



## **FAITH-BASED VOLUNTEERS: DEVELOPMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**By: Alice Walters**

**Presented at:  
NACSW Convention 2015  
November, 2015  
Grand Rapids, Michigan**

# Faith-Based Volunteers: Developmental Considerations

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Alice Walters  
Walden University

WALDEN  
UNIVERSITY

*A higher degree. A higher purpose.*

# Introduction

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**Alice Walters, LMSW, MATS**  
**Walden University**

Alice Walters has been a clinical and administrative social worker for over twenty-five years. She works in community organization and as a consultant to non-profits in fund development, marketing, social media, and grant writing.

# Agenda

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- **Volunteer Impact**
- **Why do people Volunteer?**
- **Knowing Your Volunteers**
  - **Life Stages & Volunteerism**
  - **Faith & Volunteerism**
- **Putting it Together: Your Action Plan**



# Volunteer Impact



# Volunteer Impact

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- **85%** of all nonprofits have no paid staff and are **run entirely by volunteers**
- **one in four** adults volunteer (**26.5 %**)
- **64.5 million** Americans volunteered nearly
- **7.9 billion** hours last year.
- A **\$175 billion** value based on
- **\$22.55 per volunteer hour** (average value)

<http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/resources-topic/volunteers#sthash.j4gK3K1R.dpuf>

# Why Do People Volunteer?



# Why Do People Volunteer?

- Theory & Life Stages
- Motives
- Benefits
- Challenges



# Volunteering & Theory

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## Altruism

- Altruism (caring for others) is **at the center** of most volunteering
- Altruism has been debated as either **rational-economic** self-interest or as **self-sacrificial** action (Haski-Leventahl, 2009)
- Altruism may have **mutual benefits** for giver & receiver (Menon, 2007)
- Haski-Leventahl (2009) suggested altruism as a **continuum** of behavior to merge the above theories

# Volunteering & Theory

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## Moral Development

- Moral development is knowing right from wrong with **changing reasoning patterns** as a person matures (Kohlberg, 1984)
- Moral development is dependent on maturational levels of **cognition** (Kohlberg, 1984)
- Different **life stages** present unique challenges that affect personal decisions (Erikson, 1950)
- People go through stages of **spiritual development** based on personal experience (Fowler, 1981)

# Life Stage Development



# Life Stages- Adolescence

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- Adolescents are concerned personal **identity** (Erikson, 1950).
- They are subject to **peer** influence (Kohlberg, 1984).
- Adolescent thinking reflects a norm similar to adults with **abstract** thinking (Fowler, 1981).
- Adolescents may be **more likely to volunteer** than young adults (Corporation for National and Community Service, 2015)

# Life Stages- Young Adulthood

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- Development of **intimate and long-term relationships** (Erikson, 1950).
- Conventional or **normative thinking** may be the basis for a high regard for **social order** and **rule-keeping** (Kohlberg, 1984).
- Spiritually, young adults may use **reflection** and **reexamination** to evaluate choices and future direction (Fowler, 1981).

# Life Stages- Middle Adulthood

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- Concern for the **younger generation** emerges (Erikson, 1950).
- Some people will **exceed** typical moral development valuing **individuals** above society (Kohlberg, 1984).
- For faith development, an openness to **contradiction** and **multiple truths** may emerge (Fowler, 1981).

# Life Stages- Senior Adulthood

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- **Integrity** of experience or suffering from a **despair** of purpose (Erikson, 1950).
- **Declining health** may decrease autonomy (Erikson, 1982).
- **Universal** moral standards and personal **sacrifice** (Kohlberg, 1984).
- **Peace, goodwill,** and exceptional views of **interrelated humanity** are possibilities (Fowler, 1981)

# Volunteering & Theory

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## Moral Development & Context

- **Social roles** (e.g., parenthood, employee) affect volunteer behavior (Kulik, 2010)
- **Career stages** and demands affect volunteering differently at different ages (Caldwell, Farmer, & Fedor, 2008; Myers & Jackson, 2008)
- Belonging to a **community** may influence giving behavior (Bekkers & Schuyt, 2008)
- **Personal conviction** may influence giving behavior (Bekkers & Schuyt, 2008)



# Volunteer Motives

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Motives for volunteering:

- **Expressed Values**
- **Increasing Understanding**
- **Career**
- **Social**
- **Self-esteem**
- **Protection from negative feelings (Clary, 1996)**

# Volunteer Benefits

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- Research shows an association between volunteering and **mental and physical health** benefits.
- Older volunteers report **lower mortality** rates, lower rates of depression, fewer physical limitations, and **higher levels of well-being**.

