student.

Attend the All-City Tutor Training from 6-9 p.m. on Thursday March 6th at Meany Middle School in Seattle.

For more information, e-mail volunteer@seattleschools.org or call 206-252-0794.

Involvement Surveys

If using this type of recruitment tool, you must have a system in place for following up with the interest that prospective volunteers indicate. For instance, if someone says they are interested in helping with the auction, someone needs to call them and let them know how to get involved. Don't wait until Spring to contact them, and confirm with those to whom you delegate communications.

Sample Interest and Skill Survey

Volunteer Opportunities—Come and Join US!

Please check the events or activities you are available to assist with.
Thanks so much for the work you do with our children.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Auction (Spring) | <input type="checkbox"/> Directory Publishing (data entry) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trip Driver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Donate Refreshments | <input type="checkbox"/> PE Volunteer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help at Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Open House (October 8 th) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lunchroom Assistants | <input type="checkbox"/> Razzle Dazzle Day (June) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Sally Foster Gift Wrap (Sept./Oct) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Writing (roving reporter) | <input type="checkbox"/> School Pictures (October) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Production | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Appreciation Lunch (Spring) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Supervisors | <input type="checkbox"/> Winter Program (December) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Room Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> Holiday/ Food Penny Drive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technology-Computers | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor Ed/Camp Burton (Spring) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> VIP/ Teacher Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monday Bulletin | <input type="checkbox"/> T-Shirt/Sweatshirt Sales |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds Beautification | <input type="checkbox"/> PTA Membership (Fall) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 th Grade Breakfast (June) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Fair (March) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hallway Calendar | |

Your name: _____
Address: _____ Zip: _____
Phone-Day: _____ Evening: _____
Fax: _____ E-mail: _____
Your Occupation: _____
Child's Name: _____ Grade: _____ Rm#: _____

(Optional) Are you associated with any organization or business that could supply our school with goods or services on a reduced or no-cost basis?

Availability: Weekdays____ Evenings____ Weekends____

Thank you for completing this survey and returning it to the School Office.

Sample Volunteer Form

(adapted from B.F. Day School)

Parent Involvement Activities, Interest and Skills Survey

Welcome to _____! We are very proud of our students, teachers, and staff, our warm school environment, and our active parent community. Parent volunteers enrich the learning environment for our children. In order to continue to offer a rich variety of activities, we need everyone to volunteer. How? –By helping in classrooms or on the playground, tutoring, organizing and or supporting events such as the Auction, other PTSA fundraising events, Family Dinners, After-school Classes, the School-to-Work Village and more.

We are asking each family to commit to a minimum of 15 hours of school activities this year. The following survey lists areas in which we need help. There may be additional activities occurring during the year in which you will wish to participate. **Please fill out both sides of this form and return to the school by _____.** We would like 100% return. For information about any of the survey items please contact the volunteer coordinator, _____ (**_*-****).

Parent Guardian Information

(1) Parent/Guardian Name _____ Occupation _____

(2) Parent/Guardian Name _____ Occupation _____

Child's Name _____ Rm# _____,

2nd Child _____ Rm# _____.

3rd Child _____ Rm# _____.

Address _____

Phone _____ Best time to call: morning__ afternoon__ evening__

Days/times available _____ Cultural Heritage(s) _____

- I will talk with my employer about helping the school with money, supplies, equipment, volunteers etc.

(continued)

Interest and Skills Survey- Please indicate any job or activity of interest to you as well as particular areas of skill or expertise you may offer. Many of the jobs below do not require availability during school hours. You will not be obligated to perform all the jobs in which you express interest. You are always free to say “no” if called to help. This list helps the volunteer coordinator and project leaders know whom to call when specific needs arise and will help us coordinate our efforts. Thank you for your help!

PTSA INVOLVEMENT (the PTSA supports school activities and events through fundraising efforts and enrichment programs.)

- Attend PTSA meetings and/or be involved in PTSA activities:
- Fundraising
- Arts enrichment
- Reading is Fundamental
- After-school Classes
- Hospitality (Staff appreciation, New parent Tours etc.)
- Monthly Newsletter
- You may call on me for other PTSA events and I will help when my schedule allows.

Site Council Involvement (program evaluation and decision making body)

- Attend Site Council Meetings Serve on Site Council committee:

School Committees

- Fundraising
- Arts Enrichment
- Technology

Tutoring Support

- Work one on one with student in reading or math skill area or assigned by teacher.

Classroom Support (Teacher's needs vary, please talk directly to your child's teacher about ways you can be involved)

- I would like to work in my child's own classroom
- Work in other classrooms besides my child's
- Room parent for classroom (help develop and use class roster to inform parents of important news from the classroom or from the school and to coordinate activities)
- Field trips with child's class

(continued)

Support of School Programs

- Computer lab
- Technical support for computers
- Database entry (parent surveys, auction, other)
- Playground
- Gardening
- Library
- Organize Campbell Soup Label Donations (monthly)
- Inventory of science kits (2 or 3 times/year)
- Office support
- School to Work Village
- I am interested in providing rides for children/families to school events, if my schedule allows.
- After-school class instructor (some examples of last year's classes include origami, soccer, woodworking, dance, cooking, etc.) I would like to teach _____ in after-school classes.
- Serve on a committee to help plan the food or program of one or more of the Family Dinners (tentative schedule).

I would like to share food, a display, performance, or something that represents my culture. Please specify: _____

Special Events

-

Parent Education

- Attend parent education class. Please list topics of interest to you: _____

Skills: (Please list as many as apply to you and add an explanation)

- Computer _____
- Fundraising _____
- Advertising /marketing _____
- Creative arts _____
- Creative writing _____
- Math _____
- Sports _____
- Journalism _____
- Dance _____
- Drama _____
- Sewing _____
- Storytelling _____
- Science _____
- Music _____
- Grant writing _____
- Other: _____