Coping, stress, and burnout factors in long-term volunteering

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The University of Toledo
A Dissertation

entitled

Coping, Stress, and Burnout Factors in Long-Term Volunteering

by

Kate L. Jansen, M.A.

Submitted to the graduate faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for

Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology

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August 2010
An Abstract of

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Though companies and researchers invest great resources into employee work satisfaction, there is little research regarding the same issues for volunteers. Previous research has established that individuals working in social services, including social workers, nurses, and teachers, are prone to experiencing burnout. This is attributed to the high-stress nature of their work. What has not been examined is the burnout experienced by volunteers. The current study seeks to fill that gap by studying the long-term effects of volunteerism on 44 individuals across the continental United States as well as to identify proactive activities that could reduce burnout. These individuals were measured on the following attributes: motivation for volunteering, burnout, stress, and coping methods twice during a 6 month time period. These measures were used to correlate burnout and satisfaction with their volunteer experiences. The results of this study indicate that greater use of negative coping methods, higher level of stress, decreased levels of empathy, and poorer general mental health were significant predictors of increased burnout at the end of the study. Lower levels of burnout, higher empathy, and identified motivation for volunteering were significantly correlated with the individuals’ satisfaction with their volunteer program at the end of the study. Implications for volunteer agencies are addressed.
For my family, without whose unwavering support and words of encouragement, none of this would be possible.

We are what we believe we are. C. S. Lewis
Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my parents, their consistent words of encouragement, untiring belief in my abilities, and supply of care packages. I cannot overstate the importance of their dedication to my success and the effect it has had on my educational career.

I would also like to thank my dissertation committee for their commitment and wise guidance from the conception of this project to completion. Thank you to my chair, Dr. Joseph Hovey for the freedom to pursue my interests and willingness to support my efforts.

Finally, I thank my classmates, Kathleen, Aaron, Prachi, and Darren. Their encouragement and collaboration have proven to be invaluable. I am blessed to have had this experience with such a great cohort.
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Autoimmune Deficiency Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ</td>
<td>Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Empathetic Concern</td>
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<tr>
<td>GHQ-12</td>
<td>General Health Questionnaire - 12 item version</td>
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<td>HS</td>
<td>Hope Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRI</td>
<td>Interpersonal Reactivity Index</td>
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<td>MBI</td>
<td>Maslach Burnout Inventory</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td>Perceived Stress Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Personal Distress</td>
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<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Perspective Taking</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSES</td>
<td>Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>VFI</td>
<td>Volunteer Functions Inventory</td>
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</table>
List of Symbols

\(\alpha\)…………… Chronbach’s alpha. used as a measure of the internal consistency or reliability of a psychometric test score for a sample of examinees

\(b\)…………… Unstandardized regression coefficient which indicates the strength of the relationship between a given predictor and an outcome in the units of measurement of the predictor

\(\beta\)…………… Standardized regression coefficient which indicates the strength of the relationship between a given predictor and an outcome in a standardized form.

\(p\)…………… The probability of obtaining a test statistic at least as extreme as the one that was actually observed, assuming that the null hypothesis is true.

\(r\)…………… Pearson’s product moment correlation coefficient. A standardized measure of the strength of relationship between two variables.

\(R^2\)…………… Coefficient of determination. It is the proportion of variability in a data set that is accounted for by the statistical model.

\(SEB\)………… Standard Error of the regression. It is the standard deviation of the residuals in the equation.

\(t\)…………… T-statistic. It is used to test if differences between two means are significantly different from zero.
Chapter One

Introduction

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is defined as activity for the benefit of others, which is performed out of generosity and of a person’s free will (Wilson, 2000). In 2000, 44% of adults in the United States reported engaging in volunteer work (Independent Sector, 2005). Despite reports of decreased activity in traditional service clubs, such as the Kiwanis or scouts, participation in overall volunteer activities has not declined. In fact, in 1993, it was estimated that 23.6% of Americans volunteered 5 or more hours per week (c.f. Clary et al. 1998). Individual not–for-profit agencies have filled the gap in service hours traditionally filled by service clubs, and Americans are choosing to volunteer in different ways than they have in the past (Isham, 2006). One such method of volunteerism that is on the rise is that of “voluntourism” (Winderman, 2006). In voluntourism, individuals travel to various destinations and spend half of their vacation conducting volunteer work. Examples of these kinds of opportunities include working at nature conservatories or assisting in environmentally focused projects abroad. Earthwatch, a major provider of voluntourism trips has reported an increase in participation by over 40% during the past several years (Winderman, 2006). In fact, as compared to 1975, Americans in their early 20’s are now volunteering at a 30% higher rate and, as a whole, American volunteer rates are at a historic high as compared to rates in the 1970’s and 1980’s (Winderman, 2006).

Because volunteer rates are up, questions arise about the long term effects of volunteering on individuals. Volunteer work has been shown to provide direct benefit to the individual. These benefits include providing purpose in life, reducing boredom, and
increasing self-esteem and self-worth (c.f. Ferrari, Loftus, Michelle, & Pesek, 1999). Ferrari et al. (1999) also stated that volunteers report a feeling of mastery over one’s life and sense of social responsibility, as well as demonstrate increased dependability and leadership capabilities. In addition to individual benefits, Americans’ participation in volunteer work provides an invaluable benefit to society. It is estimated that the monetary value of volunteered hours is over 280 billion dollars and that the work done by volunteers is the equivalent of over 9 million full-time employees (Independent Sector, 2005). Clearly, volunteers provide a valuable, cost-effective resource to the economy and functioning of society.

Motivation for Volunteering

Despite vast societal benefits provided through volunteering, individuals engaging in such work are not always able to identify these benefits. In fact, when asked about their motivations, volunteers have difficulty stating any benefits at all from their work. Mark Snyder, whose research focuses on the motivations to volunteer, stated “I was struck by how much easier it was to come up with reasons why people shouldn’t volunteer than why they should. [They often stated that it is] time consuming, it’s stressful, it takes time away from your job or family or leisure” (c.f. Winerman, 2006, p. 38). Much of the previous research on volunteering motivations has focused on “spontaneous helping,” when a person is faced with an unexpected need for help, and responds with one brief act of help. Research on the motivation to engage in “planned helping,” in which the individual seeks out opportunities to help, and determines their level of commitment in that situation is less common (Clary et al., 1998).
Omoto and Snyder (1995) introduced the idea that there are specific antecedents of sustained, or long term, volunteerism. Sustained volunteerism refers to individuals’ commitment to an organization or cause for a given number of hours per week or set period of time, rather than volunteering for a single instance or event. Antecedents for this behavior consist of specific personality attributes that dispose individuals to become involved, specific personal and social needs, life influences such as the social climate, as well as family and work support. It is the interplay of these factors that motivate people to begin sustained volunteer work.

In one of the few studies of sustained helping, Hwang et al (2001) found that Americans generally ranked altruistic reasons as the most important reason for volunteering rather than “selfish” reasons such as career enhancement or personal development. The most popular reasons given for individuals’ engaging in volunteer service in America are, in order, compassion to the needy, to give something back, a sense of moral obligation, to contribute to the local community, to give hope, and for religious beliefs. Similar reasons were found in a study investigating the motivations to volunteer in the AIDS community (Omoto & Snyder, 2002). The authors found five consistent reasons that individuals cited as their primary reason for engaging in volunteer activity. These reasons were: Values (defined in the study as satisfying personal values, humanitarian concerns, or religious convictions); Community Concern (helping a community to which the individual feels attached); Esteem Enhancement (feeling better about oneself or providing temporary relief from other pressures); Understanding (gaining a better understanding of other people); and Personal Development (challenging oneself, meeting new people, and furthering one’s career)
Clary et al. (1998) also examined the motivations of volunteers using a slightly different viewpoint, that of functional strategy. Functional strategy asks what purpose is being served for a person when he or she acts in a certain way; or, what functions are served when an individual volunteers? These questions assume that similar actions can hold different motivations for different people. Clary et al. (1998) theorized that by identifying the motivations behind people’s volunteer work they could help organizations enhance the satisfaction volunteers feel in their work. The authors measured individuals’ reasons for volunteering using the Volunteer Functions Inventory; a measure developed to accurately assess individual’s motivations for volunteer work, and established six motivations for volunteer work (Clary, Snyder, & Ridge, 1992). These included Understanding (or, more specifically, engaging in new learning experiences or gaining unique knowledge or abilities); Social (opportunities to be with friends or engage in an activity viewed favorably by others); Career (either preparing for a new career or advancement in a current career); Protective (reducing guilt over being fortunate, or to escape other negative feelings); and Enhancement (maintaining or enhancing a positive mood, personal growth or self-esteem).

One reason for an inability for volunteers to give explicit reasons for their motivation to engage in volunteer work may be because they are naturally more inclined to be involved in these activities. Several personality traits have been associated with higher levels of volunteer service (Carlo, Okun, Knight, and DeGuzman, 2005; Eshaug & Metzer, 2001). For example, in a study examining the differences between paid and volunteer workers engaging in the same task, Eshaug and Metzer (2001) found several important differences in personality traits. Volunteers were higher in agreeableness and
extraversion, and exhibited higher levels of positive emotions, altruism, and warmth. Additionally, the volunteers demonstrated higher sympathy and empathy towards those they were serving and were more likely to form close attachments with them. Though it might be argued that these results could be the result of the volunteers’ naïveté, Eshaug and Metzer (2001) found that there was no association between length of time spent volunteering and these personality facets.

Further work was done investigating the interaction of personality traits and volunteering by Carlo et al. (2005). The authors found a significant relationship between levels of agreeableness, defined as being altruistic, straightforward, soft-hearted, modest and compliant, and volunteering. In addition, extraversion, defined as sociability, gregariousness, assertiveness, and activity, was significantly related to levels of volunteering. The researchers examined individual’s prosocial value motives, defined as the need for individuals to express humanitarian or altruistic values. Results indicated that agreeableness was both directly related to volunteer activity as well as mediated by prosocial value motives whereas extraversion was solely mediated by prosocial value motives. Results from this study suggest that the prosocial value motive may be particularly important in determining what types of people engage in volunteer work.

When individuals’ motivations are compared to their ultimate satisfaction in the volunteer experience, researchers have found that people report the highest levels of satisfaction when their experience matches their primary motivations for volunteering (Winderman, 2006). Those individuals whose motivations for volunteering were met by the organization were more likely to report intention to continue their volunteer service in the future. It was interesting to note, however, that individuals with “selfish”, or self
focused motives for volunteering, such as esteem enhancement, personal development, and understanding, were more likely to stick with organizations longer than individuals who cited more “unselfish,” or external motivations. Based on these results and supported by a recent study examining length of volunteer commitment and personality factors (Liao-Troth, 2005), it appears to be most desirable to have a good match between volunteers’ motives for service work and the needs of the organization. Therefore, it may be important for organizations and individuals to spend more time assessing the compatibility of the motives of the individual and the opportunities the organization can provide.

**Burnout**

The term burnout was first coined by Herbert Freudenberger in 1974 to describe exhaustion he noted in certain volunteers in a free health care clinic. He noted that those more likely to exhibit the exhaustion symptoms were also more highly committed to the clinic (Enzmann, Schaufeli, Janssen, & Rozeman, 1998). The term burnout has changed from the time of early care-giving work to describe changes an individual goes through in response to chronic stress in the workplace. When burnout occurs, the individual develops a sense of detached concern for their clients as a protective measure (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter 2001). Burnout is measured over three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and personal inefficiency (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). The most obvious manifestation of burnout is exhaustion. This refers to feelings of both physical and emotional fatigue. Cynicism or depersonalization is an attempt to put distance between the individual and the client which can come across as indifference, callous behaviors, or ignoring the factors that make the client a unique individual. Finally,
personal inefficiency describes the loss of job satisfaction, which is an inability to feel accomplishment at work.

Burnout is most common in situations in which the individual has frequent personal interaction with their clientele, such as in education and human services fields. There are additional specific job factors that put individuals at increased risk for burnout. For example, large caseloads increase individuals stress levels and put them at higher risk for burnout. Negative client feedback and poor job resources also increase risk for burnout. Further risk factors include role ambiguity, in which the individual is not given clear tasks or expectations, as well as not being given sufficient information to complete the job well (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). Lack of social support also increases the likelihood of burnout, especially lack of support from coworkers. In the social service industry, all of these risk factors are more common than in more traditional job settings, particularly large caseloads and poor resources.

Environment is not the only cause of burnout in individuals; specific personality features can also play a role. Though burnout is different from depression, individuals who are more susceptible to depression are also more likely to suffer from burnout. One way this has been measured is using the five-factor model of personality (McCrae & Costa, 1984), in which individuals high on neuroticism are also higher on burnout. An additional personality characteristic associated with risk for burnout is an external locus of control (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). These are individuals who attribute events in their lives, both positive and negative, to external influences. Lower levels of resilience are also associated with greater risk for burnout including less involvement in daily activities and less sense of control over their own lives. Finally, low self-esteem and
low openness to change put individuals at greater risk for burnout. Though individuals early in their career are more susceptible to burnout, this may be in part due to the survival bias, which states that individuals who experience burnout are more likely to leave their career, whereas those who do not experience burnout are more likely to stay.

The emotional discomfort burnout creates in the individual poses potential problems for the agency. Workers suffering from burnout are more likely to leave the career field, creating turnover in the workplace (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). For the individuals who stay on, there is decreased productivity and increased inefficiency in work output. Perhaps most concerning is that burnout can spread in the workplace. One employee’s inefficiency or lowered productivity creates greater strain on the other workers, increasing their stress level and making them more prone to burnout as well.

It has been determined that burnout is particularly prevalent in social service related industries. One study of social workers in the United Kingdom by Evans et al. (2006) found that only 8% of workers surveyed met full criteria for burnout, defined as elevated scores on all three burnout subscales on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, 1996). However, 78% of respondents reported ambivalence or dissatisfaction with their employer and 47% reported a score of 4 or higher on the General Health Questionnaire, indicating potential for a mental disorder of some kind (Goldberg, 1992). Furthermore, for social workers the mean score on the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory was 26, well above the mean scores of 20 for men and 21 for females. However, mean scores on depersonalization and job satisfaction did not meet the cutoff for burnout. This indicates that in the social work field emotional exhaustion is of particular concern, or that emotional exhaustion is a more salient feature of burnout
than depersonalization and job satisfaction. In looking at potential causes for burnout symptoms in social workers Evans et al. (2006) found that low social support was significantly associated with emotional exhaustion. Additionally, it was found that it is not necessarily the chronicity of work stress that leads to burnout, but rather the intensity of stress (Evans et al., 2006).

