



Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning
l'Alliance canadienne pour l'apprentissage par le service communautaire

Recruiting to Ongoing Volunteer Opportunities

Involving students in the work of your organization through community service-learning partnerships offers you an opportunity to recruit those interested into ongoing volunteer service. Volunteer management principles encourage well thought out preparation before bringing volunteers into your organization. These same principles certainly apply when involving students in placements designed to encourage learning through service. This preparation not only assists to ensure an effective community service-learning (CSL) placement but the resulting positive experience also encourages students to consider continuing on, after the placement related to a course or program, as one of your regular volunteers.

Types of Volunteers

Two tools that can be used for reflection are journaling and discussion (see Jakubowski 2003:26). Journaling provides a medium through which students can record their actions and observations, as well their emotional and intellectual reactions to community experiences (Sullivan-Caitlin 2002:44).

Here are a few considerations for preparation, suggested by volunteer management specialists:

- Ensure you have a developed and strong mission statement
- Conduct a needs assessment
- Design appropriate policies for volunteer involvement such as risk management, a budget for volunteer management, design volunteer training, recognition programs, etc.
- Write appropriate volunteer placement descriptions to include the mission of the placement, time and energy commitments, qualifications, and requirements (i.e. police check, references, etc.)
- Attempt to match the needs of the program with the need of the volunteer
- Determine what can the volunteers get out of the experience, and who are the people who may gain the most satisfaction out of the opportunity
- Start with a small quality program that staff are comfortable with, and that may involve fewer volunteers
- Ensure outcomes measurement—how did the program fulfill the mission of the agency and improve the community?
- Think through the following questions: what are the changes we want this program to make in the community? How will we know if these changes have happened? How will we measure their impact?

Preparing for student involvement in your organization has benefits for all concerned, and may result in increased service on an ongoing basis. In addition to thoughtful preparation, please consider regularly communicating any ongoing volunteer needs to the students involved in CSL experiences within your organization. This offers them an opportunity for taking next steps in staying involved and making a difference in their communities.

WORKS CITED

Connors, Tracy Daniel. 1995. *The Volunteer Management Handbook*. New York: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

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