

Need to Know

Crucial info from 2005, what to look out for in 2006

You may well be reading this newsletter several weeks after its publication as it reaches your desk in a circulation folder amongst a pile of other newsletters, journals, old Christmas Cards, sales brochures and assorted Annual Reports.

To make life just a little easier this New Year, we have provided this “cut-out-and-keep” summary of highlights from the useful, interesting and thought provoking bits of information about volunteering that you might have missed in 2005, or should look out for in 2006.

Beyond all the important strategies, reports and initiatives – are the really important narratives that express something about volunteering itself.

My favourite snippet from the circulation folders of 2005 is an account in the Citadel Youth Project Annual Report, which describes how Leith Funeral Directors McKenzie and Millar did their bit for volunteering by providing a fleet of chauffeur driven limousines to take 30 children to the beach at North Berwick. ‘Mafia on a day trip’ a passer by was heard to comment.

Harriet Eadie

Investing in Volunteers

The Edinburgh Subsidy Scheme for Investing in Volunteers was launched in June. 12 organisations have signed up to examine and improve their volunteering practice by working towards the new quality standard Investing in Volunteers. Volunteer Development Scotland is the accrediting agency in Scotland.

Impact Assessment Toolkit

A new and invaluable resource developed by the Institute for Volunteering Research. This toolkit helps to measure the impact of volunteers under a number of different headings – community impact – economic impact – service delivery impact etc. Contact susan.wilson@vds.org.uk for more information.

Volunteering Resource

The new online resource developed by and for the Volunteering community in Scotland. Full of sample policies, factsheets, proformas, on all aspects of good practice in volunteering. See full article or access it through www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

Millennium Volunteers Re-launch

The Millennium Volunteers awards programme re-launched in 2005. It allows you to award and accredit volunteering by anyone aged 16-25. You can even

back-date your award to recognise young volunteers who have been working with you for some time. Contact kade.moncrieff@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

www.powerof5.org.uk

The new one stop website for young people volunteering - developed and maintained by a team of young Edinburgh Volunteers with all sorts of ideas for how to get involved at home, abroad, on your own or in a group.

Scottish Executive - *Vision for the Voluntary Sector*

A renewed commitment from Communities Minister Malcolm Chisholm to developing the relationship with the Voluntary sector. Support for the sector is outlined in 4 key areas - as a service delivery partner; in building strong communities; in advocacy and developing policy; and as an agent of change. Access the document at www.scotland.gov.uk

BigLottery Manifesto

In November BigLottery launched its new manifesto for Scotland focussing on investing in outcomes. There is a major commitment to volunteering in the document with new opportunities for funding in 4 different investment areas – and a tantalising hint of longer term funding. Download it at www.biglottery.org.uk

The Role of Asking

Research findings from Volunteer Development Scotland based on recent evidence that 60% of people have never been asked to volunteer. With hints and tips on how to do the asking. <http://www.vds.org.uk/information/docs/reports/pdf1Research%20Findings%20Scotland%20No%207.pdf>

21st Century Volunteer

If you read nothing else read this. This report looks at trends in volunteering including the rise of activism; the move away from altruism to more selfish volunteering; the political focus on volunteering to build social capital and the need to ‘productise’ volunteering. Download the report at www.nfpsynergy.net

Edinburgh Volunteering Strategy

Development of the strategy has begun. The working group (a sub group of the Compact Partnership) will be gathering evidence this year. Please contribute yours. The final launch of the Strategy is planned for November 2006. Contact Lara Celini or Jean Cuthbert at the Volunteer Centre.

The Volunteering Resource

Scotland's Network of Volunteer Centres has joined the ranks of many online communities by launching its own ‘wiki’ style web site. The site, developed by Volunteer Centre Edinburgh and commissioned by Volunteer Development Scotland, enables experts in volunteer management to collaborate on the production of resources for volunteer managers.

The site is intended to be as simple as possible to use. End users access items in the Resource using a straightforward search facility. And to help them identify popular and useful documents, there is a rating and review system similar to that at www.amazon.co.uk.



