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The Spirit of Service Continues

By Richard Koontz, Director, Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center

President Obama has inspired many Americans with his call to service. A special logo was even created for his National Day of Service, which took place on January 19, Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. It is estimated that 16,000 students from 28 states volunteered that day.

The website *USAService.org*

allows individuals to sign up for alerts on service opportunities to enable them to "make an enduring commitment to our neighborhoods."

Obama's sustained call for volunteerism in America has given hope to nonprofits.

While Obama wants a "new spirit of service" in America, it would be inaccurate to think support for volunteer efforts has not previously come from the White House. National Volunteer Appreciation Week (NVW), which this

year is April 19–25, was created in 1974 by President Nixon in a Proclamation where he stated, "There are abundant opportunities for every concerned American to reap the rewards that come from helping others."

Other American Presidents followed with Proclamations about NVW, Ronald Regan saying in his, "It is my hope that during National Volunteer

Week, American volunteers both at home and around the world, will receive the recognition they deserve for their generosity."

"This is a time to rekindle the spirit of service," said President Clinton of NVW in 1993, continuing, "Old and young, rich and poor, all of us have roles to play in making our nation stronger. We must serve in order to allow our children--and future generations--to live up to their full potential."

George W. Bush said in his 2008 NVW Proclamation, "Through volunteer work, Americans can demonstrate the kindness

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Advocates Gather at Statehouse for Volunteer Awareness Day

By Richard Koontz, Director, Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center

In central Iowa, Serve Our Youth has volunteers who meet with kids in youth shelters to mentor them and take them to events such as a basketball game. Serve Our Youth volunteers have also organized an event in Pella to thank the community for their support of the program. Volunteers are essential to the program's success. Executive

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Recruiting Volunteers for Your Nonprofit on Facebook

Matthew R. Hoffman, Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center

The Wild Apricot Blog provides tips for nonprofits setting up their first Facebook page at <http://www.wildapricot.com/blogs/newsblog/archive/2008/06/16/how-to-set-up-a-non-profit-facebook-page.aspx>

BL'ONG, the social networking and fundraising blog, has a list of 12 top Facebook applications for nonprofits at <http://www.theblong.com/wordpress/archives/418> (July 24, 2007).

One of the best ways to promote and recruit for your nonprofit is to take advantage of a previously developed forum. Just as newspapers and television provide access to established audiences for advertisers, many popular websites provide access to millions of Internet users. Many of these websites also offer tools beyond the means of traditional advertising, providing nonprofits the ability to engage, interact, network, and chat with supporters. But with their limited resources, nonprofits must carefully select which websites offer the greatest return for their time and money.

In the last issue, we suggested that a YouTube channel could provide Iowa nonprofits a cost-effective forum to promote their mission, collect donations, and recruit new volunteers. YouTube claims 71 million unique users, which makes it likely nonprofits will find many of their current supporters already among YouTube's membership. Through its "channels" feature, YouTube provides a template for nonprofits to begin their advertising while Google augments the "channels" with free credit card donation processing.

Another website with broad appeal that can offer nonprofits a variety of advertising and recruiting options is *Facebook.com*. Facebook offers an audience of over 150 million users. As a social networking website, Facebook offers tools beyond those of traditional media, allowing nonprofits to interact with supporters, coordinate events, and continually update information. The service is free. The only cost is computer overhead and manpower. Though manpower may prove a serious concern, Facebook provides enough flexibility

for nonprofits to tailor their experience from quick-to-set-up profiles with the most basic contact information to dynamic, maintenance-intensive pages with up-to-the-minute news, chats with users, videos, interactive applications, and other advanced features.

Even the Royal British Legion is using Facebook in its search for young adult volunteers. Russell Thompson, director of national events and fundraising at The Royal British Legion, said: "Facebook is an incredibly powerful tool to reach out directly to a huge resource of younger people with plenty of energy. We are aware that Facebook has very much captured the public imagination and hope that it will prove to be an invaluable tool to recruit new volunteers."

On Facebook, nonprofits may select from three types of accounts: groups, profiles, and pages. The American Red Cross, for example, chose to create a group to post general information, a link to their main website, recent news, and a discussion board. Over 5,000 members belong to their group and each of those members' friends sees a link to the American Red Cross group. The member links reach countless additional Facebook members. These links are more powerful than general advertising or even referrals because they provide a personal endorsement of the American Red Cross to potential members.

