

# *"The Value of Volunteers"*



Included in the Belonging Concept of the Essential Elements of 4-H Youth Development is a positive relationship with a caring adult. In 4-H we are able to meet this element in large part through our strong volunteer base. This session is designed to illustrate the importance of volunteers to the youth in the 4-H program.

# Objectives

1. Define a volunteer.
2. Describe current volunteer trends, values, and benefits.
3. Identify motivating factors that lead individuals to volunteer.



In this session, we'll focus on 3 objectives.

# What is a Volunteer?

## *Two definitions:*

- *A person who performs or gives his services of his own free will.*

*Source: The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition*

- *A person who did unpaid work (except for expenses) through or for an organization.*

*Source: United States Department of Labor, 2004*



There are a number of ways that we can define a volunteer. The key point is that the individual volunteers time or services and is not directly compensated. Volunteers may receive reimbursement of incidental expenses (program supplies, mileage, etc.) and still be considered a volunteer.

# Trends in Volunteerism

- Volunteer characteristics
  - Women (46%) more likely to volunteer than men (42%)
  - 35-44 year old group most likely to volunteer (34.7%)
  - Those who volunteer typically contribute more than those who do not. (\$2,295 to \$1,009)



Women volunteer on average more than men.

The 35-44 year old group is the most likely to volunteer. (Perhaps because this is an age when that population has school-age children and their volunteer services are needed more than ever!)

Those who volunteer time are also more likely to contribute financially.

# Value of Volunteers

- **44%** of adults volunteer an average of 3.6 hours/week.
- **83.9 million adults** volunteer a total of **15.5 billion hours**; equivalent of over **9 million** full-time employees.
- Nationally, volunteer contributions worth **\$18.04 per hour** in 2005 (\$15.57 in Indiana).
- Nationwide volunteers donated time valued at **\$280 billion**.



Source: Independent Sector, [www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)



Our 4-H volunteers are likely to have a higher than average volunteer rate.

Think about the economic advantages of having 9 million additional full time employees who are willing to volunteer their services! What a boost to the economy and to society as a whole!

If a volunteer were to get paid for the work they do, these hourly rates are what their time would be worth.

## Volunteers benefit the 4-H program in many ways...

- Point of local contact for information
- Historical perspective of the program; may have been participants themselves
- Great network of contacts – for people, donations, etc.
- Know who to contact; typically well-respected by the community



There are numerous benefits that volunteers bring to the 4-H Program.

Staff and members can rely on the volunteers to help them to network throughout the community and to identify resources that can help support the program.

## Volunteers benefits continued...

- Allow organization to reach wide range of audiences
- The program is “owned by” the local people; staff members come and go, but the local people have the long-term ownership of the program.



Indiana has just over 100 professional staff assigned to work with the 4-H members. To achieve the level of personal contact we hope to have with 4-H members to help make 4-H a positive youth development experience, we must have a group of talented, caring volunteers who can help deliver 4-H programming.

Volunteers enable 4-H to reach a much larger audience than would be possible for the staff to reach on their own.

## Youth benefit from volunteers who...

- Care about them;
- Let them know they are valued;
- Provide opportunities for them to make decisions and try out ideas;
- Show confidence in their ability;
- Help them develop new skills;



Youth in our communities need the presence of a caring adult now more than ever before. Many of our youth face significant issues at home; our 4-H volunteers can help fill the void for the youth who do not have parents who are able or available to work with them on a consistent basis.

This is a huge responsibility for 4-H volunteers, but also a very rewarding one!



## Youth benefit from volunteers who...

- Communicate realistic, appropriate, and positive expectations;
- Listen to them;
- Spend time with them;
- Recognize their efforts, achievements, and special qualities; and
- Serve as good role models.



Part of the reason that we require each person to complete the screening process and application is so that we can assure our youth and their parents that the 4-H volunteers who will be working with their children will be positive role models for them.

## Group Discussion

- Share a personal example of a volunteer who has demonstrated great value to the 4-H program.
  - What did this person do that was so memorable?
  - How can you use this example to help you in your volunteer experiences?