There are now around 200 up-to-date documents online and the Resource is constantly being added to, refined and developed by a growing band of Contributors.

A Contributor to the Resource can log on to the site, upload a document or add a hyperlink to relevant material elsewhere on the web. These submissions are checked by fellow contributors for accuracy, grammar, copyright and duplication. Items that have been submitted to the Resource are live for 6 months before the original Contributor is automatically required to update them. Items that haven't been updated disappear from view, meaning that users always access the most up to date information available.

Unlike all other resources of its kind, the Volunteering Resource doesn't exist in just one place on the Internet. Instead the Resource has been developed so that it can be plugged into the web sites of Contributors – and styled as their own. So the information ends up in multiple locations.

The result is a Resource that is cheap to run, always up to date, and meeting the information provision aims of the Volunteer Centre Network, and many other organisations involved in volunteering.

Find the Resource at:
www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk
www.vds.org.uk
resource.volunteerscotland.org.uk

Youth Panels are Big

The Big Lottery's Young People's Fund provides money to projects in Scotland which help young people; learn new things, feel good about themselves and enjoy healthy and positive activities. Over the next two years they have £20 million to give to suitable projects. Not all the projects that apply for money are able to get that money. Decisions need to be taken on which projects are going to have the most impact for local young people.

To help the Big Lottery make these decisions they have set up local youth panels who meet to look at requests for funding, decide which are best and tell the Big Lottery which projects they should be funding. Volunteer Centre Edinburgh are facilitating our local panel and we are looking for young people to join it.

To get involved they need to be between 11 and 25 years old. They don't need to have special skills or have been involved in this sort of thing before. They will be given a lot of support and training.

They will need to:

- Be able to come to the meetings; about 1 or 2 days every couple of months.
- Have an idea of some of problems facing young people in your area.
- Want to make a difference to young people like you in Edinburgh.
- Know how to keep information confidential.
- Have enthusiasm and opinions.

If you know any young people who may be interested in joining the panel please contact Kade Moncrieff on 0131 225 0630 or e-mail: kade.moncrieff@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

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Thanks:
City of Edinburgh Council
Big Lottery Fund
Scottish Executive
Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland
Laidlaw Foundation
Robertson Trust

Special thanks to our many dedicated volunteers.

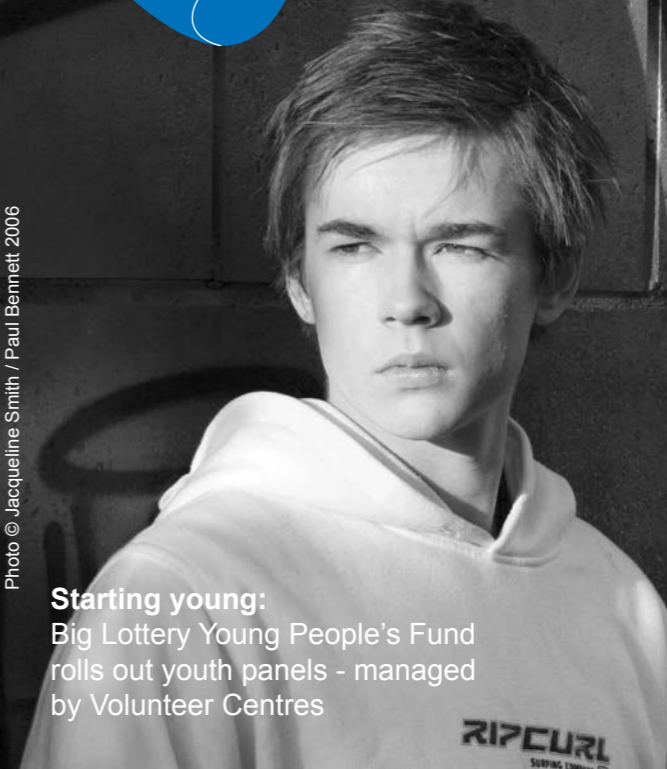
Scottish Charity SCO29681



volunteering

the newsletter of Volunteer Centre Edinburgh: February 2006

Photo © Jacqueline Smith / Paul Bennett 2006



Starting young:
Big Lottery Young People's Fund rolls out youth panels - managed by Volunteer Centres

THIS ISSUE

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Behind the oxymoron

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'Selfish Altruism' and the 21st Century Volunteer

What does the 21st Century volunteer look like? What do they want? How do they behave? How will voluntary organisations need to 'sell' opportunities to the public in the next few years? For anyone who needs to recruit volunteers, or market volunteering in general, the answers to these questions are critical.

