

cultural volunteer ©

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WELCOME!

cultural volunteer (cv) is a free e-news and information service for arts management professionals. **cv** is published six times a year and comes to you from Lynn Blackadder, of Arts People and Projects arts management consultancy www.lynnblackadder.com specialising in helping organisations successfully involve volunteers. You can choose to read **cv** in email or as a Word attachment. I hope you enjoy **cv**, but if you don't wish to receive future issues, please return this email typing 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

IN THIS ISSUE ...

This month **cv** brings you Lynn Blackadder on the highlights of **Resource's recent research into volunteering in the UK**, news of **voluntary support from the Big Four accountancy firms**, **The Egypt Centre's child-volunteer programme 'The Nubies' at the University of Wales in Swansea**, and an invitation to join a **free e-network for volunteer managers**.

WHY YOU SHOULD READ **cv** ...

cv is for arts management professionals who currently involve volunteers in their organisations, and for those who don't, but would like to find out more about volunteers.

cv aims to raise awareness of the resource cultural volunteers represent, and how to utilise it effectively.

cv actively campaigns for the recognition and progression of volunteers working in arts organisations.

cv can help you to better understand the nature of volunteering and how it relates to your organisation.

cv will regularly bring to your attention useful information, resources, and commentary on volunteering in the cultural sector. Experts on volunteer management will feature, and we will explore topics raised by you in future issues.

Lynn Blackadder on RECENT VOLUNTEERING RESEARCH FINDINGS FROM RESOURCE

Last month we reported that Resource had just published a report by the Institute for Volunteering Research. The 86-page report makes for very interesting reading, giving minimal but useful advice on best practice. The aim of the study (across the three domains of museums, archives and libraries) was to produce a demographic profile of volunteers in the sector to serve as a primary benchmark, enabling Resource to target developmental priorities. Main findings:

- Three-quarters of the organisations taking part in the survey involve volunteers.
- Volunteers are more likely to be involved in the work of Museums than in Libraries or Archives.
- The main reason for involving volunteers is 'it allows organisations to do things they could not normally do'.
- Three-fifths of the organisations involving volunteers have between 1 and 20 volunteers.
- Volunteers are predominantly white and able-bodied, seven out of ten are between the ages of 45 and 74, and three-fifths are female.
- Organisations with the fewest volunteers (20 or under) have the most diverse spread across the age categories.
- Eight per cent of volunteers in the organisations taking part in the survey have a disability.
- On average each organisation receives 55 hours of help each week from its volunteers.
- Volunteers helping a Library will generally contribute fewer hours than their counterparts in Archives and Museums.
- The main tasks completed by volunteers are Research in Museums, Outreach work in Libraries and Description of records in Archives.
- The organisations were reasonably evenly split between those who thought they had enough volunteers and those who thought they did not.
- Most organisations think that the recruitment of volunteers is becoming neither easier nor harder.
- Only three per cent of organisations have a specific person whose overall responsibility is the management and deployment of volunteers.
- The most popular methods of recruiting volunteers are a) being approached by volunteers and b) word of mouth.
- A quarter of the organisations that do not involve volunteers are considering it.

In reading the report one thing really surprises me. **None** of the museums taking part listed 'outreach' (which I am assuming includes educational activities, which is not listed as an activity either) as a volunteering activity (compared to 45% in libraries). The reason **least** given for involving volunteers across all domains was 'It increases diversity'. Perhaps the fact that volunteering programmes are not considered as an effective way to increase diversity and promote social inclusion is, in part, to blame for the fact that 97% of volunteers in museums, libraries and archives are white, that most volunteers fit into the 55-74 age ranges, and only 8% have a disability. These results also won't be helped by the **reactive** recruitment methods which are most popular. Also, in a sector where so few organisations (3% in this survey) have a specific person whose overall responsibility is the management and deployment of volunteers, and a high proportion of those taking on volunteer management as an additional task are curators rather than 'management staff', it is not surprising that the most common reason for not involving volunteers is that it is 'too time consuming'.

Encouragingly, the research overview states that: 'While there may have been something of a laissez faire approach in the past and little in the way of formal processes, there is now a strong awareness of the necessity to come into line with volunteer policy making and management that is increasingly common in the voluntary and statutory sectors more generally. Benefits of coming into the field at this stage are obvious as institutions now have a considerable body of knowledge and experience to draw on.'

We can all look forward to hearing about Resource's volunteering developmental priorities. In the meantime, have a look at the detail at:
<http://www.resource.gov.uk/action/leadership/00lead.asp#volunteers>.

'BIG FOUR' VOLUNTEERING SERVICES

Those of you who read *The Guardian's* 'The Giving List' (25 November 2002) may have noted that the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales have set up an online system matching charities and voluntary groups with accountants who want to offer their financial services for free. Also, there were interesting features on the community and volunteering activities of three of the big four accountancy firms: KPMG, PricewaterhouseCooper, and Deloitte Touche. **cv** will be investigating how arts organisations can access this support and will report back in the next issue.

FEATURE: Have you ever thought about involving child volunteers? Read about the experiences of one museum... Stuart Williams on 'The Nubies' child-volunteer programme at The Egypt Centre, Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, University of Wales, Swansea

How we got started

We are very unusual at the Egypt Centre in that we use child volunteers to staff our galleries at weekends and school holidays, and we also have work experience placements throughout the year. Most museums are astonished that we do this, as apparently there are still some that don't even like children visiting their galleries. Our child-volunteering programme started in 1999 with three young people from Swansea: Ben, Jodhi and Ross volunteered at the Centre on Saturdays, as a result of which they won a 'Swansea Bay Youth in the Community' award.

