

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

The Recruitment and Training of Program Volunteers  
in Recreational and Leisure-Time Agencies in  
Vancouver, Employing Trained Social  
Group Workers

by

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Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK  
in the School of Social Work

Accepted as conforming to the standard  
required for the degree of  
Master of Social Work

School of Social Work

1957

The University of British Columbia

## ABSTRACT

Volunteers have been working in leisure-time settings for a long time. In fact individuals were giving direct leadership long before the evolution of professional training for social group work. Since the coming-of-age of professional training, it has been recognized that the desire to help others is not enough. Personal qualifications, motivation, and knowledge influence the ability of any individual to make a valid contribution to the welfare of others. It is with these considerations that the professional social group worker must concern himself when working directly with volunteers. The practice of the group worker must be such that he can interest sufficient numbers of individuals in direct leadership to offer a satisfying program to the membership. He must be able to distinguish desirable and undesirable qualifications at the time of application. He must be able, also, to provide the volunteer with the basic minimum of knowledge required to work effectively.

To obtain information regarding the volunteer recruitment and training practices, questionnaires were sent to ten leisure-time agencies employing social group workers. The specific information thus obtained was complemented by information received in personal interviews with representatives of the ten agencies. To facilitate comparison and evaluation, agency programs were divided into (a) recruitment and (b) training, although these two parts of the total program are closely inter-related.

The study throws light on both strengths and weaknesses in recruitment and training programs. Some indication is given as to what may be done to improve both parts of the total program and, consequently, provide better service to the community at large. It is an important finding that the professional workers in this field are particularly concerned with recruiting and training program volunteers, and are interested in raising community standards. The question of standard formulation is opened up, but demands further research.

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Date May 25, 1957

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to the social workers in the respective agencies without whose help this study would not have been made. Their time, interest, and cooperation was a great moral as well as practical help.

I also wish to acknowledge the continual helpfulness of Dr. Leonard Marsh, Miss Anne Furness and Mr. Adrian Marriage, School of Social Work, University of British Columbia, all of whom gave generously of their time to facilitate the completion of this study.

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RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

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## Tentative Standards for Recruitment and Training of Program Volunteers

Today, nearly every major city in North America has a number of agencies -- either public or private -- devoted to recreation, leisure-time activities, and informal education. One rarely hears of any agency which undertakes an extensive program without utilizing the services of a substantial number of volunteers in instruction and leadership roles. The value of the services provided by these volunteers is inestimable. It is unlikely that an adequate recreational program could be carried on without them. There are several reasons for this: there are insufficient trained workers in group work and recreation to provide the volume of program required; there is not enough money available to the agencies concerned to pay the salaries of trained workers if they were available; and the great diversity of skills, knowledge, and leadership abilities available through volunteer service would be unavailable through the smaller numbers of full-time staff. It would seem then that -- at least for the immediate future -- program volunteers are a integral part of the staff team in recreation agencies in Vancouver.

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1 For example, the Community Chest and Council of Greater Vancouver obtained only 90 percent of its fund raising objective for 1957.

In addition to meeting this necessity there are other values inherent in the use of volunteer leaders. It was on this theme that Ellen W. W. Geer wrote

...that through a few trained and appreciated volunteers more of the same high type can be recruited...

and that

...more important than the concrete assistance furnished by such a body of intelligent volunteers must be rated their value as interpreters.... 1

Occasionally, individuals may be attracted to the profession of social work or recreation as a result of their experiences as program volunteers. Even more frequently, students planning to enter these or closely allied professions will use a volunteer opportunity to determine if he or she really enjoys working with people in such settings. These values are not immediately apparent in the day-to-day execution of program duties in an agency. They might occasionally be forgotten or neglected under the pressure of daily work loads.

There has been an assumption underlying the foregoing statements about the necessities and values of volunteers. It is that the agencies would use the services of the volunteer in

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1 Geer, Ellen W.W. "Volunteers in Social Work". Social Work Year Book 1933, Russel-Sage Foundation, p. 545.



an efficient, positive, and effective manner. Such may not be the case, and then the values of volunteer leadership would be open to question and doubt.

It is the responsibility of the professional social group worker to determine that adequate, professional standards are applied to volunteer service. Only through the application of such standards would there be any guarantee of the value of service offered. In this particular respect, volunteer service is a tool in social work to be used as effectively and as efficiently as possible. It should be subjected to standards, criteria, and evaluation in the interests of the membership, and is similar in this way to any other tool used in social work.

#### Community Problem

All too often, however, the recruitment and training of these volunteers is conducted on an ad hoc and formlessly empirical basis. There is little long-term planning for the assessment and satisfaction of community needs; the practices adopted are seldom subjected to rigorous evaluative scrutiny; co-ordination between different agencies in the same urban community is often woefully lacking; and perhaps above all, little effort is made on the part of the individual agency to achieve familiarity with the policies and activities of other organizations working with similar problems.

The recreational agencies in Vancouver cannot be held wholly immune from these charges. For example, ...there

seems to be a characteristic vagueness about accepted procedures or appropriate standards for recruiting and training program leaders. There is a body of opinion which maintains that volunteers can do the job intuitively because they are "interested and trying to help". Other professionals seem to operate on the premise that little planning is needed to help a volunteer do a satisfactory job. Or possibly staff work loads do not permit professional staff to give this matter as much attention as they feel it requires. Whatever the reason, some agencies or staff persons take a "laissez-faire" attitude toward the recruitment and training of volunteer leaders.

If this is so, it may be that in this one area of practice social workers in group work and recreation have failed to consider the essentials of social work principles and philosophy, and have neglected to apply the basic elements of professional practice to this problem. Is it possible that workers do not approach volunteers, and the services they offer, in the same analytical frame of mind that they would approach a client, member, or groups? Is it tacitly assumed in practice that one may forget the study, diagnosis, and treatment aspects of social group work when dealing with volunteers? Are group workers prepared to accept the volunteers on the level at which they can function, and work from there, or do they suppose that volunteers are "pre-fabricated" at a satisfactory level of performance? These and many more questions might be asked, but possibly one

general question would suffice in summary. With what attitudes do professional social workers approach their work with volunteers, and what efforts are made to ensure both satisfactory performance and continual improvement?

### Recruitment and Training

The importance of setting and maintaining adequate standards in the use of volunteer services is a common theme in current group work literature. Wilson and Ryland state "... agencies which attract the largest numbers of volunteers are the ones which set high standards, provide a sequence of training courses, and offer real supervision"<sup>1</sup>. However, these authors do not specify what constitutes "high standards" of recruitment and training. They are not alone in this respect. Much has<sup>2</sup> been written about volunteers, but a good deal of this material is of too general a nature. Much has been written about what volunteers can do, why they volunteer, the rewards of volunteer service, etc. Relatively little is available, however, on such topics as standards for effective recruitment and training programs, and the qualifications of desirable volunteers. In regard to this matter, in fact, there seems to be no clear, widely-accepted statement available which would allow a definite formulation

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1 Wilson, G. and Ryland, G., Social Group Work Practice; Houghton Mifflin Company; The Riverside Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1949, p. 605.

2 See bibliography for references.

of standards. For this reason, some attempt is made here to formulate a tentative set of standards for recruitment and training.

### Standards of Recruitment

Recruitment begins with the recognition of the need for volunteer leaders. It includes the total undertakings of the agency to interest or solicit volunteer help to the point of accepting or rejecting the application of any given individual. There are two major subdivisions of recruitment, namely public interpretation on the one hand and selection on the other. The latter would include the screening, evaluation, and selection of applicants.

Public interpretation and communication is one of the most important parts of a sound recruitment program. On this one part of the program may depend whether or not potential volunteers ever move to the point of wishing to do volunteer group leadership and, consequently, come to the agency. Wilson and Ryland make several suggestions for establishing and maintaining a healthy volunteer recruiting program.<sup>1</sup> The recruitment program should be established on a year round basis. Specific plans for recruitment should be made, including both personal and mass media contacts. Specific volunteer job descriptions should be drawn up. On the above information, the jobs should

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1 Wilson and Ryland, Social Group Work Practice, p. 609.

be classified. The classifications should be publicized. As can be seen, this program is primarily designed to disseminate information and stimulate interest among the lay public. There are two additional points which might strengthen this public relations program. The public interpretation should be designed to do more than just interpret information. It must also be designed to encourage enquiry from the lay public. A cautionary note should be included in the program to prepare interested persons in case it is necessary to reject their application for any reason.

If the public relations and interpretation is well done, then there is a good chance that potential volunteers will offer their services. Agencies which actually reach this level of development may fail to recognize the importance of adequate selection from among the applicants. Yet, good screening and selection procedures are essential to a sound volunteer program. Dimock and Trecker offer some invaluable guides for this phase<sup>1</sup> of the process. They state that the interview is one of the most valuable means of screening applicants. The interview has certain shortcomings and for best results should be supplemented with measures that will provide more objective information. To insure maximum value from the interview there are four basic precautions which may be taken. There should be careful preparation for the interview. This should include studying the

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1 Dimock, H.S. and Trecker, H.B., The Supervision of Group Work and Recreation; Association Press; New York; 1949.

available information about the volunteer, and a listing of points to be covered in the interview. A guided interview form, flexible enough to allow for individual adaptation, would tend to increase reliability. The preparation of an adequate record of the interview for review when final judgement is to be made would also be most helpful. As part of this record, a rating scale of individual characteristics would tend to diminish the "halo" effect of either a positive or negative response to the person as a whole. If possible, individual interviews with at least two qualified persons would tend to reduce error in personal judgement. The fourth precaution which might be taken is to have the interview of sufficient length to provide a reasonable sample of the interviewee's behaviour.

These precautions are essentially aimed at getting information for the interviewer. However, the interviewee should receive information during these interviews also. The interviewer has the responsibility of informing the applicant as to what the volunteer job possibilities are, and what the rights and responsibilities are for all volunteers.

As a means of assessing the qualifications of potential leaders, the application form ranks fairly high.<sup>1</sup> There are two types of forms now used extensively. One asks for general information such as age, sex, interests, etc.<sup>2</sup> As well as

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1 Dimock and Trecker, op. cit., p. 61.

2 See Appendix A for sample application form.

supplying this type of information, the other seeks insight into the individual's personality through interest and activity check lists.<sup>1</sup> The applicants statements about these situations, when judged by pre-determined criteria, provide a fairly good basis for assessing his leadership insight. The authors add that a much wider use of this type of application form would seem to be warranted.

References are widely used to determine applicant suitability but actually have rather limited value. The reasons for this situation are quite apparent. The applicant gives as references the names of people whom he expects to have a favourable opinion of him. Many people who write recommendations are incapable of objective, critical appraisals. Quite frequently the form in which the reference is requested does not encourage objectivity, even from those capable of discriminating thinking.

There are a few minor considerations which relate peculiarly to the evaluatory emphasis of the screening and selection process. Here again the "halo" effect of a personal impression may be minimized by a purposeful delay of the evaluation for a few days after the interview. At this time, after considering the applicant's maturity, motivation, availability in terms of time, skills, personal qualifications, and general suitability a decision must be reached. The volunteer must be

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<sup>1</sup> There are no instances of this type of application form in use in the Vancouver area.

notified of whether he will receive a volunteer job or not. If he is not to be accepted immediately the applicant should be informed as to when he might expect to assume a leadership role. If not to be accepted at all, then very close and careful interpretation should be given to insure that he knows why. It is imperative that the applicant not be "let go" in such a manner that he might harbour a negative reaction to the rejection of his application. Such a negative feeling could do immeasurable harm to the public relations part of volunteer recruitment and even to the whole realm of volunteer group leadership in leisure-time agencies.

### Standards of Training

Training of program volunteers may be divided into two broad categories. Wilson and Ryland outline these when they say that "...the volunteer needs specific training before he starts work and specific help after he has begun."<sup>1</sup> These two important sub-divisions of training might be termed preparation or orientation, and supervision. Before considering the specific information to be included in a training program, it might be valuable to mention briefly a few of the more important methods of putting across such information to the body of volunteers. The Toronto Welfare Council found that four main methods of training were most valuable.<sup>2</sup> The first of these is

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1 Wilson and Ryland, op. cit., p. 609.

2 Volunteers -- To Have and to Hold; Recreation Volunteer Training Committee; Toronto Welfare Council; 1954.



individual training (supervision) which is designed to help the individual with a specific job. The second is training in a small group around a particular type of work; eg., arts and crafts, gymnastics, etc. The third type of training is general agency training for all volunteers. This might include such things as group discussions, movies, or information on the agency purpose, function, constituency, etc. The fourth type consists of community training courses sponsored on an inter-agency basis or by a central co-ordinating agency. The focus of such a course might be on activity skills, teaching techniques, group leadership, understanding of individuals, etc. There should be no chance of duplication in training between courses offered on a single agency basis and a multiple agency basis. The purpose of inter-agency courses is not to replace individual agency training but rather to avoid several agencies duplicating the same kind of course. It should be remembered when considering these various methods of training, that the frequency with which each type is used would depend upon the agency, the setting, and the program needs.

#### Preparation or Orientation

There is a substantial body of information, knowledge and skill which should be imparted to the volunteer during his earliest contacts with the agency -- even prior, if possible, to the commencement of a leadership placement. Some of it may be given in printed form, but much would have to be dealt with through personal contacts, meetings, or courses. This

information might be divided into three main sections, viz., general or background information, social work principles and theory, and program skills.