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/marketing/fact-sheets>

# Volunteer Challenges

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- **Time & perceived extensive commitment**
- **Controversial organizations**
- **Burn-out, stress, secondary trauma**

(Haski-Leventhal, 2009)

# Knowing Your Volunteers



# Life Stages by the numbers . . .

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## Life Stages & Volunteerism

- **Teens** volunteer more than young adults
- **Middle age** is a peak of volunteer activity
- **In seniors**, volunteering drops

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/marketing/fact-sheets>

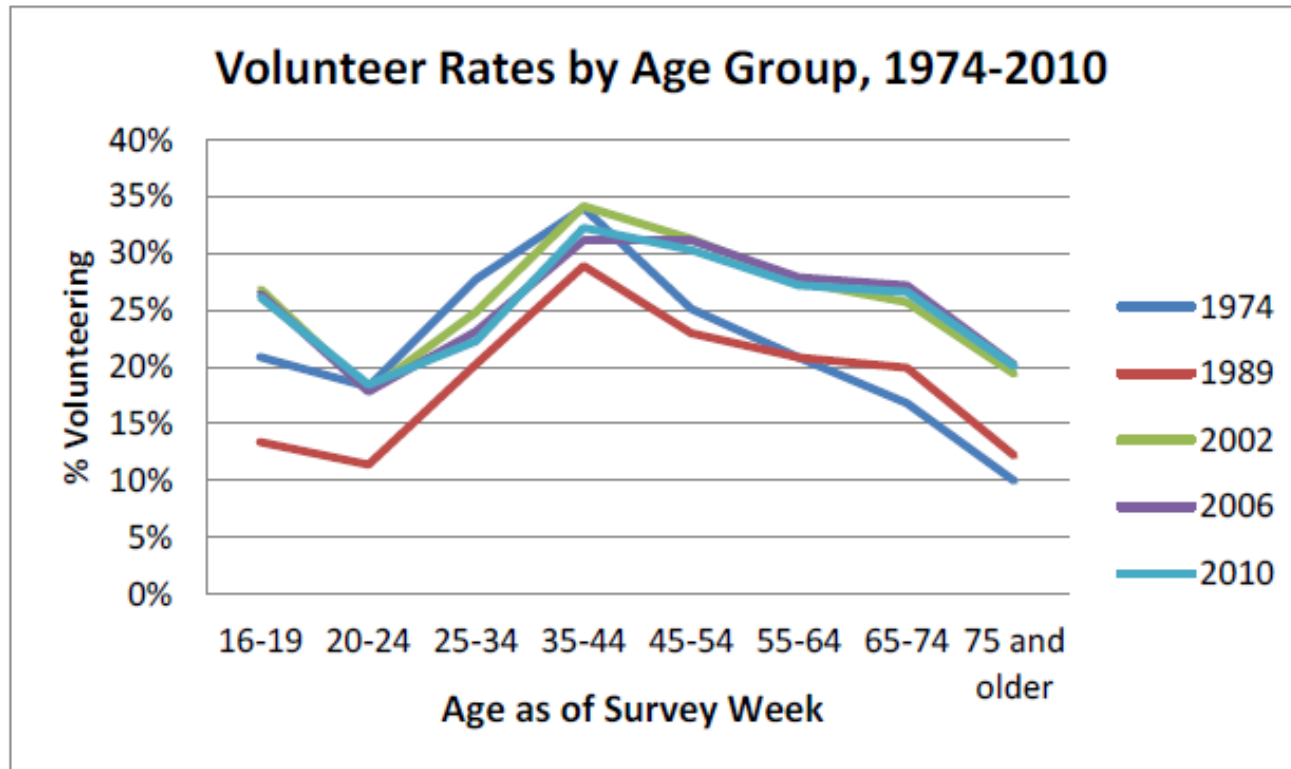
# Life Stages by the numbers . . .

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- **Midlife (30-50 yrs.)** volunteering has increased
- **Teenagers (16-19 yrs.)** are **volunteering more**
- **Volunteers age 65 and over** give the most hours among any age group
- **Working mothers** continue to volunteer more than others
- **Parents with children** under age 18 volunteer more (33.5 percent) than:
  - the **Population as a whole** (26.5 percent) and
  - **Persons without children** (23.8 percent)

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/impact-our-nation/research-and-reports/volunteering-america>

# Life Stages & trends across time



[http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/factsheet\\_via.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/factsheet_via.pdf)

# Volunteer Characteristics





# Demographics & Volunteerism

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- **Women** volunteer more than men (Farmer & Piotrkowsii, 2009)
- **Whites** volunteer more (27.1 percent) than:
  - **Asians** (19.0 percent)
  - **Blacks** (18.5 percent)
  - **Hispanics** (15.5 percent)

<http://www.councilofnonprofits.org/resources/resources-topic/volunteers>

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/volun.nr0.htm>

# The Research . . .

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**Increased Volunteering** is associated with:

- Higher **education** (Haski-Leventhal, 2009)
- Increased **social capital** networks (Haski-Leventhal, 2009)
- More **Americans** (50%) volunteer than Europeans (33%) (Haski-Leventhal, 2009)
- **Non-prejudice, self-understanding**, moral development origins (self, norms, universal principles) may all interact for different volunteer outcomes (Derryberry, Mulvaney, Brooks, Chandler, 2009)