Predictors of burnout in volunteer-work have commanded relatively little attention in the literature. Between 1989 and 1996, only 5 articles have been published regarding burnout in volunteers (Loez-Cabanas & Chacon, 1997). Though most of the research on burnout has focused on occupational stress, several recent studies have looked exclusively at the burnout phenomenon in volunteers. One such study has examined volunteering in the AIDS community. In one sample, 37.3% of AIDS volunteers scored a 5 or higher on the General Health Questionnaire, indicating that they likely had some form of mental illness (Guinan & McCellum, 1991). Additionally, 21% of the volunteers had moderate to high scores on the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory and 17% had moderate to high scores on the depersonalization subscale. Furthermore, 24% of the volunteers had a low score on personal accomplishment, which is also indicative of burnout.

Research on volunteerism in Israel has also examined the relationship between motives for volunteering and later burnout (Kulik, 2002). Four primary motivations for volunteering were examined. Altruism was the first examined motive, or the belief that volunteering leads to a better society. The second motive was termed Conformist, the belief that one should volunteer because it is what most people do. Personal Growth was the third motive, described as a desire to broaden one’s horizons. The fourth motive was
the Desire to Fill Free Time, or using volunteering as a method to prevent boredom. In this study, only women expressing altruistic motives also had low levels of burnout. With men all motives for volunteering were correlated with burnout, such that the stronger the motivation, the higher the level of burnout. It was suggested that this was because highly enthusiastic people are more susceptible to burnout, as a result of beginning their work with high aspirations and passion, but eventually losing this enthusiasm over the course of their work.

A study of burnout in volunteers in Spain suggested that volunteers’ burnout and gratification fluctuated throughout their service tenure (Fuertes & Jimenez, 2000). In a group of volunteers with a mean length of service of 35 months, the authors found symptoms of exhaustion and low levels of gratification several times throughout the year. Furthermore, volunteers who worked with more than one organization showed increased burnout symptoms. Interestingly, volunteers in religious organizations presented fewer burnout symptoms.

Additional work on volunteer burnout was conducted in Australia examining the relationship between feelings of connectedness and burnout (Lewig, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Dollard, & Metzer, 2007). Using mediation and moderation analysis in a sample of volunteer ambulance officers, the authors determined that burnout mediated the relationship between job demands and health problems, as well as the relationship between job demands and determination to continue. Results of the study indicate that burnout and feelings of connectedness explain the relationship between job resources and health problems, as well as the relationship between job resources and turnover. As such, it is the negative influence of burnout and the protective factor of feeling connected that
determine the impact of the organization’s lack of resources on the volunteer. The authors suggest that to successfully retain volunteers the agency should provide an environment in which volunteers feel valued by both the organization and the community. Also, it is important to ensure that volunteers are well supported by the organization to perform their job roles.

Work with AIDS volunteers noted differences in individuals who experienced high levels of burnout versus those who did not report symptoms of burnout. Those volunteers who used primarily internal coping strategies had higher levels of support and belonging, high relationship stability, and lower levels of burnout (Bennett, Kelhar, & Ross, 1994). Individuals with higher levels of burnout had higher anxiety levels and used primarily external coping strategies. Further research has also suggested that burnout in volunteers is the result of an imbalance between the stressors and rewards of the work (Bennett, Ross, & Sunderland, 1996).

In a study of volunteer counselors for terminally ill patients, Bakker, Van Der Zee, Lewig, and Dollard (2006) predicted aspects of volunteer burnout using personality factors. In this study the authors determined that the burnout factor of emotional exhaustion was predicted by emotional stability, or the tendency to be self confident, dominant, and active. Depersonalization was also predicted by emotional stability, in addition to extraversion and intellect. Extraversion is defined as excitement seeking, as well as attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety, and intellectual curiosity. Finally, they found that personal accomplishment was predicted by both extraversion and emotional stability. These results suggest that low emotional stability, including the tendency to react with strong emotions and self criticism is a consistent and significant
predictor of burnout in volunteers. However, extraversion predicts increased feelings of personal accomplishment and decreased feelings of depersonalization.

**Stress**

Considered one of the most significant contributing factors in burnout, stress is nearly universal to the human condition, and its effects can be debilitating. In a recent survey, 77% of Americans polled stated that they have experienced physical problems due to stress (American Psychological Association, 2007). Common problems associated with stress include fatigue, headache, muscle tension, and upset stomach. Additionally, psychological problems are associated with stress and include irritability, nervousness, and tearfulness. Beyond immediate physical and emotional reactions to stress exposure, people’s reactions to stressful events can create long-term health problems. Nearly half of individuals polled had difficulty falling asleep, losing an average of 21 hours of sleep per month. Over 40% of individuals reported overeating or eating unhealthily in response to stress, and 66% of smokers reported smoking more because they were stressed. However, it is not only stress that can cause harm to individual’s health, but also their coping response to the stressor (American Psychological Association, 2007).

Unhealthy coping mechanisms and short-term physical reactions to stress aside, prolonged stress on an individual can induce serious consequences. Prolonged stress exposure has been shown to weaken the immune system, as well as strain the heart, and damage memory cells in the brain (Goode, 2007). Further damage is caused by prolonged stress as fat is deposited along the waist line rather than in the hips and buttocks area, which leads to greater health risks. In a study comparing individuals inoculated with a cold virus, stressed individuals were more likely to become ill and also had more severe
symptoms than less stressed individuals. High stress levels have also been implicated in accelerating signs of aging, increased depression, more severe symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes, as well as other serious illnesses.

Social support has long been heralded as a “buffer” against stress in individuals (LaRocco, House, & French, 1980). In a study examining the effect of social support and health, LaRocco, House and French examined perceived job stress, defined as one’s perception that the demands of the job exceed one’s available skills, or that the job leaves the motives of the employee unmet. Perceived job stress is the result of lack of fitness between the person and the environment, and leads to negative feelings about the job and increased job stress. The authors found that perceived support from supervisors and coworkers was negatively related to perceived occupational stress. Furthermore, social support served as a buffer against mental health factors such as depression, irritation, and somatic complaints. Overall, support in the workplace mitigated the effects of job stress as well as psychological stress.

Another study examined the differences in volunteer counselors and professional counselors’ stress reactions in Australia (Capner & Caltabiano, 1993). Both volunteer counselors and professional counselors experienced similar job stressors, such as having too much work, finding clients too emotionally demanding, and work affecting their social life. However, there were some differences between the groups in reported stressors. For example, volunteers reported feelings of loneliness and lack of feedback from clients, whereas paid counselors reported stress regarding poor confidence in their own ability, problems with colleagues and supervisors, and being in a supervisory role. In an examination of suicide hotline volunteers, Mishara and Giroux (1993) found that
stress levels could be predicted by years of experience in which lower stress levels were associated with longer work experience. This could be an example of the survival effect, defined in this case as those more fit for the job remaining in the job, in which those who were highly stressed by the work did not continue to volunteer. Alternately, it may have been that as the volunteers became accustomed to the work they were less stressed by the job demands. In this sample of volunteers the most common coping mechanisms used during highly stressful calls were wishful thinking, such as wishing that the call was over, detachment from the situation, and feeling personally responsible for the outcome of the call.

Guinan and McCallum (1991) determined that for AIDS volunteers there were four specific stressors that volunteers most frequently reported: 1. Emotional overload, such as intense emotions and a sense of helplessness, as well as holding back, or not expressing feelings; 2. Client problems, specifically, negative aspects of the volunteer’s relationship with their clients; 3. Lack of social support both from family and from society and negative effects from the stigma attached to AIDS work; and 4. Lack of training, including difficulty understanding their role as a volunteer, poor training before and during their tenure of service, and frustrations with the organization they were working at.

In addition to specific stressors associated with volunteering in the AIDS community, research has determined specific rewards associated with AIDS volunteer work (Guinan & McCallum, 1991). Rewards in this study were considered possible protective factors against the stressors associated with the volunteer work. These rewards include feelings of personal effectiveness such as serving the community, easing other’s
burdens, doing something worthwhile, emotional support (including making new friends and a feeling of belonging), and finally, empathy/self knowing, which includes learning to listen and gaining inner peace. However, later work by Maslanka (1996) suggests that in AIDS volunteers, increasing volunteer’s perception of rewards from their work does not increase the happiness of the volunteer. Rather, based on the AIDS research, it was suggested that agencies should focus efforts on increasing support early in a volunteer’s tenure. Furthermore, research on AIDS volunteers shows that volunteers experience high levels of frustration when organizations lack the resources necessary for the volunteer activity (Fischer & Schaffer, 1993).

Coping

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined coping as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (p. 141). This essentially refers to the ways in which individuals deal with stressors. Coping mechanisms can broadly be combined into two categories, problem focused and emotion focused (Lazarus, 1993). Problem focused coping refers to an individual changing their environment or actions to manage stressors. This could include attending religious services or moving away from the stressful event. Emotion focused coping refers to adjusting one’s thoughts or cognitions regarding the stressor to lessen emotional effects. This might include techniques like refocusing on a positive event or planning ways to manage the stressor. Another method used to organize coping methods separates them into control and escape categories (Lattack, 1986). Control coping was defined as actions
and cognitive reappraisal that are proactive and take charge, whereas escape coping was
defined as actions and cognitions that are avoidant in nature.

Coping has been associated both with burnout and mental health. Research by
Martin and Dahlen (2005), established that different coping styles were associated with
different emotions as well as psychiatric diagnoses. In fact, independent of gender, self-blame,
rumination, and catastrophizing methods of cognitive coping were associated with
the experience of negative emotions. Similarly, anxiety was predicted by self-blame,
rumination, catastrophic thinking, and reduced positive appraisal and depression was
predicted by self-blame, rumination, catastrophic thinking, and reduced positive
appraisal.

Control coping methods have been established as negative predictors of burnout
and escape methods are positive predictors of burnout, particularly feelings of exhaustion
(Leiter, 1991). Leiter (1991) also established that in the mental health field, control
coping methods were associated with increased commitment to the organization. A recent
study examining burnout in female hospice nurses established that different coping
methods were associated with different burnout factors (Payne, 2000). This study found
that accepting responsibility was predictive of emotional exhaustion, reduced problem
solving predictive of depersonalization, and reduced positive reappraisal predictive of
reduced feelings of personal accomplishment. Additionally, conflict with staff,
inadequate preparation, and fewer professional qualifications were also predictive of
greater levels of burnout. No demographic factors were found to be predictive of burnout
levels in either of the above mentioned studies.
A study by Shin, Rosario, Morch and Chestnut (1984) examined the effects of stress and coping in the human service industry via survey. The authors found that high work stress and poor group coping led to increased feelings of burnout. An additional aspect of this study included free response sections in which the participants could add further thoughts or information regarding their experience of stress in the organization. The authors made note that though the individual human service workers had numerous ideas of how the organization could improve coping and decrease stress for their workers, none of these ideas were in place.

**Effects of Volunteerism**

Little research has been done regarding potential changes volunteers go through during their volunteer tenure. Though increased stress and potential burnout are possible, no known research has been done to date examining changes in volunteer’s personality and mental health characteristics over set periods of time. One study did look at changes in AmeriCorps volunteers’ perception of various institutions following their year of service (Simon & Wang, 2002). Though the authors hypothesized that participants would have greater confidence in public institution, this was not the case. Participants did not express more confidence in public institutions, and did not report change in feelings of trust towards civic institutions such as the police, public schools, the military, religious organizations, and government or corporations. However, following their service, participants were more likely to be involved in community groups as well as more likely to form a community group.

An additional study examined satisfaction in volunteers following one year of volunteer work at various agencies engaging in different job types, ranging from direct
work with clients to no client contact (Davis, Hall, & Meyer, 2003). In this sample motive fulfillment, or feeling that the actual volunteer work matched the initial reason for beginning such work, predicted volunteer satisfaction early in the year, but was not predictive of satisfaction at the end of the year. Distress was a predictor of satisfaction at the end of the year of service. Additionally, those who were engaged in emotionally charged tasks, such as those in close contacts with clients, were also less satisfied. The authors suggested that to improve retention and satisfaction volunteer directors should minimize distress. Attention and time should also be devoted to teaching methods of coping effectively with stressful situations. Interestingly, in a survey of volunteers who quit before or at 1 year of service, lack of satisfaction with the volunteer program was rarely cited as a motivation to quit.

Davis, Hall and Meyer (2003) were able to predict volunteer’s dropout from their service program based on several factors. The first predictor is role ambiguity, the feeling of being uncertain as to one’s purpose in the organization and what their job entails. The second predictor is emotional overload, which includes emotional over involvement, exposure to other’s grief, feelings of helplessness, and the feeling of intense emotions. Finally, organizational factors predicted dropout, including coworker support, administration, and the organization as a whole. These results indicate that volunteers experience similar distress to paid workers described in the work of LaRocco, House, and French (1980). However, rewards of volunteer work were not significant negative predictors of dropout, suggesting that the rewards experienced were not sufficient “buffers” against the stressors of the work.
A qualitative study of volunteers in a grief counseling agency provided additional explanations for turnover (Skoglund, 2006). Of the volunteers who stopped volunteering for the agency, the most common reason given was inadequate training. The former volunteers suggested that the initial training given before the volunteer work began was insufficient for the job demands, and additional training was necessary to complete the job successfully. Former volunteers also stated that increased social support would have improved the volunteer experience. While engaged in the volunteer task individuals felt isolated and alone in their experiences, and felt that support would have been important to help process, evaluate, and share experiences on the job.

**Current Study**

Recently it was stated that though retention is a significant issue in the success of many agencies, “theoretically based research on the factors contributing to the well-being and retention of volunteers has been lacking” (Lewig, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Dollard & Metzer, 2007, p.439). Given that volunteer work fills a large need in today’s not for profit and social service organizations it is important that these agencies be equipped to successfully retain their volunteer workers. Furthermore, given the previous research pointing to the likelihood of burnout and stress in volunteers, it is important that agencies be prepared to prevent and deal with these occurrences.

The current study aims to begin to fill the void in volunteer retention and mental health research. Previous research does not adequately address how volunteers change over the course of their service, both in levels of stress as well as in terms of mental health. Given the high rate of stress and burnout in social service work it is possible that change in mental health would follow for volunteers as well. The current study differs
from previous research in several important ways. The first is that only long-term volunteers were used as participants. This was defined as individuals who have committed to volunteering 10 or more hours a week for a period of at least 10 months. The requirement for intensive and committed volunteer work is different from other studies which used volunteers who did not have a required minimum number of hours per week or required length of volunteer tenure. Using a longitudinal design, volunteers who were engaged in long-term projects were contacted twice during the tenure of their service approximately 6 months apart. In using a longitudinal design, changes in the participants’ attitudes, stressors, and potential distress could be measured, rather than looking only at one point of service. Additionally, this allowed for prediction of burnout and stress levels using measures collected at the beginning of service.

