Readiness for Youth Engagement of the United Way of Roanoke Valley

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Readiness for Youth Engagement of United Way of Roanoke Valley

A Professional Project Submitted

by

Abigail C. Verdillo

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Nonprofit Management

Regis University

October 15, 2005
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Abstract

This study assesses the readiness of United Way of Roanoke Valley (UWRV) for youth engagement in decision-making and other critical activities in the organization as part of the new Community Impact United Way. An online survey was circulated among the board and staff to surface perceptions regarding youth and their abilities, and gauge interest and support for pursuing this issue. This was supplemented by interviews with staff, board and former UWRV youth volunteers as well as nonprofits within and outside the Roanoke Valley that have successfully integrated youth into their agencies. The benefits and pre-conditions to move an agenda towards youth engagement at UWRV were identified through best practices from the field and feedback from within the organization.
Readiness for Youth Engagement of United Way of Roanoke Valley

Since 1924, United Way of Roanoke Valley (UWRV) has been a well-recognized leader in addressing critical needs in the community. Its mission to improve people's lives through mobilizing the caring power of people has enabled it to become a collaborator and convener bringing together the leaders of nonprofit, business, and government sectors to create system-wide solutions (http://www.uwrv.org).

One of the significant shifts that the United Way system as a whole has taken in recent years is the direction towards community impact. Community Impact is a complementary approach to United Way's existing strategy of improving lives by supporting programs that provide direct services to individuals. It entails mobilizing resources to create lasting community-level change in critical issues affecting the valley. In addition to mobilizing financial resources through its traditional partners with businesses and employees, it intends to work with individuals, organizations and interests with which it has not traditionally partnered. This broad cross-section of partners will identify and prioritize issues, devise solutions and enlist a broad range of resources – talent, relationships, expertise, leadership, influence and technology (http://online.unitedway.org).

Inclusive participation is central to the community engagement strategy. Diverse representation from various groups ensures that perspectives are balanced. Ironically, such opportunities for meaningful participation are limited for youth (Camino and Zeldin, 2002). Finding ways to incorporate young people into the decision-making and planning of organizations and programs can be a complicated, sometimes frustrating experience for adults and youth alike (Bird, n.d.).
There is currently no formal youth representation in United Way of Roanoke Valley committees nor are there activities specifically designed to engage youth in the work in the organization. Youth as referred to in the study is defined as young people between the ages of 12 and 21.

The intent of this professional project is to understand what involving youth as volunteers will entail based on information gathered from individuals and groups that have successfully done this in their organizations. Using this information and the results from an internal assessment of staff and board perceptions regarding youth and adults, the report will bring to fore some areas that will need to be addressed before a youth engagement piece is set in place. This project is being undertaken as preparatory step for future discussion and planning to involve youth in decision-making and other aspects of United Way’s operations as part of the organization’s overall community engagement strategy.

This project was carried out by Abigail Verdillo, as part of the requirements for the Masters of Nonprofit Management degree program of Regis University – School for Professional Studies. Ms. Verdillo will be referred to hereafter in this document as the author.

Statement of the Problem

According to the 2000 census, youth aged 10-19 account for 13 % of the population in the Roanoke Valley (http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html). UWRV has identified this population as one of its priorities and has consistently invested almost half a million dollars from its unrestricted funds towards supporting after- and out-of-school programs. These
programs are aimed at not only providing a safe place for young people but also helping them with academics, leadership skills, character building, among others (UWRV, 2005).

At the same time, youth also provide financial contributions to UWRV through the annual campaign. In 2004, students from the five school districts in the Roanoke Valley gave a total of $22,781; 13% of the total amount raised came from these schools (UWRV, 2004).

Despite the positive leadership and community service outcomes gained from UWRV-funded after- and out-of-school programs, youth have had very limited involvement outside participation in the annual campaign. In 2002, UWRV had its first youth board member who attended its regular meetings. At the same time, two other high school students became involved in the community investment process (funding allocation decisions) for the 2002-2004 funding cycle. However, as these representatives graduated in 2004, the organization had difficulty engaging new youth and the vacant slots were not filled.

During the 2003 Fall campaign, United Way of Roanoke Valley began its Youth Initiative, a partnership with Roanoke Valley school systems to educate our youth about the many ways to help those in need. The program, headed by two very passionate board members, features Hi-Five the Helping Hand – the nation’s only United Way mascot as an ambassador to young people. The Helping Hand Program is designed for various grade levels to inform students about United Way and its tremendous value to our community. The program also helps youth to understand the great need for becoming involved with helping others (http://www.uwrv.org).

Since its implementation, the program has progressed to the point where the schools who have accommodated Hi-Five’s educational program are now beginning to explore opportunities
for youth to become involved in community services projects to help UWRV's partner agencies
(UWRV, 2005). The growth of the Youth Initiative is a positive step towards in providing
opportunities for youth to become involved in the community and possibly a means for the
organization to begin to reconnect with the youth.

However, in order to prepare the organization for the next steps in youth engagement, it
must learn from its past experiences and ensure that its culture, structure and processes are able
to provide a truly rewarding and meaningful exchange between involved youth and the
organization itself. This project will look into the staff's and the board's current perceptions
about youth and adult partnerships and other factors affecting readiness for such an undertaking.