# The Research . . .

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## Older volunteers

- Are more interested in **helping & belonging** (Caldwell, Farmer & Fedor, 2008)

## Younger volunteers

- Are interested in **task** achievement & **career** effects (Caldwell, Farmer & Fedor, 2008)
- 44% of adult volunteers **began volunteering as teens**, teen volunteers will **double** their chance of volunteering as adults (Haski-Leventhal, 2009)

# The Research . . .

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## Volunteer Management

Increasing volunteer outcomes may require attention to:

- Selection
- Training
- Team Building

(Caldwell, Farmer & Fedor, 2008)

# Faith & Volunteers



# Faith & Volunteerism

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More than **34%** of Americans volunteer with a faith-based organization.

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/newsroom/marketing/fact-sheets>

# Diversity

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## Ethnicity

- Religious participation and volunteering activity may vary according to **ethnicity**.
- **Immigrant** status may decrease participation

(Ecklund & Park, 2007).

# Diversity

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## Ethnicity

Different countries of origin have varying rates of volunteering:

- Americans 50%
- Europeans 33%
- Post-communist countries 15%

(Haski-Leventhal, 2009)



# Putting It Together:



# The Action Plan

# Action Plan Steps

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The best action plan will integrate theory, research, and best practices for an effective volunteer management strategy in the areas of:

1. Recruitment
2. Training
3. Supervision
4. Exit Procedures/Debriefing

# Action Plan Steps

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## Recruitment Sources

Consider both traditional and untapped volunteer sources.

### Traditional sources

- Teens, parents, working mothers, and the middle age group are sources of high volunteerism.
- Senior citizens volunteer more hours than other age groups but health concerns present limitations.
- Higher socioeconomic status, women, & Whites, are traditionally higher in volunteerism.

### Nontraditional Sources:

- Young adults, singles, men, minorities, people in lower socioeconomic status, and seniors with some health limitations are potential volunteer sources.

# Action Plan Steps

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## Recruitment Interest

Target recruitment to life stage needs.

### Teens

Use volunteering to explore identity. Consider peer & group formats over individual placements. Volunteer placements with less potential for secondary trauma are preferred. Teens who volunteer are more likely to volunteer as adults, so establishing this pattern can be important for future implications.

### Young Adults

Longer-term placements are appropriate for increased relationship building. Providing links between career and volunteering is beneficial.

# Action Plan Steps

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## **Recruitment Interest, continued**

Target recruitment to life stage needs.

### **Middle-aged Adults**

Parents are interested in opportunities related to their children. Established career professionals may be willing to lend expertise in volunteering – consider career linkages.

### **Senior Adults**

Helping & belonging to community meet needs for socializing & giving back.

# Action Plan Steps

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## Training

Consider life stage development in training development.

### Teens

Training in group settings capitalizes on peer relationships. Less practical experience in relationships should be addressed by training on relational aspects of volunteering.

### Young Adults

Career and personal obligations may require flexible training options.

# Action Plan Steps

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## **Training, continued**

Consider life stage development in training development.

### **Middle-aged Adults**

Training should be sensitive to other adult role commitments, (e.g., family, career obligations) for example scheduling flexibility.

### **Senior Adults**

Consider any health limitations that might impact training.

# Action Plan Steps

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## Supervision

### Teens

Watch for indicators of burn-out that may be more likely in this age group. Assist with processing the volunteer experience and any secondary-trauma issues. Teens are able to consider abstract concepts in supervision. Team-building activities with peers can be useful ongoing strategies for this age group.

### Young Adults

Particularly open to reflection & reexamination of volunteer experience. Young adults respond well to rule parameters and social order (lines of authority) in supervision context.



# Action Plan Steps

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## **Supervision, continued**

### **Middle-aged Adults**

Be alert to conflict in social roles (family obligations).

The ability of some adults to consider multiple viewpoints and individual rights may require an open supervision style to address any potential conflicts with established rules.

### **Senior Adults**

Allow seniors to share from their experience with those younger. Continue to foster a sense of community-building in their volunteering.

# Action Plan Steps

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## Exit Procedures & Debriefing

### Teens

Help teens integrate volunteering with next steps in identity development. What did they learn from volunteering? What would they like to try next?

### Young Adults

Help young adults integrate volunteering with next steps in career focus. How can their next volunteer experience complement career or relationship goals?

# Action Plan Steps

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## Exit Procedures & Debriefing, continued

### Middle-aged Adults

Allow middle-aged adults to consider how volunteering affects their obligations to family & career. Flexibility to volunteer or withdraw considering social roles is necessary.

### Senior Adults

If health is a limitation explore alternative volunteering contexts. Help seniors to maintain community networks and opportunities to give back.

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# More Questions?

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Email:

[aliceannwalters@gmail.com](mailto:aliceannwalters@gmail.com)