



DOVIAs and Professional Networks

This is an authorized reprint of an article that appears online at:
<http://e-volunteerism.com/win2001/dovia2intro.html>.

Part II - Models for Wider Collaboration

Participant List: (at end of article):*(Includes seven participants from six states and one province, collectively representing at least 21 different professional networks/associations for volunteer program managers at the local, state/provincial, national and international levels!)*

Welcome Back!

We revisit our Keyboard Roundtable [from the last issue](#) to further explore their discussion about ways to improve DOVIAs' role as a means of interaction, support and advocacy. Our Roundtable discussed the possibility of a "national umbrella" organization, AVA's role in connecting DOVIAs and international conferences, and even methods by which an international conference could be facilitated. In addition, the discussion led to inevitable side topics, albeit topics not uniquely related to DOVIAs, such as the need for better training methods. to further explore their discussion about ways to improve DOVIAs' role as a means of interaction, support and advocacy. Our Roundtable discussed the possibility of a "national umbrella" organization, AVA's role in connecting DOVIAs and international conferences, and even methods by which an international conference could be facilitated. In addition, the discussion led to inevitable side-topics, albeit topics not uniquely related to DOVIAs, such as the need for better training methods.

The discussion has been organized and edited according to themes which emerged.

Models for Wider Collaboration

In Part I, Keyboard Exchange participants looked mainly at local DOVIA activity. In Part II, their attention turned to collaborative efforts, either involving larger geographic areas and multiple volunteerism associations, or involving organizations beyond the

traditional networks of volunteer program managers.

Melissa Eystad:

Our state network -- the Minnesota Association of Volunteer Directors -- has been working hard the past several years to create a new "umbrella" model for all the state associations of folks in the volunteerism field. We realized quite some time ago that there is a real crisis of leadership among all the networks (including our own), so there is much duplication of effort in training and professional development and competition for members. There are at least a half dozen or more membership associations in Minnesota for school volunteer administrators, health care, faith-based organizations, corporate employee volunteer program administrators, etc. We simply must combine efforts and resources, even if it means we have to "merge identities." We received some funding to pursue what we are calling "Volunteer Leadership 2000" and, while discussions on how to move to a new model have seemed slow, there is agreement that we need to consider a new paradigm. MAVD is willing to let the needs of volunteer managers in Minnesota direct the course of its future, and will change as necessary to support those in the field in the broadest sense.

I am happy to report that the very active Volunteer Leadership 2000 initiative is being headed up by an Executive Planning Team. This group is developing a model for a new umbrella organization, which would represent the profession in Minnesota. The types of networks involved in planning include the MN Council of Directors of Health Care Volunteers, Minnesota Church Volunteer Ministries, county and city volunteer networks/coordinators, Mentoring Partnership, Senior Service Corps Association, museum volunteer coordinators, the Minnesota Alliance with Youth and volunteer centers. The goal is to have an umbrella organization in place by late this fall and the hope is that at least five or six of the more formal state networks will transition to the umbrella organization. This effort has been in the works for several years, and has only made it this far due to the passionate commitment of a small group of professionals who believe this is the future for us. How this new organization might relate to our national association (AVA) will hopefully be part of a transition plan, although I don't know what the discussions have been on that specifically since I am not part of the planning group.

Jackie Norris:

In Colorado, we are forming a new statewide group that, for the moment, we are calling "The Alliance for Volunteerism." Its stated purpose is to bring together all those who are interested in promoting and stimulating volunteerism, as well as working together to generate increased resources for volunteerism throughout the state. It will include DOVIAs, volunteer centers, our state Commission on Community Service and many other organizations that believe there is real strength in numbers. Although not part of the stated purpose, networking will certainly be a side benefit. For a state like ours, which has had no coordinated statewide effort until recently, this is a good first step.

Anthea Hoare:

Then we have the provincial organization, PAVR-O (Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources - Ontario), which was formed three years ago following the merger of OAVA (Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration) and ODVH (Ontario Directors of Volunteers in Healthcare.) PAVR-O acts as the provincial leader, really, although not all the members of the local AVAs are members of PAVR-O. (We are working on a fee structure that will allow people to join a local AVA and PAVR-O for one payment (similar to the international AVA), but it is complex -- especially as we also have a national organization: CAVR - Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources.

The real difficulty with merging two big provincial organizations is turf -- and history -- which is why it took six years from the initial suggestion to completion. The pluses, though, are wonderful. We can speak with one voice at the provincial government level, work closely with CAVR and AVA to develop standards of practice, certification processes, etc. that are mutually supportive and recognized everywhere. There is only one fee, not two, for members to pay, and the proceeds from the annual conference go into one pot, not two, which makes them work better for the profession as a whole. On the downside, there is still a degree of "I wish we had a health-care-only organization" and looking back at the good (?) old days but, overall, I think that people now are happy that we did it.

The most difficult time, I think, was the two or three years prior to having the merge becoming a done deal. Up to that time, we had been doing a lot of talking, working out the benefits, etc. Once we got to the nuts and bolts of the issue, it became rougher, as we had to work through things like the belief that VPMs in healthcare are different from VPMs in anything else. Also ODVH had been in business about 20 years longer than OAVA, and there was sometimes a sense of "it has always worked this way, so why change?" It takes a lot of patience and diplomacy. We were very lucky to have the services of an excellent consultant, who helped develop the new bylaws, policies, etc. Which meant that neither group could blame the other if they did not work, nor take credit if they did.

Kathleen McCleskey:

DOVIAs range from A to Z here in Texas - literally, we have one that has three members and one that has over 200. As the ED of the Network of Directors of Volunteers in Texas, I have gathered some data about the DOVIAs. (Don't get excited, my \$400-a-year salary just doesn't go far, and that ends in December.) The local membership dues have a huge range, as do their activities. Some try and collaborate in the area of training with "nearby" DOVIAs in the state. Keep in mind that in some cases that may be several hundreds of miles in distance. Several have volunteer management academies, various courses and other forms of training. In the Dallas Fort Worth area, several DOVIAs collaborate on a large conference each January that continues to grow in attendance. All have the traditional monthly meetings. Some have newsletters, others do not. Only a couple have web sites that have very basic information.

