Turning Youth Volunteers into Leaders

LaTonia Monroe Naylor, MS
Senior Manager, Community Investments

Chris Woods
Volunteer Coordinator
Key Content Points

1. Strategies for youth volunteer recruitment
2. Strategies for youth volunteer engagement
3. Techniques to ensure sustainability of youth service and development programming
Learning Objectives

1. Identify models that are most appropriate for their organization and/or program mission
2. Create a model (or customize an existing one) for youth engagement and recruitment
3. Identify most effective strategies and explain use in specific circumstances
Starting Point

- Recruitment
- Strategy
- Reactionary
- Aimless
Items to Note...

- Use creativity
- Use what you have
- Think forward
- Don’t assume - Talk to young people
- Talk to people who work with youth

Be flexible and ready for change!
Discussion Question:
*How do you recruit youth volunteers?*
Youth Recruitment Strategies

Intentionality and Strategy Level

- Blanket Recruitment
- Brainstorm Recruitment
- Direct Recruitment

Intentionality and Strategy Level
Youth Recruitment Strategies

Intentionality and Strategy Level - LOW

Blanket Recruitment

Characteristics:
• Reactionary – “It would be a good idea to recruit young people to volunteer...”
• Generalized – “Young people are on social media, so let’s recruit there...”
• Spontaneous / Episodic – “I am sure young people would like this project, but that’s about it...”
• Typical – “Let’s put up posters in schools and recreational centers, young people will read them and sign up for our events...”

• Little to no strategy
• Hit or miss success rates
• Often a waste of time and resources
• Least sustainable
• Most involved in management of volunteers
Youth Recruitment Strategies

Intentionality and Strategy Level - MEDIUM

*Brainstorm Recruitment*

**Characteristics:**
- **Thoughtful**—“The community/organization will benefit from young people volunteering because...”
- **Focused**—“Young people are on social media talking about issues they care about, let’s post information about things they care about...”
- **Programmatic**—“This particular project/task would meaningful to young people and benefit the community / organization...”
- **Specific**—“That apartment complex/church/park has a lot of kids there, let’s talk to them about our volunteerism...”

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- Some strategy
- Improved success rates
- More effective use of time and resources
- More sustainable
- More involved in management of volunteers
Youth Recruitment Strategies

Intentionality and Strategy Level - **HIGH**

*Direct Recruitment*

**Characteristics:**
- Intentional & meaningful – “This task/project is mutually beneficial to the community/organization and youth volunteer…”
- Laser-Focused – “Young people are on social media talking about issues they care about, let’s connect with organizations with youth members focused on these…”
- Organizational Commitment – “Projects that engage youth are important to our organization / program mission and we will invest in this programming…”
- Committed – “That youth ministry / youth development agency / school has adults that are willing to champion a group of students…”

- Most strategy
- Best success rates
- Most effective use of time and resources
- Most sustainable
- Mutually beneficial
- *Least involved in management of volunteers*
Discussion Question: 
What is youth engagement?
Youth Engagement Model

Relationship, Relationships, Relationships
UWPV Youth Volunteer Programming

• Youth Generate
• Youth Ambassadors
• Stuff the Bus
• Grand Friends
United Way Youth Generate

Youth Generate began in April 2013 as a project and turned into a precursor for other UWPV youth engagement projects in the region. Through this initiative, UWPV partners with schools in Hampden County, Granby, and South Hadley to engage youth in student-led community service projects during December 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017.

Youth Generate inspires youth to assess their communities and develop projects that meet a specific community need. The schools that have participated in Youth Generate are:

- Chestnut Accelerated Middle School - South
- East Longmeadow High School
- Elias Brookings Elementary School
- Ludlow High School
- Minnechaug Regional High School
- Palmer High School
- Putnam Vocational Technical Academy
- Southwick-Tolland Regional High School
- Springfield Central High School
- Springfield High School of Commerce
- Van Sickle Middle School
- Westfield Vocational Technical Academy

United Way organizations across the country believe that organized youth engagement:

- Enables youth to become change-makers by developing entrepreneurial skills to solve community problems.
- Empowers youth by allowing them to take the initiative and lead community change.
- Engages youth in their communities, allowing them to recognize their role and the positive impact they can create.