Instead of a "group," National Public Radio chose to create a Facebook "page" which includes general information, a discussion board, and posted items. The page allows more flexibility than a group. NPR has chosen to include a list of "fans,"

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a podcast player, an RSS feed, photos, and other applications. Facebook only permits an organization's official representatives to set up a page.

Once nonprofits have their Facebook profile up and running, they may want to take advantage of the many free third-party applications that integrate with Facebook. Applications provide additional means for nonprofits to get out their message, find new supporters, and interact with current supporters.

One especially relevant feature of Facebook is the event application. This application allows members to schedule an event, post details, photos, maps, and other information. Members indicate whether or not they will attend and can view others' responses. Megan Keane, the Online Community Manager at TechSoup said, "[O]ne thing we've seen with our Facebook page is an increase in attendance for events, often from folks who had not heard of us before. I've found it to be one of the most important event-promotion channels, as there is such a large, existing audience on Facebook."

A new Facebook application called Volunteer Connect has the potential to dramatically increase volunteerism. The way it works is simple: charities and volunteer centers send upcoming opportunities that post to the application. Facebook members will have a "volunteer calendar" and be notified of upcoming events through postings or from invitations from friends. The service is completely free and the aim is twofold: 1) To make it easier for volunteers to find charities they are interested in, and 2) To help charities reach volunteers in an easy and effective manner. These and many

Book Review

How To Volunteer Like a Pro: An Amateur's Guide for Working with Teenagers

by Jim Hancock

Youth Specialties, 2009 (143 pages)

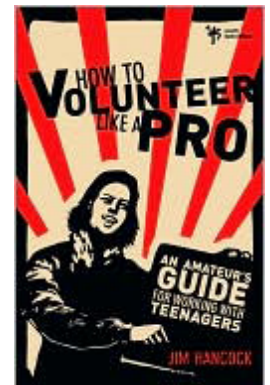
How to Volunteer Like a Pro offers practical help and indispensable insights that will make your experience as a volunteer youth worker valuable and rewarding for you and your students.

The author, Jim Hancock invested two decades as a church-based youth worker. This book contains 37 chapters in all, and each chapter is very short and concise. All the basics of volunteer management are covered, with an emphasis on building relationships, organizational management in the context of youth ministry, how to protect oneself (and the youth) from the complexities of attraction and inappropriate behavior, how to deal with a variety of kids with different personalities, how to deal with families and parents, ways to combat "culture shock," and how to engage with youth culture appropriately.

Facebook, *continued*

more resources exist to help those who are looking to volunteer.

Finally, Facebook offers a free service called Insights that collects data from Facebook pages. Find Insights at <http://www.facebook.com/business/?insights> This service provides organizations with demographic data to develop "a deep understanding of exactly who is engaging with [their] business and how." To learn more about this and other services, see the help area of the Facebook website.



Facebook.com also has a whole help section dedicated to business at <http://www.facebook.com/business/?pages>

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and generosity that makes our nation great. Mentoring a child, teaching someone to read, visiting the elderly, feeding the hungry, and finding shelter for the homeless are all examples of how Americans can and do aid those in need.”

In 2007, Senator Tom Harkin placed in the Congressional Record recognition of volunteerism at *Everybody Wins!* in 11 central Iowa schools.

In 2008, Senator Charles Grassley said in a statement, “thank you to everyone who volunteers their time, this week and throughout the year, to make a difference and improve Iowa, the nation and the world.” Grassley has supported Congressional action that would help volunteerism. He is, for instance, a co-sponsor of the Giving Incentives to Volunteers Everywhere Act of 2009 (GIVE Act), introduced in the Senate early this year. Last year, Meals on Wheels and Big Brothers/Big Sisters saw a noticeable decline in volunteers, Grassley said. This is due in some part to the low mileage reimbursement rates. In a press release announcing the commitment of Senate colleagues to changing the Charitable Mileage Rate, Grassley said, “While gas prices may be low now, these charities are still facing a shortage of volunteers since many of these volunteers are affected by the economic crisis. Unfreezing the Charitable Mileage Rate allows those charities that are on the front lines of the economic crisis to provide some incentives to volunteers. Giving the IRS the discretion to change the charitable mileage rate is a no-brainer from a tax policy perspective.”