Review of Literature

Defining Terms

Even under the best circumstances, adolescence can be a turbulent time when young
people struggle to find a sense of identity and self-worth while trying to develop the skills
needed to function as adults. This stage is one of the last opportunities to access young people in
groups through schools, community programs or peer groups and provide them the support they
need for positive youth development. In the 1980s, organizations like the Ford Foundation
refocused their efforts from problem prevention to investments focused on preparing young
people for adulthood. One of the key principles in this framework is the value of youth and
adults working together as stakeholders in positive youth development (Mohamed and Wheeler,
2001).
Youth engagement is a component of the positive youth development approach. It involves a change in the system and process to ensure that youth have access to services and opportunities that can help them gain a better sense of competence, belonging, usefulness and power (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). In order for young people to make a healthy and effective transition to adulthood, they need opportunities to demonstrate that they are capable of being responsible, caring and participating members of society (http://www.mcs.bc.ca/ya_why.htm). Finn and Chekoway (1998) stated that youth are not victims or problems, but rather, capable partners for adults in the process of change. Therefore, if they are provided and meaningful opportunity to collaborate and exercise leadership in the community, they can be a great asset to addressing social issues.

Youth participation as defined by the National Commission on Resources for Youth “occurs when adults involve youth in responsible, challenging action that meets genuine needs with the opportunity for planning or decision-making that affects others, youth and adults mutually teach and learn from each other, and each age group sees itself as a resource for the other and offers what it can uniquely provide (the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, 2001).”

Benefits of Youth Engagement

The experience of youth participation can be life-changing for a young person and equally impactful for adults and organizations. It is not just about helping youth gain confidence and leadership skills; there are many tangible benefits for an organization to institutionalize youth involvement (Lannon, 1998). Some of these benefits include:
Change in the United Way image. Engaging young people complements United Way’s current efforts to become a more inclusive organization. This is enhanced when youth serve in prominent leadership roles. This has the potential to forge positive relationships with youth and the community. What begins as one or two youth representatives in a committee can grow into principles and practices that become embedded within the organizational culture. Youth are no longer viewed just clients in after-school programs, but as assets critical for organizational effectiveness (Kendall, Lesko and Radmer, 2002).

Clarify organization’s mission. Management theory states that the most important work of boards is to create and re-create the reason for organizational existence. Youth can be great assets in making sure that that organization stays relevant through their participation in discussion about vision and mission. This has been identified as youth’s strongest impact in an organization. Young people can help bring focus to the organization not only by bringing their unique perspectives that enrich discussions but by keeping the board excited about the work that they do (Zeldin, McDaniel, et. al, 2000).

Strengthen ties in the community. Young people bring knowledge about youth and a perspective on their communities that are not easily accessible to adults. Youth have a unique perspective of the thoughts, feeling, and ideas of their peers. Their relationships with schools, organizations and other youth-strengthening projects can be harnessed to the advantage of the hosting organization. For instance, the best way to mobilize teenagers is by having other teens lead the way (Bird, n.d.). In addition, youth involvement can serve as a focal investment area bringing various groups together: government, foundations, service providers, schools and parents (Youth on Board, 1998).
**Develop future volunteers and donors.** A 2002 report on Youth Volunteerism from the Independent Sector showed that regardless of income level, Americans who are involved in volunteering as youth (66.8% of those surveyed) were likelier to give more of their time and money as adults. Moreover, involvement in more forms of youth engagement such as raising money, participating in youth decision-making, and belonging to a youth group, among others, can dictate the likelihood of adult volunteerism, the propensity to give and the amount given. A person engaged in five of these activities contributes three times more annually to charitable causes than someone who was not involved (*Independent Sector, 2002*).

According to *Youth on Board* (1998), the youth involvement continuum covers three stages. The first is where youth involvement is merely seen as something that will benefit youth (e.g., better college applications and new experiences and skills). From there, the organization may start realizing that youth can actually make a positive contribution to the organization. Finally, the organization acknowledges that the participation of young people is critical to the organization. Although are no right or wrong reasons for getting youth involved in an organization, the objective is move it from a one-sided transaction to a mutually beneficial partnership.

**Opportunities for Youth Engagement**

As important as this issue is, finding ways to incorporate young people into the decision making and planning of organizations and programs can be a complicated, sometimes frustrating experience for adults and youth alike. There are very limited opportunities (in both quality and quantity) for youth to be involved in these processes. Several barriers contribute to this situation. Some obstacles lie in attitudes about youth and their abilities, or conversely, the stereotypes and
impressions young people have about adults. Others may be as simple as scheduling conflicts and transporting those who can’t drive. Youth may be unwilling to become involved because they have never been invited to participate before and once at the table, they often lack knowledge to participate effectively as decision makers (Bird, n.d.). From the adult perspective, persistent negative attitudes and perceptions about adolescents, treating youth as children and the other extreme of ignoring differences (i.e., not adjusting strategies or training to meet youth needs) can also stand in the way of genuine youth-adult partnership (Camino and Zeldin, 2002).

At the same time, merely involving youth does not automatically result in positive development opportunities. Without the necessary support, youth can become discouraged, and moreover, they might not be able to learn what it means to be responsible and accountable for one’s decisions. (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). Sociologist Roger Hart illustrated that there are eight varying levels of young people’s participation in an organization: (a) manipulation, (b) decoration, (c) tokenism, (d) assigned and informed, (e) consulted and informed, (f) adult initiated, shared decision with youth, (g) youth and adult initiated and directed, (h) youth initiated, shared decisions with adults (Appendix A). The bottom three rungs of Hart’s ladder (a-c) illustrate that although youth may be present, there is no actual youth participation in the process (http://freechild.org/ladder.htm).