The current study was designed as a needs analysis for volunteers and agencies that rely on volunteers’ work. Measures of mental health, stress, empathy, hope, coping, and burnout were administered over two data collection points. In addition to these standardized measures, participants were given free-response questionnaires covering specific stressors associated with the volunteer work, their level of commitment to the program, rewards experienced as a result of their volunteer work, as well as any specific information, training, or support that would have been helpful to their experience. This qualitative data adds further depth to the understanding of any changes the volunteers may go through. This information will be used to aid agencies to prevent volunteer turnover and increase volunteer satisfaction and mental health. Additionally, results of the self report measures aid in determining what specific changes occur throughout the year.
There are several specific hypotheses in the current study. First, it was expected that stress will increase during the service tenure, as will levels of burnout. Second, the study seeks to establish correlates of increased satisfaction with the volunteer program and individual’s commitment to the program. It was expected that stress, coping, and specific volunteer functions will be associated with satisfaction and commitment. Finally, it was expected that empathy will serve as a negative predictor of burnout, whereas non-functional coping strategies, stress, and mental health concerns are expected to serve as positive predictors of burnout. Should coping styles, empathy, levels of stress, and mental health adequately predict burnout levels, the discussion will examine interventions in stress reduction and improved coping methods to improve the volunteer’s experience. In addition to these specific hypotheses, other measures of mental health and well-being were assessed for change during the volunteer service as well.
Chapter 2

Methods

Participants

A convenience sample of current long-term volunteers served as participants in this study. Volunteers were required to be engaged in direct service for ten or more hours a week with a minimum of a ten-month time commitment. Participants were recruited through volunteer agencies around the United States which were located through several parent organizations. First, individual agencies were recruited through AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps is a national government run organization which provides funding to individual agencies across the United States. Individuals have the option to serve with AmeriCorps for a summer, part-time for one year, or full-time for one year. AmeriCorps offers 75,000 opportunities for adults to serve through a network of partnerships with local and national nonprofit groups (AmeriCorps.gov, 2010). In return for volunteer service the participant receive student loan repayments or educational grants, varying in amount based on amount of time served. Full-time members who complete their service earn a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award of $4,725 to pay for college, graduate school, or to pay back student loans. Some AmeriCorps members may also receive a modest living allowance during their term of service. The organization of participating agencies varies, however. Programs associated with AmeriCorps can be religious based and can have one or multiple volunteers at the site. They also provide different benefits to their volunteers, such as offering housing either with other volunteers or within the organization. Programs were contacted that took full or part time volunteers for one or more years of service. Individual programs were identified through list serves, contacted
through the state-level AmeriCorps office, and contacted through individual programs that were listed as members.

Additional recruitment was completed through the Catholic Network of Volunteer Services. This organization oversees religious-based programs both within the United States and internationally. Like AmeriCorps, volunteers can serve for varying lengths of time, may be the only volunteer, live with other volunteers, or live and serve within a religious community. CNVS was established in 1963, and connects over 200 domestic and international volunteer and lay mission programs. Currently, more than 10,000 volunteers serve in these programs throughout the U.S. and in 108 other countries (CNVS.org, 2007). Placements include positions in social service, medicine and nursing, immigration, legal aid, homeless services, prison ministry, bookkeeping, community organizing, child care, agriculture, construction and housing rehabilitation, teaching, religious education, and social justice ministries. Most programs provide basic room and board and a modest living stipend, usually paid monthly. Individual programs within this organization were contacted which had volunteers for one or more years, part or full time, within the United States.

To identify potential agencies within these organizations emails were sent to CNVS as well as to AmeriCorps governing bodies. For AmeriCorps this included emailing each state-level coordinator describing the study and requesting that the information be forwarded to individual agencies. For CNVS, an email was sent to the volunteer coordinator at the national level. In addition to these emails, individual agencies were contacted based on information regarding their program provided on the CNVS or AmeriCorps website. Individual agencies were asked to invite their current
volunteers to participate in the study. Agencies which agreed to invite their volunteers were offered a copy of the study’s results. Individual volunteers who completed both parts of the study were given $5 Starbucks gift cards for their participation. A list of agencies represented in the current study is provided in appendix L.

The final sample consisted of 44 participants who completed both Time A and Time B measures. These two data collection periods were spaced 6 months apart. This represents 45% of the 98 original participants who completed all measures at Time A. No significant differences were found on the demographic data between Time A and B. Additionally, no significant differences were found in initial commitment or satisfaction with the program between those who completed the second portion of the study and those that did not. Of the final sample, 84% were female. The mean age of participants was 26 years, ranging from 19 to 66 years. Participants were committed to an average of 13.6 months of service (range 9.5 months to 36 months), serving an average of 39 hours per week (range 10 hours to 70 hours). Average time spent in the program was 5.5 months at Time A and 12.4 months at Time B (range 1 month to 18 months and 7 months 25 months, respectively). There were no significant differences between AmeriCorps affiliated programs and non-AmeriCorps programs, nor were there any significant differences comparing religious affiliated programs to non-religious programs.

Of the programs represented, 20% were affiliated with a specific religion. The majority of the participants were Protestant Christians (39%) followed by no religious affiliation (22%), agnostic or atheist (11%), and Catholic Christian (9%). Remaining religious categories include: Jewish, Eastern religion, and other, which combine for the remaining 19%.
Measures

**Demographic information.** Basic demographic information was gathered from all participants including age and gender. Additional information was gathered surrounding the individual’s history of volunteer experience including estimated hours spent volunteering per week and length of commitment to the volunteer program. Because of the religious nature of several of the programs, information was gathered relating to the individual’s personal religious or spiritual affiliation, the religious orientation of the volunteer program the participant was involved in, hours per week spent in religious activities such as attending services, prayer, or meditation, and self-reported level of religiosity.

**Qualitative response section.** Participants were given the opportunity to respond to several open-ended questions regarding their perception of the volunteer experience. Questions asked of the volunteers included: *What is the most rewarding part of your volunteer service during the past month? What has been the most stressful experience related to your volunteer service? What, if any, additional support or information would have been helpful to you and your volunteer work over the past month? Rate your satisfaction with the volunteer program on a scale of 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (could not be more satisfied) and describe the reason(s) why. Rate your commitment to the volunteer program on a scale of 0 (I would prefer to quit right now) to 10 (I would not even consider quitting) and described the reason(s) why.* These questions gave participants an opportunity to expand on ideas that were touched on in the standardized questionnaires or to better explain their responses. The responses were used to gain a
deeper understanding of the volunteer’s experience than could be gained by standardized measures alone.

The Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI; Clary, Snyder, & Ridge, 1992). As noted above, much of the previous research has focused on the motives behind volunteer work. To examine the effects of motivations on the current sample, participants completed the VFI at time A. The VFI is designed to identify individual’s motivations for engaging in volunteer work divided into six scales: Social, Value, Career, Understanding, Protective, and Esteem. Items are written in the form of statements about personal attitudes or beliefs (e.g., I feel it is important to help others) and participants are asked to rate these statements on a seven point Likert scale (ranging from 1, not at all important/accurate to 7, extremely important/accurate). The Values motive measures individuals’ need to act on beliefs about the importance of helping others, which is considered the altruistic motive. The Understanding motive measures a person’s desire to better know the people they serve, an organization, or themselves; it satisfies the need to learn. The Career motive measures a person’s desire to volunteer in order to learn some skill or to introduce them to some contacts which would promote their career. The Social motive measures individuals’ motivation to volunteer because it is the socially desirable or culturally normative thing to do. Esteem measures the motive to volunteer in order to feel better about one’s self. The Protective motive is a measure of volunteering to escape from negative feelings about oneself, or guilt for one’s own fortune. The VFI was administered at time A only to reduce test fatigue and no hypotheses were related to change on this measure.
The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach, 1996). To measure the degree to which volunteers are experiencing burnout, as well as any changes to the levels of potential burnout, participants completed the MBI at both time A and time B. The MBI is divided into three primary scales: Cynicism, Emotional Exhaustion, and Personal Efficacy. Items are written in the form of statements about personal feelings or attitudes (e.g., I don't really care what happens to some recipients) and are answered in terms of how often the respondent experiences these feelings on a 7-point scale (ranging from 0, never, to 6, every day). The Emotional Exhaustion subscale assesses feelings of being emotionally fatigued by one's work. The Cynicism subscale measures an impersonal or distant response toward one's work. The Personal Efficacy subscale assesses feelings of competence and successful achievement in one's work.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 2004). To examine changes in the level of stress experienced by volunteers over their time of service, participants were asked to complete the PSS. The PSS is a 14-item measure developed to examine the level of stress an individual is feeling over the previous month. Participants are asked to rate how often they have felt a certain way (e.g. how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly) on a 5 point Likert scale. All items in the measure are summed to form a general stress level, with greater numbers meaning higher levels of stress in the individual’s life. The PSS was designed to track levels of stress over a shorter period of time than other life stress scales and thus can detect changes in perceived stress in greater detail.

The Hope Scale (HS; Snyder et al., 1991). The HS is designed to measure hope, defined as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of
successful (a) agency – (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)” (Snyder, Irving, & Anderson, 1991, p. 287). Volunteers were asked to complete the Hope Scale in order to examine potential changes in hopefulness. The scale contains four items that measure Pathways Thinking (e.g. *I can think of many ways to get out of a jam*), four items that measure Agency Thinking (e.g. *I energetically pursue my goals*), and four items that are fillers which are rated on a four-point Likert scale. Total scores on the Pathways Thinking and Agency Thinking scales are summed with greater scores equaling greater levels of hope.

**Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI; Davis, 1980).** As a potential correlate of burnout, empathy changes in the volunteers were measured using the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI). The IRI is a measure of empathy that examines four separate constructs related to overall feelings of empathy. One subscale was removed to reduce test fatigue and was deemed irrelevant; the Fantasy Scale, which measures individual’s likelihood to imaginatively transpose oneself into fictional situations. The remaining three scales were administered in full. The Personal Distress (PD) scale examines individuals’ tendency to experience discomfort in response to distress in others (e.g. *Being in a tense emotional situation scares me*). The Empathic Concern (EC) scale assesses individuals’ tendency to experience feelings of sympathy for others (e.g., *I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me*). The Perspective Taking (PT) scale measures participants’ reported tendency to take the psychological point of view of others (e.g. *I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective*). Each item is answered on a five-point Likert scale with higher scores on each subscale equaling higher levels of empathy.
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES; Rosenberg, 1965). To examine changes in self-esteem, participants were asked to complete the SES. The SES is a well-validated measure of an individual’s self esteem which is defined by this measure as “positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall evaluation of one's worth or value” (The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale). Available in the public domain and widely used, the measure consists of 10 questions relating to different aspects of self-esteem that the respondent answers on a four-point Likert scale (e.g. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself). Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem.

Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ, Garnefski, N., Kraaij, V., & Spinhoven, P. 2001). Levels of burnout have been associated with coping methods in volunteers (e.g. Bennett, Kelhar, & Ross, 1994). To examine changes in coping styles participants were asked to complete the CERQ. The CERQ is a self-report measure used to measure individual’s coping methods. Coping is divided into nine specific strategies, three strategies are considered non-adaptive and the remaining six are considered functional. Non adaptive strategies include: Self Blame (blaming oneself for what has happened), Catastrophizing (emphasizing the negative of the experience), and Rumination (thinking all of the time about the event). Functional coping styles include: Acceptance (resigning oneself to what has happened), Positive Refocusing (thinking of other pleasant matters rather than the event), Refocus on Planning (thinking about what next steps need to be taken to deal with the event), Positive Reappraisal (attaching positive meaning to the event), Putting into Perspective (playing down the seriousness of the event), and Other Blame (putting blame on others for the event). There has been research suggesting that Positive Reappraisal and Positive Refocusing might serve as
protective strategies in that individuals who regularly use such strategies experience less distress regarding the event. The CERQ consists of 36 questions which ask the participant to indicate what they might think when experiencing negative events, rating the likelihood they would have a specific thought on a five point Likert scale (e.g. *I feel that I am the one to blame for it*). Higher scores indicate greater use of the specific coping method.

**General Health Questionnaire – 12 item version (GHQ-12, Goldberg, 1972).**

The General Health Questionnaire- 12 item version (GHQ-12) was initially developed as a 60 item questionnaire to measure individual’s overall mental health. Subsequent versions of this measure, including the 30, 20, and 12 item versions, were developed by taking the most applicable questions from the 60 item measure. Individuals answer questions about their general mental health on a 4 point Likert scale (e.g. *You’ve been able to concentrate on what you’re doing*). Higher scores indicated greater likelihood of mental illness. Psychometric properties of the 12 question version of the scale have been assessed and are considered acceptable (Banks et al., 1980).

**Analyses**

Participants completed all nine scales at two different points during their volunteer service, 6 months apart, which were collected via the internet. The questionnaires were uploaded onto the website Survey Monkey, an established website used to collect survey data. Data collected via this website remains the property of the researcher and the servers are kept in a locked facility. Participant’s information is kept anonymous through the use of an identification code they establish themselves. The first data collection point took place mid winter, on average 5.7 months into participants’
volunteer work. The second data collection point took place at the end of the year, early to mid summer, when the majority of the participants were completing their time of service, on average 12.3 months since they began their volunteer work.

Scale reliability analyses were conducted to ensure that the measures used were statistically sound for this sample. Paired sample t-tests were conducted to determine which variables changed between the two data collection points. Additionally, changes in levels of burnout were predicted using linear regression analysis.
Chapter 3

Results

Scale Reliability

Reliability analyses were conducted for each of the quantitative measures administered to the volunteers as the scales were not normed on a sample of volunteers. Results are presented below in table 1. Cronbach alpha levels were at acceptable levels for the majority of the measures and subscales. Those which did not reach a .70 cutoff at time A or time B are discussed below (Fields, 2009).

Table 1.

Reliability Analyses of the scales administered.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha time A</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha time B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VFI Values Motive*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFI Understanding Motive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFI Social Motive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFI Career Motive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFI Protect Motive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFI Esteem Motive</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI Exhaustion</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI Cynicism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI Personal Efficacy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress Scale</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope Scale Agency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope Scale Pathway</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI Personal Distress</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI Empathetic Concern</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI Perspective Taking</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale</td>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha (Time A)</td>
<td>Cronbach's Alpha (Time B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Self Blame</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Acceptance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Rumination</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Positive Refocusing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Refocus on Planning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Positive Reappraisal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Putting Into Perspective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Catastrophizing</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Other Blame</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Health Questionnaire 12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The VFI was only administered at time A to decrease test fatigue, as changes in VFI scores were not expected.

