

# TELLING YOUR VOLUNTEERS' STORIES

*Sharing The Impact of Your Volunteer Program With the Community*



**Meals On Wheels  
Association of America**

August 30, 2011  
Presented by Laura Huth, *do good Consulting*

## Behind the Scenes vs. On-Stage

*Why Share Volunteer Stories and Stats?*

- Increase donations
- More grants
- Encourage more volunteerism
- Heighten visibility
- Create lasting impressions on the public
- Accountability



# The Value of Volunteers



## Volunteers:

- Get important work done at Meals On Wheels
- Provide expertise otherwise unavailable to Meals On Wheels
- Keep overhead low, saving valuable organizational resources
- Build organizational sustainability; strength in numbers
- Attract other volunteers as well as donors



# The Value of Volunteers

## Hourly value of volunteer time:

US average: **\$21.36**

Illinois average: **\$22.34**

**Do the numbers speak for themselves?**

Source: Independent Sector, 2009/2010

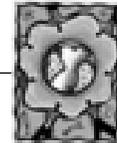
## The Power of Pictures & Words

Numbers don't always speak for themselves.

**Photos and stories draw people in, making connections and forming and strengthening relationships.**

*Let's put this to work for Meals On Wheels...*

### **VOLUNTEERS ROCK OUR WORLD!**



We couldn't do this work without volunteers to support us!

You don't have to be 40-hour trained to help us. In-direct volunteers can become board members, sort donations, pull weeds, clean gutters, wash windows, answer the administrative switchboard, staff a booth at an event, research projects, paint/repairs around the offices, fix a client's car, or just take out the trash.

If you'd like to help, contact XXXX at 585-5555 or XXX@XXX.org.

# The Value of Volunteers

**LAURA, 15:** Helps her grandmother deliver meals to the elderly.

.....

**SAM, 42:** Packages food for Meals On Wheels.

.....

**AMANDA, 33:** Processes and files client information at Meals On Wheels.

.....

**MARIE, 67:** Serves as volunteer receptionist for an anti-hunger agency.

# The Value of Volunteers

**LAURA, 15:** Helps her grandmother deliver meals to the elderly.



**SAM, 42:** Packages food for Meals On Wheels.

**AMANDA, 33:** Processes and files client information at Meals On Wheels.



**MARIE, 72:** Serves as a volunteer receptionist for an anti-hunger agency.

# The Value of Volunteers



**LAURA:** A high school sophomore, Laura donates 1 hour each week after school helping her grandmother deliver food for Meals On Wheels.

.....



**SAM:** A line-worker at a local factory, Sam donates 3 hours each week packaging meals for Meals On Wheels.

.....

**AMANDA:** A stay-at-home mom, Amanda donates 10 hours each week logging and filing client information for the local Meals On Wheels while her kids are at school.



.....

**MARIE:** A recent retiree, Marie donates 20 hours each week as a receptionist for the local food bank.



# The Value of Volunteers



## MEET LAURA HUTH:

A sophomore at Lyons Township High School, Laura Huth donates 1 hour of her time each week after school on Wednesdays driving around Cicero delivering food to elderly clients through Meals On Wheels.

**Laura's total hours donated to Meals On Wheels in 2010: 50.**

**Laura's time has a value of \$1,117 to Meals On Wheels.**

"My grandmother taught me the value of giving back by telling me stories about being young and poor. She taught me how to give back to others."

— Laura Huth, Meals On Wheels volunteer

# The Value of Volunteers

## MEET SAM MICHAELS:

A line-worker for the past 8 years at a local factory producing safety equipment, Sam donates 3 hours each week packaging meals for Meals On Wheels as a part of his community service requirement.



**Sam's total hours donated to Meals On Wheels in 2010: 150.**

**Sam's time has a value of \$3,350 to Meals On Wheels.**

"My community service requirement really turned me on to giving back to others. I learned what Meals On Wheels does for our community and I'm glad to have the opportunity to lend a hand."

*– Sam Michaels, Meals On Wheels volunteer*

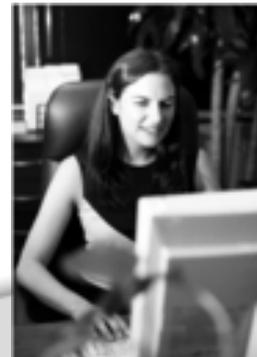
# The Value of Volunteers

"I still have a lot to do while my kids are at school during the day. But I'm not too busy to give back to others. Meals On Wheels lets me be both a mom to my kids and a volunteer to those in need."

*– Amanda Schmeltzer, Meals On Wheels volunteer*

## MEET AMANDA SCHMELTZER:

A stay-at-home mom, Amanda donates 10 hours each week to Meals On Wheels while her kids, Zoe, 5, and Clint, 8, are at school. At Meals On Wheels, she logs and files client information for the organization.