A tentative outline of the general or background information might include: a statement of the purpose and function of the agency; a statement or plan of the staff and administrative structure of the agency -- at least as related to the volunteer and his placement; some elementary knowledge of the community from which the membership of the agency comes; a statement of the respective roles of the volunteer and the professional in the team approach to social group work in a leisure time agency; and specific detail and routine (familiarity with physical facilities, equipment, program outline, hours of operation, etc. Some of these points might advantageously be covered by a printed statement of agency policies, routines, rules, and the like, which the volunteer could keep for constant reference..

The volunteer should also have sufficient knowledge of the basic elements of social work to be aware of and sympathetic with its goals. There is much information of this sort that might prove valuable to the volunteer. It would be helpful to have a simplified statement of social work principles as well as of the goals of social group work. Following on this, an analysis of the democratic process in group work, an understanding of basic leadership methods, and the essentials of

group behaviour and dynamics would be most valuable. Then, to become completely practical, the leader must know how to utilize program materials to aid in achieving the relevant goals. Since much of this information would be more meaningful if the leaders in question had experienced some leadership situations, any courses or leaders' meetings might be more advantageously held shortly after the majority of leaders had commenced their placements.

It is also necessary for the future leader to have some degree of skill in program activities. This is where the program skills workshop proves so valuable. The core of any such workshop would likely be basic instruction in the program activities pertinent to the leaders involved; eg., arts and crafts, games, gymnastics, etc. To be effective, this should include an analysis of how leaders consciously use program activities and materials to forward social group work goals. It may also be of value and interest to the volunteer leader to receive information about the resources available to him; eg., program resources (specialists, books, films, etc.), community resources (out-trips, inter-group activities, etc), and social work resources (the leader's supervisor, social welfare agencies, and so forth). And finally a program skills workshop might briefly interpret to the leaders the value and necessity of having adequately planned and prepared suggestions available for groups, including alternate ideas. If a suitable leadership candidate has received the essential elements of an effective

orientation process, he should have sufficient training to assume the leadership of a group with some degree of certainty, confidence and security.

### Supervision

Having assumed the leadership of a group, the leader may then begin what is probably the most extensive and most significant part of his training experience, namely supervision. It is in this setting that his regular experiences with the group may be meaningfully interpreted to him to permit growth and to foster understanding.

Supervision is an on-going relationship between the volunteer leader and one staff person. It should involve a regular meeting -- frequency would depend on many variables -- with additional help given to the leader when needed. There are two distinct forms of supervision, each of which makes a unique contribution to the growth and education of the leader and complements the contribution of the other. These two forms are individual supervision and group supervision. The first offers help with the specific detail of one leader's placement, growth, development, and problems arising from any phase of these. The individual relationship permits discussion of considerable intensity. Group supervision on the other hand is concerned with the educative values common to most or all group behaviour and leadership development situations. It also gives leaders an opportunity to realize that many of the problems and phenomena

they have been observing are not peculiar to their situation but also apply to group situation with a much different focus.

Supervision is more nebulous than the other phases of a training program and, consequently, its basic characteristics are more difficult to define. However, some of the essential elements can be mentioned. One of the most immediate needs of the supervisory conference is to offer to leaders help, guidance, and direction with matters related to the group activity. Preparation and planning for group meetings and activities, development of both a short term and a long term plan for the group and group members, and development of an acceptable concept of the use of limitations and authority all come under this category. The volunteer should be given information concerning:

- (a) the rights and responsibilities of the leader and his supervisor.
- (b) the practical relationship of the volunteer to the over all agency.
- (c) the uses and values of group records.
- (d) background information on groups and group members.

The supervisor should interpret the material in the leaders group recordings to enhance their value as a learning experience.

Throughout the duration of his placement the leader should receive support, encouragement and recognition for effort and progress. It is a mutual responsibility of the leader and the supervisor to evaluate the leader's work. Periodic evaluations are helpful during the course of the placement to illustrate

learning, growth, and achievement. - At the end of the volunteer's placement a final evaluation is essential to determine the degree of satisfaction achieved by both the agency and the leader. These evaluations should, if possible, be undertaken in conjunction with the volunteer. The supervisor should avail himself of every opportunity to express appreciation and recognition to the volunteer for the service rendered and the contribution made. The expression of appreciation by the supervisor may or may not be followed by an official expression by the agency.

Throughout this discussion of training, consideration has only been given to agency and professional staff needs. Professional efforts to train volunteers will be futile unless volunteers' wishes are compatible with those of the staff. What do volunteers hope to gain by serving in a leisure-time agency, and what might they hope to gain from a training course?

<sup>1</sup>  
John Pollock states that some of his most important findings are those which

...indicated one factor which has been denied or neglected by some agencies... the consistent affirmation on the part of the volunteers that they want an initial interview, training and supervision on the job, and recognition of their efforts by the agency.

<sup>2</sup>  
Florence Newbold also offers an answer to this question.

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<sup>1</sup> Pollock, J.O., The Program Volunteer in Leisure-Time Agencies; M.S.W. Thesis; University of British Columbia; 1950.

<sup>2</sup> Newbold, F.L., "Volunteers in Social Work". Social Work Year Book, 1939; Russell-Sage Foundation, pp. 477-79.

According to one student, volunteers want  
 (a) a good educational lecture course,  
 (b) training by the staff of a particular agency  
 on problems peculiar to its work, (c) regular and  
 frequent conferences and discussions with staff  
 members, (d) meetings with other volunteers for  
 purposes of discussion..., (e) constructive  
 criticism from staff and judicious praise,  
 (f) careful placement with close follow-up,  
 (g) discussion about the larger aspects and  
 problems of the agency and (h) required reading,  
 and discussion afterward.

If volunteers do want these things, there would seem to be  
 no incompatibility between their desires and the needs of agency  
 and staff. Consequently, it would be possible to evolve a  
 fairly workable and acceptable plan.

#### Limits of Study

This study has essentially three facets. The first  
 is the development of a tentative outline of standards for the  
 recruitment and training of program volunteers. The second  
 is a survey of the current practices of recruitment and training  
 of program volunteers in leisure-time agencies employing trained  
 social group workers in Vancouver, B.C. The third, is an  
 evaluation of those practices.

There are two specific limitations which should be  
 mentioned. In the first place this study has been confined  
 completely to the City of Vancouver. Secondly, in spite of  
 the close relationship to the general topic, no attempt has  
 been made to determine the specific characteristics of an  
 adequate volunteer. However, many staff persons of the agencies  
 contacted did state what they consider to be the important

characteristics of a desirable volunteer.

### Setting and Method of Study

The setting for this study is the recreational and informal education agencies in Vancouver which employ trained social group workers. These are: Alexandra Neighbourhood House, Gordon House, Y.M.C.A. (Central), Alma Y.M.C.A., Fairmont Y.M.C.A., Vancouver East Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A. (Central), Pender Y.W.C.A., Vancouver East Y.W.C.A. and the Jewish Community Centre. Because of its direct involvement in the recruitment and training of volunteers, the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver was also included in the study.

The information upon which this study is based comes from two sources, namely recent group work literature and the above-named agencies. From the literature, and in the light of the writer's own professional experience, a tentative outline of recruitment and training standards was developed. Local agencies were contacted to ask for their co-operation and a questionnaire was sent out inquiring about current practices in the recruitment and training of volunteers. Additional information was obtained through many personal interviews and telephone contacts. In the light of this information and in view of the tentative outline of standards, the current practices in recruitment and training were evaluated.



## Chapter 2

### The Method and Extent of Recruitment Programs in Several Leisure-Time Agencies

When considering the recruitment programs of a number of agencies, it is very difficult to view them on a comparative basis. There are many reasons for the difficulty. The first and foremost point to be considered is the respective purposes of the agencies concerned, because this determines the service to be given to the membership. The service to be given will in turn define to some degree the jobs volunteers might do and the qualifications they would need. Consequently it is quite possible that agencies with differing purposes might need volunteers with different skills or other qualifications. In such situations one would not expect to find notably similar recruitment programs. There are other points to be considered also but they are all related to this central consideration, eg., age group to be served, program activities and facilities, sex of membership, etc. In view of the difficulty of considering several recruitment programs on a comparative basis, some other plan might be better. Possibly the strength of each program could be viewed to ascertain the values and merits it might hold for the recruitment programs of the other agencies. In this way, each agency involved might learn from what it considers the applicable portion of any given recruitment

program with respect to its own purpose and needs.

In view of the foregoing, what follows here, and subsequently in Chapter III, will consist principally of an itemized inventory of the recruitment and training programs of ten major recreational agencies in Vancouver. The names and addresses of these agencies are listed below.

Young Women's Christian Association, 997  
Dunsmuir Street

Vancouver East Community Y.W.C.A., 788  
Commercial Drive

Jewish Community Centre, 2675 Oak Street

Young Men's Christian Association, 955  
Burrard Street

Alma Y.M.C.A., 2556 Highbury Street

Vancouver East Community Y.M.C.A., 788  
Commercial Drive

Fairmount Y.M.C.A., 4054 Cambie Street

Pender Y.W.C.A., 375 East Pender Street

Gordon Neighbourhood House, 1005 Jervis  
Street

Alexandra Neighbourhood House, 1726 West  
7th Avenue

#### The Central Y.W.C.A.

In the year during which this study was undertaken, there were 39 volunteers directly involved in group leadership situations in the Central Y.W.C.A. All but seven of these were women. Many were teachers in the Vancouver schools

who were working with Hi-Y groups.<sup>1</sup> In the Y.W.C.A., each staff person with program responsibilities is responsible for recruiting sufficient volunteers for her department. Consequently, many methods are used to contact potential volunteers; and with varied degrees of success. A pattern is evident, however, in the overall practice of the departments concerned. The most frequently used methods of contact are telephone requests to individuals, visits to individuals -- mostly school principals, and letters to individuals and groups. Less frequent methods of contact include visits to groups, contacts with the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver, and volunteer application forms. These forms are included in the printed program brochures with interpretive material, when the brochures are mailed out for fall and winter programs

This type of recruitment program seems to have filled the program need for volunteers. There were, in fact, five or six volunteer applicants who were not placed in group leadership because the program had not expanded sufficiently to use their services. The main sources of volunteers, as might be expected, are very closely related to the most frequently used methods of recruiting. There are fourteen high school teachers working with Hi-Y groups in the city. They were recruited primarily through the visits to principals. Eleven

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<sup>1</sup> The Hi-Y groups are social clubs which have been formed in many high schools. They are dedicated to the Y.W.C.A. purpose and are jointly sponsored by the schools and the Y.W.C.A.

friends of staff workers were recruited as volunteers presumably through the use of letters or telephone calls to them. In addition to these, there were eleven Y.W.C.A. members serving in volunteer leadership capacity and three referrals from the Volunteer Bureau.

In this agency, when a need for additional volunteer help in program is recognized, consideration is given first to leaders with previous experience in the Y.W.C.A. In many cases, evaluations have been written concerning the volunteer's service and these are reviewed to determine whether or not any given volunteer should be asked to return to the agency in this capacity. If a volunteer has proved satisfactory in the past, she would likely be asked if she would be interested in further group leadership. If the experienced leader is not available the staff person might then ask if she could recommend someone who might be suitable. The final decision as to qualifications of any applicant would remain with the staff person directly involved.

New volunteers are frequently recruited from the membership. When the program information is mailed to all members, interpretive material is included explaining the need for volunteers and the wide variety of jobs available. Anyone interested may then indicate her interest either by mail or on her membership registration form. Once an applicant has expressed an interest she will be contacted and interviewed,

Occasionally, leaders for some of the younger groups are obtained by making a direct approach to individuals or groups in the Young Adult program.

Vancouver East Y.W.C.A.

At the time this study was undertaken there were twenty-nine volunteers used by the Vancouver East Y.W.C.A. in program leadership situations. Only four of these leaders were men. However, in this agency the recruitment problem does not seem to be acute since a large majority of volunteers return to the agency from year to year. In the fall, all the leaders of the previous year are again contacted by telephone to determine if they would like further experience in volunteer leadership. The proportion of returning leaders has been estimated at eighty-five percent. Reasons for this high degree of continuity may be found in aspects of the training program.<sup>1</sup>

Specific attempts to recruit new leaders are usually directed in three main ways. Notices are frequently placed in the community weekly newspaper. While notices in this medium have proven valuable in recruiting new members to program, there have been no significant results in terms of numbers of new and suitable leaders obtained. This method continues to be used, however, and is considered a good interpretive practice if not an effective method of recruitment. The Volunteer

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III, Vancouver East Y.W.C.A.

Bureau has proved to be a good resource for certain types of leaders. Primarily these are leaders with very specific skills for activity groups and teachers of various kinds of classes; eg., dancing, crafts, etc. The third main method of trying to contact and recruit potential volunteers is through teachers and counsellors in the high schools. The Vancouver East Y.W.C.A. has a committee member who is a teacher at Vancouver Technical School. This teacher and the counsellors of several schools provide a valuable and helpful service in recommending individual high school students who have expressed an interest in leadership experience or who indicate leadership potential.

As was mentioned above, the main source of volunteers is returning leaders from the previous year. In addition to constituting a large proportion of the total group these leaders actually tend to recruit more leaders. An example of this can be found in the case of twelve teachers of classes for New Canadians. Of the twelve, eight teachers had returned from the previous year and the remaining four had been recruited by the other teachers. In keeping with the attempts at recruitment, the other main sources of leaders are the high schools and the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver. It was reported that very few leaders are obtained from the University, and the excessive distance was suggested as the likely reason. Very few volunteer leaders are obtained from the membership of the Y.W.C.A. This is due, apparently, to a lack of emphasis on this aspect of leadership recruitment.