Item analyses were conducted on several subscales showing poor reliability to determine how the scale alpha would be affected if certain items were removed. The IRI subscale, Personal Distress (α Time A = .46; Time B = .38), found that item 14 (I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies) was poorly correlated with other items within that subscale and removing that item would increase the alpha levels to 0.64 at time A and 0.66 at time B. The reliability of the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale could not be conducted at time B due to the violation of reliability assumptions. Negative covariance was detected within the scale items. Individual items at time B on this scale were examined to check for data errors causing the violation, however, none were found. Finally, in the CERQ, item 5 (*I think of what I can do best*), on the Refocus on Planning subscale (α time A = .66; time B = .58), was poorly correlated with other items in the subscale and would improve the alpha level to 0.68 and 0.65 at time A and B if removed.
Effects of Demographics

Bivariate correlations were computed for several demographic factors and measures. Few demographic differences were found, however, there were several findings that should be noted. At time B, both use of negative coping methods and levels of cynicism were negatively correlated with age, such that as age increased cynicism and use of negative coping methods decreased (r=-0.35, p<.05; r=-0.41, p<.05 respectively). Additionally, age was negatively correlated with the careers motivation for volunteering, such that as age increased this motive decreased (r=-0.56, p<.01).

Gender differences were examined using independent samples t-tests. Results indicated that males and females responded differently on only a few measures. Males indicated higher levels of cynicism at time A as compared to females in the current sample (t =-3.63, p<.05 ). Additionally, females indicated significantly higher levels of values motive for volunteering (t =2.93, p<.05), as well as significantly greater use of positive coping methods at time B (t =2.05, p<.05).

Similarly, few differences were found comparing religious beliefs. Comparing organizations with and without religious affiliations, volunteers in non-religious programs had significantly higher levels of career motivations (t =2.47, p<05.). Additionally, importance of religious beliefs was negatively correlated with the career motive for volunteering (r=-0.33, p<.05.)
Changes Between Time A and B

As described above, paired samples t-tests were conducted to determine what changes occurred with volunteers between data collection points. Table 2 lists the mean scores for the volunteers on each measure administered at time A and time B, as well as the respective standard deviations. The changes found for each scale are described in more detail below.

Table 2.

Study Measures: Time A m(SD), Time B m(SD), T-Test t value and p value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Time A mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Time B mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>p value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MBI exhaustion</td>
<td>13.52</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>14.90</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>-2.15*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI cynicism</td>
<td>10.06</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>11.93</td>
<td>7.09</td>
<td>-2.04*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI personal efficacy</td>
<td>27.89</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>-0.67</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress Scale</td>
<td>15.34</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>14.93</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Scale-Agency</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Future Scale-Pathways</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>-1.20</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic concern scale of the IRI</td>
<td>22.23</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>21.18</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>-1.40</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective taking scale of the IRI</td>
<td>19.76</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>19.41</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal distress scale of the IRI</td>
<td>11.27</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenberg Self Esteem</td>
<td>27.97</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>16.43</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>13.0*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ self blame</td>
<td>8.13</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>-3.02*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ acceptance</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>11.27</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ rumination</td>
<td>12.28</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>12.09</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ positive refocusing</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>9.59</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ refocus in planning</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>13.70</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>-5.90*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ positive</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>15.59</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>-4.00*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Due to the relatively small sample size and the large number of analyses conducted on the data, effect sizes were calculated for those measures which showed a significant change between times A and B. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 3.
Table 3.

*Effect sizes for measures showing significant change between time A and time B.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>p value</th>
<th>r value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MBI exhaustion</td>
<td>-2.15*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI cynicism</td>
<td>-2.04*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenberg Self Esteem</td>
<td>13.0*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ self blame</td>
<td>-3.02*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ refocus in planning</td>
<td>-5.90*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ positive reappraisal</td>
<td>-4.00*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ putting into perspective</td>
<td>2.17*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ catastrophizing</td>
<td>7.77*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ other blame</td>
<td>-2.36*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Positive Coping</td>
<td>3.19*</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERQ Negative Coping</td>
<td>-2.20*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to program</td>
<td>2.04*</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = p < .05

Note: r value of 0.1 is considered a small effect, 0.3 a medium effect, and 0.5 and above a large effect

**The Volunteer Functions Inventory.** On the Volunteer Functions Inventory, volunteer motivations are rank ordered by primary motivation to least important motivation. In the current sample of volunteers the primary motivation for the sample was the values motive followed by the understanding motive, career, social enhancement, social esteem, and finally protection. The values motive referers to individuals’ need to act on beliefs about the importance of helping others, considered the altruistic motive.
The Maslach Burnout Inventory. Results of the MBI scores at time A and B indicate that burnout levels did increase in the volunteers. Specifically, the Cynicism subscale significantly increased from a mean of 9.98 at time A to 12.12 at time B ($t(42)=-2.04, p<.05$). The Exhaustion subscale also increased from 13.18 at time A to 14.90 at time B ($t(42)=-2.15, p<.05$). There was no significant change in feelings of personal efficacy which remained at 27.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). Contrary to hypotheses, volunteer’s levels of perceived stress did not significantly increase over time. Volunteers reported a mean level of stress of 15 at both time A and B. This mean stress level is in contrast to the means reported by Coehn and Wilson (1988) who found a mean of 18.8 for males and 20.2 for females. The reported levels of stress indicate that the current sample of volunteers have lower than average levels of stress as compared to the 1988 published means. This may be due to the difference in time period, as the published means are over 20 years older than the current study.

The Hope Scale. Participants did not demonstrate any change in their hopefulness, either in the area of agency or pathways, between data collection time A and B. At both times A and B the volunteers’ mean score on the Hope Scale was within normal limits with an average score of 26 for agency and 25 for pathways, and the reported normed mean of 25 (Snyder et al, 1991).

Interpersonal Reactivity Index. Volunteer’s scores on measures of empathy did not significantly change over the study time. As compared to the published normative sample, the volunteers did not differ significantly on any of the empathy subscales.
**Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.** Volunteer’s scores on the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale changed significantly over the course of the study. At time A, volunteer’s scores were an average of 28, which is above the normed range for average self esteem of 15-25. At time B, volunteers reported a decrease in self-esteem with an average level of 16 ($t=-13.7, p<.01$).

**Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire.** Numerous changes occurred in volunteer’s methods of coping over the course of the study. Analyses were run on all subscales of the CERQ. Subscales with significant changes are described. Use of the self-blame method of coping increased over study time ($r=.36, p<.05$), as did other blame ($t=-2.3, p<.05$). Methods of positive coping also increased over the course of the study, including refocusing on planning ($t=-5.9, p<.01$) and positive reappraisal ($t=-4.0, p<.01$). The negative coping method of catastrophizing decreased over time ($t=7.7, p<.01$).

Summary scores were created for both positive and negative coping methods, with negative coping including the self-blame, other-blame, catastrophizing, and rumination subscales and positive coping including refocusing on planning, positive reappraisal, acceptance, and putting into perspective subscales. Results indicate that over the course of the study negative coping methods decreased ($t=3.19, p<.01$) and positive coping methods increased ($t=-2.2, p<.05$).

**General Health Questionnaire 12 question version.** There was no significant change between participant’s scores on the GHQ-12 between time A and time B.

**Satisfaction with and commitment to the volunteer program.** Satisfaction with the volunteer program remained consistent over the course of the study. However, there was a significant decrease in the commitment to the program ($t=2.04, p<.05$).
Correlations with Satisfaction and Commitment

Correlations were conducted to examine which measures correlated with satisfaction with, and commitment to the program at time B. As shown in Table 4, numerous measures were significantly correlated with satisfaction. All three subscales of burnout were significantly related to feelings of satisfaction at data collection time B. Additionally, initial scores on the GHQ-12, values function of volunteering, and level of empathetic concern at time B were related to program satisfaction. In addition to correlations with program satisfaction, participants’ indicated level of commitment to the program was related to two of the burnout subscales, cynicism and personal efficacy, and the values motive for volunteering.

Table 4.

Correlates of program satisfaction and commitment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Satisfaction with the Program</th>
<th>Commitment to the Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Health Questionnaire (time A)</td>
<td>-0.427**</td>
<td>-0.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic Concern (time B)</td>
<td>0.445**</td>
<td>0.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhaustion (time B)</td>
<td>-0.45**</td>
<td>-0.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynicism (time B)</td>
<td>-0.688***</td>
<td>-0.663***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Efficacy (time B)</td>
<td>0.460**</td>
<td>0.426**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFI Value Function</td>
<td>0.480**</td>
<td>0.380*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *= p<.05, **= p<.01, ***= p<.001
Predicting Burnout

Several steps were taken to determine which variables could be used to predict burnout in the current sample. Due to small sample size using all subscales of coping and empathy in the regression equation was not appropriate. The following paragraphs describe a series of correlation coefficient analyses used to choose the variable for the final regression equation.

The correlation coefficient between the combined positive and negative coping skills measure and the three subscale levels of burnout: cynicism (cy), emotional exhaustion (ex), and personal efficacy (pe) was determined. As shown in Table 5, negative coping mechanisms at time A appeared to be best correlated with the burnout subscales and chosen for the final regression.

Table 5. 
Correlations between CERQ negative and efficacious coping subscales at time A and B with burnout subscales at time B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NEG A</th>
<th>EFF A</th>
<th>NEG B</th>
<th>EFF B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MBI Exhaustion</td>
<td>0.43**</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI Personal Distress</td>
<td>0.49**</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBI Personal Efficacy</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.05  **p<.01

To determine which areas of empathy would best predict level of burnout, correlations were run with the subscales of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index at time A.
and B with the subscales of burnout at time B. As shown in Table 6, results indicated that empathetic concern at time B was the most highly correlated with the burnout subscales.

Table 6. 
Correlation of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index subscales at time A and B with the burnout subscales at time B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MBI Exhaustion B</th>
<th>MBI Cynicism B</th>
<th>MBI Personal Efficacy B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic Concern</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.30*</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective Taking</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Distress</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic Concern time B</td>
<td>-.31*</td>
<td>-.54**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective Taking time B</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Distress time B</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>-.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p>.05  **p<.01

The final variables chosen for the linear regression analysis included levels of stress at time A, mental health concerns at time A, empathetic concern at time B, and use of negative coping methods at time A. A regression analysis was conducted using the enter method with these four variables for the three burnout subscales: cynicism, emotional exhaustion, and personal efficacy. The enter method of regression, in which all
variables are entered into the equation simultaneously, was used rather than a hierarchical or stepwise regression as there is no previous research to suggest a sound theoretical rational for the entry of one variable before or after another.

As stated above, the four variables used to predict change in cynicism were: time A score on the GHQ, time A score on the PSS, time A use of negative coping skills, and time B level of empathetic concern. Results of the regression analysis indicate that all four variables were significant predictors of level of cynicism. Despite being a significant predictor, the PSS did not predict cynicism in the expected direction. The regression results indicate that higher levels of stress at time A are predictive of lower levels of burnout. All other variables were predictive in the expected direction, increased use of negative coping methods and increased concerns regarding mental health predicted increased levels of cynicism, and increased level of empathetic concern predicted lower levels of cynicism. These variables accounted for 54% of the variance in cynicism scores.

Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SEB</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Stress Total at time A</td>
<td>-0.49</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>-0.40*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Coping Methods Time A</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.33*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Health Questionnaire Time A</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.48**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic Concern Time B</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-0.42**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $R^2 = .54$ (N=39) *= p<.05. **= p <.01.
Additional regression analyses were conducted using the same variables listed above to predict the other burnout subscales. For exhaustion and personal efficacy, not all selected variables predicted burnout levels. Exhaustion was predicted by use of negative coping methods ($\beta=0.53$, $t=2.75$, $p<.05$) and personal efficacy was predicted by level of empathetic concern ($\beta=0.87$, $t=2.83$, $p<.01$). In this case, increased empathetic concern predicted higher feelings of personal efficacy.

**Qualitative Response Questions**

Qualitative data was collected at time A and B regarding volunteer’s stressors and experience with their work. These responses were examined for trends. At time A, volunteers expressed a desire for easier access to their supervisors and desire for someone to mentor, or guide them through their work. One volunteer expressed frustration reporting “*Any support or information I asked for from my boss would have been nice.***” Additionally, volunteers reported that they wanted more information at the beginning of their service, specifically clear goals and expectations of their work. Comments requesting this include “*Just an overall understanding of the role and job description of what I am doing*” and “*more clear objectives for short term projects.*” Volunteers also requested more training specific to their work duties such as “*Relevant job-specific training, esp. regarding mental health*” and “*More spanish classes.*”

When asked about the stressors, volunteers gave several consistent answers at time A. Volunteers stated that they had difficulty adjusting to the culture, both at their work site and for some the community they were serving, one person described it as “*culture shock/ a sense of guilt regarding my privilege.*” Uncertainty regarding job requirements and expectations were commonly cited, as well as supervisor support.
Volunteers stated difficulties in “Not knowing levels of expectation for tasks” and feeling frustration that “There are also many people depending on me to complete tasks that I have not have proper training in or instruction.” Volunteers reported self doubt regarding their work performance such as “Feeling I don't have the experience to do my job well/not used to the working environment.” Finally, volunteers reported stress in balancing their time and living with reduced income, stated by one volunteer as “MONEY!!”

At time B volunteers were again asked about what additional information or support they felt they needed. Again, volunteers cited lack of supervisor accessibility. Additionally, volunteers expressed the desire for great support from the parent organization they were working for (commonly AmeriCorps or religious group) and wanting more volunteers or coworkers to share the load. One volunteer stated “It would have been nice to feel like I was part of AmeriCorps and something much bigger than just my one service site.”

Volunteers again stated that they felt a need for more explicit job descriptions and expectations. They additionally requested information on coping with the challenges of their work, described by one volunteer as “Free stress-reducing activities...planning of such activities.”

Specific stressors at time B again included lack of contact with their supervisors and confusion regarding their role in the organization or volunteer site. Volunteers stated

- “Lack of support from my superiors. I feel as if I am forced to make all decisions on my own and therefore have the weight of those decisions squarely on my own shoulders”
• “It's been a great learning experience but I don't think I have been very effective. I needed more support and more defined expectations and didn't know how to ask for them.”

Volunteers also reported doubts about their own work efficacy and concerns that they were not effecting change in the community they work. Statements included:

• “Lack of community involvement and a general disinterest in clients to be helped or to seek assistance that's not cash”

• “Feeling as if there is no hope and that my agency does not cause any real and lasting change”

Finally, stress regarding their future planning and transition out of service were common.