A study conducted by Zeldin, et. al. (2000) on the impact of youth decision-making on adults and organizations showed that when the right conditions are in place to involve youth in decision-making, the synergy created by youth-adult interactions contributes to creating a responsive and productive organization. Their analysis showed the relationship of three levels: the benefits of youth-adult interaction, the outcomes that arise from this joint decision-making
process and lastly, the conditions necessary for such change to occur (Appendix B). Among the preconditions mentioned in the study are: top level support and commitment to youth governance; adult leaders advocate for including young people in decision-making roles; adults see their interaction with youth as goal-oriented and purposeful, lengthy and resulting in meaningful consequences. Looking into these and other enabling factors is an essential step in both assessing an organization's readiness for working with youth, and initiating or moving this issue forward regardless of where the organization may be in Hart's ladder.

Methodology

In order to determine the readiness of the organization to involve youth as volunteers, an online survey to determine current attitudes and perception towards this issue was designed to be circulated to all UWRV staff and board. The survey was composed of several close-ended questions and utilized a Likert scale to gauge how adults at United Way perceived the abilities of youth to lead and carry out duties required of volunteers in the organization; as well as their personal interest and willingness to support this issue (Appendix C). Initial contact was made with the UWRV Board Chair to request permission for the circulation of the data gathering tool. Once permission was granted, an email message informing board and staff about the survey was sent out along with a link to the online survey. The email communication included an implied consent for information provided to be used in the study. A similar communiqué was prepared for potential interviewees (Appendix D).

The online survey was supplemented with phone, email and face-to-face interviews conducted with ten individuals within and outside UWRV. Interviewees were selected on the basis of their familiarity and expertise about the topic (Appendix E). Two representatives were
interviewed from each the following groups affiliated with the organization: former youth volunteers, staff, board and United Ways out of state with youth in decision-making roles and local agencies that have successfully integrated youth in their activities. Target individuals and staff within organizations were contacted by phone and email to determine their willingness to participate in the study. Formal communication was sent out informing them of the study, requesting consent to use their name in the study and confirming the interview schedule, when applicable.

Survey questions were modified depending on the interviewee’s area of expertise. Questions were focused on reflections of their prior experience working with youth (or as volunteers for former youth volunteers), preconditions for successful engagement and what needs to be done internally to prepare the organization for working with youth (Appendix F). These questions were sent by email to the interviewees ahead of time to allow them to prepare for the session. Face to face and phone interviews lasted for an average of 45 minutes.

Results and Discussion

Findings from the data gathering efforts are divided into two sub-sections: online survey results and common themes arising from internal interviews (volunteers, staff and board) regarding the readiness of UWRV to pursue youth involvement. Insights from other nonprofits interviewed on best practices for engaging youth are integrated within these two sections.

*Online Survey Results*

The online survey circulated among 60 individuals making up UWRV staff and board generated a response rate of 35% (21 out of 60), with 11 responses coming from staff and 10
from the board. The highest number of respondents came from staff and adult volunteers in the Finance/IT department (29%) followed by Community Impact/Investment (24%). Half of the respondents have been with United Way for over five years.

When respondents were asked about their prior experience working with youth, 25% said that they had not worked with youth within a nonprofit context. For those that had, one considered it fair (5%), two said it was good (10%), seven (35%) rated their experience as very good, and five (25%) thought it was excellent. The average rating of previous experience working with youth was very good (4.12). These previous interactions with youth came from various after/out of school programs (Girl/Boy Scouts, Boys and Girls Club, 4H Club, etc.), community service projects, parent-teacher associations, churches and United Way of Roanoke Valley.

Research demonstrates that exposure to a variety of experiences with youth can effectively change attitudes when it includes shared activities and adequate time. Adults may not have the opportunity interact with youth in a decision-making capacity and if they do, the experience may not be long or relevant enough to warrant a change in attitudes and perceptions about youth abilities (Zeldin, et. al., 2000).

Annina Burns, National 4-H Council Board member, shared that adults have to see something in action before they buy into a concept. Board members often begin thinking that having young people on boards is either “cute” or “wasting our time” but after a while they start to see the young people succeeding in their new roles. Adult leaders realize that young people can learn just as fast as adults (Ibid., p. 47).
Responses to questions regarding general perceptions about youth showed that 85% either agreed or strongly agreed that youth were concerned about the community. When asked if youth had knowledge that would enhance United Way’s work, 95% responded positively. Regarding youth and decision-making roles, 65% thought that youth had the same needs for information and training as adults to carry out duties when assigned to committees or projects. Slightly more than half (55%) thought that youth were intimidated by adults and were uncomfortable expressing their thoughts. Consequently, only half of the respondents agreed that young people should have rights and responsibilities equal to their adult counterparts. 80% of the respondents disagreed that UWRV volunteer opportunities should be limited to youth who demonstrated strong leadership skills. At the same time, only 35% said that adults trusted youth and considered them as reliable; and 40% said that adults took the ideas of youth seriously. Moreover, 70% agreed that adults had a tendency to take over when they work with youth (Table 1).

Table 1 Perceptions about youth and adults in joint decision-making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>Tally of Individual Responses (Value)</th>
<th>Value of Average Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1)</td>
<td>Disagree (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth are concerned with helping others in the community.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth have knowledge that can enhance United Way’s work.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and adults have the same needs for information and training to carry out duties.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth are intimidated by adults and uncomfortable expressing their thoughts.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people and adults should have equal rights and responsibilities in volunteer projects.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tally of Individual Responses (Value)</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1)</td>
<td>Disagree (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only young people who demonstrate strong leadership skills should be involved in UW volunteer committees.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults find it hard to trust youth or consider them to be as reliable adults.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults take the ideas of youth seriously.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults tend to take over when working with youth.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data touches on the point raised by the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development (2001) that how adults view youth serve as either facilitating or hindering youth inclusion in an organization. Their report states that “if adults do not view youth as responsible decision-makers, the nonprofit organization will not create roles and responsibilities for young people.”