As volunteer managers we are aware that volunteering is one option among many for volunteers. It must compete with everything from ice skating, to watching TV, to strip clubs. It muscles in on people's downtime, which is filled like never before with leisure pursuits, social events and passive entertainment. The result is that volunteers are becoming less interested in tasks that involve drudgery, and are much more likely to be seeking something meaningful, challenging or stimulating.

At the heart of a recent report by NFP Synergy, commissioned by the Scout Association, is the oxymoronic concept of 'selfish altruism'.

When we talk about a person being selfish, we are implying not that they are utterly, coldly, self-interested, but that their self interest tends to dominance in their gamut of motivations. Similarly, when we consider someone as altruistic, we are generally acknowledging not that they are Buddha-like in compassion, but that they tend to neglect their self interest in favour of a cause.

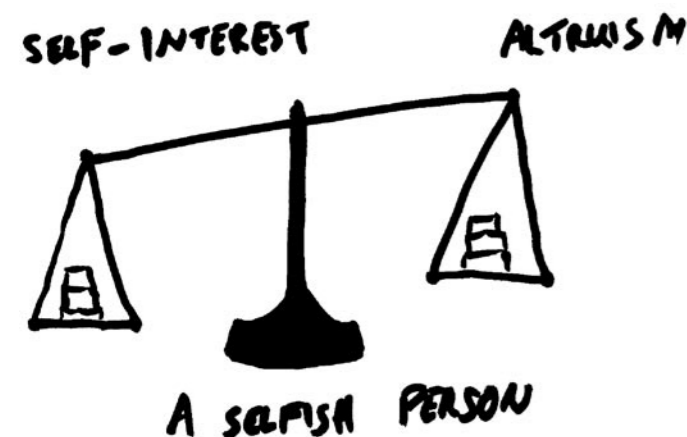
By pitching the terms 'selfish' and 'altruism' against each other, the authors of the report suggest that moral judgements about people's behaviour can be abandoned in favour of an acknowledgement that volunteering, like the world of employment, exists in a marketplace. In this market place each individual is subject to many variables, all of which affect the decisions they make about how they spend their time. In short, it implies that we should forget about selfishness and altruism and concentrate on the 'productisation' of volunteering opportunities to compete with a myriad of alternatives to volunteering, ranging from watching TV, to going stock car racing.

It follows that we need to package volunteering opportunities as simple, understandable propositions, with clear benefits and a clear cost (in terms of time) set at a reasonable level given conditions in the market. And there are different markets. As the report points out, the availability of time and money varies through the course of

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people's lives. Each opportunity needs to have a particular market, perhaps a life-stage in mind, and a clear proposition tailored for that market if it is going



Futurebuilders Fund IB Mentoring Pilot

In Edinburgh we have been lucky enough to have very low unemployment for several years now. A combination of a vibrant local economy and initiatives to help those affected by unemployment get back to work have resulted in a steady decline in the number of people on Job Seekers Allowance. While this is very positive it is sobering to realise that there are actually more than three times as many people in Edinburgh in receipt of Incapacity Benefit (IB) than Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). Unemployment may be low but “worklessness” and all the disadvantages that that brings for society and individuals is still a big issue.

Nationally there is a definite move from Government to identify solutions to the high number of IB claimants. A green paper on Benefit Reform is due soon and via Job Centres there are a number of pilot initiatives on the go, all of which are designed to help those on IB see what options they have for returning to work.