The statewide network has been in existence for many years as a membership organization. In the last year, there has been a major change in its direction. There are several reasons for the change. One was the problem that most DOVIA members felt the \$10.00 a year for membership in the statewide network was too much money to pay for a quarterly newsletter, guaranteed information about the annual Governor's Volunteer Leadership Conference, the annual Governor's Volunteer Leadership Awards information, and the statewide quarterly newspaper produced by the commission. Another reason was that it was easy to see that we were leaving out huge portions of the state, because there are no DOVIAs in some areas. So the network is changing direction to represent as many of the directors of volunteers in Texas as possible. Since there will be no more dues, we are changing the way business is conducted.

(Reference the name -- it used to be DOVIA: the Texas Network. The name change was to be more inclusive of all directors statewide, not just DOVIAs)

The local DOVIA presidents will now be responsible for furnishing the database of their member's names to the State Commission, so they can receive the aforementioned "benefits." Anyone else who is not a member of a DOVIA or does not have one can send an e-mail to me and I will send that to the commission. Of course, if I know there is a DOVIA in the area, I will send their name to that DOVIA. This, ideally, will add members to the local groups.

The other thing that is happening is the collaboration between the nonprofit management centers statewide and the volunteer centers. If you look at the three groups (nonprofit management centers, volunteer centers and DOVIAs), there are several cities where all three exist, but in others maybe only one or two of them. These three groups have had many discussions about why all three are not in cities where only one or two of the others exist. The positive point is the discussions are being held. Plus, we are examining how to collaborate with training opportunities.

In July, I put together a survey for the statewide network. I have now heard from more people statewide than I ever guessed. Plus, this is the exciting part, I am now in contact with other nonprofit statewide organizations -- statewide PTA, etc. I have saved all the envelopes and e-mails. and they will help develop a database for future mailing. Another good outcome is the commission said it would like the results and will send it to the Governor in its report. This is positive, because I do not think the commission often sees managers of volunteers as important. At a recent meeting people gasped when they heard there are over a thousand members of DOVIAs in this state -- rather a substantial group.

We do have a long way to go in promoting the profession in this state.

Jerry Pannozzo:

I'd like to share our local success story. A few movers and shakers in New York City,

with the endorsement and support of NY AVA, moved forward and formed the NYC Committee for the International Year of Volunteers 2001. The Project Facilitator (Rustie Brooke, Assistant Deputy Director, Mayor's Voluntary Action Center) has recruited and nurtured a Coordinating Team/Steering Committee, Strategic Advisor, Meeting Facilitator, Amsterdam Partnership Team, Outreach Coordinator, Borough Coordination Team, Borough Team Leaders, Communication/Publicity Team, Development Task Force, Diversity Task Force, Events Planning Team, Research Team, Corporate Volunteerism Survey Project, and Website Task Force! This is a great example of the power of local folk who lead rather than wait to be led.

Arlene Grubbs:

Pennsylvania has a statewide organization, and here in Pittsburgh we have a local DOVIA Volunteer Administrators of Southwestern PA (VASP). Both organizations have been around for about 20 years and are very informally connected, mainly by having VAs who are members of both organizations. We also have the hospital association of volunteer administrators, and there is a feeling there that they have special needs and ergo must have their own organization. However, we try to co-sponsor training programs and keep each other informed of activities.

It's interesting to note that, as in Texas, some areas of our state have a wealth of resources and others have very few when it comes to support systems for VAs. We are lucky enough to have the Institute for Volunteerism connected with our local community college. The Institute provides much of the training that is done here and did for a time provide a credit certification in volunteer administration. These certificate credits could be transferred into the human resources management track of the college and counted as partial completion of an Associate's Degree. Our United Way Good Neighbor Program (our local volunteer center) does regular "basics of volunteer administration" training that organizations must participate in if they want their recruiting needs to be posted on the United Way's data base.

A National Umbrella Organization?

In light of the shortcomings of the present interactions and collaborations of DOVIAs, participants discussed the merits of a "national umbrella organization" that would shift some of the burdens of responsibility and link the various groups.

Kathleen McCleskey:

Since some local networks are in such a "struggling mode," is it time to have some form of effective and efficient umbrella organization that works to support the local groups/networks? Would this take some of the pressure off the local networks, so they could focus on a few strategically important areas and not one over the world? Is that the future? Is that the way to assist local networks to succeed? Is that where the local groups/networks become mentors and grassroots connection to the community where the local group is located? The local networks would help to introduce/mentor new

people to the profession, have face-to-face activities/events. (Bosses breakfast, celebrating someone special -- awards for local outstanding director of volunteers or programs -- these could then go to state/provincial and national/international level, etc. and help with replication of these outstanding programs in the community.) With a mentoring program -- like the NY AVA apprentice program - it could include some of the more experienced directors.

Then is the mission of this umbrella organization to help the local networks by:

- Providing legislative information;
- Becoming advocates;
- Looking at professionalism, credentials, explaining what directors of volunteers do all day (this is discussed a lot in CyberVPM as well as salaries);
- Conducting state/provincial surveys of directors of volunteers that would tie into larger surveys by AVA, etc. (this could assist with legislation, advocacy, etc.);
- Examining the possibilities of training from a variety of resources - college level, volunteer centers, nonprofit centers, pooling resources to have area training events, find ways to support any existing state or provincial conferences, etc. - this could include accreditation of some sort;
- Maintaining a web site that could connect all the local groups with various "board areas for local information only" (read "local" as local as well as state or provincial -- there are others that cover the globe);
- Encouraging the hospital group, the library group, the PTA, etc., to look into joining their local group;
- Assisting with strategic planning and leadership development for local networks so they can become more proactive;
- Being a conduit to what is going on state/provincial wide to the local groups; and
- Representing the local groups when planning conferences, legislation, whatever - where there needs to be input from those who direct volunteers.