At time B, volunteers were also asked about the most rewarding experience they have had volunteering. Overwhelmingly the volunteers cited positive interactions with members of the community they were serving. Specific examples include:

• “Seeing the little kids get excited when I came into their school for recess time”

• “When a young man I've worked with for most of the year received his GED diploma, came up to me, gave me a hug, and said "Thank you," and I knew he meant it.”

When asked about their satisfaction with the overall volunteer experience, the volunteers gave generally positive statements:

• “I applied the skills I already had, and have been able to develop and grow my skill set further. In addition to that, I've learned how vital and impacting volunteerism and organized charity are to communities”

• “Very rewarding and satisfying feeling.”

To further examine patterns in volunteer’s responses, individual’s answers to the open ended questions were grouped into categories. Results of these grouping are presented below in tables 8 through 10.
Table 8.  
*Responses to the question: What has been the most stressful experience related to you volunteer service? Time A and B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Category</th>
<th>Number at time A</th>
<th>Number at time B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustment to the culture</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unclear work expectations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision / Agency support</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life and work balance</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with coworkers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.  
*Responses to the question: What, if any, additional support or information would have been helpful to you and your volunteer work over the past month? Time A and B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Category</th>
<th>Number at time A</th>
<th>Number at time B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization / Community support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor support</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear expectations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More training</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>75</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.  
*Responses to the question: What is the most rewarding part of your volunteer service during the past month? Time A and B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Category</th>
<th>Number time A</th>
<th>Number time B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationships with those served</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success with work tasks</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>81</strong></td>
<td><strong>53</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4

Discussion

Through the course of the study several hypotheses were supported and several unexpected findings were uncovered. The first hypothesis expected that volunteers’ level of burnout would increase over the course of their service was partially supported. Results indicated that volunteers’ level of cynicism and exhaustion increased. This indicates that at time B the volunteer reported greater distance from one’s work (cynicism) and emotional fatigue (exhaustion). However, volunteer’s feelings of personal efficacy, the third component of burnout, did not decrease. These findings show that over a 6 month time period volunteers expressed increased emotional strain and disparagement toward their work which would likely affect their quality of work and emotional health.

Additionally, this result suggests that, like individuals who are paid to work in social service settings, volunteers are also susceptible to burnout. Similar to previous research on social service workers in the United Kingdom (Evans et al., 2006), the current sample of volunteers had increased emotional exhaustion. However, unlike the workers in the UK, the current sample also demonstrated an increase in cynicism. Also unlike the previous study, the current volunteers did not report a decrease in personal efficacy, a protective factor against burnout which measures feelings that individual’s efforts are worthwhile. This may reflect specific differences between volunteers and paid workers. This may also reflect difference between a US and UK population. What is unknown are the potential changes volunteers would experience in burnout over a 12 month period of time.
This finding is also reflected in information obtained through the free-response questions. Commonly reported stressors for the volunteers at both time A and time B were lack of supervisor support and poorly defined work tasks. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) stated that role ambiguity was a significant risk factor for burnout, as was poor coworker support and lack of resources or information to complete the job well. These qualitative responses further support the past quantitative data findings regarding burnout.

The second hypothesis suggested that volunteers would experience increased feelings of stress during their volunteer tenure. This hypothesis was not supported, as measured by the perceived stress scale. There was no significant difference in volunteer’s rating of stress between time A and time B. Volunteer’s level of empathy did not decrease during the study either as might have been expected with increased ratings of burnout. These findings indicate that, though burnout increased in volunteers, they were not reporting increased feelings of stress or decreased feelings of empathy. Previous research does not fully support this finding.

Previous research in AIDS volunteers reported numerous stressors volunteer’s reported regarding their work (Guinan & McCallum, 1991). This study by Guinan and McCallum (1991) evaluated the types of stress individuals experienced, however, it did not measure what change in stress the volunteers may have experienced. The current study’s finding is, however, consistent with research by Mishara and Giroux (1993) who found that stress was lower in suicide hotline workers who had been volunteering for longer periods of time. The author’s explanations for the finding included increased feelings of competency by the volunteers and increased familiarity with the work
environment. Though the current study did not find a significant change in stress levels in either direction, the amount of time between collection points may have been insufficient to detect change. It is also possible that the effects of increased competency and familiarity with their work negated the effects of burnout on volunteer’s levels of stress.

It was also hypothesized that changes in burnout could be predicted by non-functional coping strategies, empathy, stress, and mental health. This was partially supported. Burnout was broken into three categories based on the Maslach Burnout Inventory subscales: Cynicism, Exhaustion, and Personal Efficacy. Volunteers’ reported level of Cynicism was positively predicted by increased stress, use of negative coping strategies, and greater health concerns. It was negatively predicted by increased empathy as measured by emotional concern. Volunteers’ reported level of Exhaustion was positively predicted by use of negative coping strategies. Finally, volunteers’ level of Personal Efficacy, considered positive feelings towards others and work, was predicted by increased levels of empathy as measured by emotional concern.

These findings are partially supported by past research as well. Evans et al. (2006) found higher intensities of stress were positively related to levels of burnout. Additionally, levels of burnout have been associated with coping methods in volunteers (Bennett, Kelhar, & Ross, 1994). Examining the coping strategies used by volunteers, it is logical that those who use more negative coping strategies would have higher levels of stress and more feelings of exhaustion and cynicism. The components of the negative coping subscales seem to reflect some feelings of burnout. For example, the use of catastrophizing, or emphasizing the negative, to cope seems to fit with emotional
exhaustion. However, no known research has been conducted on the role that empathy plays in susceptibility to burnout. The current findings, however, make intuitive sense as the individuals who retained higher levels of empathy also maintained higher feelings of efficacy towards their work.

An additional goal of the study was to explore the correlations between volunteers’ level of satisfaction and commitment to the program with measures given during the study. Increased commitment was associated with increased feelings of personal efficacy and values motivation for volunteering as well as decreased levels of cynicism. Satisfaction with the program was associated with increased values motivation for volunteering, feelings of personal efficacy, and increased empathetic concern. Satisfaction with the program was associated with decreased initial health concerns, exhaustion, and cynicism. It is interesting to note that the values motivation for volunteering was significantly related to both satisfaction and commitment to the program. Previous research suggested that it was the fit of the volunteer’s motive to the work site that predicted satisfaction (Winderman, 2006). As such, it is surprising that one motive was significant across different work sites. It is possible that this motive matches the two primary parent agencies’ goals and organization. AmeriCorps and Catholic Network of Volunteer Services both recruit with a focus on giving back to the community, thus individuals who participate are more likely to have that motive satisfied, regardless of the individual organizations’ focus.

It is also interesting to note that satisfaction with the program at time B was significantly related to initial general mental health in that poorer mental health was related to less satisfaction with the volunteer program. The GHQ-12 reflects the
likelihood of a potential mental illness. The results indicate that individuals with greater chance of mental illness are less satisfied with the program. However, this information should not necessarily be used to select potential volunteers. The GHQ-12 was also a significant predictor of burnout. So it is also possible that burnout serves as a mediating factor between mental health and satisfaction. Further research is needed to determine this relationship.

Volunteers’ use of different coping techniques changed throughout the study. Of note is the increase in positive coping techniques and decrease in negative coping techniques. This is of particular interest because volunteers showed an increase in burnout, but also an improvement in coping styles. This may be explained by the individual coping subscales that changed throughout the study. Negative coping methods of self blame increased, whereas catastrophizing decreased. Positive coping methods of refocus on planning, positive reappraisal, and other blame increased. It is possible that the different subscales play different roles in burnout. This may also be explained by the survival effect. Of the volunteers who completed both time A and B portion of the study, none left their volunteer program early. It is not known what coping methods or levels of burnout the individuals who did not complete the study had. It is possible that individuals who chose not to complete the second portion of the current study were different in some way than those who completed. For example, volunteers may have chosen not the complete the second portion of the study due to greater feelings of stress and burnout. It is also possible that some of the individuals who did not complete the second portion of the study may have discontinued service with their volunteer program.
Volunteer ratings of self esteem changed significantly as well. From time A to time B the average self esteem of the volunteers went from above average to the low end of average compared to the general population, which was a significant decrease. This finding is unexpected as previous literature shows higher levels of self esteem in individuals who volunteer (Ferrari, Loftus, Michelle, & Pesek, 1999). This is also concerning as prior literature also reported that low self esteem is related to higher levels of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). It is possible that the increased feelings of burnout negatively affected the volunteer’s self esteem, rather than low self esteem affecting susceptibility to burnout. Again, further research is needed to determine the directionality of these findings. Furthermore, the reliability of the self esteem measure at time B was unable to be calculated as assumptions were violated. This suggests that self esteem levels at time B were irregular in distribution or response style in some way.

Several unexpected findings were uncovered through examination of the effects of demographics on the data. Use of negative coping strategies and levels of cynicism decreased as the age of the volunteer increased, suggesting that older volunteers use fewer negative coping strategies and have lower levels of cynicism. This finding may again be the result of the survival effect that individuals who volunteer at an older age have self-selected for this work based on past success.

Certain aspects of religion also appeared to affect the volunteers. Volunteer’s self-rated importance of religious beliefs was negatively associated with the career motive for volunteers. It appears that the more important religion is to an individual the less motivated by career enhancement they are. Additionally, there was a significant difference between individuals who were volunteering for a religious-based organization
and those who were volunteering for a secular-based organization. Those in religious based organizations reported significantly lower career motives for volunteering. It appears that generally, religious individuals and religious organizations may appeal to different volunteer motives; however, more research is needed to replicate this information. Finally, individuals who identify themselves as Catholic or Christian use fewer negative coping mechanisms than do individuals of other religious beliefs. There were not, however, any differences in the positive coping techniques used. Given the effects of negative coping mechanisms on burnout, future research is needed to help determine which aspects of religious beliefs are associated with this difference in coping and how to best utilize these differences.

Several gender differences were detected as well. Females in the current study indicated a higher level of values motivation for volunteering as well as greater use of positive coping mechanisms. Males, however, indicated higher levels of cynicism than females. This makes intuitive sense as coping methods and values motive are associated with burnout and program satisfaction. However, given the small number of males in the current study these findings should be replicated.

**Implications for Volunteer Agencies**

The current research findings provide novel information for volunteer programs regarding the health and retention of their volunteers. It is important for programs to acknowledge the potential for burnout in their long-term volunteers. Though numerous previous studies have provided information on the benefits of volunteering, the potential negative effects of volunteer service should be known so that organizations can address and minimize these effects. The current sample of volunteer participants demonstrated
several negative effects of long-term volunteering, including increased burnout and decreased commitment to the program. That being said, volunteers also reported numerous benefits of their volunteer experience. Program directors can use this information to improve their own programs.

A potential area of improvement determined by the current study is in stress management and coping skills. Negative coping skills significantly predicted increased burnout in volunteers. Specifically, the use of self-blame increased during the course of the volunteer tenure. This coping method refers to thoughts of blaming oneself for what has been experienced. The Rumination, Catastrophizing and Self-blame scales are related to higher levels of symptoms of psychopathology. These non-adaptive types of cognitive coping could therefore be an important line of prevention and/or treatment. Also, there appears to be a 'protective' effect from the coping strategies Positive Reappraisal and Positive Refocusing (Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2002).

To improve their volunteers’ experience the agencies would benefit from helping the volunteers learn to incorporate positive coping skills. Stress management programs are readily available which address behavioral methods to reduce stress (e.g. Murphy, 1996). Behavioral stress reduction techniques may include deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, and guided imagery. The current study provides further insight into how to address volunteer’s coping and supports the inclusion of specific cognitive interventions for volunteers. This includes strategies to improve the ways volunteers think about negative experiences.

In addition to the need for improved coping methods, the current study’s free response section highlights the need for readily available supervision and support at the
volunteer work sites. Poorly defined job tasks and guidance has been established as a contributor to burnout levels. The current sample of volunteers frequently noted improved supervision as something they desired more from their programs. Parent organizations can assist in this area by making themselves available to the volunteers currently in service. Additionally, individual programs can establish regular meetings with their volunteer staff, establish and provide well defined job tasks and goals to volunteers, and frequently check in with volunteers for feedback on their experience. It may also be helpful to establish peer supports for volunteers. This might include regular meeting times with other volunteers currently serving, an online network volunteers can connect to, or even the individual agencies coordinating time for volunteers to interact with others their age or who are in their situation.

Improved empathy has been established in this study as a correlate to increased satisfaction with the volunteer experience and reduced levels of burnout, specifically empathetic concern. Volunteer agencies can work to monitor volunteer’s levels of empathy and intervene if the volunteers report decreased levels. Empathetic concern can be improved with valuing the welfare of the person in need (Batson, Eklund, Chemok, Hoyt, & Ortiz, 2007). This can be achieved through perspective taking. Perspective taking, also the positive coping subscale Putting into Perspective on the CERQ, can be encouraged through helping the volunteer step back from their experience. Volunteers can also be encouraged to periodically reflect on the individual’s worth that they are working with in the light of difficult situations.

Volunteer’s initial scores on the general Health Questionnaire are also related to their satisfaction with the volunteer program. Though physical health services are
frequently provided by one’s health insurance during volunteers’ time of service, mental health care may not be included. Additionally, the agencies the volunteers are working with may be related to the community mental health agencies in the area, making it more difficult for the volunteers to obtain help. It may be helpful for agencies to establish options for mental health care for the current volunteers.

Finally, agencies would benefit from evaluating what volunteer motives they are able to fulfill and then evaluating what motives the current or prospective volunteers have. Previous research has established that volunteer’s satisfaction with their program is related to their motives being matched with the agency’s purpose (Winderman, 2006). The current study found that individuals with a values motive for volunteering had greater satisfaction with their program. It is unknown if this is because the agencies were fulfilling this motive or if that motive generally predicts greater satisfaction. Regardless, agencies would benefit from evaluating what needs they are able to meet and determine how they are best able to meet the needs of their volunteers.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

The current study has several limitations which should be addressed in future research. One area of note is that the current data was collected via the internet. Though becoming more popular with researchers, it is unclear how this method of data collection affects individual responses, or perhaps more importantly, response rate. There were several significant benefits to using the internet. The population of long-term volunteers is relatively small. By recruiting through the internet a more geographically diverse sample was contacted. Additionally, the mean age of the current sample, 26, suggests a population that is more comfortable with computer use. However, the older age
volunteers may have been excluded due to unfamiliarity with the computer. Continuing research on the effects of internet data collection will help answer these questions. Additional research on the demographics and computer knowledge is needed on the long-term volunteer population.