Jewish Community Centre

Prior to the autumn of 1956, the Jewish Community Centre did not operate any program in which it saw fit to make use of volunteers as group leaders. The contemplation of such a program in September, 1956 necessitated the establishment of an entirely new recruitment program. It is particularly interesting for this reason to note how this agency started a volunteer program (involving twenty-three program leaders) within a single year.

Three main steps were taken to obtain the numbers of volunteers necessary for the success of the planned program. For one of these, an announcement was placed in the official Jewish community newspaper. In this notice an attempt was made to define the job possibilities so as to attract those people who might be most suitable. It was a new and strange request whose primary value was seen to be in its interpretive value to the readers. Three or four volunteers were obtained as a result of the notice, however.

A second, and more direct, approach was made to the counsellors and assistant counsellors who worked in either a paid or voluntary capacity during the summer program. For the most part, these people were high school students. They were approached on an individual basis at the end of the summer day camp and asked if they wished to stay on in a volunteer leadership capacity. The request was based on the two-fold value of leadership experience; viz., the possibility of

receiving additional leadership training and the opportunity of rendering a service to the community. This method was the most effective one used to procure leaders. It resulted in ten to eleven leaders offering their services, excluding a few others who offered but then had to discontinue within a short time.

The third source was also profitable from the point of view of leadership potential and response. After the United Jewish Appeal conducted its 1956 fund raising campaign, the program director referred to the list of student contributors from the University of British Columbia. The inference was that those persons who contributed to the campaign were probably interested in the agencies' services, and almost certainly more interested than the non-contributors. Following the same line of reasoning, an attempt was made to evaluate the size of the individual's contribution in terms of his ability to give. From this process, a list was compiled and letters interpreting the volunteer job possibilities, the experience to be acquired, and the service which could be given, were sent to approximately 60 students. This mailing was followed by telephone contacts with the individuals on the mailing list progressing in order from the most likely to respond to the least likely. Interviews were arranged for individuals who expressed some interest. From twelve to fifteen interviews sufficient volunteers (7) were obtained to fill the program needs, and the process was then discontinued.



In the Jewish Community Centre the recruitment and training of program volunteers is centralized in the person of the Program Director. In addition to contacting potential sources of volunteers, he interviews each applicant and evaluates their qualifications. No application form is used because it is felt that a form is frequently an obstacle to obtaining the really pertinent information that is needed in assessing an applicant's potential.

#### The Central Y.M.C.A.

The only department making extensive use of volunteers for program leadership at the Central Y.M.C.A. is the Boys' Department. The Secretary of this department stated that the trend in his department seemed to be away from volunteers.<sup>1</sup> There were several suggested reasons for this trend. Potential leaders can earn very good wages in their spare time and consequently are less inclined to offer their services free. In the experience of this agency, leaders tend to be less reliable when they lack the sense of obligation engendered by receiving an honorarium. It was felt that the agency could not compete for the leaders available without offering some form of remuneration.

In the year during which this study was made, the department concerned made use of nineteen volunteer leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Bill Bentley, February 27, 1957.

All but one of these leaders were men. These leaders come from four main sources. One of the best sources is the leaders from the Y.M.C.A. summer camp. A fairly high proportion of these leaders stay on to offer additional leadership service. Much of the Y.M.C.A. program stresses the development of leadership potential within the membership and, consequently, many leaders are obtained from the membership. In these instances, staff would select individuals who they felt had the capacity for group leadership and then approach these members directly and individually to determine if they were interested. A third source of leaders is the lay committee and board members. Frequently these people, through their interest and enthusiasm will offer additional service, will recruit volunteers directly or will offer suggestions to staff as to where leaders may be found. The fourth main source of leaders is through friends of staff who may be interested and have some time to offer.

Regardless of the method used to contact potential leaders, or the source from which the leaders might come, the primary approach of the staff of the Central Y.M.C.A. was to present a challenge to them.<sup>1</sup> This was done because it was believed that the appeal of a new and challenging experience would be greater than that inherent in any other single

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<sup>1</sup> "Challenge" is used to suggest an interesting and exciting job which would require the full personal resources of the individual.

approach that might be made. At the point where volunteers would not accept either the challenge or the responsibility involved, it has been the growing policy of this agency to hire leaders to fill the resultant program gaps.

#### The Alma Y.M.C.A.

During the course of a program year Alma Y.M.C.A. utilizes the services of a dozen or more volunteer leaders. These are contacted and recruited in many ways and from many sources. The work of leadership recruitment begins prior to the commencement of program in the fall. The leaders of the previous years activities are contacted by letter or telephone and asked if they wish to return. Letters are sent to the Vancouver Arts School, University of British Columbia Psychology Department, Physical Education Department, Department of Education, and the Y.M.C.A. Hi-Y groups in the high schools asking the counsellors, advisors, and teachers to consider referring any interested persons to the Alma Y.M.C.A. There is also a young adult service club within the Y.M.C.A. known as the Y's Men's Club which is approached for help.

More than three-quarters of the program volunteers are obtained from the membership (the Y's Men's Club and the Hi-Y group) and the high schools. The remaining few are obtained from Normal School, the University of British Columbia, or from the families of members. Interviews are arranged for all volunteer applicants who are not already known to the staff. A volunteer application form is completed as a part of this interview procedure.

One new development in the recruitment of program volunteers -- although the numbers involved are not yet large -- is the increasing numbers of parents who are becoming involved in both volunteer leadership and program. Frequently these parents seem to begin their association with the agency in either leadership or program participation, and then expand their activities to include the other. They also tend to recruit other adults to the agency and so a form of cross-recruiting occurs.

It was the observation of the Director of the Alma Y.M.C.A. that the agency staff were not yet "scratching the surface" of the leadership potential.<sup>1</sup> He indicated that the whole basic approach to leadership should be broadened. Specifically, he felt that recruiting efforts should be directed at Parent-Teacher Associations and Service Clubs. It was recognized that a great deal of interpretive work would have to be done. Visual aids could be developed; eg., slides, pictures, etc., to illustrate specifically what agencies expect in a leader and what the job possibilities really are. Moreover, it would be an excellent opportunity to interpret to the lay public the need for and value of volunteer efforts, the kinds of jobs available to volunteers, the qualifications of a good volunteer and the essential goals of volunteer work.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. G. Cue, Executive Secretary, February 26, 1957.

If this type of interpretation were done, it would almost certainly result in increased numbers of applicants.

Vancouver East Y.M.C.A.

Since 1955, at the Vancouver East Y.M.C.A., there have been a few changes in the recruitment policy as it affects program volunteers. Formerly, when new program activities were needed, they were started with professional staff leadership. Volunteers were then moved into the leadership roles as they were obtained. Now, new activities are not begun until such time as the Y.M.C.A. staff is satisfied that a suitable adult leader is available. It was also implied that greater selectivity is exercised in recruiting volunteer leaders.

During the program year in which this study was made, this agency used the services of approximately twenty volunteer leaders. Only three of these were women. The types of jobs done were about equally divided between club leaders and activity leaders. In September and October -- the period during which the most extensive recruitment program is carried on -- four main methods are used to contact potential volunteers. A personal letter is sent to each leader of the previous year. This letter not only expresses appreciation for work already done, but also extends an invitation to the volunteer to attend a workshop on the commencement of fall program. Members are encouraged to recruit their own leaders. Such people would be subject to the approval of the Vancouver East Y.M.C.A. staff,

of course. School counsellors and teachers are contacted concerning high school students who might be interested in volunteer work. These students have been found to be both competent and valuable as activity leaders. The fourth method used for contacting potential volunteers is the local community newspaper. As a recruiting medium, the newspaper has proven ineffective. It has additional value as an interpretive medium, however.

By far the majority of volunteers come from two sources. These are friends of members and high school students. Recently, increased emphasis has been placed on the recruitment of parents of members for leadership jobs. This is a new development and actually has shown no results as yet.

The Director of the Vancouver East Y.M.C.A. had some suggestions for more productive recruiting techniques.<sup>1</sup> There needs to be a clarification of agency objectives in terms of the type of volunteer required, method to be used to contact potential leaders, and the kinds of jobs open to volunteer applicants. It was also suggested that the agency staff should "present the challenge to whatever volunteers are interested". This was construed to mean giving the applicant an indication of the difficult, but exciting and rewarding work to be done through volunteer placements. The obvious

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Jack Hopkins, Executive Secretary, February 18, 1957.

implication is that the above suggestions would facilitate a greater supply of volunteers for the expansion and carrying out of agency services to membership through program activities.

Fairmount Y.M.C.A.

The procedures for the recruitment of program volunteers at the Fairmount Y.M.C.A. seem to be straightforward. This is not to imply that they are less effective than some of the differing methods used by other agencies. Much of the recruitment is focused on the community at large.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the majority of the leaders come from the general community. These leaders may be friends or other contacts of the Secretary, they may be referred by laymen, other secretaries, or members, or they may inquire directly to the Secretary. It has been found that leaders from summer program activities can frequently be recruited for winter leadership jobs and vice versa. There is one other really productive source of leaders and that is membership groups. The membership of the "N-Y" groups<sup>2</sup> provide several volunteer leaders.

In addition to these sources of volunteers, the Secretary writes letters requesting volunteer help to the

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Don McCombe, Executive Secretary, February 26, 1957.

<sup>2</sup> The "Neighbourhood-Y" groups are decentralized groups in the community away from the main building.

Volunteer Bureau, the School of Education and the School of Physical Education at the University. These requests resulted in very few applications and only two volunteers. All volunteer applicants are personally interviewed by the Secretary and during this interview the Secretary attempts to determine whether or not the applicant has the suitable qualifications to serve as a program volunteer. No application form is used to aid this procedure.

Pender Y.W.C.A.

At the Pender Y.W.C.A., all recruiting has been centralized with the Director. The Assistant Director helps in many ways but does not assume any direct responsibility for its part of the volunteer program. To establish the volunteer program in the fall, the Director contacts volunteers of the previous year to determine their willingness to return. Individual prospective volunteers are telephoned and letters are sent to representatives of groups and to the faculty of some schools or departments at the University of British Columbia. These methods have not produced quite enough volunteer leaders but it was the expressed feeling of the Director<sup>1</sup> that owing to certain temporary circumstances, there was little time available for a more elaborate volunteer recruiting program.

This agency has utilized, during the program year in question, the services of twenty-three volunteer leaders on

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Miss Marguerite Monro, Director, March 5, 1957.



a regular basis. Six of these had been with the Pender Y.W.C.A. the previous year also. Several leaders were recruited from the Y.W.C.A. membership -- both from Pender Y.W.C.A. and from Central Y.W.C.A. Some of the volunteers recruited others or suggested the names of persons who might be contacted and interested in volunteer service. Other sources of program volunteers included friends of staff (one), the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver (three), and the Pre-Social Work Society at the University of British Columbia (two). The Director also contacted the School of Physical Education and the Theological Colleges, but with no success.

Potential leaders recruited from any of the above sources are personally interviewed by the Director. At this time an application form is also filled in. The basic purpose of the interview and the application form is to aid in the selection of volunteers suitable to the specific jobs available. In fact, the need at this agency, as at others, has been so great that no volunteer applicant has been turned down. As a possible consequence, some of the arranged placements have been unsatisfactory. In some instances the placement has given the volunteer no personal satisfaction. In others, the leader has not been able to fulfill the time requirements of the job, or has been unsuitable for the job in some other way.

At the present time, no specific plans have been made to remedy the deficiency of the numbers of volunteer applicants.

Since there was a complete turnover in staff at the beginning of the year during which this study was made, it is expected that the recruitment situation will improve the following year since the staff will be more familiar with the community and will be able to start on recruitment earlier in the fall.

### Gordon House

Gordon House is a relatively large social agency and the professional staff make use of the services of approximately thirty volunteers during the course of a program year. The recruiting of these volunteers is centralized with the Assistant Director. He is also responsible for interviewing and placing volunteers in suitable jobs. The beginning of this part of the Assistant Director's job during any program year would be the sending of letters to volunteers with past experience in the House. These letters would only go to those leaders whose year-end evaluations suggested further valuable service. Letters explaining the opportunities for volunteer service are sent to organizations whose membership might be interested. Many volunteer contacts are obtained through members of the Board of Directors or the Advisory Committee. Personal friends or acquaintances of staff are frequently contacted. Other less used methods of contacting potential volunteers is by sending a staff member to speak to interested groups or by conducting a telephone campaign of interested persons.

In view of these methods of contacting volunteers, the

leaders obtained actually come from quite varied sources. Two major sources which account for close to half of the volunteers are the University of British Columbia and friends of full time staff. Other important sources of leaders include the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver, Gordon House membership, and the Vancouver Art School. The Vancouver Normal School and the general community account for the remaining few leaders.

During the year in which this study was undertaken, the Assistant Director found it necessary to reject the applications of four persons who volunteered. The reasons for these rejections included: inability of volunteer to give sufficient time, desire for pay, unsuitable previous experience, nervous condition, and a striving for personal gratification. This is a definite indication of selectivity on the part of this agency and could well be a most healthy sign.