OK, I confess. This is what we would love to do here. But as the original questions asked, who has time to do this? Should it be a paid position within an already existing structure?

Conclusion: Is it the next step to assist local networks by developing ways to help facilitate their activities by taking larger issues (I don't like that word, but that is what comes to mind) and have these umbrella organizations look at these issues and "free up" the local groups to concentrate on local things?

Anthea Hoare:

Kathy has some really good points, and I think she is on the right track. I think that the role for the "umbrella" organizations is much more of a governance and advocacy one than of hands-on. The local DOVIAs, AVAs, or whatever they are called, have a far better chance of understanding what is needed locally in terms of training, support etc. and mentoring each other. They do a great job of it, too, in most cases. But they are very

busy doing their own jobs, and dealing with the day-to-day problems of volunteer management and local issues.

Thus, I believe that the provincial/state/county role is that of advocacy, province/state wide training (conference?) possibly a traveling "dog and pony show." (Some years ago Ontario hosted a traveling "Train The Trainers" workshop, subsidized by the provincial organization, which went to several regions to provide training for any VPMs in that region for a minimal sum. It was very successful.)

And maybe certification -- not sure if this should be independent, probably not, but in conjunction with the national and International bodies. Also, possibly, working with provincial/state/county governments on legislation, where it affects volunteers and volunteer management.

Provincial or national groups could also be big players in helping the different factions within the profession to work together for the betterment of all. I really think that we can be so much stronger if we are talking with one voice.

Nationally/federally, again, the role is, I believe, that of governance and advocacy, but on the national scale (i.e., design and operation of certification, working with colleges and universities to standardize curricula, national standards of practice, ethics, etc., advocacy with governments to work toward recognition of the profession and its accreditation, salary expectations etc.) And one day (this is my own personal wish/goal/dream for the profession), a college which will control accreditation, and maybe even license practitioners -- giving us the credibility and recognition the profession should receive.

I agree with Kathy that it is highly unlikely that anyone would have the time to do any of this and still hold an FT position. I know that AVA has made huge strides as an international body since we moved into our own office and hired an ED. It has made a huge difference in how the organization does its work, and taken a big chunk of the "grunt" work off the members of the board, and, more importantly, has resulted in better service to the membership. But when will the majority of umbrella organizations be able to do that? I know that PAVR-O is currently pursuing funding for an office and a staff person, simply because the workload on the board members has become so big, at a time when the pressure on us in our own workplace is fast increasing. But without outside funding (in our case, from the Trillium Foundation, an Ontario government organization) it would be a pipe dream.

Maybe part of an "umbrella" group's work would be to source funding for its undertakings and for the member groups.

Obviously, I agree with Kathy's conclusion!!

Jackie Norris:

I guess it's time for me to state in this forum my strongly held belief that AVA and DOVIAs around the country ought to be one organization. As many of you know, during my term as AVA President, we "dissolved" the regional structure in search of something that would better serve our members and our leaders at every level. Unfortunately, another more workable structure has not yet been developed. However, I believed then and still believe that AVA could serve a vital role in helping to be that "umbrella" organization, both nationally and perhaps on a state level in this country. I would think there are compatible structures in other countries, too.

In my experience, AVA members are almost always members of their local DOVIA -- obviously not all DOVIA members belong to AVA. But I believe they should and they could, if we could just somehow bring these two networks together. What strength in numbers we would have to more actively promote the profession, as Winnie suggests. With the incredibly good work AVA has produced in the last couple years, they could be a fabulous resource to local DOVIAs -- one national/international website that could be a rich source of information and exchange for all of us. The potential for developing a web of local networks is incredible. The interaction of state conferences and the AVA conference could be so valuable to all of us. I have always felt there were so many positive reasons for this alliance that it continues to amaze me so few DOVIAs have grabbed on to the local affiliate concept.

Unfortunately, I think this lack of togetherness comes not only from the high rate of turnover in our field, but the limited vision of many DOVIA leaders who cannot see the bigger picture outside their own community - or even within their own communities. What will it take to change this? What can all of us as leaders in the profession do to constructively bring about this very important alliance? Am I being way too presumptuous in thinking AVA or any of us can do this?

Until we develop the ability to come together as a cohesive group, I'm afraid we will never make the progress we all care so deeply about in promoting our profession and gaining the credibility we all talk about all this time.

Anthea Hoare:

I have to agree with Jackie re the DOVIA leadership (and in our case the local AVAs) not being able to see outside the box. So many of them seem to have the "I don't see what is in it for me/us" attitude.

I was thinking about this on the way home last night, and I know that one of the main reasons that the members of the local AVAs in Ontario don't join PAVR-O, and even less CAVR, is that they cannot see the use of it, which speaks to the issue of advocacy and support at a provincial-state and national level. I agree with Jackie that all members of DOVIAs/AVAs etc should be members at least of their state/provincial (where they exist) organizations, which in turn should be affiliated with the national/international organizations. With regard to membership fees, there must be some way in which the

individual can pay once, but that would translate into affiliation with the larger, umbrella groups.

Winnie Brown:

Jackie - I agree completely that AVA and DOVIAs should be part of one organization. Unfortunately, the handling of the AVA restructuring did much to discourage this from happening. When I moved to Salem in 1994, I worked hard to maintain the \$100 MVVMA affiliation and convinced a group to attend the Calgary Conference. However, when we received the notice that the affiliation fee had been discontinued and the only connection could be through half or more of the members joining AVA, no one wanted to join. If we had had a year to make the transition, rather than the few months allowed, we might have won them over. Even NOVAA in Portland -- a large, active DOVIA -- took several years to come around. The old Region fell apart. I have a personal AVA membership and try to share information coming from AVA. Nancy Gaston and I have pleaded to have Katie Campbell or the President visit our area to restore the connection.

Jerry Pannozzo:

You refer to a structure that I endorse -- "umbrella organization to help the local networks." This approach is not without controversy and may conflict with established turf issues. This is a United States structure (local, state and national structured organizations), that doesn't fly with the global community that we have all come to embrace.