**Amanda's total hours donated to Meals On Wheels in 2010: 500.**

**Amanda's time has a value of \$11,170 to Meals On Wheels.**

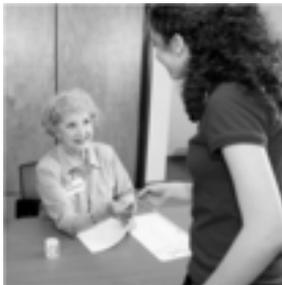
# The Value of Volunteers

## MEET MARIE ANGELICO:

Recently retired from a local elementary school where she worked as a kitchen cook for over 45 years, 72 year old Marie donates 20 hours each week serving as a receptionist for the Eastern Illinois Foodbank.

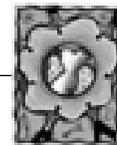
**Marie's total hours donated to the Foodbank in 2010: 1,000.**

**Marie's time has a value of \$22,340 to the Foodbank.**



"I'm not interested in slowing down just yet. There is still so much I want to do to end hunger. The Eastern Illinois Foodbank is a wonderful place for me to volunteer my time." ~ Marie Angelico, Foodbank volunteer receptionist

# So how do we go from this...



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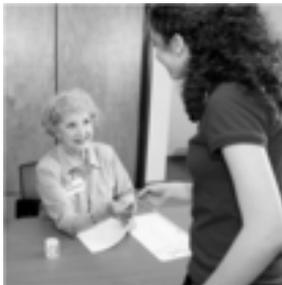
## ...to this?

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## Get to Know Your Volunteers

- ✓ Volunteer application form and interview process
- ✓ Photos for storytelling and recognition purposes
- ✓ Database to log and track volunteer data (hours, contact information, etc.)
  - ✓ Volunteer trainings
  - ✓ Recognize milestones (i.e. 100 hours)
- ✓ Don't skip on volunteer recognition events: consider the value they add to your organization
  - ✓ Random lunches for special occasions
  - ✓ Get into the field



## Empower Volunteers as Ambassadors

- ✓ Add every volunteer to your database
- ✓ Include volunteers in relevant meetings, communications, and announcements
- ✓ Ask them for donations. They appreciate the opportunity to give more than just time. Let them (not you) decide how invested they want to be in Meals On Wheels!
- ✓ Provide custom name tags, t-shirts, and business cards when possible



## Good stories

- **Know your purpose.** Where and how will this story be used? Who is the audience? What do you want people to know or do after reading or hearing the story?
- **Draw readers in from the start.** Use dramatic or heart-tugging openings. Quotes and compelling stories work great.
- **Be brief.** Get to your point quickly to keep readers' interest.
- **Include elements to help readers connect.** Photos, life experiences (kids, jobs), and quotes all make connections.
- **Condense quotes.** Pull the good stuff for quotes.
- **Editorial license is a double-edged sword.**



# GOOD PHOTOS



- **Plain background.** Plain backgrounds emphasize your subject(s).
- **Outdoor flash.** Use the fill flash to improve pictures outdoors.
- **Get close.** Eliminate background distractions. Step closer or zoom until subjects fill viewfinder. Use macro mode for sharp close-ups.
  - **Vertical pictures.** Change it up!
    - **Off-center.** Don't always take center-framed pictures.
    - **Know the flash range.** About 10 feet or 4 steps away.
- **Watch the light.** Avoid overhead sunlight, which casts harsh shadows.
  - **Direct.** Add props, rearrange subjects, or try different viewpoints.
  - **Get down.** Kids and pets needn't look directly into the camera, but stooping a bit can create better angles.

## 20 Great Ways to Tell Your Volunteer Stories

- 1) E-Newsletter
- 2) Paper newsletter
- 3) Website
- 4) Brochures
- 5) Media



#1-5  
Communications

## 20 Great Ways to Tell Your Volunteer Stories

- 6) Database
- 7) Volunteer applications & interviews
- 8) Name tags
- 9) Grant applications
- 10) Thank-you notes



#6-10  
Infrastructure

## 20 Great Ways to Tell Your Volunteer Stories

- 11) Volunteers
- 12) Community presentations
- 13) Donor meetings
- 14) Community connections
- 15) Special events



#11-15  
People

## 20 Great Ways to Tell Your Volunteer Stories

16) Stories

17) Photos

18) Good planning & coordination

19) Letters to the editor

20) Annual appeals



# 16-20  
Methods

## Thank You!

**do good Consulting**

*Catalyzing non-profit organizations to do good even better*

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"Be the change you wish to see in the world." - Gandhi