

# COMMUNITY BUILDING

## WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

### *Ideas for Action*

- ❖ **Ask for assistance from the community.** Make the need for volunteers and participation widely known.
- ❖ **Create an opportunity (day) to listen to youth** and what they want to contribute and then find ways to help them get involved.
- ❖ **Create fun activities for volunteers** to exchange information and see that volunteering isn't all work. Hold the socials at the same time and place each week and have them just for fun – no work. It should be an opportunity for people to get to know each other and hear about what other people are doing in town.
- ❖ **Develop ways to greet newcomers** into the community, as in the Welcome Wagon model. Include information about town government, town services, volunteer opportunities, and ways to meet other residents.
- ❖ **Create a volunteer section on the community website.** Have an e-mail link to the sponsoring organization so people can communicate directly.
- ❖ **Develop a buddy system for introducing and involving new people.** Find out newcomers' interests and match them up with someone in town so they may be taken as a guest to an organization meeting that might interest them.
- ❖ **Create a volunteer column in the local newspaper or on a community website.** Different organizations could write it on a rotating basis, reporting on ongoing projects and listing volunteer opportunities, with phone numbers or e-mail links. Profile a "Volunteer of the Week."
- ❖ **Create a focal point** where people can come to learn more about the community or become involved in specific activities.
- ❖ **Create a master list of people** who might be interested in volunteering in town. Actively pursue them.

- ❖ **Encourage businesses to give employees release time to volunteer in the community.**
- ❖ **Encourage businesses to become involved in the community** and then recognize them for their involvement.
- ❖ **Recognize volunteers** for their service through some very visible means. By showing the general public their work is valued, it encourages more people to serve.
- ❖ **Develop projects like beautification efforts** that bring people together in a tangible, positive endeavor around the community.
- ❖ **Create a voluntary direct mail registration** of talents, hobbies, interests, knowledge, and skills, when registering cars or paying tax bills. Computerize the list and make it accessible to those who might be seeking specific talents or skills for their organizations.
- ❖ **Have a Newcomers Club** to help orient them to the community and to involve them.
- ❖ **Have an achievement program** for non-athletes in the schools to recognize people for their contribution of time. Publicize it like sports heroes.
- ❖ **Spotlight one citizen in town each week.** Show the positive sides of volunteering.
- ❖ **Use student government to access students.** Ask them for help and provide opportunities. They are usually interested in finding projects.
- ❖ **Put volunteerism as a category on cards or forms** used to ask people to contribute – such as the United Way cards.
- ❖ **Public Service Announcement/Campaigns.** Get local television and radio stations to make volunteerism their public service campaign. Have recognized people make public service announcements about participation and its importance to New Hampshire's way of life and government. Make participation "popular."
- ❖ **Ask each volunteer to identify one potential new volunteer each year.**

**Resources:**

Granite State Civic Profile Book of Ideas, The Governor's Commission on New Hampshire in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.