Admittedly, there are pros and cons to consider as this structure addresses some of the issues we have raised. I believe it is more effective and REALISTIC to approach training/accreditation on a local and state level (schools), rather than on a national or global level. With regard to advocacy, on a state level there are certain (appropriate) issues to focus on, and on a federal level there are others. I think it will be a HARD SELL to include all the disciplines/groups. However, some of them would sign on if the new DOVIAs develop an effective marketing plan. It is probably a long way off; however, funds for a paid position should be part of the plan. Hopefully, we can learn from the models already established by grassroots organizations that developed into local, state and national structures, such as PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network), Human Rights Campaign Fund, and NGLTF (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force).

In response to Anthea, you refer to the strength in numbers concept -- which I endorse. However, I struggle with the concept of "talking with one voice" -- something I've heard before. I think this is where our strategy gets into trouble. IAVE, POLF, AVA do not speak for me. I think we are, once again, trying to achieve an unrealistic goal. The "one voice" concept is a promise we can't keep or a product we cannot deliver. You end up with a disappointed membership. That is why I was interested in this Roundtable discussion: What new models are needed to address the changing world in which DOVIAs operate? However, it looks like PAVR-O is working in Canada, and I'm a little envious. You raise another important point, the issue of fundraising. Have volunteer

administrators been trained, what level of experience do we have and/or what unrealistic expectations might we have with regard to pursuing funding for our DOVIAs?

Jackie, I applaud your passion and respect the work you have done for AVA. AVA made the decision to go international. With their decision to serve a global membership, they gained something and they lost something. I've found them to be less effective with regard to listening and responding to NY AVA or members' issues raised at the ICVA of the past few years. You mention the "limited vision of many DOVIA leaders who cannot see the bigger picture outside their own community" -- or even within their communities. What will it take to change this? What can all of us as leaders in the profession do to constructively bring about this very important alliance? Am I being way too presumptuous in thinking AVA or any of us can do this?

Maybe this is an opportunity to think outside the box. We envision them seeing the bigger picture outside of their community. What if they have no interest beyond their community? Are we prepared to respect their priorities to invest in their community and develop strategies for motivating them to become engaged in the bigger picture? You mention "change" -- maybe those who want to lead need to learn to listen to the potential member more effectively. Rather than blaming/distancing them for their connection to community/local needs/agency mission/bosses they report to, how do we better serve those interests? Do we perform a disservice to the profession if we reject those who have a different vision than the original visionaries in the field? Keeping in mind, commitment to any career in the 21st century will be very different. Finally, I do not think you are "too presumptuous," but rather passionate. Passion being one of the components we need as we move toward tomorrow!

Anthea Hoare:

In response to Jerry, when I was talking about "speaking with one voice," I was referring to issues about which everyone is concerned: advocacy, lobbying, recognition of the profession, national/international certification and its recognition -- salary scales, (that is probably a state/province issue in North America, but would probably be a national issue in Europe etc.),etc. If two or three organizations doing substantially the same thing, i.e., providing the governance for a professional group, and all saying something different, then the government in question is going to say "go away until you all speak with the same voice -- we cannot help each of you separately, but might be able to do something for you all together." The same would apply to a major issue that affects volunteers and/or VPMs. I have had direct experience of this here in Ontario. Several years ago when we were separate organizations, we tried to get something done through our provincial legislature. One group wanted one approach, a second wanted a different approach, and a third yet a different one again. The government literally said that "until you get your act together, we will do nothing." It took several years, and a lot of water under the bridge, but it has happened, and we have credibility and a voice - albeit not a very loud one, but it is there, at the table. When you consider that the provincial organization has the potential to represent several thousand VPMs in Ontario, and several hundred thousand volunteers, it is clout that can have an effect.

What Should Be the Role of AVA?

Without any plan or intent, the Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA) surfaced numerous times in the discussion. Given that all the Roundtable participants are members and many are or have been international board members of AVA (and one past president), this is not surprising! The ideas presented here are provocative and e-Volunteerism is happy to share them. But we also understand that this is NOT the appropriate forum for giving formal input to AVA. It is our hope that other AVA members will respond with their points of view and that everyone takes these ideas in the spirit in which they were intended: creative, passionate concern for our field. Of course, as you might expect by now, our participants did not agree on the role that the AVA should take in this collaborative effort.

Deborah Witmer:

In general, these ideas seem to be headed in the direction of a national organization, which could spearhead the larger issues of professionalism, certification/education, advocacy, etc. That leaves the local DOVIAs to handle networking, training and the like. One unsolved question would be WHO would take on this national role? To be perfectly candid, I suspect there are "political" reasons why AVA may not be the best choice. Another major problem is the lack of a unified forum to even discuss these issues on a wide scale. It is the old "chicken and egg" problem: what comes first? We need a national forum to discuss the issues of whether or not we need a national organization to represent us -- and we need the national organization to provide the forum to discuss the question! Eek!

Anthea Hoare:

The other point is that I agree that there needs to be some sort of national or international leadership. And I do think that that needs some sort of merger/coalition, whatever you want to call it, and Deborah is right in saying that, politically, AVA probably isn't the group to lead it. That was obvious to us here when we looked to combining our resources with ODVH. Neither group could assume the leadership role (and name) without enormous political fallout from the membership. It needed a whole new name, and approach. It needed both sets of bylaws and policies to be scrapped and a new set that combined the best of both to be developed -- and we had to hire a consultant to do that, as if anyone from either group did it, it would have been seen as biased. We had to decide what to do with our reserve funds -- very hot potato that one -- in a way that would benefit all the members equally. (A training scholarship? Special event at the conference? The list goes on.) But the end result is a stronger, more politically aware and able organization, with a voice at the table at government. We are now in a position to *advocate for the profession as a whole* and for things that affect the profession. We are able to raise the profile of the whole profession, not just individuals within it, and at the same time provide support, training and materials to the local groups.

