

MULTI-CITY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Background

In 2012, the Dakota County High Performance Partnership (HiPP) Shared Services sub-committee developed the idea of collaborating to develop and/or enhance volunteer programs. Four cities entered into a joint powers agreement in 2014. The cities were: Apple Valley, Inver Grove Heights, Rosemount and West St. Paul.

In May of 2014 Diane Erickson was hired as the Volunteer Coordinator at 24 hours per week. The parties agreed that West St. Paul would be the legal employer and would then bill the three other cities each one-fourth of the costs for the position, and related expenses. Each city has a designated high level administrative staff person to facilitate the Volunteer Coordinator's work for their respective cities.

In May of 2015 the title for the position was changed to Volunteer Engagement Manager. On January 1, 2016 the position was increased to 32 hours allowing for an 8 hour work shift in each of the four cities per week. Diane Erickson works for each city remotely on the days she is not in the building, so she can manage the needs of each city from any location.

Volunteer Placement

The four cities have all seen large increases in volunteers, volunteer hours and dollar value since the program started in May of 2014. Below are Performance Measures for the four cities, showing the progression.

APPLE VALLEY	*2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Volunteers	169	615	674	718	681
***Total Hours	1269	3493	6349	5775	6186
**Dollar value of hours	\$22.55	\$23.07	\$23.56	\$24.14	\$24.69
Total Annual Value	\$28,616	\$80,584	\$149,582	\$139,409	\$152,732

INVER GROVE HEIGHTS	*2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Volunteers	65	293	264	395	413
***Total Hours	957	2387	3585	5054	4307
**Dollar value of hours	\$22.55	\$23.07	\$23.56	\$24.14	\$24.69
Total Annual Value	\$21,580	\$55,068	\$84,463	\$122,004	\$106,340

ROSEMOUNT	*2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Volunteers	200	296	460	282	550
***Total Hours	1111	1714	2612	3594	4850
**Dollar value of hours	\$22.55	\$23.07	\$23.56	\$24.14	\$24.69
Total Annual Value	\$25,053	\$39,542	\$61,539	\$86,759	\$119,747

WEST ST. PAUL	*2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Volunteers	60	166	152	362	470
***Total Hours	933	2354	2419	3651	3763
**Dollar value of hours	\$22.55	\$23.07	\$23.56	\$24.14	\$24.69
Total Annual Value	\$21,039	\$54,307	\$56,992	\$88,135	\$92,908

*2014 was a partial year

** The value of volunteer time is posted every year by the Independent Sector: <https://www.independentsector.org/resource/the-value-of-volunteer-time/>

***These numbers do not include Committees, Commissions, Police Reserves or Police Chaplains but do include all other volunteer hours reported for each city in every department in 2018.

Roles Being Filled by Volunteers

- Bluebird trails: spring and fall readiness and cleanup; nest monitoring during nesting season.
- Code Enforcement: collecting outdated signs, collecting shopping carts, assisting with re-inspections.
- Communication and Website: Intranet and website design; reconfiguring, research, updating, maintenance.
- Community beautification: cleaning up trash and weeding in parks; gardens, at Lebanon Cemetery, at transit stations, ponds, bus shelters, and on sections of streets. Drain stenciling, buckthorn removal, invasive plant removal, tree planting, watering, mulching, lake monitoring, shoveling out fire hydrants. Recycling. Ordering flowers, planting and deadheading.
- Eagle Scouts: building a planter for around a sign; building tee boxes for disc golf; building bat racks for dugouts; planting bee gardens.
- Events: setting up, staffing tables, serving food, greeting and directing, helping with crafts, etc.
- Facility: cleaning, Art on the Walls.
- Finance: account receivables and payables, utility and bank reconciliation, report verification.
- Interns: Finance, HR, Park and Recreation.
- Office support: prep for scanning, document scanning, data entry, records management, projects, typing, stuffing envelopes, filing, compiling packets, stuffing gift bags, delivering posters, pre-election help, translating.
- Photography.
- Youth Sports: coaches, coaching assistants, learn to skate instructor.