It is the expressed desire of the staff of Gordon House<sup>1</sup> that the Volunteer Bureau become the central recruiting agency for the Greater Vancouver recreational and leisure-time agencies. Each agency would still do such recruiting as it wished from among its membership and from among the parents of younger members. Likewise, the Volunteer Bureau could never assume responsibility for recruiting through personal contacts as individuals in the profession may now do.

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<sup>1</sup> Questionnaire, Mr. Elmer Helm, Assistant Director, February, 1955. Personal interview, Mr. Elmer Helm, Assistant Director, March 5, 1957.

The Volunteer Bureau would be particularly suited for recruiting persons from community groups and organizations such as the art school, fraternities and sororities, service clubs, and the university schools, departments, and clubs. A centralized recruiting agency would avoid the unnecessary duplication of requests for volunteers and the resulting poor public relations.

### Alexandra Neighbourhood House

Recruiting of program volunteers at Alexandra Neighbourhood House is concentrated in the fall. As with many other leisure-time agencies, this process is timed to coincide with or precede the commencement of program following the summer holidays. At this time, the Program Director<sup>1</sup> contacts past volunteers by letter or phone. Visits are made frequently to school counsellors, representatives of groups or other persons in key positions. Of these people visited, the school counsellors probably do the consistently best interpretation of Alexandra House and the opportunities for volunteer leaders. The counsellors occasionally select certain students they think might be interested, and on other occasions speak directly to classes. It is not uncommon for an entire class period to be taken for discussion of Alexandra Neighbourhood House and volunteer work. If the Program Director is contacting a school with which there has been no previous association or the Social Work undergraduate class at the University of British Columbia,

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<sup>1</sup> The Program Director is responsible for all volunteer recruitment.

arrangements are often made for her to speak to these classes directly. Other methods used to contact persons interested in doing volunteer work include interviews of selected members from program, the Junior League of Vancouver, and the Volunteer Bureau.

When any person expresses interest in doing volunteer leadership a personal interview is arranged with the Program Director. These interviews vary from one-half an hour to one hour in length. At the time of the interview an application form is completed. At this time the Program Director attempts to emphasize both the rights and the responsibilities that a volunteer assumes. The applicant may also be introduced to the program staff for a general discussion of program ideas, problems, etc. Each applicant receives printed pamphlets and brochures dealing with Alexandra House program activities. As a matter of policy, no volunteers are accepted at the time of interview but are contacted following a short period to notify them of acceptance or rejection of their application. Upon acceptance each volunteer receives a printed manual or handbook<sup>1</sup> which contains much simple information on orientation, details, and routines that every leader should know.

This method of recruitment and selection of program volunteers has provided Alexandra House with nearly forty volunteer leaders. High School students and students from

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<sup>1</sup> Distribution of this handbook has since stopped, pending revision of its contents.

several departments of the University account for half of all these leaders. Other profitable sources of leaders are the Normal School, the community at large, those volunteers who have worked in the agency at an earlier date, and the Junior League of Vancouver. The Junior League has done much valuable work in the field of volunteer service. In cooperation with the agency they have assisted with pilot or experimental programs in the use of volunteer leaders. When the need becomes vividly illustrated the Junior League members withdraw to permit the agency and its Board of Directors to carry on.

In addition to the many volunteers in leadership placements, Alexandra House had a waiting list of eight to fourteen potential leaders and had turned down the applications of nine others.<sup>1</sup> Those applicants on the waiting list had been accepted as suitable for volunteer service and were available if and when a new program was implemented. The rejected applicants had been turned down for four main reasons. Some gave indication of personality difficulties. There were applicants who were too young or inexperienced. A few had negative attitudes toward work with people. Others were looking principally for personal gratification and prestige. Immediately following this program year there was a large turnover of professional staff, including the Program Director. The new staff did not have the established community contacts.

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<sup>1</sup> Questionnaire, Miss Josephine Spicer, Programme Director, February, 1955. Personal interview, Miss Josephine Spicer, Programme Director, February 12, 1955.

The smaller number of volunteer applicants resulted in a lesser degree of selectivity for program leaders.

The Director of Alexandra Neighbourhood House expressed his strong belief in the principle of central recruiting for all leisure-time and recreational agencies.<sup>1</sup> The logical central recruiting organization would seem to be the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver. At the present time this method does not seem to be too effective but it is still a very new trend and is growing rapidly.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Basil Robinson, Executive Director, February 26, 1957.

## Chapter 3

### An Outline of Training Programs in Several Leisure-Time Agencies

The training programs of several different agencies are just as difficult to compare as are the recruitment programs. In any agency there is a basic minimum of information which every volunteer leader should have. However, the nature of this information may vary from agency to agency and the method of dissemination may differ vastly. Beyond this basic minimum the instruction and training needed by each leader varies depending upon the type of job to be done, age and sex of members, activity, etc. The necessary training will also depend upon the background, skill, training, and other qualifications of the volunteers. For these reasons, it may be more profitable to consider the strength inherent in a given training program rather than comparing the methods of all the training programs studied.

#### The Central Y.W.C.A.

In any volunteer training program some consideration must be given to the basic qualifications that every volunteer should have. This is necessary both to assess the potential capacity of the volunteer and to determine at what initial level training should be offered. At the Central Y.W.C.A. emphasis



is placed on three main considerations: first, does the volunteer have the necessary interest both in undertaking volunteer leadership and in the specific activities of the group? Second, does the applicant have the necessary skills to offer an interesting and stimulating experience to the participating members of the group? And, third, does the applicant have any previous group leadership experience which would offer proof of her ability to work with people in groups?

All applicants who may be placed in direct leadership situations are personally interviewed by a staff member. During this interview, the staff member tries to assess the value of the applicant's past experiences and of her motivation. Depending on the placement being considered, the applicant's interests, skills, or experience -- or combinations of these -- may be sufficient to qualify her for placement. If no suitable placement were available the volunteer might be put on a waiting list until such time as acceptable placement arose.

If the volunteer leader is acceptable and is placed with a group then some consideration must be given to her training. It was primarily in this area that staff at the Central Y.W.C.A. expressed concern about agency practice.<sup>1</sup> Some training of volunteer leaders is done, of course. During a program year, agency staff would organize coffee parties for

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mrs. S. Carlile, Group Work Director, January 31, 1957. Statement by Mrs. D. McNair, Young Adult Director, February, 1955.

the program volunteers. This procedure provided a vehicle for disseminating information such as agency principle, purpose, background, structure, function, etc. It also gave an opportunity to hold question periods or "buzz sessions" for the volunteers to ask any questions that they might have.

Additional training is offered to group leaders through individual supervision, but this is seldom offered on a regular basis. Supervision is most likely to be offered informally or when specific problems arise for the volunteer leader. Nor are group leaders required to do regular recordings of group meetings and activities. Staff apparently place little emphasis on these two aspects of training program and so, naturally enough, volunteers do not take advantage of them with any marked degree of consistency. Concerning these practices one staff person expressed the opinion that the training area represented the greatest lack in the volunteer program. The background and qualifications of potential volunteers are checked quite thoroughly but there is very little follow-up in helping the individual learn to work more effectively with groups. One other staff worker expressed several criticisms due to this lack of emphasis on orientation and training.<sup>1</sup> "The only volunteers who can be said to be regular and responsible are those who teach a class and who therefore have a direct responsibility to their group. They tend, however, to be solely concerned with their own corner of

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, written statement, Mrs. D. McNair, Young Adult Director, February, 1955.

work and it is a slow process, relating them to general "Y" program". Of experienced volunteers who have not had any formal training Mrs. McNair says it is not easy to change their pattern. "An entirely new, individual registration of volunteers in September, plus a "Y" orientation course might be attempted, but time is always a factor and these are busy people....." She indicates that present practices leave much to be desired. Apparently staff has had to work with social groups because of a shortage of volunteers. An attempt was made to use university students as volunteer leaders for friendship groups but these girls stopped coming without even informing the staff. In view of these comments, it can be seen that the professional staff at the Central Y.W.C.A. is thinking critically, objectively, and realistically about their volunteer program. Critical appraisal must be an initial step in any attempt to improve a service and there is every indication that the Y.W.C.A. is trying to do so.

#### The Vancouver East Y.W.C.A.

Realistically, a volunteer's training probably starts during the initial interview that the applicant has with a staff person. It is at this time that the applicant receives information relating to the purpose of the agency, the types of program offered, the possibilities for leadership experience, the responsibilities of volunteer leaders, etc. Leaders are also given a Volunteer Leaders' Manual which includes general information about the agency, principles of volunteer service,

a statement of agency routines, and a general job description for the leader. It is felt that this availability of specific printed matter is extremely valuable in terms of the applicant's security in the interview situation, and offers something concrete to be discussed and considered. While the applicant is getting this information, so is the staff interviewer. Specific information is required concerning previous leadership experience, group experience, hobbies, interests, skills, etc. At the same time the interviewer tries to assess the personality characteristics of the individual in terms of suitability for group leadership; eg., reliability, acceptance of the agency purpose, ability to put across the group activity, and warmth of personality. If the individual is seen as being acceptable and a suitable placement is available, a placement would be made.

Of the volunteers serving in this agency, eight were directly involved in an orientation session. This involved general information concerning background, purpose, structure, function, etc. of the agency. By far the greater part of the training being done by the staff of the Vancouver East Y.W.C.A. is conducted through supervision of volunteers. The majority of the volunteers are receiving supervision in some respect although only two were stated to be receiving regular weekly supervision. There was a total of nineteen who were receiving supervisory help when special problems arose or when informal opportunities presented themselves. A very important factor

in the overall training of program volunteers is the recognition which this agency bestows on its leaders. Toward the termination of the program year a large and elaborate dinner is held for the volunteers. At this time some evaluation is made of their experience over the year but the primary purpose of the dinner is to pay a final tribute to people who gave their services to the agency. This dinner program has been so successful that it has been credited with drawing back to the agency the large numbers of leaders who return year after year. Following this dinner, formal letters of appreciation are sent to all those volunteers who could not attend.

The Vancouver East Y.W.C.A. is not currently offering any training courses or skills workshops for program volunteers. Current policy is to recommend that volunteers attend such courses as might be sponsored by the Central Y.W.C.A. or courses offered for the general community by the University of British Columbia Extension Department, the Community Chest and Council, or the Volunteer Bureau. The degree of participation in these courses by the leaders is only moderate.

The Director made several recommendations for improvement in the overall training program.<sup>1</sup> Although the agency already uses volunteer application forms, leaders manuals, expects leaders to become members, and has an initial interview

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mrs. Betty Zdan, Director, February 19, 1957.

with the volunteer applicant, it was felt that these practices could be greatly improved. A specific volunteer training course was suggested for volunteers before they begin their leadership job. It was thought that this course might last approximately three evenings and should be offered in small groups organized in accordance with what the leaders are training for, eg., classes, friendship groups, interests, etc. Material dealt with in these groups should touch on both specific skills and group process. The material should be presented by the best people available, first to ensure a good quality of instruction, and second because of the importance of impressing the volunteers with their own vital role within the agency function. In such a training course all the volunteers might meet together for information concerning general orientation to the agency.

### The Jewish Community Centre

Definite plans were made during the establishment of this new volunteer program<sup>1</sup> to train volunteers specifically in relation to the program area in which they would be involved. There are two program departments. The methods used for training the volunteers of each are quite different.

The leaders for the junior program (for nine to eleven year olds) were possibly younger and less experienced than the others and, consequently, received a more intensive training

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1 See Chapter II, Jewish Community Centre, p. 25.

program. Initially there was an orientation period prior to the commencement of group activities. There were four meetings held over a three week period. The plan for the first three meetings was prepared by staff with the leaders themselves planning the final session. The major emphasis was on how a large mass activity program could develop through the interests of the members and guidance of the leaders into a small group activity. Thus by discussing the structure of the coming program, the values of this type of program and the purpose of all program activities could also be discussed. The leaders were asked for their suggestions and ideas for program. These ideas were then reviewed with respect to the general purpose of program; eg., to help the members develop a broad background of general skills and a high degree of acceptance of other people.

When regular program actually started, the training with these leaders continued, but in a different form. On each program evening, leaders' meetings were held for one and one-half hours before activity started. This time was used to review the program, its operation, and its values. At the end of approximately five weeks emphasis began to change from the total mass program to a consideration of what could be done within small groups in the total program. As some of the small groups became more clearly defined, staff began to meet with the leaders of individual groups. Frequently there would be two or three leaders for a single group. It was felt that when

there are two or more leaders working together, they both contribute their particular strength, the more experienced or skilful leaders provide training to leaders who have the potential. In addition, group frustration is averted if one leader is necessarily absent. The training of these leaders continues through frequent supervision. Supervision is not offered on a regular weekly or bi-weekly basis but rather on the basis of the needs of specific groups and their leaders.

The training program for leaders of "teener" groups (members twelve to fourteen years old) has been very different in both form and content. Two meetings of the leaders were held prior to the commencement of program. The purpose of these sessions was to answer the questions and dispel the fears that some of the leaders might have concerning moving into a leadership situation. The leaders themselves defined the content and its order for these meetings because it was felt that a staff-planned program might not ease the feelings of the volunteers. The volunteers had many questions that they wanted answers to, such as What is the difference between a club and an interest group? Who can join? What does the leader do in certain situations? What should the leader expect? Etc. Special training beyond these two preparatory sessions has been directed toward specific needs as they arise. However, regularly at the end of each evening of program, the leaders all meet for informal discussions over coffee. Such informal sessions are quite valuable in that they improve



morale among the volunteers, permit routine clearances, and encourage a sharing of knowledge and experience. It has been the experience of the staff person involved that the leaders get much more out of these discussions if they start on a specific program or suggestion and then move toward the relevant generalizations and theory. In this way theoretical principles and implications seem to be more meaningful to the lay leader.