Kathleen McCleskey:

I get nervous when we talk about forming *another* organization. Surely there is some way to accomplish some of the great ideas that have been discussed without starting something else. AVA has come a long way and may not be there yet, but one of its "pieces" is working with local DOVIAs or whatever they are called. I do know they dialogue with ASDVS, POLF, MADD, NAVPLG, etc. Plus, if another group was formed, it could splinter what is already available in terms of resources. And getting buy-in from people is hard enough without having another alphabet soup name at the table.

Jackie Norris:

I know my major bias will show now, but I must go with Kathy McCleskey and say that forming another national organization makes me more than a little nervous. I know I don't know all the local nuances and politics -- and not even all the national ones anymore -- but I cannot see the value of forming another national professional association when AVA and DOVIA are almost identical in terms of purpose and mission. I really wish we could figure out a way to overcome whatever barriers exist to bringing these two organizations closer together.

Melissa Eystad:

Regarding a national level organization, I know there has been much pressure on AVA, and I know it is trying to adapt and meet the needs of its constituents. The value of a professional association lies in the exchange between and among its members, the giving as well as the receiving. It is acknowledging the opportunities presented by joining a diverse group of people with common interests. While I am a member of at least two associations, I have not been actively involved in the past year or two through my own choice. It has limited my benefits, but I still want to support the associations, so they are there for others who are in different stages of their careers. I'm sure I will be back at some point, and I feel an obligation to pass on what has been shared with me over the years.

Anthea Hoare:

I think the real question is what are their individual roles? And if we can agree on that, then we can look at the bigger picture of where to next. No small local DOVIA, whatever name it goes by, can be expected to provide all the "stuff." It is financially and physically not doable. But if the provincial or state organization can take on the major "global" training issues -- either by providing trainers, or training materials or resources -- and do some of the advocacy work, and/or certification to a greater or lesser degree, then the national and international bodies can deal with the bigger issues of mainstream advocacy, political lobbying, and support of provincial and local groups.

AVA's main drawback, in some people's eyes, is that it is seen as basically a North American organization. For some members it is their ONLY organization, if there is no DOVIA or state organizations with which to hook up. This makes it politically very difficult for AVA -- which is not to say that it cannot do it, only that there are more

fences to jump that might otherwise be the case.

Jerry Panno:

With regard to creating another national organization, my suggestion was for a "structure" which currently existing networks/DOVIAs could fold into and still have their individual identity (turf/history). I was attempting to answer the point raised by Deborah: We do not have a national structure, and that appears to be problematic. AVA is excellently positioned to take the "international" lead within the structure I proposed. What is different is they would not be trying to create/imagine a structure as they plan, but rather they would be able to plan within the boundaries for a uniquely USA model/umbrella, same as they would plan for a uniquely Canadian model/umbrella. In the end, I believe this would make it easier for AVA to build/encourage/customize the affiliate model.

Winnie Brown:

I shiver at the idea of starting a new organization. It has been my experience that starting up a new organization usually leads to its repeating all of the mistakes that the existing one has already gone through, plus finding more of its own.

A "National Congress"

Deborah, the DOVIA Roundtable's convening editor, suggested a "National Congress" as a way to get greater input on the question of whether and how to establish an umbrella organization.

Deborah Witmer:

So how's this for a way-out idea? Let's hold a national congress on volunteerism -- jointly sponsored by as many of the larger networks as possible -- and hold a debate and referendum on the subject of establishing a new, national professional association! (Like the old "let's use the barn and put on a show!" approach. <smile>) The idea might sound outlandish, but from the quality of the discussion we have had here thus far, it is clear to me that there are enough people out there thinking about this issue to perhaps put some energy behind making some changes.

Perhaps if we start with the "bigger picture," eventually local DOVIAs would be freed to take on the more specific tasks of training, networking, mentoring and supporting each other on a scale that is more manageable. It is clear that when DOVIAs try to be all things to all people, they rarely succeed.

Kathleen McCleskey:

Let's face it, people do not even think of directors of volunteers as being part of many equations when it comes to volunteers and service. I do believe in the old adage of strength in numbers. Many groups are starting to talk to one another (at various levels), and there needs to be more work in this area. So I like the idea of getting these groups

together at a high level conference and start talking about how to position all the efforts being made for the most impact on people who daily do the work: the local directors of volunteer programs. It would take work to develop a strategic plan to do this umbrella organization, but I do think it would be worth the effort.

I still believe if the main things DOVIAs want could be discerned and compared with what other groups want, then some important dialogue would take place. My gut feeling is that it would center on training/education/tools to do the job, communication in its many formats (e-mail, newsletters, etc.) and advocacy. These could take many forms, and my gut may be wrong.

Jackie Norris:

I agree wholeheartedly that the best progress might be made through a face-to-face national/international meeting to discuss all these issues, and I would pay my own money to see that happen, IF it was structured effectively and could produce real results and move us forward in a positive way.

Winnie Brown:

I think the idea of a national forum is an interesting one although the planning and management boggles the mind, to say nothing of the expense. It is hard to think about it realistically without some specific goals.

Jerry Pannozzo:

Any National Congress ought to consider these Potential Points for Consensus:

1. Agree that partnering benefits all of us.
2. Agree that individual goals at local, state, national, international, and discipline specific levels will be different and shall be respected (not judged).
3. Agree to collaborate with regard to education/training, advocacy, etc. efforts because these efforts will benefit the larger constituency.
4. Agree that at each level -- local, state, and/or national -- they are best positioned to determine the most effective structure for leadership and governance of their association.
5. Agree to discuss, develop and share a variety of models for local, state and national associations to adopt that include:
 - a. Membership benefits (realistic with regard to level of dues) for voting, meetings, trainings/workshops, newsletters, web sites, mailings, discounts, etc.
 - b. Board and/or Leadership Councils (assignment descriptions)
 - c. Bylaws and Policies and Procedures (samples to be provided)
 - d. Committees (committee descriptions)
 - e. Systems for Communication Flow: local, state, and national
 - f. Trainings/Workshops / Conferences Collaboration
 - g. Advocacy Collaboration
 - h. Membership Benefits Collaboration, including local, state, national, and

international collaboration

i. Accountability/Data Collection/Reporting Systems: What do members want and how do you measure the effectiveness of the local, state and/or national association?