Goals and Accomplishments for 2018 (many of these are ongoing goals)

1. Recruit and retain more skill-based volunteers.
 - Worked with supervisors and staff to add innovative roles for volunteers that increased city resources by tapping into the current volunteer pool or recruiting additional skill-based volunteers.
 - Skill-based volunteers are in place in all four cities. They are generally looking for high level volunteer opportunities to either build their resume or to keep their skills sharp after retirement. Many have stayed with the cities for three years or more.
2. Promote volunteerism throughout the communities and in the field of volunteerism while also increasing time out in the communities.
 - Submitted articles that were published in the cities' individual newsletters.
 - Worked with local service agencies, churches, businesses, civic groups, etc. to match their volunteers with individual city needs.
 - Recruited volunteers at the Healthy Living Fair in Inver Grove Heights, and at the West St. Paul Open House.
 - Organized and recruited volunteers at the spring and fall DVDC Volunteer Recruitment Fairs.
 - Spoke about volunteering at the Apple Valley Senior Center.
 - Partnered with Inver Hills Community College and Century College to post city volunteer opportunities, and to recruit and place interns within the cities.
 - Met with businesses and churches to see how we can collaborate on joint volunteer opportunities.
 - Posted Volunteer opportunities on VolunteerMatch.
3. Provide information and data for city reports for the Volunteer Program for each city.
 - Provided information and data for numerous reports for each city.
 - Created semi-annual reports of numbers of volunteers, their hours, and their tasks for each city supervisor. Tailored the reports to the individual city's needs.
 - In Inver Grove Heights there is an additional report that tracks the number of pages scanned by department since the scanning project started in December of 2015. 258,854 documents have been scanned as of year-end 2018.
 - Created a year-end Performance Measure report comparing each year since the program started in 2014.
 - Provided an Annual Report for the City Councils and management to show concrete numbers including the number of volunteers, the type of work they are doing and the number of hours per year of volunteer work, with the value of those volunteer hours.

- Reported to each city the names of new volunteers, and volunteers who resigned.
 - Different techniques were tried this year, some verbal and some emailed.
 - In 2019 they will be reported by highlighting on the volunteer spreadsheet for each city who is new and who is inactive. This will only be emailed out monthly if there is a change from the previous month.
4. Assist each city with recognizing volunteers. In 2018:
 - Apple Valley invited volunteers to their annual staff recognition dinner in January, which Diane attended.
 - In Inver Grove Heights Diane planned, implemented and attended a first-time volunteer recognition dinner.
 - Rosemount had a volunteer recognition where volunteers were invited to attend a City Council meeting and have cake and other sweet treats after the meeting. Diane invited volunteers and attended. There was a standing room only turnout of volunteers.
 - West St. Paul hosts a volunteer recognition dinner annually, in 2017 and 2018 Diane applied for sponsorship for the dinner from the South Robert Street Business Association, and \$1,000 was donated each year. She also planned the event and attended it.
 - All cities recognize volunteers with a variety of thank you gifts during the year. Examples were t-shirts, mugs, gift cards, candy, pencils, and pins.
 - Volunteers enjoy personal verbal thanks most of all, so Diane encourages all staff working with volunteers to express their appreciation on a regular basis as this is highly important for volunteer retention.
 5. Develop more group opportunities so that when groups contact Diane there is a selection of tasks they can choose from.
 - Worked with all cities to get more parks adopted through the Adopt a Park programs.
 - Recruited for and managed the Adopt a Street programs in West St Paul and Rosemount.
 - Worked with the Public Works and Parks and Recreation departments in all four cities to creatively brainstorm value-added group projects.
 6. Develop strategies to ensure all volunteers are using their skills in the most meaningful way possible.
 - Made sure prospective volunteers are aware of all volunteer openings, not just the one for which they applied.
 - Held off on mentioning specific opportunities until volunteers' interests had been fully assessed, when volunteers come in open to anything.
 - Checked in with each volunteer at least once per month to make sure they feel what they are doing has value, and that they feel their skills are being optimized.
 7. Created a plan to streamline the process as to whether volunteers work with Diane, supervisors, or other staff, since she is only in each city one day per week.
 - Worked with supervisors and volunteers to get them used to working together directly with less to no input from Diane unless needed.
 - Got supervisors and volunteers familiar with being connected by email, and then replying to all so Diane is kept in the loop. All questions from volunteers and details from the supervisor are shared with all on the email. If a volunteer needs to cancel they are trained to reply to all on these emails as well.
 - Once a volunteer is working with a supervisor on a regular schedule they are trained to talk to or email their supervisor directly if they need to change their schedule or need to cancel their shift.
 8. Based on the results of the MAVA task force final report "8 Strategies for Creating a More Inclusive Volunteer Program" West St. Paul city staff started working through the suggested strategies to build the framework for engaging more diverse and immigrant populations with the end goal of increasing the number of volunteers from these populations, with an over-riding goal of increasing city engagement of these populations. This will be a multi-year process, and for 2018 the focus was on the strategy that was suggested to be of the highest importance, building relationships.
 - To accomplish this, West St. Paul created a task force to continue this conversation, and developed multiple strategies to start the relationship building process. The task force will continue this work in 2019.
 - One change that has already been made is that the West St. Paul Open House is merging with West St Paul Days in 2019, where food trucks will be there with a variety of foods that will appeal to a broader scope of West St Paul's residents.