Before being offered my job as Volunteer Coordinator at The Egypt Centre, I was a volunteer for over two years. There were more and more children asking for places every week, and our waiting list was beginning to grow. Wendy Goodridge, our Assistant Curator, and I decided to set up a child volunteer programme. We called it the 'Nubies' after the Egyptian god of mummification, Anubis, which is also our logo. Very soon we began to encounter major problems.

Working with the Nubies

Sometimes our Nubies would turn up for duty with a friend, brother, or sister who mum or dad thought might also like to volunteer. We had no parental consent for them to be with us, and we had no knowledge of other important issues, for example if the child had a medical problem. What should we do? We couldn't send them away, or tell them to go home, as very often Mum and Dad had already gone out for the day. It got worse! Sometimes parents would turn up unexpectedly with children and ask if the child could volunteer for us for the day. We even had children turn up to volunteer when we had already told the parents that there was no room on the programme. Parents believed that we were a free crèche! On many occasions we were begged by parents to let their children stay. I always explain that there is a waiting list, and application procedures which have to be followed before a volunteer can start, for example providing proof of identity and parental consent.

As word got around, the waiting list began to grow even bigger. It became trendy to have your child volunteer at the Centre, even when the child did not want to volunteer! Another problem we encountered was parents not arriving to pick their children up. Our museum closes at 4.00 pm and very often I would still be outside the museum at 4.30 pm waiting for parents to arrive, usually with the excuse: "You don't mind, do you?"

Protecting the children

Working with children, we needed a Child Policy that included rules such as no adult member of staff should be alone with a single child Volunteer. If any of you work with children you will know how difficult this is to put into practice, particularly when children want to come into your office to have a chat, or play on the chairs! The children are trained in all aspects of Health &

Safety at the Centre. For each we have emergency contact numbers, and details of allergies and medication. We also ask for parents' permission to administer medication / first-aid, and to take photographs of the children for publicity purposes. A major concern for us is protecting our children from potential harm from visitors. Our galleries are all fitted with a personal alarm, and are filmed by CCTV 24 hours a day. The children work in groups – usually 4-6 children in each gallery at any one time – and always carry radios. The children also police the galleries – a task of which they are extremely proud.

What do the 'Nubies' do for us?

On a Saturday, our galleries are staffed entirely by children – with adult supervision. Some of the children work every Saturday, some on a two-week rota. Today we have 16 Nubie volunteers and a further eight on the waiting list. The children work on all of our hands-on activities. They give:

- Mummification demonstrations on our dummy mummy.
- Demonstrations of writing in hieroglyphs and Egyptian Maths.
- Handling sessions where visitors are invited to handle objects as old as 50,000 years.
- Guided tours, sometimes whether you want one or not!
- Help to raise money for disadvantaged children in Swansea, enabling them to come to our Saturday Workshops free of charge. Some of the local children they have helped have now become Volunteers. They also raise money for the 'Sunshine Project International', a charity that runs a home for abandoned children in Luxor, Egypt. I took some of the Nubies and their parents there in August this year. Overall, the children have helped us raise over £4,000.

Children interpret objects differently to adults, and some of their comments on our objects have been added to our electronic object catalogue.

What do they get out of their Volunteering?

The Nubies get the chance to meet children from other schools. Their social, and communications skills are greatly increased. Their teambuilding skills are second to none; they all look out for each other. We also try to recruit children with disabilities. One of our Nubies is autistic, and we have been told by his family and teachers that his social and verbal skills have developed beyond anything that they could have wished for. This particular volunteer has been with us for two years, and next year he will join another of our volunteer programmes 'Millennium Volunteering', which will enable him to visit Egypt with his parents next April. The children also receive training in customer care, and attend mini master classes where they learn more about the objects we have on display.

As well as making new friends who are interested in the same things as themselves the children get an opportunity to come on any Museum trips that we have, but only if they are accompanied by a parent, and, of course, there's the Christmas Party, which is probably the highlight of the year for our Nubies. It is financed by Viscount and Lady St Davids who are very keen supporters of The Egypt Centre, and especially of our Nubies. Last year we had a travelling zoo attend: Noah's Ark brought along rabbits, Guinea pigs, snakes, spiders and all manner of other creatures. The children are given the Saturday off on this day and the galleries are staffed by the 'Millennium Volunteers'.

Recently I have been trying to recruit more Welsh-speaking volunteers, and we now have five Welsh speaking 'Nubies' which means that a third of our child volunteers are Welsh speaking.

Benefits?

Having child volunteers in the galleries is certainly widening access. Many people who would not normally set foot on a University campus now come along to see the kids working in the

galleries. The children have helped put our museum 'on the map'. Letting children volunteer for your organisation can be extremely hard work, but is very rewarding for them and for you.

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UK VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME MANAGERS (UKVPMs) NETWORK

UKVPMs is a lively, friendly and participative networking and communication resource for all Volunteer Programme Managers working in the United Kingdom. UKVPMs' mission is to increase the scope, scale and quality of both voluntary activity and the management of volunteers. It seeks to achieve this by bringing Volunteer Programme Managers together in a virtual community to develop their skills and knowledge. The network was founded and is managed by Rob Jackson, Volunteer Development Manager at RNIB. To subscribe, simply send an email to UKVPMs-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. The UKVPMs website address is <http://www.egroups.com/group/UKVPMs>.

FEEDBACK

cv is keen to respond to your interests and needs. If you would like to forward your news and views, comment on content, or suggest a topic for discussion, please email lynn@lynnblackadder.com.

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of **cv** will include a report on **volunteering culture in the USA from guru Susan J Ellis**, an analysis of **volunteering motivations and some tips on how to meet specific needs from Consultant Judith Mills**, and we will hear about the National Centre for Volunteering's project which is exploring the creation of an **Institute for Volunteering Management and Development**.

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