As with the federal efforts, Iowa’s various government entities have embraced National Volunteer Week. For instance, cities and counties all over Iowa have at various times recognized the

importance of NVW at council meetings, such as Johnson County (1997), Bettendorf (2004), and Mason City (2006). Central to administration of volunteer efforts in Iowa is the Commission on Volunteer Service (ICVS). For example, ICVS is about to have volunteer recognition in connection with the NVW. In 2007 over 600 volunteers were honored with volunteer awards. Governor Chet Culver said, “Volunteers are the glue that holds our communities together. They are servants of their fellow citizens, always there to lend a hand when it is needed. I am honored to present the Governor’s Volunteer Award to these outstanding Iowans and look forward to working with volunteers across our state.”

ICVS has existed under various names for some time in Iowa. Governor Robert Ray created an Office of Volunteerism. In 1994 Governor Terry Branstad, with an Executive Order, changed the office to the Iowa Commission for National and Community Service. The order states that there is a “compelling need for more civic participation to solve community and state problems and address many of the country’s unmet social, environmental, educational and public safety needs.” The order goes on to promote “community service and volunteerism as an integral part of the state’s well being.” Eventually this office became known as the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service.

The ICVS works to promote volunteerism through its volunteer awards and the Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame. It runs such programs as the Iowa Mentoring Partnership, AmeriCorps, and RSVP. Each year ICVS reports on the volume of volunteerism in Iowa. (See a sample of the statistics from the annual report at left.) In Iowa, it is clear that we have made the commitment to community service that Obama has called for, and that it is a longstanding effort Iowans embrace.

For more information on ICVS see their website at <http://www.volunteeriowa.org/>

From the ICVS 2006 annual report:

- More than 1 million hours of AmeriCorps service were performed in Iowa in the previous five year.
- More than 4600 K-12 students were tutored in ICVS programs.
- More than 29,000 citizens were trained in environmental awareness and protection
- 6870 people received anti-victimization and violence presentation training.

AmeriCorps Fuels Hope Through Disaster Relief

By Lacy White, Waldorf College

The summer of 2008 brought tornadoes and floods that devastated many Iowa towns. In May, an F5 tornado tore through Parkersburg, leveling almost half the town. Homeowners emerged from their basements to find nothing on their lots but piles of rubble and debris. In June, record flooding submerged towns like Oakville and Cedar Rapids. When the waters receded, residents were left with houses full of molding walls and possessions beyond salvaging.

Families across the state were in dire need of help, the damage so extensive that any hope of rebuilding their homes – and their lives – seemed out of reach. Many did not know how or where to begin the enormous task that lay ahead.

AmeriCorps quickly stepped in to offer its service. Hundreds of members arrived eager to do whatever was necessary to rally and relieve distressed communities. Arriving in Parkersburg less than a week after the tornado, Bill Dillon, a Corporation for National Community Service (CNCS) program director, realized the greatest need was for organization. Dozens of volunteers sat waiting to be deployed, but there was no system for coordinating them.

“We determined the most appropriate use for our team was to set up a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) to which all groups, internal and traveling through, could report,” said Dillon. This is also where homeowners could call in and register for assistance.

The VRCs established by AmeriCorps teams across the state provided the key element of efficiency to the work being done in each town, benefiting not only AmeriCorps members, but any volunteer who registered at the VRC. They

also became a place for residents to socialize with volunteers, to tell their stories or take their minds off their troubles.

Perry Onorio, a member of the Washington Conservation Corps AmeriCorps program, served as head of the Oakville VRC.

“I had direct contact with almost everyone in that town,” he said. “I talked to them and let them vent or let them know what was going on. I assured them there were people who had come in solely to help them rebuild their lives.”

It was this assurance by Onorio, and countless other AmeriCorps members like him, that helped facilitate one of the program’s most important duties: to offer hope to those who could not see past the devastation in front of them, those who saw their belongings lost or destroyed, their futures uncertain. Many thought their homes were beyond repair and there was nothing they could do. But, as Onorio observed in Oakville, their outlook evolved.

“As people started seeing things change in town it became more hopeful. Once a group like AmeriCorps comes in and does a lot of the work for you – rips out your carpet and drywall – it looks much more doable. You can say, ‘I can totally fix this up now.’ I saw that change in people on a daily basis as homes were gutted out.”

In flooded towns, the work consisted of draining houses of water and mud, throwing out waterlogged furniture and appliances, removing everything down to the studs and power washing inside and out. In Parkersburg, it was removing debris – everything from trees to metal to glass to concrete to piles of lumber – and anything salvageable from inside houses. AmeriCorps members were able to undertake a

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tremendous amount of manual labor, freeing many residents from the emotional task of gutting their own homes. Their tireless commitment to backbreaking work in sweltering humidity and the enthusiasm with which they met each challenge provided the support residents needed to endure the summer.