In the Jewish Community Centre volunteer leaders are viewed as members who are getting a service from the agency (leadership training, experience and education) and who in return are giving a service to the members of the agency, and the community. It is seen as the staff job, through volunteer training programs, to keep these two in balance. Through the administration of this policy it is hoped that many leaders will wish to return to the agency for another year. Agency staff might then be able to work with these leaders throughout the summer months so that they would be prepared to start direct leadership as soon as school began in September. In this way both leaders and members could plan their schedules wisely.

In addition to these programs for persons who are actually engaged in group leadership, the Jewish Community Centre is currently offering a twenty week leadership training course for high school students who may be interested in leadership in time to come. The course was publicized through the Jewish newspaper, through the counsellors and the offices

of youth groups having members of high school age, and through letters sent directly to 175 high school students. The Centre charged \$2.50 for the course and set a maximum of twenty registrations. There was actually an overflow response. The main emphasis was on program skills but the course included much more. There was some interpretation of the use of skills and the value of the selective use of skills. The members taking the course also had an opportunity to observe experienced leaders in action. In addition to this emphasis on skills, there was discussion about why people join groups, the kinds of activities they like, and how to help the "shy" child or the "bully".

In keeping with this training course are the future plans for the development of a volunteer program. The Jewish Community Centre sees volunteer leadership as a key developmental experience for its membership and plans to emphasize recruiting through interesting members in participating in leadership service. It is also felt that the emphasis on both recruitment and training should be on a year-round basis so that it is not necessary to concentrate the entire program into a short space of time immediately prior to the beginning of program. The program director stressed particularly that in the interests of quality of service, agency staffs should not take on more volunteers than can be effectively worked with.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Walter Lampe, Program Director, February 26, 1957. Mr. Lampe cited the case of a staff person of his knowledge trying to supervise 28 volunteer leaders.

The Central Y.M.C.A.

In planning a training program for volunteer leaders, the staff of the Y.M.C.A. considered two main factors in addition to the information they wished to convey to the leaders. These were the previous experience and the qualifications of the leaders. Altogether, fourteen of the nineteen leaders had some previous training or experience. All fourteen had previous group leadership experience. One woman was a social worker with her Master of Social Work degree and thirteen others had received training in Y.M.C.A. leadership training courses. When interviewing volunteer applicants the staff look for certain traits and characteristics to help them reach a decision as to whether or not the applicant has the potential and the interest to enable him to become a valuable volunteer. Some of these characteristics can be determined fairly accurately and some require subjective evaluation on the part of the interviewer. If the applicant has been a member of the Y.M.C.A., consideration is given to the length of his membership, degree of participation, and general attitudes. If not, the interviewer tries to assess the individual's general maturity and adjustment, whether or not the person stands out from the average, and whether or not he would likely respond to the training which volunteers are offered. In the case of students, scholastic achievement is considered in an attempt to avoid overburdening the volunteer.

With this information as background, an orientation and training course was established for the new and inexperienced

leaders. It was expanded to include all program volunteers. This training period extended for six weekly sessions and provided a total training time of approximately ten hours. Following this series, bi-weekly supper meetings were planned to include an evening training session. The program of these sessions varies and might include guest speaker, panels, forums, films, etc. The leaders themselves help to plan the program agenda for these meetings and can suggest any topic they wish that is relevant to their volunteer placement, eg., skills, group dynamics, individual behaviour, and leadership techniques. In addition to these training meetings, all leaders are continually supervised. The majority receive regular weekly supervision and the remaining few receive supervisory help either bi-weekly or when special needs arise. As part of their regular responsibilities group leaders fill in a statistical activity sheet at the end of each session. Leaders are not, however, asked to do recording on group activities or members.

The Central Y.M.C.A. does not encourage its leaders to make use of community training courses or skills workshops. It has been observed that very few leaders attend such meetings and that those who do seem to benefit very little from them when it comes to implementing the content of the course in group activities. As a result, leaders are encouraged to attend the Y.M.C.A. leaders' meetings where the smaller attendance and greater unity of interest makes for a more intensive learning experience.

The Boys' Work Secretary at the Central Y.M.C.A. expressed the opinion that staff need to have more time available if they are to implement a more effective recruiting and training program.<sup>1</sup> It is his opinion that the most effective leadership training is done within small groups of fifteen to twenty leaders. With relatively small units for discussion purposes a leader is able to ask questions without feeling unduly self-conscious. It is around this thinking that the Y.M.C.A. has developed its own rather individual approach to the recruitment and training of volunteers.

#### The Alma Y.M.C.A.

Including the training process of supervision, there are three training programs in operation in the Alma Y.M.C.A. The advisors of the two Hi-Y clubs have a training program specifically designed for their activity. Since these people are professionally trained teachers, less demands on their time can be made and, in fact, less of their time is needed. These club advisors meet monthly to confer with the Director of the Alma Y.M.C.A. Their meetings deal with a review of objectives and goals, progress evaluations, methods of work, and program planning. This keeps each Hi-Y club functioning as a unit of the Y.M.C.A. within the basic program even though each club can and does operate quite independently of the other.

The training program for all the other club and activity leaders is quite different. These leaders meet

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Bill Bentley, February 27, 1957.

for a leadership training session every two weeks. A chairman is elected from the leaders group. A typical meeting would begin with a devotional or reading. This would be followed by routine clearances of programs, dates, times and facilities. The special evening program might consist of speakers, panels, or films.<sup>1</sup> The leaders discuss the significance of this program at some length. The meeting is terminated following a round-the-table progression of difficulties arising in the volunteer placements, and a sharing of related experiences. A high proportion of leaders attend these meetings and occasionally they are visited by Board or Committee members. It is also planned to allow one volunteer to attend each Board Meeting as an educational experience.

Every volunteer leader meets with a full time staff person on a continuing basis. These meetings might be held either weekly or bi-weekly as the situation requires, and are geared to the specific needs of a leader and his group. Leaders are not asked to do group records but do submit regularly an activity report form for statistical purposes.

With respect to the development of a more intensive training program, the Director of this agency felt that leadership training should be developed for the situation for which the leader is being trained. He stated that general volunteer training, orientation to the agency and volunteer work, and

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<sup>1</sup> The leaders plan this portion of the meeting themselves, and may substitute skills training if they wish.

skills training can all be better done within the agency where the volunteer will be working. Apparently leaders who have gone to community sponsored skills workshops simply do not carry the newly learned skills back to the groups. The Y.M.C.A. has tried both centralized and decentralized training courses for volunteers. The decentralized courses have been found to be more effective by far.

Vancouver East Y.M.C.A.

The Director of the Vancouver East Y.M.C.A. admitted that actual training practices left much to be desired.<sup>1</sup> He stated that the current trend was toward greater emphasis on leadership training. Currently the activity leaders meet twice monthly for training sessions. The club advisors have monthly meetings. In these meetings, the leaders are provided with basic information that a leader might need; eg., agency background, purpose, program, leaders' roles, group dynamics, skills, etc. An opportunity is provided to ask questions which might arise in the leadership situation and to discuss points of mutual interest with the other leaders. In addition to these meetings, each volunteer leader has the opportunity to meet with a staff person whenever he wishes or when any problems should arise.

The Director plans for the near future to place more and more emphasis in leadership training on "what makes people

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Jack Hopkins, Executive Secretary, February 18, 1957.

tick?" It is hoped that a long-range development plan might better help leaders to observe and record indications of individual growth and development. Closely related to this point, is a statement by the Y.M.C.A. of what is considered to be the major qualifications for a club advisor. The statement appears on the reverse side of the volunteer application form and could well be paraphrased here. A leader should have the ability to relate himself effectively with the age group with which he will likely be working. He should be a person young people like to be with and who likes to work with them. He should have a relaxed way of working and be able to gain support easily. A wholesome mature personality is essential. He should possess the values for which the program works, be adult chronologically, and able to share as an adult without dominating or seeking to meet his own emotional needs through others. Finally, he should be a person who wants to do a good job; will readily accept training and supervision and become a partner in the youth education enterprise; and have the ability and willingness to give the necessary time on the job. In addition to this statement it is important to obtain leaders who can accept the basic concept of the Y.M.C.A. as an agency dedicated to developing the Christian personality.

It was suggested that one of the needs of the Vancouver community with reference to training of program volunteers is for a central counselling service to agency personnel to use as a resource. If qualified help, instruction,



and leadership were available through such a source, agencies would be more readily able to train their own leaders. This training might help alleviate the need for capable leaders who have some understanding of human behaviour.

#### Fairmount Y.M.C.A.

The Fairmount Y.M.C.A. seems to place a unique emphasis on training for leadership development. The basic idea is to strive to develop leadership potential in members of all ages and in all activities -- both physical and social. This is attempted by encouraging members to assume as much responsibility as their participation allows. Even in the groups in the 9 - 12 and 13 - 15 year age range members are urged to assume responsibility for matters of routine such as taking attendance, instructing activities under guidance, assisting with planning, giving out equipment, demonstrating, etc. One of the older groups with five boys meets twice weekly. Their program consists of one activity evening when activity leadership is stressed and one training or "fellowship" lecture. The fellowship program makes use of visual aids, forums, talks, etc., and includes a written examination at the conclusion of the course. That two additional groups are not receiving a similar program is due only to a temporary staff shortage. All three groups did have an orientation course of two periods and all participate in the planning of the gym program.

It is the feeling of the Secretary that adult clubs have no need for an advisor but the Secretary does try to work

with these clubs through the natural or indigenous leader.

Fairmount Y.M.C.A. co-sponsored the Fraserview Leadership Training Course for adult volunteers with the Fraserview Community Association. This course was advertized through the Fraserview Community Council Bulletin, through local Parent-Teacher Associations, and through posters placed in local stores. A registration of thirty adults was obtained and twenty of these continued to the end of the six week course. The Fairmount Y.M.C.A. obtained five program leaders from this course.

A community training course is being planned for teenage volunteers in the area. A five week course is planned. To publicize this course, notices were sent to Fairmount Y.M.C.A. membership, John Oliver High School and Gladstone High School. In addition, the Secretary spoke to teachers, to clubs, and gave information to the school counsellors. At this date it is too early to determine what the response will be but community interest seems high.

Four leaders from Fairmount Y.M.C.A. participated in a skills training course sponsored by the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver. Two of these leaders were very pleased with the course but the other leaders expressed the opinion that it was only of moderate value. It is the thinking of the Fairmount Y.M.C.A. staff that greater value might be obtained through localized training programs.

The adult volunteer leaders at this agency meet twice monthly. These meetings are designed to deal with essentially the same material as a group supervisory period might do, eg., program and leadership concerns common to all program activities and to all program volunteers. All volunteers receive frequent supervision. The progression tends to be weekly meetings at the commencement of the placement, bi-weekly supervision when the leader is established with the group and has learned the routines, and informal or occasional contacts when the volunteer leader achieves a state of relative security and independence in his placement.

One of the reasons given for the success of the volunteer program at the Fairmount Y.M.C.A. is the calibre of volunteer who applies. The Secretary stated that there had been no need to turn away a single volunteer applicant in the past two years. When each volunteer applicant is interviewed, the staff worker considers his general attitudes, sincerity, personal qualifications, past experience, and individual and group adjustment (where this can be obtained or is known). The final decision is made on the basis of staff evaluation and impression.

The Secretary outlined what he considered to be a desirable volunteer program<sup>1</sup> and toward which, it is assumed, the Fairmount Y.M.C.A. staff is striving. A greater flow of

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Don McCombe, Executive Secretary, February 26, 1957.

leaders was deemed necessary and it was suggested that this flow could be improved through improved public relations. Certain times of the year (eg., September) should be set aside for leadership training, orientation courses, and workshops. Interpretative material should be prepared stating briefly the opportunities for volunteer service, agency policies, philosophy of volunteer service, etc.

Each applicant should be carefully interviewed. If accepted, the leader should then be supported in starting out with his group. Individual supervision can be flexible but must be offered at least twice monthly. The opinion was expressed that the agency has the responsibility to bring together such volunteers as may be doing a similar type of work so they may mutually benefit from their varied experiences. At the termination of the volunteer's placement there must be an adequate evaluation. In this respect it is important for the agency staff to show their good intentions by stating the facts simply and clearly. Finally, throughout the entire duration of the volunteer's contact with the agency there is a great need for basic and sincere opportunities of recognition for the volunteer.

#### Pender Y.W.C.A.

In the course of this program year there were three methods used to offer training to the program volunteers. All leaders were encouraged to participate in a four week skills

course jointly sponsored by the Volunteer Bureau and the Extension Department of the University. The registration fee for the leaders was paid for by the Pender Y.W.C.A. and as a result six leaders took advantage of this opportunity for training.

The second method for training program leaders was regular supervision. The responsibility for supervising volunteers was divided between the full-time staff. Each leader was supervised by the senior staff person on duty at the time of his or her placement. Supervisory meetings took place nearly every week either before or after the group meetings and provided an ongoing opportunity for learning by the volunteer. The content of these meetings might include routine program clearances, discussion of group process and progress, discussions of leaders' concerns, etc. The success of these supervisory meetings varied greatly with each individual leader.