We have been helping people on New Deal to overcome barriers and move towards employment by matching them up with volunteer Employment Mentors for six years now. Our programme of mentoring has been very effective and with the shift in focus towards people on IB it seems a natural time to try helping those in receipt of IB using the skill of an employment mentor.

Whether long term unemployment has come about

to work.

Another key message in the nfpSynergy report is the relationship between fundraising and volunteering. As young childless workers your supporters may be better able to give money rather than time, as parents whose kids have just left home there may be time available, but an ongoing lack of money. Thus it makes sense to create a range of ‘supporter products’ that enable sustained involvement with the organisation as circumstances change. The products may vary widely, from full-on, highly involving volunteering opportunities, to negligible financial commitments.

The 21st Century volunteer is out shopping, and volunteer organisers are among a crowd of hawkers trying to get their attention. The most successful products closely match the customer’s needs; have clearly defined benefits, and clear-cut costs.

The full report includes some useful exercises to help volunteer organisers to refine their offerings. Download it from www.nfpsynergy.co.uk.

Mark Steven

by ill health or for any other reason the effects on confidence combined with issues such as a fear of returning to a work routine and practical problems like lack of up to date experience, references and skills for getting a job can be devastating.

For us, the good news is that we have recently been successful in securing funding from Futurebuilders to develop a pilot programme to deliver mentoring to people on IB. We will run the pilot for a year and our aim is to develop a model which will enable us to further develop this service.

The work we do with the clients while being similar to JSA clients will differ in many ways. Wider issues are likely to be barriers and the client’s progress may well be more staged, perhaps gaining confidence and skills in the safe, supportive environment of volunteering or supported employment before progressing to paid work. Our over all aim is to support people in a client centred manner which will empower and enable them to make the decisions which will lead them to secured employment and get off state benefits and we hope that it is as effective as our New Deal Mentoring has been.

If you would like more information on employment mentoring please contact Steve Piercy on 0131 225 0630 or e-mail him steve.piercy@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

From Good to Great

Effective leadership from your management committee is one of the keys to success in your organisation. We place a lot of responsibility and expectations on committee members. Yet we can sometimes forget that all our management committee members are volunteers from our community, many with busy lives and jobs who give of their time freely and willingly. How do we therefore support them to be as effective as possible, grow in confidence and skill and ensure they want to come back to meetings on those dark rainy nights in February? These are just some of the questions we are addressing on a new programme that is being offered to Management Committees of small community based organisations.

Since the programme, known as “Good to Great”, began in October, I have been fortunate to work with Management Committees that are all fairly well established and ready to take some time to reflect on how they can become more effective.

All of the committees are made up of passionate and dedicated people who are committed to the cause and want to give something back. They share a desire to work more effectively and really take their organisations forward. All are aware of the increasing responsibility and expectations placed on them. Often, they feel they are not as well equipped as they would like to be to deal with the complexities they face.

Small community based organisations are increasingly expected to be the main deliverers of critical and important services to their community with limited and uncertain resources. They do this, in a climate of more and more red tape, legal obligations and bureaucracy. “We are so busy worrying about our policies and procedures and obligations to the Inland Revenue, Companies House and the Charity Commissioner that we don’t have time to think about where we want to take the organisation next year”

The programme therefore brings together a number of different community based management committees and provides an opportunity for them to learn from each other and share experiences and challenges. We explore what they think they have done well to come this far and what they could do more of or better to lead their organisation forward positively. It is also an opportunity to meet other local community activists and explore any links or opportunities to share ideas and resources. The programme aims to increase people’s confidence and skills to have rigorous and effective debates and make good decisions. It helps committees think about how they work better as a team, manage conflict effectively and use people’s skills and ability’s well so they can meet their increasing demands. It is a practical programme, focusing on the main issues

that each committee is facing in the immediate future. “Having the time to discuss the pressing issues of the organisation and having other colleagues and professional input into how to go about addressing them was extremely useful” was the response from one of the participants at the last session.

What I have been particularly struck by is the desire of participants to take time out, reflect on how they work together and learn new and different ways of leading their committee. Every person sitting on a management committee is a leader in their community. It is our responsibility to support them to be the most effective leaders they can be. The Good to Great programme is one way we are able to do that.