Perhaps related to the method of data collection, the response rate of the second portion of the study could be considered a weakness. Of the original sample, 45% responded to the second portion of the study. It is unknown if there are differences between the responding sample and the non-responding sample. In the current study, this information would be of particular interest as the concepts being evaluated include retention and satisfaction. Future research may examine differences between these groups. Additionally, the resulting small sample size may make the generalizability of the current findings more limited. Future research may also use techniques to improve response rate including fewer or shorter surveys the volunteers need to complete. It would additionally be helpful to determine the reasons volunteers do not complete the second portion of the study, particularly if the volunteers quit their programs prior to time B.

The amount of time elapsed between data collection points may have also been a limitation. There was a 6 month time period between the two data collection points. The volunteers surveyed committed to an average of one year of service with their organization. Future research should look at the changes volunteers experience throughout the entire tenure of service. It is notable that even with the shortened time period between data collection there were significant changes over multiple domains. It is
still unknown, however, what these changes might have been from participants; pre-service baseline.

Finally, the current sample of volunteers is largely drawn from individuals participating in national programs like AmeriCorps and Catholic Network of Volunteer Services. This group does not encompass the entire population of individuals who engage in planned helping, or volunteering. Individuals may volunteer ten or more hours a week outside of these parent agencies. Additionally, the current sample does not encompass agencies which choose not to be a part of the mentioned parent agencies. It is unknown what differences there are in the agencies that rely on volunteer work outside of these organizations and the agencies that do choose to participate. Future research should determine what, if any, difference exist between these samples.

Concluding Remarks

Numerous benefits of volunteering to the individual as well as to the economy have been established in previous literature. The current study established that volunteers who commit to at least 10 hours a week for 10 or more months of service undergo some negative effects of their work, similar to the effects experienced by their paid counterparts. For organizations who rely on the work of volunteers, the current study provides information on factors related to feelings of burnout and decreased satisfaction in current volunteers. This valuable information can be helpful in determining potential strategies agencies can use to improve their volunteer’s experience and thus improve retention rates.
References


*Psychosomatic Medicine, 55*, 234–247.


Appendix A. Informed consent provided to participants prior to the start of the study

ADULT RESEARCH SUBJECT - INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Retention and Mental Health in Long-Term Volunteers

Principal Investigator: Kate L Jansen, M.A., Graduate Student, 419.530.2721
Joseph D Hovey, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor, 419.530.2721

Purpose: You are invited to participate in the research project entitled, Retention and Mental Health in Long-Term Volunteers which is being conducted at the University of Toledo under the direction of Kate L Jansen. The purpose of this study is to investigate changes in individuals’ mental health, stress level, and coping through the time spent in long-term volunteer projects (10 months or more, 10 or more hours a week)

Description of Procedures:
Data will be collected at two points across the year: winter, and late spring, approximately six months apart. Information will be obtained through self-report measures regarding mental health, stress levels, coping mechanisms, burnout, and protective factors of burnout. Additionally, free response items will be included to give you an opportunity to express specific stressors you are experiencing, as well as any positive experiences you are having during your tenure of service. Total time to complete the measures will talk approximately 30 minutes per session, equaling an hour and half over an 8 month period. After you have completed the surveys the research team will be available to answer any questions you might have about the research.

Potential Risks: There are minimal risks to participation in this study, including loss of confidentiality. There is a remote possibility that answering the surveys (or participating in this study) might cause you to feel upset or anxious. If so, you may stop at any time.

Potential Benefits: By participating in this research you will receive a $5 gift card to Starbucks. Additionally, participation in this research will allow you to help researchers better understand the effects of volunteer work on individuals.

Confidentiality: The researchers will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you provided this information, or what that information is. The consent forms with signatures will be kept separate from responses, which will not include names and which will be presented to others only when combined with other responses into a statistical analysis. Although we will make every effort to protect your confidentiality, there is a low risk that this might be breached.

Voluntary Participation: Your refusal to participate in this study will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled and will not affect your relationship with The University of Toledo or have any ramifications on your current volunteer work. In addition, you may discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits.
Contact Information: Before you decide to accept this invitation to take part in this study, you may ask any questions that you might have. If you have any questions at any time before, during or after your participation you should contact a member of the research team (see contact information above). If you have questions beyond those answered by the research team or your rights as a research subject or research-related injuries, please feel free to contact the Chairperson of the SBE Institutional Review Board, Dr. Barbara Chesney, in the Office of Research on the main campus at (419) 530-2844.

Before you sign this form, please ask any questions on any aspect of this study that is unclear to you. You may take as much time as necessary to think it over.

SIGNATURE SECTION – Please read carefully

You are making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your continuation indicates that you have read the information provided above, you have had all your questions answered, and you have decided to take part in this research.
Appendix B. Open ended responses to question: What is the most rewarding part of your volunteer service during the past month? At time A

1. Professional and emotional skills that I have learned. I fell my time here has taught me organization and helped me deal with people.
2. Meeting new people and encouraging them to eat right and try new ways of cooking.
3. Being included at the board meeting of the non-profit that I work at for: strategic planning, route planning. Also feeling more comfortable with my daily duties and using my creative talents to help out my co-workers with designing posters and editing film.
4. Being able to juggle so many different things at once; doing orientations, planning holiday party, coordinating volunteers working our donations basement, ESL, Family Center, those who are wanting to buy presents and present them to family and also juggling volunteers who are putting labels on our envelopes for our end of year appeal.
5. Being able to meet with the staff members in the office to be able to learn about the projects they're involved with and how we can work together over the next year.
6. Seeing my hard work result in funding for the nonprofit at which I volunteer.
7. Training for free tax preparation service
8. Essentially, I have just begun, but the most rewarding part of my service has been getting to know the needs of the community, my new important role to fulfill those needs, meeting the key persons that I will be working with, and the sense of adventure that's obviously linked with moving to a foreign community alone & initially uninformed.
9. helping those who do not have the resources to succeed, traveling to different places & meeting different people, enjoying a sense of family with all those I have worked with and for
10. I tutor elementary school kids, and this past week I got to make granola with a couple of them. It was great to see how excited and enthusiastic they were about it.
11. Assisting families and assuring them that anyone at anytime can have a problem that would require the help of others. So don’t be ashamed to ask for help.
12. Due to lack of funding, shutting down the program was being considered. Board will allow program to continue and search for funding.
13. Seeing everything start to come together. Contact with people who also want to improve knowledge in the community.
14. Realizing how I am affecting the students at my university. I am providing information and opportunities they may not have had access to before I came to campus.
15. Getting to meet and know many of the population I am here to help.
16. Seeing the smile on the face of someone who had let gravity take control of the corners of their mouth.
17. The kind comments received from clients
The most rewarding part is when listeners (the people we serve) call in to thank us for the work we're doing.

The most rewarding part of volunteering this past month is seeing the affect it has on the students I work with. I am in AmeriCorps and when I get a chance to work in the schools, I always have a great time helping them with their projects.

going to know people a variety of people in the new orleans non profit community and see a couple of examples of how the work/volunteering that we are doing is directly impacting the community.

Working with kids who have become conscious of what it means to be a peaceful person and seeing them bring tears to the eyes of their parents, educators and peers as they award them with a peace prize.

The most rewarding part has been finalizing the details of our art and poetry contest.

Collecting donations to provide Christmas gifts for our clients.

When we had our mentee's christmas dinner

Having the opportunity to learn more about the non-profit realm and the chance to collaborate with similar agencies in the area.

doing the planning for an event

opportunity to write grants, opportunity to work for a cause I enjoy

Serving the children for Christmas. Collecting and distributing toys to needy families in our area.

Submitting a grant proposal for the project I have developed for the non-profit where I am serving.

Seeing the differences in the children I work with.

excitement and talent of high school youth, engagement with personal interests, obtaining and expanding marketable skill sets.

The most rewarding part of my volunteering service thus far has been my personal ability to generate tangible support to help further the youth conservation corps in Colorado.

Helping animals find a home.

Watching programs take off and how some success right from the top.

Challenging myself to move across the country and really learn to be more independent and self-reliant.

Watching how children pick up on how important things are like, recycling and eating healthy.

Working with the children. Working with the children makes me feel like I'm making a difference.

Being able to see a change in the peoples lives that i have help

Helping a family find a replacement home after theirs was damaged in a hurricane

being able to help those in need reach their full potential and growth

not applicable

Seeing the children learn is very rewarding. Working with kids is so much fun!

Spending time with the kids.

watching the children to learn your name and repeat back things to you that
you have thought them

45 Seeing all my hard work and planning pay off when a kid is smiling from ear to ear because they are at a ski resort for the first time in their life.
46 The most rewarding part of my volunteer experience this month has been the knowledge that my work is preserving and enhancing stream ecological integrity of West Virginia while simultaneously combating impoverishment.
47 Being a part of a great city (New Orleans) at a very important time in the region's history.
48 gaining hands on experience in working on poverty-related issues
49 Seeing hard work paid off, ie. children learning more english in my esl classes.
50 The most rewarding part of my volunteer service would have to be being able to make a difference in a child's life. Since I tutor in the Science Lab, I'm able to show children how to experience with objects they would never consider to be fun and interesting as well as a learning process. To see the child learn something new and fun.
51 seeing life return to a dead stream, hope to those that live here
52 Bringing joy to the children and helping them learn
53 giving out gifts at the ymca christmas event the look on the kids faces was great
54 Successfully bringing together people from various organizations and sects of the population, to work together on community projects and events. (Organizations, which in years past, did not cooperate much)
55 Seeing how research and work is already making a positive impact on those serving
56 meeting with people and brainstorming possible ideas for projects.
57 Building new skills and confidence in an array of topics. Over the past month I have improved my own grantwriting skills, developed stronger communication techniques, and helped to bridge gaps between agencies.
58 Knowing what I am doing is important and helping people; Learning about another part of my country I didn't know; Talking to people who I've helped
59 We had a community meeting to plan for an event and everyone involved said no one would show up but people did and generated good ideas and seemed really involved and hopeful.
60 In addition to being an AmeriCorps VISTA Leader, I also am a mentor for a young lady. The other week she proposed that we go to a soup kitchen and feed the homeless. It was a beautiful experience to have her put out the request to do such an honorable mitzvah. And even though we are both low-income, we found joy and honor in helping those less fortunate then us!
61 Despite the persistent feeling that I cannot give the youth I work enough to heal their wounds, I do realize that my mere willingness to listen, to look them in the eyes, to show them respect, and to never give up on them, means something. Many of clients have not been shown love in very long time, and I like to at least believe that the compassion I have for them deep inside shows through and touches them at least momentarily. In conclusion, attempting to preserve human dignity is the most rewarding part of my service; even if I fail I think the attempt means something, and adds something to this badly broken
world.

62 Seeing how I positively influence the kids.
63 Getting to the results. Especially the smiling faces of the people we help
64 During the past month, I organized a Christmas Gift Drive for the youth that
we serve (70+ children between the ages of 2mos and 18 years). The gifts
were recently distributed. Being a part of that and hearing stories from the
parents and children about their gifts has been the most rewarding experience
in the past month.
65 working with kids
66 The most rewarding part of my volunteering in the past month has been the
fact that I have been able to gather christmas gifts for needy children in the
area. And the whole project has been very successful.
67 Helping people in need, accomplishing things
68 Because I work with youth, the most rewarding part is seeing the kids excited
about a project or concept I have introduced. I enjoy seeing youth engaged in
positive activities that they are motivated and passionate about. To be a part of
that experience is extremely rewarding and fun.
69 My work is in the planning stage and won't have its pay offs until the spring.
Aside from that, being able to tell people what I am doing is very rewarding--
not in a bragging sense but more with a hope of a domino effect where they
will become interested.
70 My international clients have welcomed me into their own families as if I was
their sister or daughter. They invited me to celebrate their holidays and even
call me "sister". This is important to me because I relocated 650 miles away
from home to participate in this year of service.
71 I love seeing the families that we are helping. I know I am not well off but it
gives me joy to know that I am helping someone less fortunate.
72 knowing that I am helping other people and that I am being a servant of God
73 Learning from the kids to not take life so seriously and to value my own
childhood experience as it was not nearly as stressful as theirs.
74 Seeing the excitement and dedication my students have to the activities we
provide them afterschool.
75 Working on a team to better the lives of homeless children.
76 The few personal relationships with my students that transcend the typical
student-teacher interaction.
77 seeing the kids happy
78 Interacting with people in the community! Whether it's tutoring at a local
middle school, assisting with blood pressure screenings or breast cancer
screenings, or serving at a meal program, the best part of my days are spent
with the people in the underserved community of south St. Louis.
79 relationships
80 Small moments with the kids in my program -- the moments when I remember
why I'm here. There is so much depth to these kids! It humbles me to see their
wonderful ideas and abilities while looking around at the lack of opportunities
they have.
81 Building relationships with people in the community.
Appendix C. Open ended responses to question: What is the most rewarding part of your volunteer service during the past month? At time B

1. Building relationships with the people within the community I serve; professional and personal.
2. The money I have brought in to the organization to make up for revenue shortfalls.
3. The memories I will hold for the rest of my life.
4. Generating valuable resources that ultimately help at-risk young adults receive employment, education, and training.
5. Freedom to work on many different types of projects and seeing the positive results.
6. Knowing that some of what I do actually matters in the long scheme of things.
7. Helping families following Hurricane Dolly
8. People being thankful
9. The little victories and the sincere moments, like seeing clients in their caps and gowns at the GED graduation ceremony and receiving a hug and a "Thank you" from a long time client and knowing that he means it.
10. I did not find the job to be rewarding at all.
11. I have been helping people recover from Hurricane Dolly
12. Getting to know and work with our kids on a longer term basis
13. Seeing the children's face light up
14. Working with children and having an impact on their lives
15. The little moments when I feel a genuine, positive connection with a youth - like when a young man I've worked with for most of the year received his GED diploma, came up to me, gave me a hug, and said "Thank you," and I knew he meant it.
16. Being able to work with the children and helping them succeed.
17. Knowing that I created a program that was both fun and educational for underprivileged youth. Establishing relationships with these youth was by far the most rewarding part.
18. Seeing the little kids get excited when I came into their school for recess time. Nothing makes you feel better then having kindergartners coming up to you asking are you playing with us today!
19. Getting to know refugees themselves as individuals
20. Seeing programs that I developed finally up and running on their own.
21. Working with kids--getting to spend time with them, show them they're loved, and make them smile.
22. Being hired on full-time at my current VISTA location.
23. Working with volunteers and see their enthusiasm and interest in the project. Being able to know who to ask to get my questions answered. Having a better idea of what is going on
24. Working with staff at food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters
25. The relationships I build with people
26. Working with staff at food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters
Seeing a change in the environment and the people that live here
helping children and families of incarcerated parents
Working with the older children. I mostly work with infants to preschoolers and recently I had the opportunity to work with school-age children. They are so smart and funny. I laugh most of the time when I'm with them and they do too.
Using the connections I have made in the last year to help put together a new service project for my program.
Serving with other people.
The relationships formed with the people I was serving.
I have been volunteering at a hospital since my term ended. And I have enjoyed it very much.
I've got to hear from some of our listeners (that's who we serve), who are very appreciative of our service.
in May we did the AmeriCorps Day
Gardening with our kids and teaching them about gardening.
Creating the opportunity to have the same students participate in summer programs that were part of our winter programs.
Connecting with the people in the community in which I have been serving/living and learning about their world through them. My perspective on my country, my world, and my species has become deeper and more complex. I feel like I understand and appreciate people much more.
Nothing really sticks out as overly rewarding, as I have been doing so much volunteering.
bringing together volunteers from all over to participate in an event i have planned an organized. and then seeing that project through to completion
Teaching cooking classes to participants who appreciate it. Even during classes with disruptive participants, I've learned to enjoy myself, not to take things too personally and how to become a disciplinarian.
seeing families who I volunteered with last year come together with the programming my current Americorps program offers. I invited my co-worker to be a guest speaker to a group of youth I worked with last year and have been spending time with this summer and it was such a great way to build the community between a great organization and some youth who can really benefit from their programming.
completing an entire school year and seeing how much my students have grown and learned
Seeing the events we have put on run smoothly
Spending time with my community, especially during our last few weeks together.
See families getting homes that they deserve
Seeing a program succeed due to my volunteer recruitment - knowing how to mobilize people to make a difference
Creating a process that can be sustained after I am gone.
The look on the other persons face know that your there to help them.
My greatest reward has been working with children and seeing growth in them, growth that will lead them to success in adulthood.
All of it. It's quite challenging at times, but there's always a great sense of accomplishment and community.