The third method of training offered in this agency is group recording. Generally, the leaders did their recordings regularly. These recordings were for the most part factual accounts of activity. They included very little or individual observations or group process unless it was something which was extremely evident.

The Director of the Pender Y.W.C.A. has a two-fold

plan for increased training for volunteers. This training program is to be based upon the fundamental qualities which the Director looks for in volunteer applicants. Briefly, some of these qualities are maturity, interest in young people, desirable motivation in volunteering, enthusiasm and understanding of the job, and willingness to give the required amount of time. The Director expressed the opinion that every agency had a direct responsibility to offer to volunteers a basic training course at the beginning of the program year.<sup>1</sup> This course should include some orientation to the specific agency, interests and needs of persons of various ages, how a volunteer leader works with groups, and some interpretation of the multiplicity of roles of any group leader.

The second part of the proposed training plan was the development of regular, monthly leader meetings. Depending upon the numbers of leaders attending, two such groups might be offered -- one for the leaders of social groups or clubs, and the other for leaders of interest activities. The advantage of these regular meetings would be in the opportunity for the volunteers to meet each other and to benefit from the discussions of the experiences of others. Leaders would have a chance to share and discuss their difficulties, receive help collectively, and to discuss the particular strengths of their programs. These meetings could also aid in

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Miss Marguerite Monroe, Director, March 5, 1957.

developing a positive "esprit de corps". The Director stated that frequently volunteers are asked to do very difficult jobs of leadership and that such help as can be offered through a training course is the minimum that the agency can do to fulfill its responsibility to the program volunteers, and its responsibility to the members.

### Gordon House

At the time of this study the volunteer training program could not be called highly developed. Prior to this year there had been no formal training program. At this time, agency staff made their first attempt to orient volunteers through a formally organized program. Eight leaders participated in this program, constituting approximately one third of the leaders in the agency at that time. This proportion may appear low but would probably compare favourably with the experience of other agencies, considering it was a first attempt at orientation. It has been the policy of Gordon House to encourage its volunteer leaders to participate in leadership courses sponsored by the Community Chest and Council of Greater Vancouver, the Extension Department of the University, and the Volunteer Bureau.

In assessing the strengths of the volunteer training programs at Gordon House it should be noted that eleven of the volunteers had previous experience.<sup>1</sup> While past training may

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<sup>1</sup> One had professional Social Work training, seven had previous group leadership experience, and three had previous experience in art and teaching skills.

not be due to the work of the agency, this training does have direct value and benefit to agency service and program.

Possibly the strongest part of the training program is the supervision of the volunteers by the full time workers. All of the volunteers are receiving supervision of some kind. Six leaders receive regular weekly supervision and about the same number receive supervision regularly every two or three weeks. All of the other leaders as well as some of those already mentioned have the opportunity to meet with their respective supervisors at any time they wish, in order to clarify problems that arise periodically.

The Director of Gordon House<sup>1</sup> gave some suggestions as to the type of training program he would like to see implemented in the Vancouver area. He felt it was imperative that a desirable quality of volunteer be attracted to the agency. Some of the qualifications he said should be considered were individual personality, motivation and intensity of desire to do the job, an understanding of what the job entails, a willingness to accept the responsibilities involved, and specific skills. At the beginning of the program year an orientation and training course should be offered. It should be jointly sponsored by the Volunteer Bureau and the

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Elmer Helm, Director, March 5, 1957.



community agencies.<sup>1</sup> The Volunteer Bureau could profitably deal with the philosophy and principles of volunteer group leadership, fundamentals of group process and dynamics, roles of the leaders, specific skills, etc. The agencies could then inform the volunteers of agency background and purpose, the details of agency program, what leaders might expect upon first meeting a group, and other pertinent details of orientation. In addition to this initial orientation and training series, supervision should be offered to all volunteers continually. In this setting both individual and group supervision can be properly employed. It is important, however, that group and individual supervision be complementary rather than supplementary. This joint use of the two forms of supervision has many advantages including an opportunity for a maximum of education for the volunteers combined with a minimum consumption of staff time.

#### Alexandra Neighbourhood House

The plan for the training of program volunteers at Alexandra Neighbourhood House has been changing for the past three or four years in a constant trend. Two years before this study was begun, the staff of Alexandra House undertook all the training of its leaders. The recent trend has been away from this practice and toward encouraging all leaders to participate in community training courses sponsored by the Community Chest

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<sup>1</sup> The opinion was expressed that this series should not exceed three meetings in view of the demands on volunteers' time.

and Council, the Volunteer Bureau, or the Extension Department of the University of British Columbia.. To date these courses have not proved altogether satisfactory.<sup>1</sup> The variation in skill, maturity, background, and volunteer placements is such that a central agency has difficulty determining an appropriate level of instruction and training for all the volunteers taking the course. Consequently, there is a lessening in the participation of the volunteers and the training becomes less effective. The greatest advantage to a centralized system of training is probably that for all participating agencies it is a great economy of staff time. As yet there are not many of these courses held, so there remains much training to be done by the respective agencies.

It is generally agreed that some training can be given to all leaders irrespective of job and agency. In addition some training must be given in relation to the type of job and the specific situation. Training as distinct from and in addition to supervision should be ongoing throughout the program year. It is in these areas that the agency staff still have full responsibility.

In trying to meet this responsibility, Alexandra Neighbourhood House offered a five week training course for all

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Basil Robinson, Executive Director, February 26, 1957.

volunteers in the year prior to the undertaking of this study. This course was primarily instructional and tended to be both more academic and more prolonged than workshops or orientation courses. The following year, no such course was planned. This was to enable participation in a "Leadership Training Course for Program Leaders" which was being offered by Miss Elizabeth Thomas.<sup>1</sup> Approximately fifteen leaders attended this course and found it a valuable aid to their volunteer leadership. In comparison to a volunteer staff of forty, this constitutes a fairly large proportion to attend such a training course. Of the total number of volunteers in the Neighbourhood House, nearly half had previous experience or training in working with groups. Nearly all of these had had the experience of group leadership, and many had participated in formal courses or workshops. All volunteers in the agency -- experienced or not -- received some type of formal orientation. Some instruction in program skills and their use was included in the orientation course.

Once the initial orientation period was over, the continuing training process had two important facets. These were monthly volunteer leaders' meetings and supervision. The leaders' meetings were held once monthly, but at no fixed time. The date was set and all leaders notified by mail about a week in advance. Follow-up checks were also made by

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<sup>1</sup> Miss Thomas was at that time a member of the faculty of the School of Social Work at the University of British Columbia.

by telephone and personal contact. The formal training program was centralized with the Program Director, as was all recruiting. A typical meeting might include a lecture, discussion and occasionally instruction in program skills. Once in a while "gimmicks" were used<sup>1</sup> to stimulate participation and enthusiasm on the part of the volunteers.

Supervision, on the other hand, is decentralized with each program staff worker. Most supervision is done on an individual basis but of late group supervision has been increasingly experimented with. Regular individual supervision is offered to all leaders on a bi-weekly basis. In addition any or all leaders may ask for additional help or instruction preceding or following their group meeting. Group supervision was originally introduced into Alexandra House as an expedient method of dealing with relatively large numbers of volunteers. Each professional social worker may work with eight to fifteen volunteers. It was deemed nearly impossible for one person to meet individually with such numbers of leaders. Group supervision is no longer only an expedient resolution to a problem, but now provides leaders with a valuable and distinct experience. Material pertaining to general program and leadership situations may be discussed and all leaders have the opportunity to benefit from the experiences of each.

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<sup>1</sup> eg., Composite paintings; as each leader arrived he or she would add a few creative strokes to a large painting.

In addition to these meetings, individual supervisory sessions are still held regularly but with slightly less frequency.

All leaders at Alexandra Neighbourhood House are required to submit recordings of each group meeting. This recording experience is valuable educationally<sup>1</sup> and provides the agency with a permanent record of group activity and membership participation. Also of some value to many leaders is the staff library, from which all leaders are entitled to borrow books, pamphlets or other academic and program material.

The opinion was strongly expressed<sup>2</sup> that one vital part of any volunteer program is recognition for the volunteer leaders. This recognition should be given on a continual basis throughout the year and in some special form at the termination of placement. At Alexandra House, this is usually done through a party or other special event for all leaders and a formal letter of appreciation for the work done and service given.

The Director<sup>3</sup> expressed the opinion that one of the major problems currently facing the full and careful training

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<sup>1</sup> If it is discussed and developed through individual supervision.

<sup>2</sup> Personal interview, Miss Josephine Spicer, Program Director, February 12, 1955.

<sup>3</sup> Personal interview, Mr. Basil Robinson, Executive Director, February 26, 1957.

of program volunteers is that of the proper and respective roles of centralized and decentralized training. Inherent in this problem are such important matters as the classification of the kinds of jobs that volunteers do, consideration for the past experience or training of the volunteers, and the specific purpose of the agency for which the volunteer is being trained.

### The Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver

Within recent years the Volunteer Bureau has become actively interested in the training of volunteers.<sup>1</sup> The first planned move in this direction was a one day workshop sponsored in conjunction with the Group Work Division of the Community Chest and Council. From this one day workshop, the training of program volunteers by the Bureau has come a long way. In the spring of 1954 and 1955, the Junior League of Vancouver held training courses for its provisional members. To these courses the Volunteer Bureau was invited to send twenty volunteers to series of eight and seven lectures, respectively. These courses proved quite helpful, and in some respects were the forerunners of regularly sponsored training programs.

During October, 1944, the Volunteer Bureau and the Adult Education Department of the Vancouver School Board

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<sup>1</sup> The Bureau recruits and trains volunteers for many areas of the health, welfare, and recreation fields. Of the total number, a relatively small percentage would be program volunteers for leisure-time agencies.

co-sponsored an orientation course for volunteers. The lecturer for this course was the Director of the School of Social Work, Miss Marjorie J. Smith. This course obtained a registration of 44 volunteers. One year following this orientation course the same two organizations co-sponsored two basic training courses -- one for advanced and one for beginning volunteers. Miss Marjorie Smith was the lecturer for the advanced course. The course for beginners was offered by Mrs. Helen McCrae, who is on the Faculty of the School of Social Work. Once again, a most encouraging registration was obtained.

In the spring of 1956, the largest, most intensive training course yet attempted in Vancouver was planned. It actually consisted of four courses of five sessions each and was jointly sponsored by the Volunteer Bureau, the University Extension Department, and the Adult Education Department of the Vancouver School Board. The four courses offered were:

- (1) "Work with Children". This was a child development series given by Miss Cecil Hay-Shaw.
- (2) "Work with Groups". This course emphasized the theory and principles of group dynamics and group leadership. Miss Anne Furness was the instructor.
- (3) "Play and Playthings Appropriate for Various Age Groups". A large number of hospital volunteer workers were among the registrants for this course which was offered by Mrs. Phyllis Robinson.

- (4) "Volunteers in the Health Field". The instructor for this series of five sessions was Mrs. Claire McAllister.

The total registration for the four courses was approximately 80 volunteers.

The most recent training course offered by the Volunteer Bureau was held in November, 1956. It was co-sponsored with the University Extension Department. The title was a "Skills Course for Program Volunteers". The person responsible for giving the series of four sessions was Mr. Gerald K. Webb. This was the first course offered in which all 40 registrants were from leisure-time and recreation agencies. Thirty-one of these registered participants were from agencies included in this study.<sup>1</sup>

A most important recent development directly related to training is the establishment of an Advisory Committee.<sup>2</sup> Representation for this committee has been asked from all of the Divisions of the Social Planning Section of the Community Chest and Council, and also from some organizations which are not members of the Community Chest and Council but are interested in volunteers. Some of the basic Volunteer Bureau philosophy underlying this development is as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Ten of these leaders came from Gordon House, fourteen from Alexandra House, five from Pender Y.W.C.A., one from the Central Y.W.C.A., and one from the Jewish Community Centre.

<sup>2</sup> Personal interview, Mrs. MacFarlane, January, 1957.



The Volunteer Bureau believes that its most useful role (in respect to training) will continue to be that of organizer and administrator for courses which have been agreed upon by the users of volunteers as especially needful. This requires that the Bureau continue to be in close consultation with these agencies. 1

The thinking presently suggests that this committee might continue to work on the same informal lines that have proven so useful in the past. Representatives would bring knowledge of the special volunteer needs of the agencies with their respective divisions. They would participate in discussion and evaluation of community-wide volunteer training needs and help reach conclusions as to the best uses of available resources to meet these needs. Once the general program had been determined for a definite period, specific courses could be devised through meetings of sub-committees of the appropriate representatives and representatives of the Volunteer Bureau. Implimentation of any approved training program would be primarily the responsibility of the Volunteer Bureau.

Mrs. M. F. MacFarlane's statement goes on to say:

We are acutely aware of the satisfaction to volunteers themselves of training and orientation which gives them individual confidence and some assurance that their volunteer time is effectively employed. We believe, important as the contribution of volunteer service now is in the city's total social service programme, that we have only

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1 Mrs. M. F. MacFarlane, written statement following interview, February, 1957.

scratched the surface of its potential. We believe that a broad co-operative approach to community-wide volunteer training can be a potent factor in realizing on this potential.<sup>1</sup>

It is with a similar thought that a co-ordinated community recruitment program is seen as desirable. Through such a co-ordinated plan, many sources of volunteer leaders would be approached only once rather than by each individual agency. The resulting increased efficiency should save much time and vastly improve the public relations of volunteer-using agencies.

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1 Mrs. MacFarlane, *ibid.*, p. 3.