Lara Friedman, Management Committee Development Worker

[Joins us at the first city wide “Good to Great” Event on the 18th of March.](#)

The Volunteer Centre Edinburgh and the City of Edinburgh Council and would like to invite all management committee members of community based organisations to join us and other committee members on the 18th of March.

The event will be the first time that management committee members from a wide range of community based organisations get together to share their experiences and develop new skills. Together we will explore what helps a committee to work really well and how we can address some of the difficulties committees face along the way.

The event will take place in central Edinburgh from 10:00am – 4:30pm. Lunch will be provided as well as tea and coffee during the morning and afternoon breaks. If you have any child care requirements, please let us know and we will be happy to see how we can assist.

To book or request information please email lara.friedman@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk or call Lara on 0131 225 0648.

This is an opportunity for management committees to invest in themselves, meet others and build new skills - we look forward to hearing from you.

Generous City Project

Generous City is a groundbreaking project for Edinburgh charity shops and reuse projects. It is run by LEEP and funded by the City of Edinburgh Council, Transforming Waste Scotland and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency. Through publicising and supporting charity shops and reuse projects, Generous City aims to inspire residents, charities, volunteers and organisations to make Edinburgh the Most Generous City in Europe!

The aim of the project is to make a lasting difference to levels of donating, volunteering and buying in charity shops and reuse projects. It also aims to recognise and support the role that charity shops and reuse projects play in diverting goods from landfill and enabling thousands of people to contribute to reuse and recycling.

In practice this has involved setting up a partnership of charities, holding a seminar to prioritise key issues, developing a citywide promotional campaign, providing shops with advice on reuse and recycling, and developing an Edinburgh Charity Map.

Volunteering plays a key role in the project, especially as one of the major problems charity shops and reuse projects currently face is finding enough volunteers.

Course to “Maximise Volunteering in Sport”

Participants from across the Lothian and Borders region who attended the inaugural regionally based Volunteering in Sport Training Course have reported that participating in the courses will help them improve the management and utilisation of volunteers in their organisations.

The courses, run by Volunteer Centre Edinburgh in conjunction with Sport Scotland, focused on developing best practice in volunteer involving sport and physical recreation organisations in the region. Professional staff from a diverse range of organisations including local authorities, active schools programs, national governing bodies and sports clubs attended the training.

The training program focused on strategies and methods to develop volunteer frameworks; recruit and retain volunteers as well as the effective management of volunteer programs.

Course participant and Manager of Active Schools Edinburgh, Lynne Hogarth, said: “The course was relevant to the (sport and physical recreation) field

Generous City aims to promote volunteering through its publicity campaign and is particularly keen to emphasise the ‘green’ nature of volunteering with these charities.

Volunteer Centre Edinburgh has provided support and advice throughout the project and has a place on the Generous City steering group. For further information please contact Jess Gildener, Generous City Project Officer, LEEP, on 0131 538 7943 or via Jgildener@leep.org.uk.

Jess Gildner, Generous City Project Officer, LEEP

and will be valuable in assisting our organisation implement a volunteer strategy and recruit volunteers to our program.”

Also attending the course was Suzanne Laing, Sport Coordinator at Lothian Disability Sport who reported the impact of the training program will change her organisations approach and attitude towards utilizing volunteers.

“Implementing the actions from the training will assist us to promote the role of the volunteer both within the organisation and to the public.”

The Volunteering in Sport Training Courses form part of a wider training and development program for volunteer involving sports and physical recreation organisations. This training program is supported by the Volunteer Centre Network Scotland and Sport Scotland and encompasses a variety of training and development opportunities for professional staff, club personnel and volunteers.

Oliver Dudfield, Volunteering in Sport Development Worker

Generosity in Numbers

90 the number of charity shops in Edinburgh

120 average tonnes of donations per year, per shop

11,000 the total number of tonnes of donations given to Edinburgh charity shops every year

4,000,000 estimated number of transactions in Edinburgh charity shops per year