



BAVC Recognizes National Volunteer Month

APRIL IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH, so we reached out to local nonprofits on the Barrington Area Volunteer Connection (BAVC) platform to get their advice for both volunteers and nonprofits. Here are their thoughts!

Susan Lenz, Exec. Director of Conservation, Barrington Area Conservation Trust (BACT)

What advice would you give a potential volunteer? Try a variety of different opportunities, as you never know what might spark further interest. We have had students volunteer to earn service hours, and they have gained so much more—a love of the outdoors and further interest in pursuing our summer internship or other future educational opportunities in the conservation world. Volunteers should also be ready to adjust to changes. Whether more bags of food are dropped off at the food pantry than expected, or weather conditions change the plan for a conservation workday, volunteers may be forced to adapt. Organizers will appreciate the volunteer's positive attitude.

Carol Hannagan, Volunteer Coordinator, Barrington Area Council on Aging (BACOA)

What advice or tips would you give to other nonprofits that need to utilize volunteers? Stay organized and include your volunteers in what is going on at your organization. Let them know why you started in the first place, what you are doing now, and where you plan to go in the future. Share your strategic plans to keep them in the loop and give them the opportunity to help achieve those plans. Embrace all local outlets for volunteers: school, teacher, community organizations, area libraries, local government organizations, churches, and area businesses.

Jeanne Hanson, Exec. Director, Samaritan Counseling Center in Barrington

Can you share your perspective on how nonprofits benefit? From an agency perspective, volunteers are providing in-kind gifts of time that lower operating costs, and increase the impact of donor dollars for programs and mission. It's a win-win-win for volunteers, agencies, and the people served by the agencies. What could be better than that?

Courtney Q. McGovern, Exec. Director, Hope's In

What advice do you have for student volunteers? The advice we always give our student volunteers is to stay curious and in tune with your heart. What is the news story that you keep re-reading? What do you notice in your community that you want to change? Find a nonprofit related to what you are curious about and check it out. Get involved and ask questions about how you can help.


Betsy Wintringer, Exec. Director, Barrington Area Youth and Family Services (BYFS)

What tips do you have for nonprofits as they utilize volunteers? Be mindful of the time you are asking from the volunteer and make sure to honor the commitment and that the time is used in a meaningful way. Make sure that what your volunteer is looking for aligns with your organization's mission and what you are looking for so that you truly are a match made for each other! Check in with the volunteer to make sure they are benefitting from their time with the organization as much as your organization is. A happy, well-versed (on your mission) volunteer can be a great champion and ambassador for your organization!

Cynthia Lamb, Volunteer Supervisor, JourneyCare

What tips do you have for current volunteers? Be flexible, be open to something different, enjoy the assigned project and "do what needs doing," -Advice from a volunteer trainer many years ago!

Dr. Kiran Frey, Director/Volunteer Coordinator, Chess Without Borders

What advice would you give to nonprofits to help their volunteers learn about your organization? Engaging with national and international chapters whenever possible adds an intellectual rigor to a service exercise. In the case of youth participants, I never cease to be amazed at the ideas they generate to get more volunteers or more support for the project. 



This is the perfect time to create your profile on BAVC and start volunteering! To hear more from these nonprofits, visit thebavc.org/news.

Shefali Bhuva is a BAVC Committee member.