- For all four cities there will be a focus on finding community events or other venues that are open for people to attend to meet diverse populations where they are and, to start building relationships. We are also looking at changes that can be made to city events to bring in a more representative base of the population.

Professional Accomplishments

1. Member of MAVA (Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administrators) Inclusive Volunteerism Task Force.
 - Was an integral part of the task force in 2017, when the focus was on increasing the diversity of volunteers for government entities. In 2018 helped in a consultant capacity as the focus was on nonprofit volunteer recruitment.
 - Have been asked to be on the Committee to help select grant recipients from nonprofit applicants for Small Grants for Building Nonprofit Infrastructure Around Racial Equity in Volunteerism.
2. Was awarded the Inver Hills President's Community Partner Award
 - This was awarded for consistently engaging with IHCC students to offer a variety of volunteer and internship opportunities within city government to help in the education and development of future professionals, and for understanding the importance of community-based learning and how to foster growth among students and volunteers.
3. Manage the DVDC (Directors of Volunteers in Dakota County) networking group (December 2014-present), also the GVM (Government Volunteer Managers) networking group (January 2016 – present).
 - Keep up the member roster and work with members to find host sites and get meetings scheduled.
 - Facilitate the meeting if the host site prefers not to.
4. Co-creator of a Volunteer Recruitment Fair that DVDC hosts in the spring and fall of every year starting with fall of 2016.
 - There is no cost to these volunteer fairs, but everyone having a table needs to help in some way. Diane keeps track of who is attending, finds out how they are promoting it, and updates the sheet of attendees that is handed out at the Volunteer Fair. She also promotes the event on VolunteerMatch. Other members of the group cover the other needed tasks and promoting of the event.
 - We have had five Volunteer Recruitment Fairs so far, and we have eleven volunteers that came out of those fairs, many of these volunteers are volunteering weekly.

Goals for 2019

In addition to continuing goals set for 2018 that are ongoing, the following goals are added:

1. Work with staff who recruit their own volunteers to track volunteer hours in a timely manner.
 - Working with Park and Recreation and Public Works staff in the four cities to get volunteer hours soon after they receive them to ensure semi-annual statistics are as accurate as possible.
2. Plan ways to recognize groups.
 - Will talk to staff in each city to come up with creative ways to recognize groups whether it is a certificate, small gift, invitation to an event, a recognition just for groups, etc.
3. Find resources to recruit more event volunteers and groups.
 - Each city's staff is asking Diane for more help with filling positions for events and larger group projects. Currently it is a struggle sometimes to get the requested amount of volunteers needed.
4. Focus more on retention, and utilizing current volunteer's skills, than recruiting new volunteers for positions inside city buildings.
 - It is hard not to place every volunteer that is interviewed exactly where they want to be, but if we over staff then our current volunteers become frustrated and we may lose them. Since Diane works for four cities she can often find a match for the volunteer in one of the other cities, but sometimes it means referring a volunteer outside of the four cities.
5. Find new ways to recruit highly skilled volunteers.
 - At times it takes longer than is optimal to find the right match for an open position.
 - Need to do some networking and research to see if there are some new resources to recruit highly skilled volunteers.