In his “ten commandments” for involving young people in community building, John Kretzmann, Director of Neighborhood Innovations Network at the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy at Northwestern University, identifies a need for organizations to clearly and loudly send a message to young people that they are needed and that the community cannot be strong and complete without their participation (Youth on Board, 1998). Hence, if misconceptions about youth are keeping those within the organization from embracing this truth, then this is a barrier to genuinely involving youth and finding meaningful roles for them within the organization.

When negative perceptions about young people cause adults to exert their influence and authority without regard for the experiences, feelings, or opinions of youth, this leads to adultism
(Velasquez and Garrin-Jones, 2003). Leaders must make the effort to address the issue of adultism head-on through joint training with youth and adults. At the same time, these sessions can serve to equip both parties for their expected roles. Adults are not automatically mentors because of their age the same way that youth may not be familiar with the norms within a nonprofit or how it operates (Cheri Hartman, personal communication, September 30, 2005).

Of note is the positive response (80%) of the staff and board in allowing a diverse set of youth to participate in nonprofit decision-making, not just those who are visible leaders. Often, only outstanding youth are recruited by adults. A young person doesn’t need to be high achieving or influential with his or her peers in order to contribute significantly in an organization. In fact, UWA suggests that it might be beneficial to involve someone who has experienced challenges that the organization is trying to address (Kendall, et. al., 2002).

Respondents considered half of the tasks listed on the survey as appropriate to be carried out by youth. The highest responses were for adopting Days of Caring/community service projects (21), performing administrative tasks (20), recruiting volunteers (18) and speaking on behalf of UW at meetings and conferences (18). Tasks like determining policy and strategic direction, reviewing financial reports and chairing committees were the top activities considered as maybe’s and not appropriate for youth (Table G1).

Youth are often expected to be no more than rank and file members and are often left to do minor tasks such as filing and handling phone duties. It is important to include youth in significant task at United Way. When informed in advance about responsibilities and time commitments of leadership roles, young people have been able to assume them (Ibid., p. 14).
Paul Vidas, United with Youth Director at UW Fox Cities, revealed that youth have to assume meaningful roles if they are to be truly engaged in an issue. Something with tangible results such as a direct-service activity will generally be a good place to start involving them and build their character for future tasks. Also, their interests must match the activity or they will lose interest. Young people are anxious to serve and an organization needs an appropriate outlet for this enthusiasm. Tasks can be immediately rewarding but also associated with achieving something bigger; and the agency must help them realize this link (personal communication, September 30, 2005).

Sixty-seven percent of staff and board respondents considered high school as the best age for youth involvement at UW. Nineteen percent said that age did not matter when engaging youth volunteers. A couple of respondents added that middle school would generally be a good idea to prepare youth to assume these roles (Table G2).

Based on her experiences mobilizing youth, Nancy Hans, Council Coordinator for Roanoke County Prevention Council, suggests that organizations start early by educating middle and high school youth about community issues and how they are affected. After the groundwork has been laid, agencies can then ask youth to “help build something that will benefit them.” (personal communication, September 23, 2005). In addition, Clint Anderson, Community Impact Manager at UW of Mid-South, advises that United Ways also have to think about what to do when students graduate. United Ways need to provide an option for these students to stay active and connected. The Mid-South winning strategy is to utilize youth volunteers (high school graduates and older) as mentors and chaperones for newer volunteers in the organization (personal communication, September 23, 2005).
When asked about the level of youth involvement that would work best for UWRV, there was no overwhelming response for any one level. Thirty-five per cent said that equal levels of youth/adult decision making would be best, adult-led collaboration and youth-led collaborations each received 15% of the votes and another 15% selecting other options (Table G3). Feedback from some respondents mentioned that there was difficulty identifying a "best model" for UWRV since the organization might transition to different stages of involvement in the course of the relationship building with youth. They added that different situations might require another model to be in place.

The Youth Development model adopted by the Middlesex County Substance Abuse Action Council in Connecticut, for instance, is characterized by increasing youth involvement and responsibilities. Youth grow from passive to active roles. They begin by working on projects and tasks directed by adults, and then assume a role in providing input during consultation, until finally they become part of a shared leadership (Antonucci and Bourdon, 2004).

Average responses regarding personal and organizational commitment to youth involvement at UWRV ranged from 3.1 to 4.0 (ambivalent to agreeable). Respondents were most agreeable to the need to increase youth involvement within the next three years. However, ratings were split when asked if UW should invest more time and resources in this effort. Only 43% agreed to this statement, while the remainder either disagreed or were ambivalent. Although the majority (62%) agreed that youth were needed in their area of work and that they would be interested in involving youth, it is interesting to note that a significant number of the respondents (38%) were also either ambivalent or disagreed with both statements. Willingness and
availability to mentor youth once they become involved was the next lowest ranked item on the list, with a third of the respondents being either opposed to the concept or ambivalent about it.