Youth engagement helps youth assume a role that expects and encourages them to lead in positive social change and replicate that example throughout life.
Youth Generate Outline

• Youth-led volunteer initiatives
• Youth research issues and community needs
• Youth organize the budget, project timeline, and outcomes
• Adult Champion is there as a liaison between UWPV and the organization to co-manage the project
• Youth share their findings and next steps
Types of Projects

**Military Care Package Drive**
*Motivation:* High school alum (and friend) killed on military base  
*Outcome:* Collected nearly 500lbs of supply donations  
*UWPV Support:* Mini-grant used to pay for postage and shipping of donations

**Say “Yes” to that Prom Dress (annual)**
*Motivation:* Provide prom dresses to young ladies who can’t afford a gown.  
*Outcome:* Received hundreds of new and gently used (fashionable) prom gowns and accessories  
*UWPV Support:* Mini-grant used for purchase a camera, clothing racks, accessories, etc. to improve marketing and accessibility of gowns

**Food Bank Fundraiser Drive**
*Motivation:* There are thousands of households in the region that receive food from the Food Bank of Western Mass  
*Outcome:* Students learned that raising $1 provides several meals in comparison to food costing the same amount. They raised enough money to provide nearly 500 meals  
*UWPV Support:* Mini-grant used to purchase marketing supplies and food for volunteers

**Student Care Packages**
*Motivation:* Students realized that many of their peers don’t have the basic hygiene products  
*Outcome:* Students collected donations and partnered with teachers to anonymously provide students with necessary items  
*UWPV Support:* Mini-grant used to purchase additional supplies

**Zoo Beautification Project**
*Motivation:* Local zoo needs upkeep and has limited staff capacity  
*Outcome:* Over 40 students participated in cleanup and several signed up as long-term volunteers  
*UWPV Support:* Mini-grant used to pay for bus transportation and lunches

**Blood Drive (annual)**
*Motivation:* One of the teachers has a son with a rare blood disease who requires regular blood transfusions  
*Outcome:* Students collect enough blood to save approximately 90 lives (per year)  
*UWPV Support:* Mini-grant used to cover cost of food for blood donors (incentive)
Youth as Event Volunteers – Stuff the Bus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Pre-Direct Recruitment</th>
<th>Post-Direct Recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>• Sent out request for volunteers via social media, flyers, etc.</td>
<td>• Post information on the event and social media for promotional purposes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Posted volunteer needs in public volunteer portal</td>
<td>• Created a list of UWPV community stakeholders – reached out to donors, youth development agencies, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Created a private posting for volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Completion</td>
<td>• Called people that I know to help complete the project</td>
<td>• Increased community partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Had to spend thousands purchasing additional supplies</td>
<td>• Increased sponsorship levels</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Spent a couple hundred on specific supply items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Management</td>
<td>• Responsible for ensuring volunteers were recruited and showed up</td>
<td>• Ensured adult champions understood project tasks to complete</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focused on improving the volunteer experience for youth volunteers</td>
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Youth as Volunteers – Grand Friends Day

Youth-led initiative
Low-cost program

More youth are going to be doing these projects – will be the next Youth Volunteer Program for UWPV

Uniquely establishes a relationship between the elderly and youth

Makes young people feel valued and respected
Youth as Ambassadors

Stay in School Youth Ambassador Pledge

I pledge allegiance to myself and the leader that I will become.
I know that I am a leader of tomorrow.
I also know that it means I must start to lead today.
I pledge to stay in school—which means that every day I must go to school.
I know that going to school every day means that I am in each class every day.
I pledge to share the message of Stay in School with my friends and other students.
I will support them and let them know that there are caring adults in our lives that can help us stay on track.
I pledge to graduate high school even if times get hard.
I know that I am a leader of tomorrow.
I also know that it means that I must start to lead to today.
Therefore, I will go to school every day.

Name of Student: _______________________________
Date: _______________________________________ 
Name School or Program: _______________________

I Am Me Fashion Show & Take the Mic Programs

Constructing Kings Male Summit
Discussion Question:
What does youth leadership look like?
Youth as Leaders

• Development of:
  • Transitional skills (self-aware, advocacy, academic, etc.)
  • Transferable skills (interpersonal, communication, etc.)

• Increased strategic thinking
• Increased commitment to serving
• Increased ability to take lead
• Increased desire to create change
Youth Volunteers Become Leaders

• 50% less likely to engage in risky behavior
• Perform better in school and more likely to graduate
• Are more civically engaged
• Develop stronger work ethic
• Develop stronger communication, social, coping, citizenship, and servitude skills
• Are 83% more likely to give to charitable/nonprofit organizations
• Are more likely to become leaders
References

• Corporation for National Service www.nationalservice.org
• National Service-Learning Clearinghouse www.servicelearning.org
• National Youth Leadership Council www.nylc.org
• Youth Service America www.ysa.org
• The Points of Light Foundation www.pointsoflight.org
• America’s Promise – The Alliance for Youth www.americaspromise.org
• http://www.effectivecommunities.com/pdfs/ECP_YouthLeadership.pdf
• SERVEnet www.servenet.org
• http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/eecd_YETOOL_E.pdf
Thank you!

LaTonia Monroe Naylor
Senior Manager, Community Investments
lnaylor@uwpv.org / 413-693-0215

Chris Woods
Volunteer Coordinator
cwoods@uwpv.org / 413-693-0236