Special Addition - National Congress - From Inspiration to Aspiration

Jerry Pannozzo took the "national or international congress" musings one step further by proposing a structure for the major conference idea.

In reply to Deborah, I've got some thoughts with regard to your proposal for a national conference and referendum on the subject of establishing a new national, professional association. Allow me to "ignore" the logistics of this venture (funds, coordination, etc.) and just brainstorm! Remember no censoring at this stage. This is "one" idea for a national discussion:

I'm including a timeline; targeted audience; goals for dues and structure; invitation list; potential points of consensus; and local, state and national organizational structure.

Timeline:

2001: During the International Year of Volunteers, schedule Deborah's proposed National Congress: hold discussions and then develop a plan for collecting data tracking/documenting the "interest" for such a national umbrella structure. (Invite AVA, POLF, CyberVPM, etc. to the table.) Identify team leaders for key committees and committee members to prepare for 2002 actions.

2002: Develop and implement a system for collecting and analyzing data with regard to the "interest" in such an umbrella plan/structure. Cast a very wide net, as this will be the pool for potential membership. Define and assign tasks and deadlines for team leaders, committees and committee members. (Involve AVA, POLF, CyberVPM, etc., as the results may influence their dues structures of the future -- and its about building partnerships and planning for our future.)

2003: Based on hard data collected during 2002, design and implement a pilot project to recruit memberships on local, state and national levels. Define and assign tasks and deadlines for team leaders, committees and

committee members. (Continue to engage AVA, POLF, CyberVPM, etc.) This stage is necessary only if the data supports an interest in this venture.

2004: Test Market the new structure. (With AVA, POLF, CyberVPM, etc. possibly experimenting with us.)

2005: Assess the health of the new structure, based on predetermined criteria for success. (With established partners.)

Targeted Audience:

Volunteer Administrators, Volunteer Program Managers, Volunteer Resources, etc.

Invitation List:

For this to be successful, a lot of people should come together. Here is a starter list of participants at Deborah's forum: AVA, IAVE, POLF, Mentoring Programs, RSVP, Independent Sector, Red Cross, United Way, Girl Scouts, Big Brother and Big Sister, Healthcare Associations, PTA, MADD, Museum Associations, Library Associations, Faith Based Associations, CyberVPM, Energize Inc., all those local and state AVAs and DOVIAs, etc.

For discussion purposes only, I'll call this association the Professional Membership Association for Volunteerism (PMAV).

Dues: The plan is to keep it simple and provide ownership, decision-making, and fiscal responsibility at each level. This will also facilitate local, state and national PMAVs to collaborate/partner with Discipline Specific Associations, with no cumbersome top-down "baggage," hopefully avoiding the turf/history issues we've discussed.

Dues for local membership are directed toward only local membership benefits and/or actions, as determined by the local association of members.

Dues for state membership are directed toward only state membership benefits and/or actions, as determined by the state association of members.

Dues for the national membership are directed toward only national membership benefits and/or actions, as determined by national association members.

Dues Structure: I've assigned a "membership fee" for discussion purposes only. However, we need to keep in mind the fees that folk are willing to pay and what the money will get your association will be a reality check issue.

Membership benefits will be determined by human and financial resources unique to each level.

I also propose a cafeteria-style plan: The individuals determines at which level she/he wishes to join each independent association.

Local PMAV Membership @ \$25

Receive local membership benefits -- example: voting, local meetings, workshops, job bank, newsletter, etc.

State PMAV Membership @ \$25

Receive state membership benefits -- example: voting, state conferences, newsletter, advocacy, etc.

(You might be up to investing \$50 at this point, or you may select only one of the two levels described so far.)

National PMAV Membership @ \$25

Receive national membership benefits -- example: voting, national conferences, advocacy, web page.

(You might be up to investing \$75 at this point, or you may select only two or only one level.)

International level @ \$25

(For this exercise, I suggest this level would be with AVA.)

Receive international membership benefits--example; voting, ICVA, etc.

(You might be up to investing \$100 at this point, or any other combination of levels. You might decide to join only at the International level.)

Discipline Specific Membership Associations @ ?

Receive membership benefits as determined by associations.

(My dream is that they will all see the benefits of collaborating with the local, state, national and international PMAVs.)

This plan puts the responsibility of marketing on each level. However, they are closer to their members and may be the best positioned to meet their members' expectations.

Training and Accreditation

The need for improved training found its way into almost every area of this panel's discussion. Although training is by no means an issue unique to DOVIAs, our panel found itself examining the merits and formats for formalized training in the field of volunteerism.

Jerry Panno:

Do we want training from our DOVIAs? From my vantage point, training for our profession is a big black hole. I've been in the field almost eight years, and mine was an intentional career change. After about three years, I was surprised to discover the limited number of trainers on the East Coast and local networks limited resources for paying such trainers for workshops. Fortunately, with the elimination of the old AVA region structure, things are better financially for NY AVA, and we have been able to address this issue (once a year we can pay to bring in a trainer -- a perk for members).

At my current place of employment (health care), other directors as well as managers and coordinators, have master's degrees from universities and colleges. If we want our profession to have respect and to get the same salaries as other directors, then how do we, as a profession, document we meet established standards? Four years ago I made an assessment, the best I could do was pursue a performance-based certification through AVA. I'm glad I did. However, allow me to share two perceptions of such certification.

One friend, a former press agent for Barbara Walters who has relocated in L.A., made the following statement regarding my CVA. "What's that? Something you get through the mail?" My answer, "Well yes. But let me explain...." His implication -- how credible is it?

Another friend, a faculty member with NYU's Photo Department, was helping me on my resume. She raised a question with regard to how I position/validate/ground my CVA status on my resume. We decided that providing an "address" for AVA, (since the certification wasn't from a school), was the compromise.

I'm currently enrolled in a one-semester Mentoring Supervisor Certificate program through NYC Big Brother Big Sister and Fordham University Graduate School of Social Services. I'm hoping to learn more about university-affiliated training. My questions -- were local, state, national, worldwide professional associations/networks (DOVIAs) involved with developing this program? If not, why not, and/or should they be? Do we expect our future DOVIAs to be involved in such issues of validating our training/competency?