Working with others to financially empower survivors of domestic violence.

Reflecting on the skills and contacts made during the year.
Appendix D. Open ended responses to question: What has been the most stressful experience related to you volunteer service? At time A

1. The constantly changing nature of post-Katrina New Orleans. About every 4 months, the nature of rebuilding (ie codes, legal deadlines, demolition of homes) changes, and many of the client processes that our organization has come up with have to be scrapped and begun anew.

2. I wish I had more people to talk to at work. There are opportunities to socialize, but I'm one of the youngest at the agency and usually busy during the cooking classes I teach.

3. A lack of long term goal for my volunteer position, through AmeriCorps VISTA, which is a 1 year commitment. Since my project is in the third and final year, I feel like there is little use for me, other than random or administrative tasks. I would like more project management responsibility.

4. All of this as well! Trying to juggle everything related to my job plus keeping my personal life active and also trying to separate the two which sometimes is unavoidable.

5. Adjusting my time schedule to get up early enough to commute into work.

6. Moving from another state without having friends or family nearby. The transition has been much harder than when I moved to a new city for college, but that was only 1 hour from home; my volunteer service is 6 hours away.

7. Just starting out and not knowing where to go or what to do.

8. Taking IRS tax prep certification test.

9. The uncertainty of what my job will actually entail and the attempt to digest the plethora of information that ultimately makes up what my job will be. After various day-long training meetings, I've learned of my multitudinous duties and the quasi-strict way I'm going to have to manage them. Being somewhat of a rebel, I have a hard time following orders or doing work that does not essentially benefit anyone, work that is a waste of time sort of, work that is just a "check & balance" that hinders me from giving 100% of my time to where it is most needed; in short, bureaucratic work.

10. Attempting to meet the high expectations I put for myself.

11. The most stressful part of my volunteer service is trying to recruit families for my program. The culture here (in Appalachia) is very different from my own, and I am not very accepted as an outsider here. The hardest part is figuring out how to fit in, so that I can help effectively.

12. Watching a dad leave his wife with 8 kids and she has never worked a day in her life and she can't drive.

13. Lack of funding, community support.

14. The learning curve at first. Tons of research and analysis had to go into becoming "up to par".

15. Trying to juggle all my new responsibilities while adjusting to a new city and state. I just graduated in May and moving 8 hours away from home to a full time job with no friends nearby is daunting.

16. The uncertainty that I am doing all I can do in the area of grant writing.

17. Getting people interested in volunteering.
Phone calls from people that are upset about things going on in their lives.

We lost a staff member about 2 weeks into my service, and I've been picking up the slack for that for 3 months.

I am not doing as much direct service as I am supposed to be doing. I have been mostly behind a computer in an office cubicle since I've started this program. I feel like I am more an administrative assistant than an AmeriCorps member doing direct service in the schools.

Learning all of the different organizations that my office works with and catching up on all of the service days/activities that we have partnered to do in the past.

The sometimes unorganized manner of the non-profit that I work for.

My boss doesn't get me the information I need for my grants in a timely manner, and the organization in general lacks organization.

Working with boss who lacked the aptitude to do her job.

organizing our Thank You dinner for our mentors

Changing responsibilities. Due to financial cutbacks, my assignment has turned into something different than what I first expected it to be. I often have to create work for myself and don't always feel needed.

lack of support from agency

Not knowing levels of expectation for tasks

Keeping up with all the different volunteers for our events (150 volunteers over two events).

Financial instability.

The attitudes and disrespect from some children.

Working with other volunteers and staff members who do not pull their own weight, look for excuses to pawn off work load, and who treat volunteers like interns or peons rather than peers or colleagues.

Money-management has been unequivocally the hardest thing to deal with, though through it, i have learned a great deal about frugality and have been disgusted at the gluttonous nature of my past.

Founder's Syndrome, resistance to change, poor communication.

Trying to communicate between multiple buildings in which my volunteer service is needed.

Not making enough money to pay my bills.

Gaining support for my program.

Having to work and also attend school.

the frequent changes in supervisors

Lack of services for the poor and underserved

Not being able to help everyone that comes through my door

getting statistics for the assignment of project

Not being able to do more for the children that are low income. Some of these kids hardly have a coat for the winter, or toys for x-mas, clothes that don't fit. These kids are very honest and open and hearing about their circumstances at home can break one's heart, especially when one can only do so much to help.

Getting switched around.

the fact that the children are low income and the little attention that many of the
children receive from their parents

46 Overworking. Being a full-time VISTA volunteer, I sometime have weeks where I work 60+ hours for VERY little pay and this can be extremely difficult.

47 The most stressful experience would be long hours and the overwhelming amount of local travel that must be done. We sample water quality in a large area; the lower Cheat River is one of the largest watersheds in the state. Thus, we drive a lot.

48 Difficulty in being motivated for a volunteer job that I don't particularly like.

49 living on a small stipend

50 Communicating with spanish only speaking children.

51 The most stressful experience I had that related to my volunteer service would have to be when I can't understand the bilingual students very well. Even though I speak some Spanish, I can't fully understand it when a student speaks really fast.

52 getting around the people that work hard to discredit what the group is trying to accomplish

53 The time commitment. Finding a healthy balance between school, studying, work and volunteering

54 accumulating enough hours to get my education awards while still maintaining something of a social life.

55 Successfully bringing together people from various organizations and sects of the population, to work together on community projects and events. (Organizations, which in years past, did not cooperate much) In addition to this, there is a degree of stress when trying to help organizations which are fairly disorganized.

56 Goals changing

57 knowing what i should be doing exactly. knowing what purpose i serve.

58 Due to a limited budget, I must make every dollar spent count. There are many projects I am working on and I must complete them often without the proper funding. There are also many people depending on me to complete tasks that I have not have proper training in or instruction.

59 Understanding and adapting to a new culture (I'm from northern Ohio, moved to southern West Virginia); Being an outsider where I now live; Being isolated without my friends or family; Feeling I don't have the experience to do my job well/not used to the working environment

60 When I got sick and the road was out and it was icy and I couldn't go anywhere.

61 Being very low on the totem pole, limited responsibility, not being able to make decisions on my own, lack of appreciation.

62 Feeling as if there is no hope and that my agency does not cause any real and lasting change. I sometimes feel as if the youth we serve are too damaged to recover, and the services we offer are just keeping them afloat for the time being. The tough financial times we are currently facing has made this even worse as my agency is in serious danger of losing a large transitional housing program, and we currently have very few options for placing youth in transitional housing. I am currently working with an amazing young man who is intelligent, hardworking, courteous, and good-hearted. He attends high school full time, has
a great GPA, and works part-time; yet I cannot find him housing. Wait-lists are years out, and I worry his potential will begin to dissipate the longer he remains in the predatory shelter atmosphere.

63. The lack of communication between the teachers; there are often misunderstandings between co-workers because of this.

64. The hours/lack of money

65. The most stressful experience would be trying to get some of the youth to participate in programming that would be beneficial to them - often times the teens I work with are not interested in learning more about the resources available to them.

66. programming

67. The pressure to get things done by the deadline.

68. Overload of responsibilities

69. I have had a lot of failed lesson plans. I do not have a background in education so it is often stressful to have my best laid lesson plans experience a massive train wreck. The goal of my program is to have the youth complete a project that changes a policy and/or practice. I have not yet met that goal in large part because I am still learning how to be an effective educator.

70. Working in a volunteer setting for 40 hours a week.

71. I feel I have no direction or supervision. Not only are all of my projects self-contrived, but also long-term. The effect of this is that daily accomplishments and small successes become negligible.

72. It is stressful knowing that as much as I help, there is still so much more that I could be doing.

73. Not knowing my role is supposed to be. Volunteers roles are frequently undefined.

74. Seeing what these kids are going through instead of having a carefree childhood.

75. Stress comes when students do not listen and follow directions.

76. Working with kids who have behavioral and/or learning disabilities.

77. Teaching, and work associated therein. I work in a tough neighborhood, and that difficulty is reflected in my kids and their parents.

78. finding enough time to get everything done

79. Whenever I encounter a local agency or organization that fails to treat its clients with dignity and respect. The shortcomings of these "systems" maintain people in the cycle of poverty and keep them in a subordinate position.

80. culture shock/ a sense of guilt regarding my privledge

81. I feel overwhelmed sometimes by the amount of things I'm responsible for, when I feel that I don't have the information or skills to accomplish them successfully.

82. Finding time to prepare for my future after this volunteer year. It is hard to find time to finish applications, prepare for interviews, etc.
Appendix E. Open ended responses to question: What has been the most stressful experience related to you volunteer service?

At time B

1. Managing many different partners/tasks in one day can be stressful. Making sure that I have done everything I said I would for each (very different) organization at the end of the day stresses me sometimes. Also, just managing personal finances has been stressful at times.

2. Seeking individual donors

3. The most stressful experience related to my volunteer service is dealing the disrespect from some of my students.

4. Lack of philanthropy and ability to leverage new funding partners during the economic downturn.

5. Miscommunication around the workplace that leads to doing redundant work or very short notice assignments. Also, having a project that is not directly related to my work take up too much time.

6. Feeling that many of my energies were wasted on tasks that did not matter in the long or short term. Basically, a lack of meaningful tasks to keep me busy.

7. Paperwork that is required by Americorps and VISTA

8. The people that are not thankful

9. Lack of support from my superiors. I feel as if I am forced to make all decisions on my own and therefore have the weight of those decisions squarely on my own shoulders.

10. Lack of community involvement and a general disinterest in clients to be helped or to seek assistance that's not cash.

11. Lack of resources

12. Having more children for longer hours of the day and being understaffed

13. keeping in contact with the family

14. trying to balance work, school and homework

15. Feeling unsupported at work. I feel that I am making 90% of my decision without managerial support and seeing that those decisions carry a lot of emotional weight it is very difficult to carry it all on my shoulders without feeling supported by a superior.

16. Some students will get it instantly while it takes others more time so therefore we would have to have a variety of activities yet at the same time still have all the children learn the same materials.

17. Writing reports. Tracking down the information needed for grant reports.

18. Recruiting families to come to my family wellness night. It is a summer event so I am fearful that no one is going to show up.

19. Dealing w/ personal issues plus my workload which increased 10 fold for about 2 months or so.

20. not being appreciated or hardly recognized by fellow staff members/coworkers who are on the payroll.

21. Trying and failing to contact clients and to get them keep commitments.

22. Having to develop a focus group with 20 students in 2 weeks in order to use up funding.

23. Trying to find my place in the community. also has been most rewarding

24. working with staff at my own organization
I am a teacher...everything to do with that and all of the responsibilities that are tied to that job.

working with staff at my own organization

restoring aquadic life to a dead stream

recruiting mentors and mentees for the program

Drama between teachers e.g. miscommunication or no communication, disagreements

Trying not to become overwhelmed by my ever-expanding list of duties.

Completing projects on time.

Not having in money at the end of the program for finding an apartment, paying for school books, loans...etc

Not knowing what to do when the workers are stressed.

I've been doing the job of two people for 8 out of the ten months I've been there. It's pretty stressful not to be able to take a day off.

not being trusted with responsibility or getting the training needed to step up and take initiative

Work overload.

Being overworked- there were weeks that I worked up to 80 hours 7-days a week

In the beginning, my self doubt was crippling (see my initial survey answers!), and it sent my personal and professional self confidence to an all-time low. I was sure I wasn't competent enough to help my organization achieve its massive, important mission. Toward the end, as I gained confidence, the most stressful experience was dealing a disorganized, dispassionate boss and board (who therefore gave me little to no support or direction on my work, and forced me to do their jobs, which I didn't sign up to do) and the continuous stress of being in a foreign culture/place with few people to relate to.

Preparing for the next volunteer to take my place.

distance from others in my organization; lack of contact with people.

Frequently I don't feel as connected to my work or appreciated by my coworkers. The communication in the office has become more and more tangled, making it difficult for me to feel needed any longer.

poor management, communication and appreciation from the non-profit

My program is in the same city where I went to college and near where I grew up. I have begun to regret the decision to remain in this city because while I am still physically close, I feel terribly distant and on top of my responsibility to my students, coworkers, and community I also spread myself thin trying to keep up with old friends and professors/mentors as well as my family

Coordinating a volunteer appreciation dinner

1) The first few weeks on the job, getting acclimated and learning my new responsibilities, especially since my boss was out of the country for my first four months. 2) Violence and related issues that developed during my last few months in the neighborhood where I was working.

The afterschool program I work with

- unpredictable hours/overtime - not having clear job expectations

Unclear mission statement/long-term goals of the organization I am working with
Working with different types of people and messing together so that the work gets done.

The most stressful experience I have had so far is also in relation to the children. I volunteered in a summer camp program with many undisciplined children. It was very unnerving to realize the power in a large group of children who had little respect for adults.