AmeriCorps members also took something away from the experience of disaster relief. Katie Graham, a member of Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), shared the lesson she learned from her ten-week term in Cedar Rapids.

“I learned the importance of living for someone other than yourself, for giving even when you think you have nothing to give, for giving without an expectation of being thanked. And I learned how much community service can tie you to the place where you serve; you sow a part of yourself into whatever community you serve, so returning is a little like coming back home. It’s familiar, it’s comfortable, it’s yours.”

This is a sentiment echoed by many other members who found it difficult to leave when their first term was up, often requesting to extend their service to a second term. In Cedar Rapids, VISTA remains a strong presence as it continues to help the town in its rebuilding process.

Across the state, AmeriCorps helped accomplish in weeks what it would have taken individual homeowners and volunteers months to complete. The program’s quick and effective response cleared a space for hope to rise up from the muck and debris, and there are those now rebuilding on foundations AmeriCorps helped clear and cleanse.

It has left a lasting impression on the towns through proactive and sustainable volunteer coordination systems, thousands of eager helping hands and relentless positivity. It was this selfless desire to alleviate the frustration and vulnerability of those left suddenly in need that put so many Iowa residents on the road to reclaiming their lives in the wake of disaster.

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Director Bernie Van Roekel says with conviction, “Without volunteers we would not have a program.”

Volunteers are essential to many community programs in Iowa. For the fourth year in a row, thirty nonprofits and agencies set up displays on February 25, Volunteer Awareness Day, in the state capitol rotunda. They sought to inform Iowans, and particularly legislators, about how critical volunteers are to our state. Participants listed a variety of tasks which volunteers perform such as assistance with blood donation, support and education of victims of violent crime, providing low-cost eye care, and caring for the terminally ill. A cornerstone of volunteerism in Iowa is the AmeriCorps program, something President Obama wants to expand.

Organizers from the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service say, “This event has been designed to give organizations and programs that rely on volunteers a chance to talk with their legislators about the impact volunteers have in Iowa and the critical services volunteers provide in your community.”

After the exhibits closed at 1:00 p.m. Lt. Governor Patty Judge announced inductees into the Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame.

Numerous Iowans volunteer because, as one volunteer stated, “It is the right thing to do.”

For photos of attendees see <http://inrc.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/updates/2009/awareness/>

Legislative Updates

General Assembly Considers SF 178

The Iowa General Assembly is considering a bill that would create a private right of action for consumer fraud. The bill, SF 178, provides for an action when someone has engaged “in an unfair practice, deception, ... or misrepresentation ... in connection with the advertisement, sale, or lease of consumer merchandise, or the solicitation of contributions for charitable purposes.”

Iowa is the only state that does not have a private right of action for consumer fraud, so it is seen as important for this bill to pass. As it relates to fundraising, this bill would allow a private individual to sue a nonprofit that made a deliberately false representation in its fundraising resulting in damage or injury to the donor.

Since its introduction in the legislature, there have been a few changes limiting its application to charitable solicitation. First, the group of nonprofits excluded from charitable solicitation regulation in Iowa Code 13C (political organizations, religious organizations and accredited colleges and universities) have been removed from the consumer fraud bill. Second, a provision has been added limiting liability for volunteers who take part in fundraising for nonprofits in Iowa. The Office of Consumer Affairs in the Attorney General’s office has been responsive to comments on the bill.

Other Updates¹

Both Houses of Congress are focused on improving the **Charitable Mileage Deduction** for volunteers. Currently the deduction is 14 cents and provides a substandard tax deduction for charitable volunteers compared to the business and government standard mileage rate set by the IRS – 55 cents today – or even the medical rate of 24 cents.

The reintroduced Giving Incentives for Volunteers Everywhere (GIVE) Act (S 243) states that it would “grant the IRS discretion in setting the mileage deduction rate for volunteers and charitable organizations...

as high as the business mileage deduction but not lower than the deduction for moving and medical expenses.” The companion legislation in the House is the Fair Deal for Volunteers Act of 2009 (HR 524). In a recent development, Congressmen Petri (WI-R), Campbell (CA-R), and Platts (PA-R) introduced a bill focused only on the reimbursement side, the less costly aspect of relief. Their bill, the Charitable Driving Tax Relief Act (HR 590), excludes from taxpayer income any reimbursements received by a nonprofit for volunteer driving up to the standard mileage rate of 55 cents. The current discrepancy between the charitable and business mileage rates is viewed as discriminatory and unfair by nonprofits. The new bill would also drop a federal requirement that charities report their reimbursements to the IRS, thereby removing an administrative and paperwork burden.