Anthea Hoare:

What about the idea of a professional college? That way we would force the organizations to employ only registered/licensed people and require that those

organizations that must be accredited - e.g., hospitals, to employ certified VPMs at least at the Director/Manager level.

Melissa Eystad:

Another "test" of the health of the profession in Minnesota will be coming up in 2001. The University of St. Thomas is offering a mini-MBA in Volunteer Management this coming winter/spring. Enrollment will be a good indicator of how people view the value of a formal education in volunteer management. The course is being offered under the UST's Center for Nonprofit Management. In addition, "The Leadership Institute: Developing Professional Expertise in Volunteerism and Community Involvement," a one-year certificate course for career professionals in the field of volunteerism and citizen participation, will be offered by the Minneapolis Community & Technical College in partnership with the Volunteer Leadership Consortium of Minnesota in 2001.

Times are changing; and we need new models and structures that are flexible enough to support those who work in this field (with no judgment of their level of "commitment" to it!) I do fear sometimes that we will lose the ability to have real human contact and opportunities to form lifelong friendships and mentoring relationships, and what that means for community-building and the other things that make volunteering of value. Which brings me to large, impersonal national conferences: Do my colleagues think those are still of value in building professionalism and networks?

Jerry Pannozzo:

As a supporter of training/accreditation/degrees, I was very interested in the various educational opportunities that have been discussed. You made an important point with regard to future enrollment providing some answers with regard to people actually investing in the various options.

I was pleased that you reminded us of the value (and potential loss) of the human connection. To answer your point, I have always enjoyed attending the large international conferences (ICVA), and I recently attended my first state conference for DVS in healthcare. I've always eaten part of the expenses myself for such conferences. I don't know what can replace the experience of seeing so many colleagues in one setting - - knowing that we are not alone -- among those who seem to be natural nurturers. I enjoy socializing with local colleagues while out of town, as it is so difficult to schedule social time when at home. However, at both international and state conferences, I'm so not interested in raffles and shopping. Alas, the topic of this discussion is not about examining issues related to inclusion and gender sensitivity.

Winnie Brown:

It has been a hope of mine for many years that we could make an impact on the colleges and universities that train for other professions, especially those that do, could, or should utilize volunteer services. Years ago, when I was doing a January training for professionals entering Camp Fire at the West Point hotel, General Electric was there

conducting a managerial training course. The instructors for both groups got to know one another and joined forces for a number of sessions, some taught by us and some by them. In New York, when I headed the Mayor's Voluntary Action Center, we even got the Civil Service Commission to state that "documented, relevant volunteer work" would be accepted as qualification for paid employment." The latter took 13 years, but it finally made the grade.

Conclusion

Deborah Wittmer:

So, did we answer our question? "What new models are needed to address the changing world in which DOVIAs operate?" One thing quickly became clear: new models ARE needed -- and change will *not* always be easy! Local organizations are swamped trying to meet all their members' needs. They need assistance in providing quality training and networking opportunities, and haven't the time to take on larger (though no less important) issues such as salaries, accreditation and professionalism.

In Part One of our Roundtable, we did take on structure issues such as meeting times, Internet and email use, though I don't think we came up with concrete answers. It seems our organizations' structures are very much "local," conforming to local mores and customs. Even within this thread, however, we raised the issue of non-uniformity among organizations and how they all seemed to have different ideas about what constituted "work responsibilities." Some members consider DOVIA participation as part of their professional duties -- while others must become involved only on their own, personal time. Could a larger, "umbrella" organization be in a better position to advocate for a change in the way organizations support their Volunteer Managers' participation?

I also found thought provoking the comment that some "DOVIA leaders... cannot see the 'bigger picture,'" perhaps accounting for the disconnect between local organizations and those operating on a state or national level. I would agree that responsibility does, indeed, rest with our local leaders. I would also suggest that it is *up to the leaders of those larger (state and national) organizations* to do the outreach to the local leaders. Show them what the benefits of membership can be and provide a cost-effective method of connecting individual members to their groups.

I must say, I found the array of organizational names astounding -- who can keep track of all those initials? It is clear that, while this may have been a "DOVIA Roundtable," it is used in the most general sense. There is no standard convention for what volunteer management organizations call themselves. Although the Roundtable never directly addressed this, I find it representative of the lack of standardization in the profession as a whole. Issues of titles, salaries, responsibilities, accreditation, etc. can only be addressed in a more national forum, and our participants returned to this notion time and again.

Overall, we found much common ground in our diverse perspectives. Our conversation was spirited, opinionated, passionate, and full of commitment to the future of volunteerism and volunteer management. It is my hope that this will spark more conversations on the local levels, as well as between organizations on a wider scale. Obviously, volunteer management, as a profession, is here to stay!

Let me end by offering heartfelt thanks to our Roundtable participants. Your willingness to share your perspectives and opinions, on often-controversial subjects!, gave us an honest and critical look at current structures within volunteer management -- on both the local and national levels. This unique forum has broken new ground in sharing ideas and issues across geographic boundaries in ways conferences never can. It may perhaps lead to another level of collaboration -- and wouldn't it be exciting if it actually led to a National Volunteer Management Congress?

Participants in Discussion

Winifred L. (Winnie) Brown

Winnie Brown has served as the Executive Director of the Mayor's Voluntary Action Center of New York City, the National Director of Personnel and Training for Camp Fire Girls, Inc., and as a Field Representative for the five Chapters of the American Red Cross of Greater New York. She is now semi-retired and serves as a Consultant in Volunteer Services Management.

She has also served on the National Boards of the Association for Volunteer Administration and the National Volunteer Center. Currently, she is the Vice-President of the Mid-Willamette Valley Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, President of the Advisory Commission for the Salem Senior Center, Board Member of the East Lancaster Neighborhood Association, and Board Member of the National Association of Social Workers Oregon Chapter. She holds the AVA Harriet Naylor Distinguished Member Service Award and received an Honorary Doctorate in Community Service from Vermont College of Norwich University.

