



IDEAS for involving YOUTH as VOLUNTEERS

The following information is an amalgamation of ideas from workshops focused on engaging YOUTH. This list has been growing since 2003.

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APPENDIX 8 Ideas for Involving Youth as Volunteers

Think about some of these possibilities:

- **Research** – learning about design of questions, set up, administration, implementation and analysis. Do you have a satisfaction survey you would like to do for your volunteers?
- **Promotions:** developing brochures, reports, manuals, annual report – graphics opportunities, newsletter development; media work, writing stories, interviewing.
- **Computer Technology:** Data base management or training your staff on specific program; putting your materials onto 'power point'; Web design & maintenance; Conducting on-line research on a specific topic for an agency and developing a resource manual of materials.
- **Training – Video** developing specific videos to target different aspects of your work; youth training youth; eg. Video program on proper way to push resident in a wheelchair, on and off elevators; any topic that lends itself to 'orientation'; Videotaping special events and then planning a program for clients around it; videotaping life histories of clients. Use youth to develop an historical documentary /history of the agency.
- **Curriculum Design:** Have youth develop their own curriculum for example on nutrition.
- **Training Teams;** recruit youth to form training teams, they research, design and implement specific training. Students go into classrooms to

train/promote students to volunteer. Youth with good experiences share the benefits.

- **Planning of special event** - Projects that might be youth specific and involve a team of youth; doing research and planning of an event. Gala or fashion show.
- **Group work** – teams of 3 youth assigned retired business person to assist seniors with yard work. Learn business skills, seniors needs, community involvement, increase skills; Mentoring young would-be entrepreneurs with business owners.
- **Outreach learning programs** – youth mentors to younger students needing help with school projects; youth mentors with seniors to teach computer and emailing, internet use.
- **Recycling projects** – youth enjoy environmental projects. Assess your agency and design appropriate recycling campaign.
- **Displays-** music, art for agency promotion.
- **Youth mediation programs** – train youth on conflict resolution to help in schools and educate public/work with police. Target unemployed youth assisting them to build skills to employment.
- **Youth speakers bureau** – give opportunities to learn presentation skills then develop specific topic and students go out and talk.
- **Use youth for youth recruiting:** recruiting for mall displays; high school presentations.
- **Marketing Project:** Have youth develop a marketing strategy aimed at youth and have them share with other agencies.
- **Project specific targets:** Assemble memory books; build reminiscent kits; write up resident stories and laminate into binder; plan a celebration around the completion of the book; do in conjunction with residents. Youth learn knitting/quilting from seniors. Short term project like gift giving.
- **Animals-** if you have animals in your facility youth assist in care, maintenance.
- **Special seasons** – students decorate during festive seasons and take down when complete. Good short term project.

- **Tuck Shop/Café services** – assign students to run small business in facility; reporting, administration, finances, ordering, stocking. (good class project – students then train next group to take over) Partner with a business teacher and his/her class to build entrepreneur skills but they commit to manage your cafe or tuck shop for one year.
- **Youth Directed Initiatives:** use the skills and talents of youth for entertainment, they design fashion show, entertainment evening and could be fundraising related. Could also be language skills, translator roles.
- **Youth Council/Advisory Committee** – if your agency is conducive to engaging youth why not establish a youth forum via committee of youth to determine what opportunities are available or could be developed in your organization. This group markets to schools.

Ideas from Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Congress

- **Education Event** –Young diagnosed student (speaker) go to schools with an adult volunteer so they can speak to high school classes (PDR) personal development. Asking youth to share their story. Youth guest speaker at meetings.
- **At youth event** – have youth selling the bracelets like a sports tournament or dance competition.
- **Personal approach** – personal contact or classmate that is affected
- **Be specific with task or volunteer opportunity** – what is involved and how much time needs to be clear. Make it FUN!
- **Ask What the Youth want to do** – and fundraise around that. Pearl Jam concert or paint ball.
- **Let them manage and run the event with supervision. Fundraising event developed that is geared towards youth interest and they run it.**
- **Listen to ideas**
- **Education meeting with only youth**
- **Create a position specific to youth. Recruit a volunteer Coordinator that is a youth.**
- **“Caps for Crohn’s”** – wearing caps and paying a fee for it, similar to jeans for genes.
- **High School HNW Competition** – get high school age youth volunteering for Heel ‘n’ Wheel-a-thon (as in Mississauga) – team leaders designated; pledges for best class/school, certificates for all participants; ratio of 1 team leader to 10 students; approach School Board regarding implementation and viability.
- **Educate in the form of assemblies to teach about volunteerism**

- **Take away the ‘Shame’** – associated with this disease and involve the youth.
- **Ask “parent-student” meetings** – to make the parents accept the disease and get them involved together.
- **Have a youth committee**
- **HNW** – youth focused/youth run; teams from schools, phys ed/health; pledge forms
- **M & M** – man store/competition; shirts
- **Shinerama** – type event in the fall? University students go out and compete? Try this with high schools; this may need to be spearheaded nationally?