On January 16, Senators Kennedy (MA-D) and Hatch (UT-R) introduced the **Serve America Act**, a bill to expand national and community service opportunities for all Americans. The bill would create volunteer organizations to put Americans of all ages and backgrounds to work to help address local and national challenges. It encourages increased levels of traditional volunteering through the creation of a Volunteer Generation Fund; establishes an Opportunity Corps, an Education Corps, a Clean Energy Service Corps, and a Healthy Futures Corps to respond to pressing issues; and creates a network of Community Solutions Funds that will support replications of successful initiatives to increase economic opportunity, improve education of economically disadvantaged students, promote healthy child and youth development, expand access to health care and health education, conserve natural resources, enhance energy efficiency, increase civic engagement, and reduce crime.

To see the full text of **SF178** go to <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Cool-ICE/DisplayBills.htm> Type SF178 in the **Quick Find** box.

See the official press release about the **Serve America Act** at http://kennedy.senate.gov/newsroom/press_release.cfm?id=0ba0c2ed-0061-4b4e-b291-9a8e262c82cb

¹Source:

<http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/?q=policynews/february2009>

June Sessions Scheduled in Principles and Practices

Six-hour training sessions in the Iowa Principles and Practices for Charitable Nonprofit Excellence will be given this June at three locations: Davenport, June 4; Des Moines, June 23; and Sioux City, June 25. Sandy Boyd, Jude West and Richard Koontz will deliver the instruction. The cost for the workshops is only \$25. Donated use of the auditoriums at the Putnam Museum in Davenport and the Cultural Affairs building in Des Moines make these low fees possible.

To enroll, download the June Training Registration Form from the INRC web site at <http://nonprofit.law.uiowa.edu/updates/2009/prinpracregjune09.pdf>. Nonprofits in Iowa sending staff or board members to the training will be listed on the Register of Accountability.

Be sure to visit: <http://inrc.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu/> for additional information on each event listed.

National Council of Nonprofits Forms Stimulus Guidelines

The National Council of Nonprofits (NCN) has put considerable effort into wading through the recently passed economic stimulus package to create guidelines for nonprofits seeking stimulus funds. The NCN has posted an Economic Stimulus & Recovery Overview as well as a piece entitled "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Grant Application Information, Tips, and Thoughts" on their website. The latter includes important deadlines associated with this federal money. A third piece looks at what states are receiving what funds from the package. Additional reports on the new federal money are being created. To review any of these reports see the NCN website at <http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/stimulus>

2009 Nonprofit Management Academies, Iowa State University

Information at: www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/npma.html Click Current Offerings for additional details.

Date/9:00 am-4:00 pm	Topic / Location
April 1	Strategic Planning (Davenport)
April 16	Fundraising and Managing (Marion)
May 20	Engaging Your Board (Marion)
June 26	Creating an Integrated Fundraising Program (Marion)
July 24	Your Development Shop (Marion)
August 21	How to Secure Major and Planned Gifts (Marion)
September 25	Seeking Funding: Marketing and Development (Marion)
October 23	Risk and Crisis Analysis (Marion)

About Our Organization

The Larned A. Waterman Iowa Nonprofit Resource Center is a University of Iowa interdisciplinary collaboration created to make more accessible educational and service programs focused on strengthening the operational capacity of Iowa nonprofit organizations.

The Center works collaboratively with government agencies, nonprofit organizations and educational institutions to impart new knowledge through activities and provide in-

formation and training resources to help nonprofit organizations and interested persons throughout Iowa. We seek to build the capacity and develop the effectiveness of community-based organizations and enhance the overall effectiveness of local organizations in building communities. The Center also introduces students to the nonprofit sector and develops their sense of public and community service.

Visit the center's website at: <http://inrc.continuetolearn.uiowa.edu>.

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The Larned A. Waterman
Iowa Nonprofit Resource
Center
130 Grand Avenue Court
Iowa City, Iowa 52242
Toll free: 1.866.500.8980