Melissa Eystad

Since February 1999, Melissa Eystad has been the national director of volunteer development for American Field Service (AFS) Intercultural Programs USA. In that role she has been responsible for ensuring that volunteer structures and processes enable AFS to change and grow as an organization.

Melissa's involvement with volunteer administration networks/DOVIAs began almost at the beginning of her work in the field. While a community relations specialist for an HMO in the mid-80's, she joined a corporate volunteerism council and was mentored by many wonderful and sharing professionals in employee volunteerism. She continued on to become chairperson of the Corporate Volunteerism Council of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. In 1989, she became Chief of Volunteer Services for the Minnesota Department of Human Services. In that role, she provided training, resources and

technical assistance to public social service agencies' volunteer programs. At this point in her career, she joined both the Association for Volunteer Administration and the Minnesota Association of Volunteer Directors. In 1997, she served as president of the Minnesota Association of Volunteer Directors. Melissa also joined the International Association of Volunteer Effort (IAVE) to learn more about volunteering in various cultures and socio-economic systems.

Arlene Grubbs

Arlene Grubbs first entered the field of volunteer management over twenty-five years ago managing volunteer programs for the Visiting Nurse Association of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. She is a founding member and past president of both Volunteer Administrators of Southwestern Pennsylvania (VASP) and the Pennsylvania Association for Volunteerism (PAV) and has served in many different positions in each organization. She has co-authored a book on volunteer recognition entitled *The Volunteer Recognition Skit Kit* (available in the Energize Online Bookstore at <http://energizeinc.com/total/volr.html>). Her most recent article on volunteer management appeared in the spring 1998 issue of *The Journal of Volunteer Administration* and is entitled "Managing the Impact of Organizational Change on Volunteers."

For the last 15 years Arlene has worked as an organizational consultant. Working mainly in the nonprofit community, she has conducted board retreats and training for groups ranging from local churches to national organizations. As adjunct faculty at the Community College of Allegheny County Institute on Volunteerism, she has taught credit courses in organizational theory and the management of volunteer programs and has offered a variety of training programs pertaining to volunteer management issues.

Anthea Hoare

Anthea Hoare has worked in the field of Volunteer Resource Management in Canada since 1983 in a variety of settings including sport, long term, hospital and paediatric care. She formerly served as President of the Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration (OAVA)--which has since merged with the Ontario Association of Directors of Volunteers in Healthcare (ODVH) to form the Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources - Ontario (PAVR-O). Currently, she serves as the Chair of Certification for PAVR-O. Anthea has been one of the designers of the new PAVR-O Certification Process. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Volunteer Administration (AVA).

Anthea is currently the Coordinator of Community and Volunteer Resources for Allendale, a long-term-care facility in Milton, Ontario, Canada. She is also a trainer and consultant in the field of volunteer management, and gives workshops and seminars on a wide variety of related subjects. She is passionate about the future of the profession and its need to become stronger and more accountable in today's world. She has written two books--*So You Have been Asked to Do a Newsletter* and *Volunteers & You: A Handbook for Staff and Volunteers Working Together*--and is a fairly frequent correspondent to the

CyberVPM listserv. Her other interests are horses and riding, acting and the theatre, sailing, reading and people.

Kathleen McCleskey

Kathleen McCleskey has worked in the field of volunteer administration for over 20 years as a volunteer, an administrator of volunteer programs, a member of various nonprofit boards and committees, and a trainer and consultant. She has trained over 10,000 participants in five foreign countries and in over a quarter of the states in the United States of America. She has received a variety of awards for her service including the Army's highest award, the Emma Baird Award. She received the Association for Volunteer Administration's Harriet Naylor Distinguished Member Service Award in October 2000.

Kathleen has served on DOVIA boards in Virginia and Texas. In addition, she has served on the welcoming committee, co-chaired and been a member of programs/training committees. She is currently the Executive Director of The Network of Directors of Volunteers in Texas.

Jackie Norris

Jackie Norris is Executive Director of Metro Volunteers!, metropolitan-Denver's expert resource on volunteerism and training. She is also Past President of the Association for Volunteer Administration, an international professional association for managers of volunteer programs.

Jackie was appointed in January of 1994 by Governor Romer to the Colorado State Commission on National and Community Service, and served as Chair of the Commission from 1996-1998. She was reappointed to the Commission by Governor Owens in December 1999. She recently completed a term as Volunteer Chair of the Mountain West Regional Committee, American Red Cross, and as a member of the Board of Directors of the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame.

Jackie spent 23 years with the American Red Cross in a variety of positions, including Director of Volunteers, Deputy Chapter Manager, and Deputy Regional Officer for the Mountain West Region. She began her career as a Red Cross recreation worker in South Vietnam in 1967-68.

Jackie has spoken at local seminars as well as national conferences on a variety of topics such as volunteer/staff relationships, basic volunteer management, recruitment and retention, future trends for volunteerism, and volunteer recognition, among others. She recently provided training in volunteer management for Red Cross staff and volunteers in Germany and Okinawa.

Gerald (Jerry) Pannozzo

Jerry Pannozzo, is the Director of Volunteer Services at Rivington House Health Care

Facility in New York City. He currently serves as Secretary for the New York AVA and is a member of the Greater New York Association of Directors of Volunteer Services in Health Care Facilities as well as the New York City Committee for the International Year of Volunteers 2001. He also volunteers at Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE).

Previously Jerry served as Vice Chairperson for AVA Region 2 and as Co-Chairperson for the Professional Development Committee. He was a member of Queens DOVIA (QDOVIA), Co-Chairperson for New York AVA's CVA Committee (promoting and advocating for AVA certification), and Marketing Chairperson for AVA from 11/99 through 5/00. Jerry also volunteered as volunteer coordinator on various fundraising events at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in New York City from 1988 through 1997. From 1982 through 1992, Jerry was a faculty member and costume shop manager in the Design Department of the New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, Theatre Program.

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