## Chapter 4

### Evaluation of Current Practice

It is difficult to make "blanket" observations concerning any such diversified programs as the recruitment and training programs studied in the several agencies surveyed. However, a few general comments might be appropriate. It has been maintained that the value of service provided by program volunteers is very great. Some idea of the magnitude of this service might be obtained by considering that the ten agencies surveyed used more than 250 program volunteers. The time involved for these leaders averaged approximately three hours per week. These figures provide no measurement of the other less tangible services provided by the volunteer leaders. Such services include valuable interpretation to the community through personal and group contacts, recruitment through these contacts of additional potential leaders, diversity of skills, experience, etc. During this study, the trend as reported by most of the agencies in the Vancouver area was toward larger and more comprehensive volunteer programs. At no time did any administrator or other staff person express any dissatisfaction with volunteer service in principle. One director actually stated that the best was none too good for volunteers in

his agency.<sup>1</sup> Without them, it would be impossible to carry out an adequate leisure-time program.

There are many examples of mutual benefit to both agency and volunteer. Possibly the best case of this is that of university students who apply for volunteer opportunities in the area of their interests or specialties. Many of these students are considering graduate study in a school of social work and in this way have an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the setting and nature of the work. Others may be students in Physical education who wish experience working with groups in gym, tumbling, games, etc. These students, as well as providing service to the agency membership, have a practical opportunity of testing their affinity for their chosen vocation or professions.

The awareness among the social group workers of the need for improved methods of recruiting and training volunteers was considerably higher than expected. Everywhere there were plans, hopes or thoughts of improved programs. These plans were frequently hindered by shortage of staff, insufficient finances, unfamiliarity with the community, and other reasons. For the most part there was genuine concern about the current programs and a sincere desire to work out more effective and efficient methods of recruitment and training. Some agencies

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. B. A. Robinson, Alexandra Neighbourhood House, March, 1954.

wished to establish these programs themselves while others desired community-wide recruitment and training programs to be set up. Whichever particular development the different staff workers saw as desirable, there was at least one common factor. None were really familiar with the attempts at recruitment and training which were being carried on in other agencies.

### Recruitment

In order to consider the community efforts toward recruitment it will be valuable at this point to review briefly the suggestions made by Wilson and Ryland<sup>1</sup> pertaining to a sound public interpretation program. The authors suggest that such a program should be established on a year round basis; that specific plans should be made for personal and mass media contacts; that job description should be written; that jobs should be classified; and that these classifications should be publicized. In view of these suggestions, do the agencies in this survey include a sound public relations program in their efforts to recruit volunteers? Only one agency could be said to conduct a year round recruitment program. The Jewish Community Centre<sup>2</sup> began recruiting early in the fall. This initial process<sup>3</sup> was continued until the immediate needs

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, G., and Ryland, G.; Social Group Work Practice; Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1948, p. 609

<sup>2</sup> The Jewish Community Centre only began using program volunteers in September, 1956.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter II, Jewish Community Centre.

were fulfilled. During the winter a training course was established for 22 persons of high school age who had expressed some interest in group leadership. These potential leaders were under no obligation to serve as volunteer leaders in the Centre. It was expected, however, that some would be recruited to summer camp program and some to program leadership the following fall. Leaders are also recruited from winter program to summer program, and vice versa.<sup>1</sup>

There is indication that the staff of the agencies have plans for personal and mass media contacts. How specific these plans are is not known. Most of the recruiting staff use individual visits, letters, and telephone calls to contact potential leaders. Visits to groups are made with slightly less frequency. Frequently the community newspapers are used, and occasionally the metropolitan daily papers -- but always with a singular lack of success. The sources from which agencies obtain volunteers give a good indication of what emphasis is placed on recruitment. Of the 250 volunteer leaders, agencies obtained 73 from among their own membership. The second best source is the high schools -- both students and teachers. Friends of staff and volunteer leaders was a valuable source of leaders, recruiting 34. Other important sources of leaders were: the University of British Columbia 30, the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver with 17, Normal School with 14;<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cross-recruiting between summer and winter program leaders is common in most of the agencies.

<sup>2</sup> Normal School has since been incorporated with the College of Education of the University of British Columbia.

and the Art School with 8 recruits for program leadership. From the general community and all other sources the numbers of program volunteers only approximated twenty. It is assumed that nearly all leaders recruited from these various sources were actually recruited through the respective institutions as well. If this assumption is correct, the figures suggest that very few leaders are being recruited from other than seven "conventional" sources. Also that the community at large is an essentially untapped resource for program leaders.

Specific job descriptions as an aid to volunteer recruitment are sadly lacking. When a volunteer applies for a leadership position, most agencies are able to offer verbal descriptions of a job, or of job possibilities. These descriptions tend to be general in nature and do not really serve to help the applicant visualize the job he or she might be doing. Consequently, little of the volunteer's doubt or uncertainty is dispelled. None of the agencies surveyed uses written job descriptions to any significant degree.

The degree to which volunteer job possibilities can be classified depends upon the use and availability of job descriptions. Classifications do seem to be used more frequently, especially for publicity purposes. In nearly all recruitment publicity and literature some classification of volunteer jobs would be included. If a staff worker were speaking to an interested individual or a large group, some interpretation would be offered as to what a volunteer might

do. The same would apply to letters, circulars, newspaper releases, etc. In view of the lack of specific job descriptions, the indication is that these classifications are rather broad. In some instances they might simply consist of such headings as club leaders, activity leaders, instructors, etc. At other times, they might be more definite, specifying gym leaders, arts and crafts leaders, games room leaders, etc. These classifications as they stand are helpful and valuable for interpretive purposes. If they were more specific and detailed they might be even more valuable and effective as a device for recruiting potential leaders.

Selection of volunteer applicants is the second important part of the recruitment process. At present in Vancouver, this process is considerably divided by the paucity of volunteer applicants. This fact by itself may well be an indication that the public interpretation of the need and opportunities for volunteer leaders is not being adequately, effectively, or completely done. An effective public interpretation program should interest sufficient potential leaders to make selection a realistic necessity. In current practice, volunteers are frequently recruited to fill a program gap or immediate need. In such cases, the first applicant who is reasonably acceptable is likely to be taken for the job. The elements of selection in such practices are virtually non-existent. Other opportunities for the selection of volunteer leaders do present themselves. There are indications of the



frequency of such opportunities. Of the ten agencies surveyed five had reason to reject applications owing to unsatisfactory personal qualifications or for other reasons directly affecting the applicant's ability to do the job required. Nineteen applicants were rejected for such reasons. This figure represents approximately seven percent of the total number of volunteer applicants. In addition there were approximately 20 applications withheld or rejected<sup>1</sup> because the program activities afforded no opportunities for the volunteers to move into a group leadership situation. Only three agencies had acceptable volunteer applicants which, for program reasons, could not be used. This situation might be an indication of a surplus number of applicants over the agencies' needs. However, there is another alternative. The agency may have received applications from a number of persons with a single specialty; eg., several persons may volunteer to instruct a woodwork group but if the agency program needs required only one woodwork leader the remainder would not be placed. Four of the ten agencies were able to use the services of every applicant who came to them during the program year in which this study was undertaken.

There are two important methods used by most of these agencies to screen applicants. These are the personal interview and the application form. Representatives of all the agencies stated that volunteer applicants were asked to come in to the

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<sup>1</sup> This figure represents an additional seven percent.

agency for a personal interview. The length of the interviews and the quality of them vary greatly from agency to agency and from worker to worker. There is no indication of any agency taking planned steps to insure the accuracy of information and impressions gained through these interviews. The apparent goal of these interviews is to provide the professional workers with a first-hand impression of the individual applicant's personal characteristics, motivation for volunteering, and so forth.

The application form as an aid to screening volunteers is considerably more controversial. It has not received the unanimous acceptance of the interview. The majority of the agencies surveyed do use application forms.<sup>1</sup> Those that do, feel it is an essential part of the screening process. It is considered an invaluable aid to providing a basic minimum of information pertinent to the volunteer's background, experience, etc. Two or three agencies which do not employ application forms declined to state whether they viewed such forms as an asset or a liability. The Program Director at the Jewish Community Centre expressed a very definite opinion.<sup>2</sup> He suggested that application forms could become a liability if they were used mechanically. For this reason application forms are not used at the Jewish Community Centre. Rather, the basic information which would otherwise be obtained through the

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1 All application forms used locally are quite similar. See Appendix A.

2 Personal interview, Walter Lampe, February 26, 1957.

application form, is obtained from the personal interview in a more flexible manner.

The evaluative part of the selection process is, of course, directly related to screening methods. The information on the application forms and the impressions formed during the personal interviews are considered to be sufficient for reaching a final decision as to the applicant's suitability for volunteer group leadership. Recommended practice for this process is to delay a few days prior to the actual evaluation. This practice is adhered to in some instances but the common practice in nearly all agencies is to accept or reject the applicant almost on the spot. The basis of most evaluative decisions is the worker's analysis of the applicant's personal qualifications, motivation, availability, and skills. The frequency of acceptance and rejection has already been discussed. Upon reaching a decision, the worker must notify the applicant. In instances of the seven percent outright rejections or the seven percent rejections resulting from program limitations, extremely careful interpretation must be done to insure that the rejected applicant does not feel hostile about his rejection. This interpretation is probably done quite carefully in view of the small numbers of rejection necessary.

### Training

During the course of this survey, it became increasingly obvious that agency staffs gave considerably more

attention and time to the training of program volunteers than to their recruitment. The training programs are, generally, better planned and organized than the recruitment programs. Basically, staffs seem to accept the statement of Wilson and Ryland that ".... the volunteer needs specific training before he starts work and specific help after he has begun".<sup>1</sup> An attempt is made to provide this training and help in most cases. There are many reasons why this training and help is neither as extensive nor as intensive as the workers would desire. Frequently, financial problems, resulting in too heavy work loads and a shortage of staff time, are a contributing cause. Sometimes, the volunteers are reluctant to make a further commitment of their time for training purposes. The essential components of the over-all training process being considered here are orientation, supervision, recording, evaluation, and recognition. The quality and enthusiasm with which staff workers carry out these parts of the training programs vary sharply from agency to agency; and also vary considerably between the different parts of the training process.

Of the total number of volunteers (over 250) approximately 140 had some kind of experience prior to moving into a group leadership situation. Nearly 110 of these volunteers had done primary group leadership at one time or another. Fifty had participated in some kind of formal lecture training course

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, G., and Ryland, G., Social Group Work Practice; Houghton Mifflin Company; The Riverside Press; Cambridge, Mass.; 1948; p. 609

and 34 had taken part in a workshop dealing with the development and use of program skills. In addition there were twenty teachers and six professional social workers doing volunteer leadership. Since 55 percent of all their volunteers had some previous experience and training, agencies may well take this into account when planning their training programs. However, notwithstanding any training these leaders may have had, it is likely they would still need some orientation for their volunteer activity and it is certain they should have ongoing help for the duration of their placement.

At the time of this study, 150 of the 250 volunteers were reported to be receiving or to have received some form of training during that program year. About one half of all the leaders participated in an orientation or initial training course. The majority of these leaders were taking part in small courses sponsored by a single agency for its own volunteers. Most of these courses are purposely kept short, i.e., one or two evenings. Approximately thirty leaders were involved in workshops on the mastery and use of program skills. This number may seem proportionately low but the large numbers of leaders with previous experience in leadership or program skills should be remembered. Also many leaders may be activity specialists and have no need for general skills or for further competence in their specialities.

A greater percentage of the leaders are receiving training through the ongoing help of supervision. It is estimated that a majority of all the leaders are meeting with their supervisors at regular intervals. The frequency of these meetings varies from weekly to monthly intervals. The most common meeting interval is bi-weekly. This would appear to be a fairly sound plan for supervisory meetings. However, there is no record available of the length of the meetings, material discussed, or the degree of participation of the volunteers. In addition to these regular periods of supervision nearly all leaders were helped occasionally when special problems, situations, or needs arose that required staff attention. This form of help is offered to volunteers so often and in so many ways that it is probably taken for granted. It is likely that the 100 leaders, who were reportedly receiving no training of any kind, were actually being helped in this manner. This relationship of the leaders to one staff person enables the leader and worker to cooperate in the most effective part of the training process. All leaders receive some help in this manner, and many receive the greatest part of their training experience through supervision.

Recording of group activities appears to be one of the most controversial methods of volunteer training. Only

two of the ten agencies<sup>1</sup> reported asking volunteer leaders to submit a written report for every group meeting. On this matter, one line of thought maintains that volunteers are usually busy people; Consequently, there must be a limit to the amount of work which can be asked of them. The other line of thought suggests that agencies should only accept as volunteer leaders those persons who can devote sufficient time to do the job adequately. Recording is considered to be an integral part of any leadership job. It provides the agency with a permanent record of group activity and individual behaviour. It provides the leader with an excellent opportunity to learn about individual and group behaviour and to consider his own behaviour in a leadership situation. It would seem to be an important part of any leader's training in any agency where the concern of the staff was more for the individual member than for the activity. It would seem at present that this part of the training program is either overlooked or neglected.

Few agencies reported directly on their procedures for evaluating a volunteer's placement, service, and experience. Most agencies did suggest that, during the recruitment period, only satisfactory volunteers were asked to return. This statement clearly implies an evaluation but whether this evaluation was worked out with or without the volunteer is not indicated. Only two agencies indicated trying to involve volunteers in

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<sup>1</sup> These agencies were the Central Y.W.C.A. and Alexandra Neighbourhood House.

evaluations of their work and freely admitted inconsistent success.