(Instructions: depending upon time available, divide the group into small groups of 3-4. Ask each group to share personal examples of how a volunteer in 4-H was particularly valuable. Be sure to emphasize to the volunteers the importance of recalling these examples as they complete their volunteer work in 4-H and elsewhere.)

## Factors influencing volunteer participation

- People volunteer when asked to do so (71%).
- 2/3 of volunteers first volunteered as youth, often with their family.
- Volunteer marketing campaigns simply heighten awareness.
- Volunteers often work on issues pertinent to them or their family.



There are a number of reasons why people choose to volunteer. This slide lists some of the influencing factors.

Notice that the most frequently-reported reason that people volunteer is when they are asked. There is a lesson here that all of us need to remember: If we need help, we need to ask!

Another point to note is the importance of encouraging youth to learn to volunteer. Those youth who volunteer at a young age will learn the value of volunteering and will be much more likely to volunteer when they reach adulthood.

## Motivational factors for volunteers

- Individuals are motivated to volunteer for a number of reasons. Here are a few ...
  - Affiliation
  - Achievement
  - Power

Source: Vineyard, Sue. "Beyond Banquets, Plaques, & Pins". 1989.



There are a number of motivational factors for volunteers. This list is one of the more common ones. Each motivational factor has some positive characteristics and some less-than-desirable ones.

## The Affiliation-Motivated Person...

- Needs personal interaction
- Makes friends
- Is involved with group projects
- Has personal relationship with the supervisor



The Affiliation-motivated person is one who volunteers because they like to be around people.

## The Affiliation-Motivated Person...

- Works best with people they know well
- Likes to be perceived as a “good” person
- Wants to be liked and keep people happy
- Appreciates social opportunities
- Caution: these people may sacrifice the organization’s programs to be popular and well liked.



These individuals need to be careful not to compromise the organization’s values or guidelines in an attempt to be well-liked.

## The Achievement-Motivated Person...

- Sets specific goals to meet
- Works well alone
- Sticks with a task until it is completed
- Seeks feedback and responsibility
- Is a problem solver
- Sees problems as challenges
- Sets parameters to measure success
- Caution: these people may sacrifice people to attain their goals.



Achievement-motivated volunteers are ones who volunteer because they like to see the end result.

These volunteers need to be careful that they don't let their goals get in the way of how they treat people. The young people we work with in 4-H are still the most important end product that we "produce", not the exhibits they are working on!

## The Power-Oriented Person...

- Wants to impact and influence others
- Works alone or in a group
- Likes to teach others
- Is responsive to needs of people or programs



Power-oriented volunteers like to be in leadership positions and thrive there. We certainly need these volunteers in 4-H.



## The Power-Oriented Person...

- Keeps focused on program goals
- Appreciates titles of authority
- Seeks and accepts position of authority and responsibility
- Is persuasive and self-starting
- Caution: these people may sacrifice people or programs to retain their personal power.



We need to caution these individuals to once again remember that the youth are the reason we do what we do. Their desire to exercise leadership may need to be tempered at times so that the youth can learn to lead themselves.

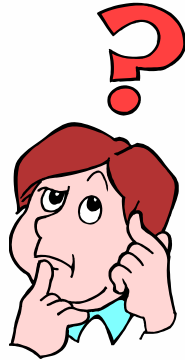
## Discussion Questions

- Which of the categories of motivation do you best relate to?
- How can this category be used positively in the 4-H program?
- What cautions do you need to take as a member of this category?



Again, there are good and bad traits of each category. It's important to recognize these traits, capitalize on the positives and minimize the negatives. These questions are designed to help each of us think through why we are volunteers in the 4-H program and how we can best help our 4-H members develop to their full potential.

## Conclusion & Quiz



In this session we have defined a volunteer as someone who gives freely of their time or services.

We then reviewed some trends in volunteerism and looked at statistics illustrating the value of volunteers. We have also seen how volunteers benefit the 4-H program and the youth participants.

Finally, we looked at factors that influence people to volunteer (remember that asking is the most influential factor!) and some of the different motivational characteristics that encourage individuals to volunteer.

Do you have any questions regarding this lesson?

To conclude the lesson, we have a brief quiz for you to take related to this lesson.

## Sources

- *The American Heritage Dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> college ed.). (1982). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
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