Think about some of these ways to “tweak” existing volunteer opportunities that are currently not being done by youth:

1. Currently have mealtime visiting; gift shop, information desk and recreation programs – challenges are youth reliability; meaningful work; and ongoing training and supervision. Think about doing the following:
 - Staff commitment will increase if they invest in training and supervision and so too might the commitment from youth
 - Youth/peer leadership – have day captains
 - Float program (i.e trained for more than one area)
 - Youth Council – ideas what they want to do
 - Redo the length of the shift
 - Programs immediately after school form 2:30 or 3:30
2. Friendly Visiting in Home Care programs currently has adults visiting in seniors homes
 - Challenges are with risk management and isolated situations, maturity level of youth to identify if senior in difficulty, transportation for youth, age of youth
 - Consider recruiting older end of youth scale (age 12 to 24) recruit College or University age would increase maturity level, might have own car, do on their own schedule
 - Consider adapting the original definition of friendly visiting to make a social group time – bring seniors together once month at office space and have youth come there for tea/crafts etc. More intergenerational like. Students like to do nails, manicures and hairstyles....have possibility of creating fashion show with seniors and youth.

Crohn’s and Colitis has several fundraising roles for youth – Heel’n’Wheel and M&M Chairman. Consider

- youth speaking to doctors; youth will bring their friends; held fundraisers at school, 50/50 raffle, sold bracelets; pizza party (local pizzeria donates pizza and then sell for \$1); give youth role or project.
- Hold fashion show fundraiser- appeal to their fads; get models to show what clothes to wear.
- Include youth at Congress one day event.
- Honorary chair for Heel'n' Wheel; put picture on pledge form; can take on role as youth coordinator and would work with volunteer coordinator and help bring ideas on what type of activities, be at CCFC events.
- Media coverage for event – such as M& M BBQ. Bring youth rep and hamburgers to TV and radio station to get good coverage.

Crohn's & Colitis has several leadership positions for youth that include Vice-President, Youth Executive and Youth Volunteer Coordinator. Ideas to consider include:

- Contact Universities – improve communication skills, public speaking focus; high responsibility suited to independent person; attracts those looking for experience, benefits in career; prestigious title; can recruit more youth for other positions.
- Unofficial Youth Executive – President; Vice-President; Secretary and Treasurer; Youth holds separate meetings then meet and work together with the official “Adult” Executive. Gives the youth a sense of empowerment and confidence.
- Youth Volunteer Coordinator works with the volunteer coordinator as a liaison to youth in the community getting more youth involved.
- Volunteer coordinator – needs a cool name; assistant mentoring; Social networks – different interaction patterns for youth – cell phones and email in!; train youth volunteer “ninja” to represent the organizations values/mission but thrust them to explore their social networks their way!
- Have congress for youth with a rep from each chapter
- Make it online for those who can't make it or too sick

Think about Marketing Possibilities:

- Develop relationship with local School Board and promote to youth during spares
- Go to a local church or recreation group that is specific to youth.

- Expect commitment beyond the 40 hours and promote the reasons why
- Go to where youth arethey will not necessarily come to you...they don't know where you are!
- Target your youth who have the disease (Crohn's) can we connect with doctors who recently diagnose...are our materials available in doctor's offices to target youth and the support we have for them?
- Youth write their own position/job description – find out what they would like to do
- Youth Ambassadors – student led orientation of new volunteers
- Partner with other professionals like Junior Achievement, local Volunteer Bureau or Local Volunteer Association
- Partner with a youth oriented business e.g. Snowmobile Club connects with sports store that carries outdoor snowmobile clothing and develops a youth competition event or a fashion show.

Ideas from The Ukrainian Canadian Care Centre

- Legacy Project: www.uccclegacyproject.org – A web site created to preserve stories of residents and also allow comment. Created by a student wishing to get into medicine but who had a creative interest.
- Presentation Package: Developed by student on projects and initiatives that the Centre does to improve resident quality of life.
- Student “trainer/consultant” – a skilled student who wanted to be an ECE teacher, volunteered to learn the on-line assessment process (PointClick) and then provide one-to-one support to all the staff who had to learn this new program and who were very reluctant and nervous about it. Computer stations were set up and times when the student would be available. The staff embraced this training opportunity.
- Board Orientation Package: student coordinated information gathered from each department to put into a manual for new board members.

Ideas from an Arts Council Organization

- Art in the park specifically for youth – organized by youth for youth
- Youth Artists in the facility – demos and sessions for children
- Youth artists do a mural in the town ...paint the town wall day; could be for promotion or fund development
- Use youth project to fund scholarship for youth to go into arts
- Youth Committee – not advisory but decision making about what projects would appeal to youth; done by youth and maintained by youth.
- Have one adult artist as mentor for youth to support, guide.