All agencies surveyed try to give the volunteer leader some kind of special recognition. Throughout the program year, staff workers seem to be watchful for opportunities of expressing their appreciation for the services provided by volunteers. Many agencies have some official form of recognition at the end of the program year. Some offer parties or dinners for their leaders. Many write official letters of appreciation. All agencies find some means of letting the volunteer know that his work is really valuable.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

One of the basic assumptions for this study has been verified by it. Volunteers are widely used. Unfortunately, they are not always wisely used. One of the more acute problems pertaining to volunteers is the continuing shortage of leaders in nearly all agencies. This would appear to be a problem of recruitment. More definitely, it is one of public relations and interpretation of the need and opportunities for volunteer leaders. Obviously, more leaders are needed. Some method must be found to interest more persons in offering their services on a voluntary basis. The present methods seem inadequate. The most likely alternative would seem to be a study of the merits and de-merits of a centralized system for recruiting program volunteers. The logical agency for such a



recruiting program is the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver. At the time of this study the Bureau provided only 17 of more than 250 program volunteers to the ten agencies. There are only five other important (in terms of numbers) sources of volunteers.<sup>1</sup> Some of these sources can but be approached by the agencies and some might better be approached by a central recruiting organization. The largest source -- the membership of the respective agencies -- can only be approached by the agency staff. More work along this line might be done in some agencies where very few members are helping with direct group leadership. Recruiting leaders from the high schools is also a job primarily for the agencies. The staff of each agency knows which schools are close, which schools will likely produce persons interested in leadership, and which counsellors will be most cooperative. A recruiting program designed for the high schools should be conducted cooperatively with the central recruiting agency. In this way, persons not used by one agency immediately, might be registered with the Bureau and referred to another interested agency. Friends of staff can only be recruited in one way -- through personal contact. If the leisure-time agency has no immediate need for their services these friends might be referred to the Volunteer Bureau. Realistically, this seems unlikely. There is considerably more chance that

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<sup>1</sup> There were six until the Normal School moved to the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia.

friends of volunteer leaders might be recruited through the leaders to either the Bureau or the agency. The above mentioned sources of volunteer leaders are those in which the agency or staff have a direct or personal contact with the source of potential leaders.

The Volunteer Bureau, on the other hand, might best direct its efforts toward sources of potential leaders which are community wide in scope. Those most frequently used at present include the Vancouver School of Art and many groups at the University of British Columbia, such as the Social Work Undergraduate Society, the Faculty of Education, the Department of Physical Education, the sororities and fraternities. Some of these organizations are approached independently by most of the agencies requiring volunteers. The demand on their time and attention from these numerous appeals constitutes a basis for extremely poor public relations. A single appeal from a central recruiting agency would certainly constitute better public relations. If care were taken by the agencies to provide the Bureau with detailed job descriptions from which the jobs could be adequately classified, the appeal of volunteer work could be just as great and more cooperation might be obtained from these community organizations. As well as recruiting from these established sources of volunteers, the Volunteer Bureau could turn to the community at large. Some investigation might indicate new sources from which volunteers could be drawn; eg., service clubs, church

groups, community associations, etc. For purposes of interpretation to the public, the Bureau could utilize the resources of television, radio, and the newspapers. Before people will volunteer they must become conscious of the concept of volunteer work. A central agency, with the cooperation of the leisure-time agencies, is best equipped to do that job.

There is another possible cause for the general shortage of volunteers. It may be related to the treatment volunteers receive, or in the attitude of the professional staff toward volunteer leaders. Of the more than 250 volunteers, less than one-quarter had been with the various agencies the previous year. Consequently, more than 180 new leaders had to be recruited. The proportionate "turnover" of volunteers seems very high. If this figure could be substantially altered, the acute recruitment problem might be somewhat alleviated. One staff attitude that may be contributing to this situation is that relating to the contribution of the volunteer. The prevalent opinion and implication in most public interpretation recruitment material seems to be that the volunteer is making a considerable sacrifice, and that he is giving much more than he is getting. This attitude is undoubtedly furthered by the eagerness of agencies to obtain leaders. A more positive approach might be to stress equally the contribution of the volunteer in terms of service, time, experience, and skills; and the contribution of the agency to the volunteer in terms of training and experience.

Even though agency staffs are putting more time and planning into the training of program leaders than into recruitment, they all voiced a desire for more comprehensive training programs. As with recruitment, the shortage of time and staff workers presents an obstacle to extended training courses. Community wide training courses may be a partial answer to this problem. Such courses would enable agencies to avoid duplicating material and would allow volunteers to meet leaders from other agencies. There is a definite limit to the material that can be properly dealt with in a community-wide course. Of the four methods of training suggested by the Toronto Welfare Council,<sup>1</sup> only two lead themselves to community sponsorship. Individual training (supervision) and general agency training<sup>2</sup> both must be done by the respective agencies. Instruction pertaining to specific program skills might well be handled by either individual agencies or on a community basis. In fact skills workshops are held quite frequently. The opinion of the value of these workshops was strongly split among the agencies. The majority favour them and encourage their volunteer leaders to participate if the subject is related to the volunteers' placement or interests. During a recent series of four workshops five of the agencies studied registered a total of 31 leaders for the course. The branches of the Y.M.C.A. do not participate in these workshops.

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<sup>1</sup> Volunteers -- To Have and To Hold, Recreation Volunteer Training Committee Booklet, Toronto Welfare Council, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> This might include information on the agency purpose, function, membership, etc.

The opinion was expressed that although the leaders seem to enjoy the course, they seldom transpose any learning from the course to the group situation.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, the Y.M.C.A. has found the transposition more easily made if the course is held within the agency in which the leader is placed. Other material which could be readily dealt with in a community-sponsored course might include teaching techniques, group leadership, understanding of individuals, and understanding of the community. Care should be taken when planning such courses because the purpose of inter-agency courses is not to replace individual agency training but to avoid several agencies duplicating the same kind of course. To be effective, a high degree of agency participation must be obtained. Now that the Volunteer Bureau has obtained a part time professional staff person to coordinate training programs, greater progress can be expected in this field. A successfully operated program would convince the most skeptical workers.

When planning a training course for volunteers, it must be remembered that these are lay people giving freely of their time. The training they are asked to accept should be only what is needed to help a lay person do an acceptable job. The training is not a "junior grade social work course" and should not be given with that intention. The volunteer

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<sup>1</sup> Personal interview, Mr. G. Cue, Executive Secretary of the Alma Y.M.C.A., February 26, 1957.

and the professional have unique and essential contributions to make in a leisure-time agency and the complementary aspects should not be overlooked.<sup>1</sup> To help the agencies maintain this distinction and clarity of roles, the best resource possible is available to them. The faculty members of the School of Social Work should be called upon as often as needed to help with the proper training of volunteers, whether they be program, administrative, or some other. Mrs. Zdan of Vancouver East Community Y.W.C.A. expressed the opinion that the best available people should be used in training volunteers. This would be one way of doing just that. This plan would also have additional potential as a recruiting device for the profession of social work.

During this survey, several questions were raised which could not be answered within the limits of the study. There is a real need for a definitive statement of the qualifications for program volunteers. At present there is undoubtedly a gap between what agencies consider to be desirable qualifications and what constitutes minimal qualifications for volunteer leaders. Any statement of qualifications should allow for this discrepancy. To put such a statement on a practicable basis, research is needed to develop tests and objective criteria to aid in the evaluation of volunteer applicants.

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<sup>1</sup> Pollock, John O., The Programme Volunteer in Leisure-Time Agencies, Master of Social Work thesis, University of British Columbia, 1950, pp. 6 - 7.

See also, Introduction of Chapter I of this thesis.

As indicated in this study, approximately seven percent of the volunteer applicants are rejected. With the judicious use of tests and objective criteria, this figure might be expected to rise. What effect other changes in the recruitment policies might have on this figure is not known. For example, a more effective public relations program might have any of three different results. If more people are recruited, agencies can be more selective and there may be more rejections resulting. A good public relations program might attract only the more desirable potential and the proportion of rejections may decrease. Or, the figure may be typical of the number of unacceptable persons among likely applicants.

Similarly, there are unanswered questions pertaining to the training of program volunteers. For example, what factors influence the number of volunteers that one social worker can effectively work with. One staff person interviewed claimed knowledge of a worker attempting to supervise and train 28 volunteers. The informant considered this number disproportionately high, but in some circumstances it may be quite reasonable.

What constitutes an acceptable minimum of training for a program volunteer? There seems to be no answer readily available. Every worker has opinions as to what he would like a volunteer to learn, but no part of this training appears

indispensable in the light of day-to-day work loads. It becomes very difficult to define that essential body of knowledge which any given volunteer should have. There would be considerable value to a detailed study of any one part of the over-all recruitment and training programs, eg., the value and content of the screening interviews, the uses of individual and group supervision, etc.

Agency workers seem to be well aware of the value of program volunteers. They are working extensively toward recruiting an adequate quality and number of volunteers and toward training those volunteers to do a suitable job. However, there does seem to be in many parts of the program a need for greater planning and cooperation to ensure a more successful volunteer program to the agency, the volunteer, and to the community.



## Appendix A

## VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM - Y.W.C.A.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Business \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_

University \_\_\_\_\_ Special Courses \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been a Volunteer before? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, where and when?

List any special interests, skills, or hobbies \_\_\_\_\_

What other organizations do you belong to? \_\_\_\_\_

What would you like to do here - check preference:

Clerical ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Leader or Assistant: Interest Group \_\_\_\_\_

Friendship " \_\_\_\_\_

Sports Coach \_\_\_\_\_

Receptionist Duty ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Preference: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Age Group: 6 - 8 years \_\_\_\_\_

Female \_\_\_\_\_ 9 -11 years \_\_\_\_\_

12 -14 years \_\_\_\_\_

14 -16 years \_\_\_\_\_

16 -20 years \_\_\_\_\_

Adults \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be able to undertake the following responsibilities  
approximately THREE HOURS per week \_\_\_\_\_

Preparation for Assignment

Specific Assignment

Supervision

Attendance at Training Course, Leaders' Meetings

Notification in case of absence

Recording

Times available: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

PLACEMENT \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

School of Social Work,  
University of British Columbia,  
Vancouver 8, British Columbia,  
February 2, 1955.

Dear

Can I enlist your help in getting information about the recruitment and training of program volunteers? This is a subject which will be of interest to your agency and yourself.

I am working on this study as part of the requirements for a thesis in the Master of Social Work year at the University of British Columbia. It is hoped that through the cooperation of the agencies most directly involved both the strengths and weaknesses of current volunteer programs might be determined.

In order to make this survey as simple as possible, a schedule has been worked out which can be filled by each worker at your agency who has volunteers in his or her program areas. I include also an additional blank which you may care to have for your agency files. It would be greatly appreciated if you could distribute these forms to the staff members involved and later collect the completed forms and mail them to me in the enclosed envelope. It would be much appreciated if these schedules could be returned to me by February 19.

I realize that you are undoubtedly busy but the data on what is being done to recruit and train volunteers can only come from the agencies and staff members who are doing the work. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Yours truly,

Stanley R. Merson.

## Appendix C

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Agency \_\_\_\_\_ Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Staff Member \_\_\_\_\_ Program Responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_

A. GENERAL

How many volunteers are included in your program responsibilities this year? (from Sept. 1954 to the present date.)

	Male	Female
As club leaders	_____	_____
As Activity leaders	_____	_____
As specialists (not already counted)	_____	_____
Others (specify)	_____	_____

How many of these volunteers receive token payments or honorariums? \_\_\_\_\_

B. RECRUITMENT

What methods do you or your agency use to contact potential volunteers, or sources of potential volunteers? (check blanks, or number in order of use, if possible)

Visit to individuals _____	Visit to groups _____
Letters _____	Telephone requests _____
Other (specify) _____	

What are the chief sources of your volunteers? (include numbers if possible)

Art School _____	Normal School _____
Friends of Staff _____	High Schools _____
From membership _____	Volunteer Bureau _____
Other (specify) _____	

In how many instances did the volunteer initially contact the agency? \_\_\_\_\_

Was it necessary to turn down any volunteer applicants? \_\_\_\_\_

How many? \_\_\_\_\_ For what reasons? \_\_\_\_\_

C. TRAINING

How many of these volunteers had experience, preparation or training prior to working with groups this year? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of experience? (specify numbers in each category)

Group Leadership \_\_\_\_\_

Initial orientation workshop or training course \_\_\_\_\_

Program or skills workshop \_\_\_\_\_

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

How many of last year's program volunteers returned to the agency this year? \_\_\_\_\_

How many volunteers are receiving training during this program year? \_\_\_\_\_

How many volunteers receive that training, or part of it, through:

Orientation courses \_\_\_\_\_ program workshops \_\_\_\_\_

Regular weekly supervision \_\_\_\_\_

Regular supervision (less than weekly) \_\_\_\_\_ How often? \_\_\_\_\_

Supervision held when special problems arise, or held informally during program etc. \_\_\_\_\_

Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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D. RECENT AND RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Have there been any major changes in recruitment or training of volunteers in your agency or department during the past two or three years? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

What changes, if any in recruitment and training of volunteers would you see as desirable within the future?

Do you have any program now in planning for the further training of volunteers? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

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E. COMMENTS

Other relevant comments \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

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