Table 2 Personal and organizational commitment to youth involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tally of Individual Responses (Value)</th>
<th>Value of Average Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involving youth should be a priority in the organization.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree (1) 1  Disagree (2) 1  Ambivalent (3) 4  Agree (4) 14  Strongly Agree (5) 1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing youth involvement in the organization is something UW should act on within the next three years.</td>
<td>1  1  16  3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way should invest more time and resources to involve young people as equal partners throughout the organization.</td>
<td>1  5  6  8  1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth involvement is needed in my area of work.</td>
<td>1  1  6  12  1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in actively involving youth in my area of work.</td>
<td>1  1  6  12  1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am willing and available to mentor youth volunteers.</td>
<td>1  3  3  14</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the UWA Youth as Equal Partners concept, assessing readiness for youth involvement includes identifying champions to help secure commitment from other adults. It is important to have a critical mass of individuals who are supportive of bringing youth to the table and who are willing to help with the process. It is helpful, but not necessary, for everyone to be supportive of the idea. In some cases, incremental progress needs to occur before the concept is fully embraced within the organization (Kendall, et. al., 2002).
Mid-South’s Youth United Way Leadership Program was initiated under the direction of Sara Lewis, then assistant superintendent of curriculum for the Memphis City Schools. Lewis and UW President Harry Shaw were the strong advocates who explored opportunities for youth and integrated these into the service-learning curriculum. For over 18 years, this United Way has engaged community youth (age 10-18) by designing the program around a 22-member Youth Executive Board and five committee areas: Community Service, Marketing & Promotions, Fund Development & Allocations, Advisory Council, and the Quest Club for middle school students. They have even allowed the youth board chair to present the youth report and vote at United Way of the Mid-South Board of Directors meetings (Clint Anderson, personal communications, September 23, 2005).

Interviews with UWRV volunteers and staff

Interviewing individuals within the organization surfaced several common themes surrounding opportunities for youth engagement within the organization. The opportunities touched on building organizational capacity and addressing barriers to address to provide necessary preconditions for youth involvement at United Way of Roanoke Valley. Feedback from former youth volunteers affirmed staff and board assessments that UWRV is currently not equipped to fully engage youth in decision-making. However, opportunities to pursue the following facilitating factors that came up in both the online survey and in the interviews could pave the way for a strong youth engagement effort in the organization:

The first facilitating factor is a strong advocate for this issue within the organization and the community at large. This supports the data from the online survey where 33% of respondents said that they were ambivalent or were not willing and available to mentor youth.
There was slight variation when asked whether this issue should be a priority for the organization (29%) and if youth involvement was needed in their area of work (38%).

Securing organizational commitment is one of the first points cited by Youth on Board (1998) to successfully involve young people in organizational decision-making. Commitment has to go beyond the individual youth wanting to serve in this capacity. More so, staff and board have to support the whole concept of youth involvement itself. Board members provide the necessary directional support and staff play a key role in the logistical matters.

Staff can do only so much given the many priorities in the organization. In order to move this issue forward, passionate and committed volunteers must run the project, including preparatory work, until the organization is able to fully take it on (Jean Glontz, personal communication, October 4, 2005). Former youth volunteer Julia Weinmann observed the effects of not having a wide base of support for youth involvement. During her volunteer experience, she felt that UWRV was beginning to engage adults and youth to work side by side. Since then, numerous staff changes occurred and passion and commitment seemed to die out (personal communication, September 22, 2005).

The second factor cited is defining a clear rationale and desired outcomes for youth involvement. Although such discussions were pursued at the board recruitment level, no formal discussion along these lines has been initiated for all volunteer leaders and staff. There has to be a clear purpose for involving youth. Staff and board leadership need to identify what they want out of the partnership. What difference will this new perspective and contribution make in the organization? (Terry Smith, personal communications, September 23, 2005). It should not be viewed as additional work for people, but rather, as a normal part of the organizational culture.
Once this is accomplished, the appropriate level of involvement for tasks identified should be discussed to make sure that they’re agreeable to both youth and adults. (*Cheryl Hilton, personal communications, September 26, 2005*).

The UWA Youth as Equal Partners concept is recommended not as a stand-alone initiative but instead as an approach integrated in the work of local United Ways. Beyond teaching young people to be responsible decision-makers or gain leadership skills, the focus is to generate organizational and community change as a result of this involvement. It does not demand new structures and initiatives to be in place but for youth to be important players in existing opportunities. Young people can work alongside adults in campaign efforts; serve on vision councils, community investment/allocation panels, board of directors, among others (*Kendall, et. al., 2002*).

The third factor is training to equip and prepare adults and youth to work together. Using and building on youth’s leadership and action skills; deepening their knowledge related to systems and strategies; and ensuring that they have the basic services and support are necessary to initiate and maintain engagement (*Forum for Youth Investment, 2002*). By the same token, adults need to receive training on how to overcome misconceptions about youth and how to work better with them. Such sessions will help both parties realize how they can learn from each other, and that their contributions are mutually important to success (*Frank Rogan, personal communications, September 23, 2005*).

The fourth factor is certain structural and procedural changes to facilitate youth involvement. In order to make youth membership an ongoing practice, bylaws and policies need to be amended to state that young people will be permanently included in these committees.
Meetings may need to be structured differently to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate in the process. Additionally, board and staff should meet with youth to establish formal or informal mentoring relationships (Youth Service America and Points of Light Foundation, 2001).

When the youth board member position was unfilled at UWRV, it reinforced the stereotype that capable youth leaders were an anomaly and that youth were incapable of maturity and responsibility (Rajiv Srinivasan, personal communications, September 21, 2005). Canceling meetings without adequate advance notice or scheduling meetings at a time when youth are not available can make them feel like they were not valued or wanted in the process (Julia Weinmann, personal communications, September 22, 2005). Thus, increasing adult awareness and sensitivity within the organization regarding youth engagement can pave the way for better and more productive experiences for both youth and adults.

