

# Building Leadership Capacity: Helping Staff Succeed with Volunteers



# Welcome

- Panel Introductions
- Why is this important?
- Institutional Profiles
- Questions, Comments & Shared Experiences

# Panel Introductions

## **Moderator:**

Elizabeth Barton, United States Botanic Garden

## **Panel:**

Shawna Jones, Santa Fe Botanical Garden

Julia Lo Ehrhardt, Tyler Arboretum

Sally Kutyla, Longwood Gardens

# Why is this important?

- Non-profits rely on volunteer support!
- Successfully placing and leading volunteers:
  - Maximizes the volunteer's contribution of time and talent
  - Promotes teamwork and organizational efficiencies
  - Supports the organization in accomplishing projects
  - Builds staff leadership skills and capacity
  - Fosters community engagement



**Shawna Jones**  
Adult Education and  
Volunteer Coordinator  
*Santa Fe Botanical Garden*



# The Volunteer Council comprises representatives from the major volunteer categories for the Santa Fe Botanical Garden

- Special Events Volunteers
- Docents
- Gardeners
- Office Volunteers

# Why The Santa Fe Botanical Garden formed a Volunteer Council



# Responsibilities of Volunteer Council Representatives





# Volunteer Council Expectations



# Avenues for Problem Solving



# What all of this accomplishes

- Streamlined communication
- Faster, quicker, and easier problem solving
- Attentiveness to volunteer needs
- Inclusivity
- Retention
- Relief of responsibilities on staff members
- Empowerment

# Are you Ready for a Volunteer Council?

## Some Factors to Consider

- Will a Volunteer Council address your volunteer issues?
- Who will spearhead your Council?
- Goals?
- Framework?
- Staff Training





**Julia Lo Ehrhardt**  
Community Outreach Manager  
*Tyler Arboretum*



# Tyler Arboretum, an oasis where people can re-engage with nature



650 acres with 16 full time staff



# Volunteers are essential to Tyler's mission





# Volunteer Match-Maker - Getting it Right

- Forge relationships
- Advise
- Chaperone relationships
- Speed up, or slow down relationships



# Volunteer Match-Maker

## Why do they volunteer?

They believe

They learn

They have a relationship



# 1. Questions to Ask Yourself

Why do I need volunteers to complete this job?

When? Is it one time or repetitive? Start time?

Who will be the point person?

What does it look like if the volunteers **are** successful?

What does it look like if the volunteers **are not** successful?

What does the volunteer gain?

How do I meet the needs of the volunteer(s)?

How do I support their success and genuinely show them gratitude?



## 2. Know and communicate group culture

Organization values (Integrity, team approach, accurate work etc...)

Standard of conduct

Acceptable interactions

Recourse

### 3. Putting it all together (timeline)

8-weeks ahead of first work date:

Job description (#1 and #2)

6-weeks ahead:

Post and send it out with your current volunteers.

Call out should be 3 to 4 weeks long.

Remember social media.

### 3. Putting it all together (screening)

1. Volunteer Form (electronic or paper)
2. Phone Screen
3. In-person Screen (set times of year or days of the week)  
or at group Meet and Greet
4. Placement (within 2 weeks of in-person screening)

# Helpful Tools

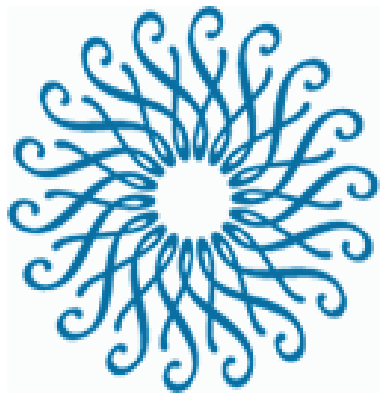
VolunteerMatch.com

Sign-up Genius

Electronic Volunteer Newsletter







**Sally Kutyla, CVA**  
Director, Volunteer Services  
*Longwood Gardens*



# Sorting Things Out

Solving problems

Planning for everyday success

Building leadership capacity



# Leadership can get messy

You *thought* you did everything right, but things aren't going as expected.

What happened?



# Is it a problem volunteer...or is it your problem?

“My volunteer is always late...”

“We had to change our policy, but the volunteers aren’t cooperating...”

“I returned and found that the volunteers did it all wrong... and they just left it like that! ”

“My volunteers are more interested in socializing than working.”

# When issues arise or projects fail

Ask yourself...not *Who* dropped the ball, but

*Why* or *How* the ball got dropped

Were my directions clear?

Did I provide the support the volunteers needed?

Did I follow through?

Was the volunteer a good match for the task?

# What if I goofed?

Be honest. Skip blame and look for solutions.

Talk to the volunteers about what happened.

Let them be part of the solution for future success.

If the volunteer wasn't a good match for the task, have a private conversation and talk about reassignment.

# Setting the Stage for Success

## 4 Golden Rules

A Good Beginning

Training

Communication

Recognition



# A Good Beginning

Position descriptions

Clear directions & shared expectations

Respect for volunteer's time & contributions





# Training

An upfront investment  
of time pays off in success

Great training leads to  
Great volunteers

Volunteers love Learning!



# Communication

Include volunteers in decision-making that impacts them

Ask for and listen to feedback



# Recognition

Celebrate success!

Recognition can be formal or informal

Include staff & volunteers!



Remember to make it fun!



# Setting the Stage for Success

The Golden Rules ensure:

Better teamwork and collaboration

Happier, more confident volunteers

Less stress for staff leading volunteers

Increased leadership capacity at all levels



Building on Our Strengths

# Building on Our Strengths: Longwood Gardens' Coaching Program

Capacity to supervise volunteers is “uneven” across the organization

How can we tap into the expertise of staff who are good leaders and build a coaching program for all staff?

# Building on Our Strengths: Program Steps

Assess current staff & volunteer interaction

Enlist staff and volunteers in the process

Identify areas for improvement

Propose, approve & implement changes

Circle back to evaluate & report on success



# Challenges

Making your case: Who are your champions?

Budget: Do you need outside expertise? Budget for consultant & plan for needed resources.

Time: Planning and approval process

Scheduling brainstorming sessions for busy staff and volunteers

# Rewards

Consistency of policy & procedures fosters program stability

Experienced staff can become mentors for those new to working with volunteers

Overall, should lead to stronger embrace of volunteerism in your organization

# Staff and Volunteers as Partners !



# Questions, Comments & Shared Experiences



# Stay in Touch

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