

VOLUNTEERS

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spot.

North Carolina was ranked fifth in the nation according to the percentage of retirees aged 60 and older who settled in the state between 1985 and 1990.

Henderson County is one of the 10 counties in North Carolina with the highest concentration of retirees from outside the state. Residents over age 60 make up almost one-fourth of the county's population.

"Retirees have a significant impact on our volunteer services," says David Knotts, executive director of the United Way of Henderson County.

Because of their availability and work experience, retired and senior volunteers provide many services for the organization. For instance, the United Way's board president, annual campaign chairman and fund distribution committee chair are all retired volunteers.

"Most people, these days, are younger than 65 when they retire," says Knotts. "Their health is good and they have a lot of energy and interest and they're looking for ways to get involved."

Bill Werner, president of the Executive Service Corps of the Carolinas in Durham, has seen the same thing.

"It used to be that people waited for retirement in order to just do nothing and loved it," he says. "Now, with the different energy capacity, we're getting tremendous responses with commitments from people who want to use their time to contribute to the community around them."

Through the Executive Service Corps of the Carolinas, retired professionals volunteer as consultants for nonprofits in the Triangle area. The corps is one of 40 affiliates of the National Executive Service Corps based in New York City.

Corps volunteers provide assistance in general management, marketing, financial planning and board development - among other services. The corps now has 33 volunteers working with 20 nonprofit agencies.

Another national program, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), helps place volunteers over 55 with nonprofits.

"It is designed so that persons 55 or older could make a contribution to their community through voluntarism," says Helen Featherson, director of the Durham County branch of the program.

Of the 360 volunteers the Durham chapter helped place last year, the average age is 70.

The RSVP program, a project of the National Senior Service Corps, has 17 offices in North Carolina. Other volunteer programs of the 400,000-member national corps include Senior Companions, through which volunteers over 60 provide one-on-one assistance to fellow seniors, and Foster Grandparents, which matches seniors with children with special needs.

"The quality of their experience and their general knowledge can really add value to an organization," says Lisa Martinez, manager of the Volunteer Center of the United Way of the Central Carolinas in Charlotte.

Martinez, who is also a former director of the RSVP in Charlotte, says that nonprofits should not underestimate the ability of seniors to contribute as volunteers.

"Regardless of age and also ability, if you give somebody a chance they can still make a contribution of some sort," she says. "We should not have this presumption that, because you're a certain age, you're not able to participate as a full citizen."

For information about the Executive Service Corps of the Carolinas, call (919) 681-3536. To contact the National Senior Service Corps, call (800) 424-8867.

Setting the standard

New resource available for volunteer managers

The North Carolina Association for Volunteer Administrators is offering the state's first certification program designed specifically for volunteer managers.

By SIDNEY CRUZE

Managers of volunteer programs in the nonprofit sector now have access to a new resource.

The North Carolina Association of Volunteer Administrators (NCAVA), a 300-member nonprofit, is offering a certification program designed to increase the knowledge and on-the-job performance of volunteer managers.

Sandy Leonard, chair of the NCAVA education committee that

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designed the program, says most volunteer managers lack strong professional support within their organizations.

"They often work in isolation without the team of peers available to many other nonprofit professionals. The certification program will provide them with a body of literature and management techniques they can use as on-the-job support."

Certification is open to NCAVA members with two years of volunteer management experience. Other requirements include a bachelor's degree or one year of experience in the field for each year of college; two peer recommendations; one year in a NCAVA

or community organization leadership role; completion of 24 hours of NCAVA-endorsed certification training; satisfactory completion of a written exam; and a \$25 fee.

The educational component of the program requires volunteer managers to focus on general management issues, personnel management and volunteer program development. Participants must take at least two courses in each of the above three categories to fulfill the 24-hour certification training requirement.

Because many volunteer management issues are interrelated with nonprofit management issues, the NCAVA has developed a cooperative relationship with the Duke Certificate Program in Nonprofit Management. Up to twelve hours of certification training may be

taken through the Duke program.

The Duke courses are designed to serve as a supplement for volunteer managers working toward NCAVA certification. The other 12 training hours must involve specific skills, such as recruiting and retention, that are related to volunteer management.

Twenty-four people completed the first certification exam on January 11. These graduates, along with the six members of the NCAVA education committee who designed the exam, will be awarded certification on May 8 at the 1995 State Conference on Voluntarism in Sunset Beach, NC. A second exam will be given at the conference.

For information about the certification program, call Leonard at (910) 373-1633.



Employee Malinda Franklin with Special Olympian, Amy.

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