

CAP TIP #3 *To Improve Public Awareness*

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Introduction

Young people in high school, colleges and universities are a rich resource for volunteers in crime victim assistance. Through student groups, internships and personal experiences with their own families' voluntarism, they are often committed to engage in their communities and to make a positive difference.

In addition, many high schools, colleges and universities today have *requirements* for student voluntarism that cultivate and encourage an active role in service to others, and service to communities. And regardless of whether or not service is "required," many young people today feel a strong need to engage in their neighborhoods and communities through voluntarism.

What We Know About Young Volunteers

The Washington, DC-based Corporation for National and Community Service conducted a national survey of youth in 2005. "Building Active Citizens: The Role of Social Institutions in Teen Volunteering" (November 2005) found that:

- *Millions of young people volunteer.* 15.5 million youth between the ages of 12 and 18 contribute more than 1.3 billion hours of service during 2004.
- *Young people volunteer more than adults.* Young people volunteered at twice the rate of adults, with 55 percent of young people volunteering, compared with only 29 percent of adults.
- *Volunteering helps young people succeed.* Youth who volunteer are less likely to engage in risky behavior, are more likely to feel connected to their communities, and tend to do better in school.
- *Altruism is the driving motivator.* Youth who volunteer do so out of altruism, strongly agreeing with statements such as "I would like to help make the world a better place," and "It's important to do things for others."
- *Adult role models are crucial.* A youth who has a parent who volunteers is nearly three times more likely to volunteer on a regular basis.

- *They need flexible volunteer opportunities.* Thirty-nine percent of teenagers volunteer on a regular basis; 35 percent do so occasionally, and 27 percent are episodic volunteers.

Today's youth – who are in college or high school (or of that age) – comprise the “Millennial” generation (born between 1977 and 1998). There are 75 million Millennials in the United States today – a generation known by its:

- Ability to celebrate and be comfortable with diversity.
- Ability to multi-task.
- Optimism.
- Individualism.
- Comfort with and strong connection to technology.
- High expectations of self and others.

In addition, many young people have been directly affected by violent crime (including family violence and sexual assault) and non-violent crimes, or know somebody who has been a victim of crime. They will have an existing connection to your 2009 NCVRW activities.

Volunteer Tasks for Young People

It's a good idea to think about how high school and college students can help with your NCVRW activities. Of course, they can help set up and break down your NCVRW events, and volunteer to serve as “staff” for your outreach activities. However, you can get creative and consider the following suggestions for voluntarism among young people to solicit and secure:

- ROTC members to serve as greeters to your event, and/or participating in an Honor Guard or Color Guard.
- Glee Club or Choral Groups, or high school/college bands to provide music for your special event (and remember, their parents are also likely to attend to add to your crowd!).
- Computer Clubs to help you with any needs related to technology.
- Student newspaper and media groups to help you publicize your NCVRW activities.
- Service organizations to help you with tasks such as folding programs and name plates; affixing ribbons to the NCVRW commemorative pin; delivering bookmarks to bookstores and libraries in your community; and hanging posters about your event(s) throughout your community (camera-ready artwork for all these suggestions can be downloaded from the OVC 2009 NCVRW Resource Guide at http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2009/camera_ready.html).

- Art students to provide calligraphy for certificates of appreciation (see the NCVRW Resource Guide at http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2009/camera_ready.html) and other awards.

Where Do You Find Young Volunteers?

High Schools

Many high schools now *require* students to complete a specific number of volunteer hours in their community, in order to graduate. Since NCVRW falls just a month before graduation, there may be many students who are seeking opportunities to fulfill this requirement.

You can contact local high schools to solicit volunteers, and ask the administrative staff if they have “community service requirements” that can be fulfilled by volunteering during 2009 NCVRW. In addition, high school-age volunteers can be sought from:

- Teen court and youth court programs.
- Youth crime prevention groups (such as Students Against Drunk Driving and Teen Crime Prevention Councils).
- Youth groups sponsored by multi-faith communities.
- Multi-cultural groups that address specific populations (such as African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, etc.) or promote cross-culturalism.
- Teen gay/straight groups.
- Youth public service groups.

Colleges and Universities

Many victim assistance and justice agencies sponsor student internships, with current and past interns serving as a great “portal” for seeking volunteers. They can be asked to identify and engage their fellow students and friends in volunteer activities to promote 2009 NCVRW.

In addition, college and university volunteers can be sought from:

- Direct contact with the Faculty Directors of relevant majors programs (such as criminal justice, social work, corrections, communications, journalism and arts programs)
- Student organizations and groups (especially those involved in social justice issues, such as social work or criminal justice organizations).
- Student leadership (such as student body presidents and governing councils).
- Greek communities (sororities and fraternities).
- Campus women’s centers.

If *any* of your 2009 NCVRW activities focus on issues relevant to young people (such as teen bullying, relationship violence, family violence, and/or juvenile offending), make sure to include such information in your “pitch” to students or their faculty supervisors.

Additional Tips

Global Youth Service Day

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) will be held from April 24 to 26, 2009. GYSD is the largest annual service event in the world. GYSD highlights and celebrates the difference youth make in their communities year-round through community service and service-learning. On April 24-26, 2009, millions of young people will participate in and lead service projects in all 50 states and in more than 100 countries around the world. Young people, working with their families, schools, community organizations, multi-faith-based communities, and businesses, will improve their communities by addressing critical issues such as global climate change, education & illiteracy, social justice, poverty, health, hunger, and homelessness. Hundreds of local teen courts, youth courts and youth service programs have been involved with Global Youth Service Day in the past.

Since GYSD falls on the first day of NCVRW (April 26th), this is an excellent opportunity to engage young people in your activities. You can learn more about GYSD, download planning resources and the Action Kit, and register your NCVRW program or project on the global event map at www.GYSD.org

Volunteer Match

A truly wonderful online service is now available that matches volunteers to nonprofit organizations in their communities. Volunteer Match allows you to post information about your volunteer needs, and the types of volunteers that can help meet them, with your zip code providing the geographic link to voluntarism. Thousands of people link to volunteer opportunities through this innovative website.

This is a great resource for both youth and adult volunteers, and perfect for 2009 NCVRW *and* throughout the year! For more information, and to register your organization to solicit volunteers, visit www.volunteermatch.com.

For More Information

Please contact National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at annese@atlantech.net; or by telephone at 202.547.1732.