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# Recruiting and Keeping Equine Volunteers



HSUS

This is what you think it looks like.



This is what the volunteer thinks it looks like.



**“Can’t I just ride the horses?”**

# RECRUITING

Finding them is easier than keeping them.

# Recruiting

Rick Lynch and Steve McCurley, authors of *Essential Volunteer Management*, (Heritage Arts Press) suggest that there are three basic ways to recruit:

1. Warm Body Recruitment
2. Targeted Recruitment
3. Concentric Circles Recruitment

# Warm Body Recruitment

Involves a broad dissemination of information, including:

- Canvassing the community
- Speaking engagements and displays
- Notices in appropriate media



# Targeted Recruitment

For a targeted campaign, ask yourself these questions:

- What do we need?
- Who could provide this?
- How can we communicate with them?
- What would motivate them?

# Concentric Circles Recruitment

Your concentric circles include:

- Your adopters, their families and relatives.
- Friends of your current volunteers and staff.
- People in your organization's neighborhood.
- People who have been affected by the problem you are attempting to solve.

# Never underestimate the power of youth.

A well organized and appropriately managed junior volunteer program is a valuable resource for your organization, as well as, for the community.



Caroll Sinclair

# Mandated and Community Service Volunteers

Pro: Mandated service volunteers and Social Service Work Experience programs can provide a large pool of resources with unique talents and a unique perspective.

Con: They also require unique management practices.

# RETENTION

Keeping them is easier than keeping them productive.

# The Link Between Productivity and Retention

Volunteers want to know that the time they are spending at your organization is useful.

*According to Independent Sector's latest annual calculation of the value of volunteers' time, for 2012, the value of an average American's one hour of volunteer time was \$22.14.*

*Independent Sector is the leadership network for nonprofits, foundations, and corporate giving programs.*

# *Managing Volunteers: A Report from United Parcel Service (UPS Foundation 1998)*

Study randomly polled 2,430 people:

Almost 60% said they would be more likely to volunteer if organizations made good use of their time.

40% stopped volunteering for an organization because of poor volunteer management practices.

“Too many potential and active volunteers are turned off by what they regard as inefficient use of their time.”

# Utilize Their Skills

Volunteers are valuable members of the team that should be given meaningful challenging tasks and can eventually help with:

Adoption Counseling

Humane education

Equine care

Veterinary assistance

Fund-raising

Special events

Community outreach

Customer service

Clerical duties

Foster care

Training

Equine Assisted Learning



# The Link Between Relationships and Retention

“The volunteers are supposed to be helping, not creating more work, right”?



Train and encourage supervisors to work with the volunteers and reward those that do it well.

# The Link Between Relationships and Retention

“There may be no factor within your program that impacts retention more quickly and obviously than relationships volunteers and paid staff have with each other,” says Sue Vineyard, contributor to *Grapevine*, a newsletter for volunteer managers (2000, 15).

“People simply stay longer in situations where they enjoy their co-workers and others they encounter.”

# The Link Between Recognition and Retention

Simple ideas for volunteer appreciation:

- Recognition in newsletter or social media
- Volunteer Spotlight
- Thank-you notes
- Anniversary cards
- Recognition pins
- Volunteer Bulletin Board
- Annual Appreciation Event

# Five Free, Easy, Powerful Retention Tools

1. Smile!
2. Learn volunteers' names and check-in.
3. Say thank you often and sincerely.
4. Encourage volunteer friendships.
5. Work along-side them and let them see you as you are.



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# Volunteer Program Must Haves

- An Orientation
- A Detailed Application
- Written Standard Operating Procedures
- Training
- A Volunteer Manual

# An Orientation

- Write a script
- Explain who you are: mission, vision, values, programs
- Discuss sensitive topics
- Talk about the benefits of volunteering
- Give a tour
- Make sure they have a clear understanding of the next steps/training.

# The Orientation is Community Outreach

Volunteers are a vital link between your organization and the community you serve.

As ambassadors for your organization, they reach a lot of people — family, friends, co-workers, and others.

Even if they never come back after the orientation, send them away as ambassadors.

# A Detailed Volunteer Application

- Detailed contact info.
- Date of birth
- Driver's license number
- Emergency contact info.
- Occupation
- Previous volunteer exp.
- Experience with horses
- Volunteer positions/areas of interest.
- Special skills and hobbies
- Times and days available
- Allergies or disabilities that require accommodation



# The Volunteer Interview

Volunteer interviews are a good way to match volunteers to jobs, and to weed out those that you do not think will be a good fit.

Remember: You are not obligated to find opportunities for every willing volunteer.

Best Practice when a volunteer leaves is an exit interview; at least have a conversation.

# Written Standard Operating Procedures

Survey current staff and volunteers, if you have them, to learn what they wish they'd known when they started.

Written job descriptions provide clarity for volunteers and staff, and protection for the organization if volunteers aren't doing what they're supposed to do.

# Training



Erin Parker

You should provide a general equine safety course for all volunteers, even those who plan to do office work, fundraising, etc.

# Your Training Should:

- Be tailored to the volunteer jobs and be specific.
- Teach volunteers all the basics.
- Be written down for consistency.
- Set clear boundaries.
- Test volunteer knowledge.
- Use volunteer trainers when possible.



Keep records of who has been trained in which areas

- Consider color-coding volunteers and/or horses.

# A Volunteer Manual

- Welcome letter
- Mission statement
- Brief organizational history and achievements
- Programs and services offered
- Overview of main policies and procedures
- Hours of operation
- Important numbers and contact information
- Scheduling and sign-in procedures
- Volunteer position descriptions

# A Volunteer Manual

- ❑ Training requirements
- ❑ General equine handling and behavior information
- ❑ Safety information
- ❑ Frequently asked questions
- ❑ Termination policy
- ❑ General volunteer policies such as attire, bringing guests, alcohol and drugs, sexual harassment and discrimination

# Set Them (and Yourself) Up for Success

Make sure you give them space: to work, store their things, and take a break.



Supply them with adequate tools to complete the job.



Include a volunteer program budget in your planning.



# Your volunteers will stay if:

- ✓ They are satisfied with communication
- ✓ They perceive that they have a voice
- ✓ They experience organizational commitment
- ✓ They are satisfied with supervisors and other volunteers
- ✓ They feel engaged
- ✓ Their role is not ambiguous
- ✓ They are recognized for their work
- ✓ You don't burn them out

Volunteer Program Assessment, Univ. of North Carolina at Charlotte



# Volunteer Resources

## Volunteer Matching Sites:

- [Volunteer Match](#)
- [Idealist](#)
- [Points of Light](#)
- [Single Volunteers, Inc.](#)
- [Youth Service America](#)
- [Volunteer Solutions](#)
- [Senior Corps](#)

## Volunteer tracking:

- [Volunteer Management Software](#)

# Equine Volunteer Resources

## **Sample Volunteer Documents** (handbooks, agreements, etc.):

- [AnimalSheltering.org](http://AnimalSheltering.org)
- [Homes for Horses.org](http://HomesforHorses.org)
- [Best Friends Animal Society \(Horse Haven\)](#):
  - [volunteer agreement and release](#)
- [Habitat for Horses](#)

## **Compassion Fatigue:**

- [Petfinder article](#)