The fifth facilitating factor and perhaps the biggest point of reflection for those interviewed is collaboration with other groups already working to engage youth and prepare them to assume leadership roles. Staff and board recognize the need to pursue this issue creatively and not to reinvent the wheel. Lack of financial and staff resources to fully pursue youth engagement gives intrinsic value to working with groups that already have access to youth, programming focused on leadership and decision-making skills or youth successfully integrated in their organization.

The Youth United Way of United Way of the Capital Area in Texas is a model for United Ways across the country with “youth infusion” where students have the same opportunities as adults to participate in their community. This was the first United Way to have a fully youth-
driven investment committee (http://www.myunitedway.com/youth/). Their Youth in Action volunteer program even recommends youth to serve on other area nonprofit boards. This UW also collaborates with New Horizon Ministries to hire middle/high school students as part-time summer staff. The students are compensated by the collaborating agency (Kendall, et. al., 2002).

Conclusion

The great strides made by the educational component of the United Way of Roanoke Valley Youth Initiative over the past couple of years and the consistent financial support gained through student fundraising efforts at the schools during the campaign season necessitate revisiting the issue of youth engagement to include opportunities for involvement in organizational decision-making. As more youth become aware of the value of giving back to their communities through the messages delivered by Hi-Five the Helping Hand, United Way needs to connect them with opportunities to positively impact the community. This is part and parcel of the organization’s new role as a convener and collaborator within its Community Impact agenda. No longer just a funder of after- and out-of-school programs that benefit young people, United Way must mobilize youth to be part of the solution of issues that affect them and their communities.

The implications of both youth infusion and involvement in decision making are far-reaching. It is not just youth who benefit from empowering leadership experiences but also the adults who interact with them and the organizations they serve. The youth of today will tomorrow become a nation’s workforce, a community’s leaders and a nonprofit’s volunteers and donors. United Way can either decide to engage now or scratch its head trying to figure out a solution later.
The question remains, is United Way of Roanoke Valley ready to undertake moving its current Youth Initiative to the next level? Even with a highly skilled staff and board signifying interest in the issue, transforming interest into passion and bringing it to fruition involve developing a culture and mindset to facilitate youth integration. In this area alone, there is much work to be done. The organization’s readiness will require solidifying commitment to the issue, identifying a champion who will advocate for this cause, building on current competencies, adopting strategies that will work best with youth, and utilizing resources within and outside the organization in order to maximize the impact of youth involvement in United Way and moreover, the whole Roanoke Valley.

Although investing in children and youth is one of the visions of the organization, the true test lies in whether United Way can demonstrate its commitment to this issue beyond funding. The perception is that there is no urgency. Unless the staff and board enter into conversation about how youth fit in the organization’s future and are made aware of the consequences of pushing this aside, the issue will never be seen as important enough to require immediate action. The misconception that youth involvement is optional has gnawed at the very core of what United Way represents – the strength and value of every member in society working together to effect positive change and improve lives. This study provides an important first glimpse but the real challenge is not to turn the other way.

"The secret message communicated to most young people today by the society around them is that they are not needed, that the society will run itself quite nicely until they – at some distant point in the future – will take over the reigns. Yet the fact is that the society is not running itself nicely... because the rest of us need all the energy, brains, imagination and talent that young people can bring to bear down on our difficulties. For society to attempt to solve its desperate problems without the full participation of even very young people is imbecile."

- Alvin Toffler, Futurist and Author
References


The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development. (Winter 2001). Rejecting the isolation of youth: Adults and organizations dramatically benefit. The Nonprofit Quarterly. 6-11.


United Way Online website. http://online.unitedway.org


UWRV. (2005, October) October Board minutes. United Way of Roanoke Valley, Roanoke, VA.


Youth on Board. (1998). Youth Governance: 14 points to successfully involving youth people in organizational decision-making. YouthBuild USA, Somerville, MA.


Appendix A
Hart’s Ladder of Young People’s Participation

Rung 8. Young people & adults share decision-making
Rung 7. Young people lead & initiate action
Rung 6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people
Rung 5. Young people consulted and informed
Rung 4. Young people assigned and informed
Rung 3. Young people tokenized*
Rung 2. Young people are decoration*
Rung 1. Young people are manipulated*

Note: Hart explains that the last three rungs are non-participation


Degrees of Participation

Rung 8 - Youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults is when projects or programs are initiated by youth and decision-making is shared among youth and adults. These projects empower youth while at the same time enabling them to access and learn from the life experience and expertise of adults.

Rung 7 - Youth-initiated and directed is when young people initiate and direct a project or program. Adults are involved only in a supportive role.

Rung 6 - Adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth is when projects or programs are initiated by adults but the decision-making is shared with the young people.

Rung 5 - Consulted and informed is when youth give advice on projects or programs designed and run by adults. The youth are informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of the decisions made by adults.

Rung 4 - Assigned but informed is where youth are assigned a specific role and informed about how and why they are being involved.

Rung 3 - Tokenism is where young people appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.
Rung 2 - Decoration is where young people are used to help or "bolster" a cause in a relatively indirect way, although adults do not pretend that the cause is inspired by youth.

Rung 1 - Manipulation is where adults use youth to support causes and pretend that the causes are inspired by youth.

Source: The Free Child Project (http://freechild.org/ladder.htm)
Appendix B
Theoretical Framework of Youth-Adult Decision-Making

A. Youth Contributions

B. Effective Organizational Decision-Making Bodies
   Youth-Adult Partnership Synergy

C. Responsive and Productive Organizations

D. Confident and Committed Youth

E. Confident and Committed Adults

F. Expanded Community Capacity for Decision-Making

G. Necessary Conditions for Change

Appendix C
Online Survey

I. Demographic information

How are you connected with UWRV?

______ Staff
______ Board
______ Other (please specify) ________________

Area of involvement/expertise with UW:

______ Executive
______ Administrative
______ Finance/IT
______ Development/Fundraising
______ Marketing
______ Community Impact/Investment
______ Other (please specify) ________________

How long have you been serving in this capacity?

______ Less than a year
______ 1 year
______ 2-5 years
______ Over 5 years
______ Other (please specify) ________________

Have you previously participated in an organization/project that involved youth and adults working together?

______ No
______ Yes (what project/s or agencies were those) ________________

How would you rate your experience working with youth?

1 Poor 2 Fair 3 Good 4 Very Good 5 Excellent
II. Perceptions about youth and adults working together

Rate the statements to best describe your view on the following topics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth are concerned with helping others in the community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth have knowledge that can enhance United Way's work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and adults have the same needs for information and training to carry out duties.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth are intimidated by adults and uncomfortable expressing their thoughts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people and adults should have equal rights and responsibilities in volunteer projects.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only young people who demonstrate strong leadership skills should be involved in UW volunteer committees.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults find it hard to trust youth or consider them as reliable adults.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults take the ideas of youth seriously.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults tend to take over when working with youth.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What roles do you think youth can play should if involved with UWRV activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Roles</th>
<th>Yes – Youth can do this.</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Not appropriate for youth.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruit volunteers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise funds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform administrative tasks (filing, mailing, receptionist duties, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design/maintain website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review financial reports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze proposals and make funding recommendations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and carry-out surveys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt Days of Caring/Community Service projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue media/public relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead a workshop/training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak on behalf of UW at meetings and conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with key people (legislators, major donors, CEOs, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair a committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine policy and strategic direction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What age group should youth volunteers be in order to perform duties in your UWRV team/committee?

- [ ] Middle school age
- [ ] High school age
- [ ] College age
- [ ] Does not matter
- [ ] Other (please specify) ____________________________
III. Future Directions

What level of youth involvement do you think would work best at UWRV?

- Adult-centered leadership (adults lead all activities, youth only participate)
- Adult-led collaboration (some youth decision-making but at low levels)
- Youth-Adult partnership (equal levels of youth/adult decision-making, utilizing skills and learning from one another)
- Youth-led collaboration (youth leading with limited adult supervision)
- Youth-centered leadership (youth activity with very little/no adult supervision)
- There’s no need for youth involvement at the moment
- Not sure
- Other (please specify) ____________________

Rate the following statements as they relate to you and your work in the organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Ambivalent</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involving youth should be a priority in the organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way should invest more time and resources to involve young people as equal partners throughout the organization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth involvement is needed in my area of work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in actively involving youth in my area of work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the questions used in the survey were adapted from the following sources:


Appendix D
Communications Relating to Data Gathering Efforts

From: Abby Verdillo
Sent: Tuesday, September 20, 2005 7:07 PM
To: UWR staff and board
Subject: UW staff graduate project on youth engagement
Importance: High

Good evening!

I hope this email finds you well! I wanted to give you a quick update on something that I am working on for the next few weeks, outside my duties at United Way. I am currently working on a Masters degree in Nonprofit Management and as part of the requirements for graduation; I am conducting a study on youth engagement. Specifically, I will examine perceptions of United Way of Roanoke Valley volunteers and staff towards engaging and working with youth. I will also interview former UWRV youth volunteers as well as other nonprofits that have had successes in involving youth in their organizations. Information from these sources can be used as the building blocks in creating a meaningful and rewarding experience for youth volunteers in the future. Study findings will be available to members of the Board of Directors and staff who are interested to see the full report.

Below is a link to an online survey that will take approximately 10-12 minutes to fill out. Please note that this study is being conducted on a personal capacity and participation in the survey is purely voluntary. By clicking on the link below and filling out the survey, you are consenting to participate and provide information that will be used in the study. Your responses will be kept confidential and no respondent names will be used in the report. Please fill-out the online survey by 7pm on Tuesday, September 27, 2005. The survey will be inaccessible after that date.

http://surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=690441352497

If you have any questions about the study, clarifications about the survey questions or have trouble accessing the link above please don’t hesitate to contact me at (540-467-0837) or email: acverdillo@cox.net. I appreciate your assistance and look forward to your insights on this topic.

Thank you very much!

Abigail Verdillo
Regis University Graduate Student
September 20, 2005

<Respondent name>
>Title
<Organization>
<Address>

Dear <First name>,

My name is Abigail Verdillo and I am a graduate student with Regis University – School for Professional Studies. I am currently working on a Masters degree in Nonprofit Management and as part of the requirements for graduation, I am conducting a study on youth engagement. Specifically, I will examine perceptions of United Way of Roanoke Valley (UWRV) volunteers and staff towards engaging and working with youth. I will also interview former UWRV youth volunteers as well as other nonprofits that have had successes in involving youth in their organizations. Information from these sources can be used as the building blocks in creating a meaningful and rewarding experience for youth volunteers in the future. Study findings will be available if you are interested to see the full report.

Please note that this study is being conducted on a personal capacity and participation is purely voluntary. By replying to this mailing, you are consenting to participate in a phone/face-to-face interview and provide information that will be used in the study. Your perspectives and lessons learned from working with youth is very important to this study.

If you have any questions about the study, clarifications about the questions or have trouble opening the attachment please don’t hesitate to contact me at (540-467-0837) or email: aeverdillo@cox.net.

Thank you very much!

I appreciate your assistance and look forward to your insights on this topic.

Respectfully,

Abigail Verdillo
Graduate Student
Regis University – School for Professional Studies
### Appendix E
### Interviews Conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Subject</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Interview Date</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clint Anderson</td>
<td>Community Impact Manager, United Way of Mid-South (Memphis, TN)</td>
<td>Clint has served in the Youth United Way program for over nine years. The initiative promotes philanthropy, leadership development and character building among local middle and high school students. His youth board chair also serves as a member of his United Way's Board of Directors.</td>
<td>September 23, 2005</td>
<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Glontz</td>
<td>UWRV Board member (Co-Chair, Youth Initiative)</td>
<td>Jean is an active community leader and has served in various positions at UWRV including Board Chair and Community Impact Chair. She is leading the Youth Initiative (Hi-Five the Helping Hand) along with co-chair and fellow board member, Lucy Walton.</td>
<td>October 4, 2005</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Hans</td>
<td>Coordinator, Roanoke County Prevention Council</td>
<td>Nancy has been working with youth since 1979. Her organization is the product of a collaborative effort of the public school system, nonprofit agencies and concerned individuals in the community. Among other things, they sponsor an annual Youth Conference and Rally organized and attended by area youth.</td>
<td>September 23, 2005</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheri Hartman, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Director, Youth Development Family Service of Roanoke Valley</td>
<td>In 1990, Cheri started the Teen Action Program which works with at-risk youth. Her agency is a United Way of Roanoke Valley partner and implements the program United with Youth locally. United with Youth is a local affiliate of Youth Service of America.</td>
<td>September 30, 2005</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Hilton</td>
<td>UW Board member and Chair of the Community</td>
<td>Cheryl is the Academic/Career Coordinator for Roanoke College Upward Bound, a highly</td>
<td>September 26, 2005</td>
<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Subject</td>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Interview Date</td>
<td>Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Rogan</td>
<td>President and CEO, United Way of Roanoke Valley</td>
<td>Successful college preparatory program serving high school students. She has been in this position for three years and is also a program graduate.</td>
<td>September 23, 2005</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Smith</td>
<td>Marketing and Communications Director, United Way of Roanoke Valley</td>
<td>Frank has spent over 20 years in the United Way system, heading UWRV for the past five years. He worked closely with Rajiv Srinivasan during the latter's role as a youth board member.</td>
<td>September 23, 2005</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajiv Srinivasan</td>
<td>West Point Cadet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Vidas</td>
<td>Director, United with Youth United Way of Fox Cities (Menasha, WI)</td>
<td>Former Youth Member to the United Way of Roanoke Valley Board from 2002-2004.</td>
<td>September 27, 2005</td>
<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Weinmann</td>
<td>Community volunteer</td>
<td>Former Youth Committee member of the After/Out of School Task Force organized by United Way of Roanoke Valley</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Email (responses received on September 22, 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F
Interview Questions

1. Background
   - The name of your organization and your role?
   - How long have you been working with youth/adults?

2. Experience working with Youth
   - Describe the most rewarding/frustrating experience you had working with youth?
   - What ideas/beliefs about young people and youth involvement did you have to overcome or were reinforced as a result of your experience?

3. Future Direction
   - What does youth engagement look like?
   - Do you think that UW is ready to have youth assume roles outside the regular school campaign? Why?
   - What should nonprofits do to engage youth and provide them a meaningful and rewarding experience while volunteering?
   - What do you see as the opportunities and challenges to moving this issue forward?
## Appendix G

Additional Data Tables from the Online Survey

The following tables were generated during the analysis of online survey results:

### Table F1 Work perceived as appropriate for youth at UWRV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Tally of Individual Responses (Value)</th>
<th>Response Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes - Youth can do this (1)</td>
<td>Maybe (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit volunteers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raise funds</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perform administrative tasks (filing, mailing answering the phone etc.)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design/maintain website</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review financial reports</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze proposals and make funding recommendations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create and carry-out surveys</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt Days of Caring/Community Service projects</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursue media/public relations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead a workshop/training</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak on behalf of UW at meetings and conferences</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with key people (legislators, major donors, CEOs etc.)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair a committee</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine policy and strategic direction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table F2 Appropriate age for youth to be involved at UWRV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Volunteers</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not matter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents who marked other stated that maturity level instead of age should be a determinant, adding that middle school would generally be a good starting point to involve youth in UWRV.

Table F3 Level of youth involvement that will work best at UWRV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Youth Involvement</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult-centered leadership (adults lead all activities youth only participate)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult-led collaboration (some youth decision-making but at low levels)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth-Adult partnership (equal levels of youth/adult decision-making utilizing skills and learning from one another)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth-led collaboration (youth leading with limited adult supervision)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth-centered leadership (youth activity with very little/no adult supervision)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There's no need for youth involvement at the moment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other&lt;sup&gt;a,b,c&lt;/sup&gt; (please specify)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Youth-Adult partnership (somewhat equal levels of youth/adult decision-making, utilizing skills and learning from one another), however, adult taking the role of mentor/supervisor. <sup>b</sup>Dependent upon the maturity, interest and strengths of the person, the same criteria used to evaluate adults. However, willingness and time to participate are of critical importance. <sup>c</sup>Balance of responsibilities and leadership will vary as what's appropriate for different tasks.