Lack of organization, and inaction, on the part the board of the non-profit I am volunteering with.

Keeping up with the myriad tasks assigned to me.

Planning for after service is complete.
Appendix F. Open ended responses to question: What, if any, additional support or information would have been helpful to you and your volunteer work over the past month? At time A

1. I wish we had closer ties to the local government.
2. None.
3. To help my mindset, I will need to define the goal(s) of my position so that I can gage my accomplishments throughout the remainder of the year. While my supervisor created a VISTA Activity Description (VAD) before I started, he confessed that we can "throw it out the window", and figure out what my role in the organization will be over time. Well, first of all this was misleading when I applied for the job. Secondly, he is so busy, and it's been 3 months, with my goals not anymore clearly defined. I have set out to make my own goals to prevent myself from getting even more depressed about the situation. As for physical materials and intellectual knowledge, the non-profit where I work is full of wonderful resources.
4. That I would have known about activities for our holiday party that I would have to help coordinate, and that I would be responsible for getting our end of year appeal letter out to all volunteers, sponsors, etc.
5. A map of the office and where various staff are located. Business cards ready for me when I arrived so I can start passing them out to my existing contacts.
6. Although my volunteer service is meant to be an educational and training opportunity for me, I would have preferred more formal, job-specific training at the beginning of my service. I won't really get it either until my 10th month!
7. No
8. None
9. My main supervisor, who infact I met yesterday for the first time, gave me a giant relief after answering many questions that couldn't be answered during my first days of service. She does not work in the same county as me, but has offered any help/advice whenever it may be needed, even a "3am phonecall" would not bother her. Ultimately, it appears I will have the support I need.
10. I would love to have more community support. It is almost non-existent.
11. More information on assistance for families with parent(s) in prison, domestic violence assistance or programs that help with moving expenses.
12. More participation by directors in fundraising efforts, more community financial support, more participation by local churches, businesses.
13. Possibly a contact that was well-versed in the subject matter of my project who could be a mentor.
14. More details about what was needed in the projects I had taken over.
15. It would have been helpful to have another VISTA working on the same project so that we could compare notes.
16. General guidance
17. An assistant to help with the phones
18. How to recruit more volunteers!
19. A job description would have helped me understand my role better and it also would have helped me point out to my supervisor that I am not doing what I had
been recruited to do.
20 While I do have some materials that the last Americorps Vista collected from service days, seminars, and activities; a more complete set of material on what my organization has been a part of in the past, who partnered with us, and what their organizations do would be really helpful.
21 knowing who my organization has worked with in the past so I would not have to rekindle connections and community contacts. Also an adequate healthcare package would have been very beneficial.
22 Any support or information I asked for from my boss would have been nice.
23 management support
24 n/a
25 names and phone numbers of tutors who have expressed an interest in the project I'm supposed to launch; information about what kind of financial support this project would be receiving
26 more clear objectives for short term projects
27 Assistant to just make reminder calls/emails.
28 Better feedback on the grant proposal I submitted, and information regarding other sources of funding once the initial request for funds was denied.
29 n/a
30 Relevant job-specific training, esp. regarding mental health. We are a mental health education program--not service or treatment--but I have not received any training pertaining to risk factors, warning signs, etc.
31 A strong leader.
32 Actually been emailed by the supervisors of other buildings.
33 Closer support network, opportunity to bond with other volunteers.
34 MONEY!!
35 Knowing how to manage my time better between school and work.
36 A clear understanding of who was in charge
37 I think I have had sufficient information and support.
38 more MONEY
39 A more functional program or software to extrapolate info from one web site to convert to usable stats-- doing all manually and requires too many labor intensive hours
40 More resources for these families in need. Some of these families don't even know that they can get helped.
41 Supervisor support.
42 to get ready to get attached to the kids
43 More experience with my work. I am learning as I am doing which in turn means I take longer to complete tasks.
44 Some information on past successes of other volunteers conducting similar work would have been helpful. That would have allowed me to recognize successes as well as think of new, original projects that hadn't been done previously.
45 None - the VISTA network has a website with many resources that I have not yet sought
46 More spanish classes.
47 I would just say to have more volunteers so we don't need to be so stressful
about what we have to complete.

48 legal advice

49 How much time is involved

50 I need help balancing my Americorps commitments with my personal life

51 Over this past month? I have been noting the wealth of knowledge which would have been beneficial to many VISTA members, were we given it at our pre/in-service orientation/training. Eg: structures of many non-profits and committees, more in depth time spent discussing grant giving entities and their structures and how their decisions are made, more time discussing meetings - how to facilitate positive and *productive* meetings. But most recently, what my role is in the organization.

52 I don't think any information could have been helpful. Many of the challenges I am facing are due to the lack of experience. Many times it is necessary to just try your best and this will provide the best information for future trials.

53 More, regular training about the culture I am living in now; More people and families reaching out to help me (besides older men)

54 Knowing more people in the area or region doing similar work. A list of resources. Knowing more people my age. More trainings.

55 None

56 I would have appreciated additional non-religious supports. I am not religious and do not find the religious aspects of my program therapeutic. Yet I still yearn for some sort of outlet. A forum in which my internal struggles could really be laid out on the table without the cop-out excuse that it is all God's plan, etc, would be great. I often feel resentful about this, and I feel this resentment growing because of my inability to express it openly because I know it will not have an effect. I am now tending toward the opinion that God is no more than a psychological crutch for those who cannot handle the sad reality of this world.

58 Better preparation/ job description.

59 None

60 n/a

61 n/a

62 none

63 More acknowledgement of the work that I put in

64 Shadowing other teachers/volunteers as they work with youth. More background information on working with youth in poverty and in an urban setting.

65 I could have used more direction from my superiors.

66 I wish I had my agency's support. Although I am a full-time volunteer with my own office and responsibilities, I rarely get recognition for my accomplishments within my Institute.

67 None

68 Just an overall understanding of the role and job description of what I am doing. Sometimes because I am unable to attend staff meeting small bits of information do not reach me.

69 None

70 I feel the support network at my volunteer site is very extensive and dependable.
Additional freedom to use a computer.
I cannot think of any information. 
more available resources
I'm trying to learn more about how some of these local agencies (food pantries, 
rent/utility assistance programs, health clinics) must operate under their federal 
and financial constraints. This information cannot be obtained from an agency's 
website...I want to know how and why these organizations "run" the way they 
do. 
Support in the beginning with trying to figure out how to defer loans would have 
been helpful. I am still struggling with figuring out and finalizing this.
Appendix G. Open ended responses to question: What, if any, additional support or information would have been helpful to you and your volunteer work over the past month? At time B

1. I can't think of anything.
2. can't think of anything
3. At times I feel my program was under staffed.
4. I also had all of the support I needed.
5. NONE
6. Some other person to do the paperwork that I dislike
7. Same as above
8. Feeling more supported by my supervisor. I am supposed to have weekly supervision and have only had about 4 sessions in the past 6 months.
9. More community support and interest. The churches don't particularly support the program and that hurts it as well.
10. More volunteer teams to do repair/construction work
11. More staff for field trips and more active participation from other teachers
12. more information on things to do with the mentee
13. being allowed to work on homework during down time
14. A more supportive supervisor. I am supposed to have weekly supervision and have had maybe 4 in the over 6 months I've been working with this supervisor.
15. none
16. If my supervisor was here for me and not abroad during the end of my service. She has offered no suggestions about my Wellness Night until 3 days prior to it.
17. If i had more volunteers or more staff working on this big event I had to plan
18. My site supervisor could have given me more support in my program. She doesn't really worry too much about whether I'm meeting my objectives. I'm the kind of person who needs general guidance every once in a while. I'm not good at motivating myself to do things that aren't necessarily required of me, especially if they don't seem inviting to me.
19. Having more time, or more advanced notice would have been a nice additional support.
20. help interpreting data
21. Regular visits from program staff
22. none
23. Protection from liability for volunteer organization
24. more volunteers available at the office.
25. More general support from co-workers.
26. More guidance on projects I am unfamiliar with or have no experience with.
27. None
28. We were AmeriCorps volunteers, but we had no connection with AmeriCorps. It would have been nice to feel like I was part of of AmeriCorps and something much bigger than just my one service site.
29. Got enough.
30. We got a paid employee last month, and she has been so helpful.
31. insight into how to develop this manual we are working and and insight into how to help with trainings we are supposed to do soon.
32  More management support - it would help if they were around more often to help me find the resources I need.
33  MOre staff
34  Direction, advice, wisdom, experience shared by my boss and board would have helped me feel like my work was making a bigger impact and could be used after I was gone. The criticism and encouragement would have especially helped me when I was starting out and feeling particularly self-conscious and down. Also, since I was living in an unfamiliar place/was an outsider, it is always helpful to have more friends who share your experience and can relate on that level.
35  None
36  none
37  Better communication between the staff at the office and patient attitudes.
38  Guidance writing a 30,000 dollar grant that I was just handed to write... I turned it in but would have appreciated a little bit more support in writing it and conducting the research.
39  We are supposed to reflect every other week but my community culture does not allow for this to happen and it is frustrating to do without. Our support people are not as involved as I wish they would be. We do not connect to our four pillars enough; I think outlining these visually as a community and updating as the year progressed would be helpful.
40  None
41  None that I can think of.
42  None
43  N/A
44  More supervision at times.
45  It would have helped to have another VISTA working with me from the start and to have a supervisor who was more accessible.
46  I've actually been fortunate enough to have many older, and wiser, women volunteering with me. When I do have questions, there is often someone who can help me.
47  N/A
Appendix H. Open ended responses to question Rate your satisfaction with the volunteer program on a scale of 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (could net be more satisfied) and describe the reason(s) why? At time A

1. I am very happy here, but I always find things that could be better. I wish people higher up in my organization, while very supportive and encouraging to me, were less combative when dealing with various people outside our organization. I wish the nature of the rebuilding in post-Katrina Louisiana were less corrupt.

2. This is a very fulfilling job. I get to work on my own and I'm given more responsibilities over time, so I have not been overwhelmed or left out, but there are moments when I feel useless.

3. I am not satisfied because, as mentioned in question 3, I was misled when I applied for the position, and I feel that my supervisor has not helped me develop the program to be challenging and to allow me to best use my talents. I could give so much more than what I do now, but I don't have the opportunity to do it. Instead, many days I have nothing to do, and I feel bad about that. However, I love the non-profit organization that I work for and volunteering in other parts of the organization other than my department. I have also learned a lot, which will help me in building a career. The volunteer coordinator that works here is great and is allowing us to plan workshops for our professional development, perhaps I should talk to her about my difficulties with my volunteer position.

4. I would say 9 because I absolutely love working where I am working and working with refugee clients and also our great volunteers, but I have noticed that it has taken a huge strain on my body, health and stress levels and that I hope it hasn't permanently affected me physically due to the high amount of stress.

5. I'd rate my satisfaction with the program an 8. The staff are very professional and caring. The orientation seems somewhat chaotic and it will take some time to translate the more abstract portions of my job description into specific action plans.

6. I love my placement and the opportunity, but I was really disappointed when I meet the people who ran the volunteer program at the federal level. I felt a bit taken advantage of and misled, as well as politically oppressed by the Hatch Act. The program leaders came off as uncaring in orientation and actually told a group of 200 volunteers that financial decisions were made "in the best interest of the government." I think everyone suspected that considering we all are paid at 105% of the poverty level, but to say it so coldly was rude!

7. Just because I barely started but I'm sure it will progress upward soon.

8. I am able to help others and work at my own pace. My position allows me to use training and skills I already have and acquire more training.

9. I like the program thus far, but it's spread out over several bureaucracies; essentially, I will have 3 different bosses I will be doing work for, the 3 "checks & balances" I would like to call them. With this, there will be a lot of useless work that will take me away from helping the needs of my community.
10. I am put in situations where I am best able to use my skills to help people
7. I enjoy my program very much, though it has been difficult for me. But I do
not like that the most I could ever do this is 2 years.
10. I have not volunteered in the community as much as I do now. And how
people need to know that it's okay to ask for help. There are people who care.
7. Location of our office is not ideal. Too out of the way (located in a rural area).
Reports we are to submit are too limited in the information. Their questions do
not cover several actions I am responsible in completing.
10 for the organization I am volunteering for--they have tried to help me as much
as they can and have tried to provide structure (deadlines,etc) but do not
micromanage. 6 for AmeriCorps-many of the financial details were not
disclosed beforehand. It is hard to contact any supervisors at the headquarters
which is 2 blocks away. Miscellaneous issues with "insurance" and availability
of information.
9. I like my job, the people I am working with, the location and the students I
come into contact with. If I was about 5 hours closer to home I would be
perfectly satisfied.
9. the program I am currently with has a 'sink or swim method' and though I am
not directly affected by this, I can see where others would.
8 - I have overall had a very good experience
8. There are many ways my site could improve, mostly through more
organization, but on the whole I am extremely satisfied with it.
3, the only time I am satisfied with this position is when I am actually doing
direct service in the schools. Otherwise, I am extremely disatisfied with my
position. I did not sign-up to be someone's personal assistant.
9-I am very happy with my program so far. Being so new, there are still a few
things that I feel unorganized or confused about but I really think that those
things will work themselves out as I get more comfortable in my organization.
6.5
7, it is a good program, but there isn't a lot of support from the organization I am
with. I feel like the organizations we are placed with either don't know what to
do with us, or they expect us to save the organization and don't provide any
assistance.
4
9, because it is fun and you get to see the difference you make in the child or
young adults life.
7 - I love the ideology of the program I am working with, I just wish my services
were better utilized.
5 Right now I am in the middle of deciding whether I want to continue this work
with this agency for another year. I enjoy the target audience, but the lack of
information and support is at times maddening--I have to ask at least three times
to get even the simplest information. In addition to not getting support in the
tasks I've already been given, I keep getting more and more tasks put on me.
We are supposed to have a work plan, but it isn't working because it's too vague.
8 - I would like to see more organization within our volunteer tracking program,
but that is part of my job and I am becoming more satisfied with it.

6, I feel that I am not totally utilized in my position. While I feel that I am making a difference, there does not appear to be a need for me to remain in the office for 40 hours a week.

30 I would rate my satisfaction as a 4, or somewhat dissatisfied. I have had a hard time believing in the long-term impact of our core services, due to various systemic problems. This has made convincing funders that our organization is truly viable in the disability community.

5

31 10; This is the best job I have ever had. I love working with the students and staff and my bosses are so understanding and motivating. I enjoy coming to work each day.

33 The AmeriCorps program is extremely well thought out and has no major kinks. They really take care of their volunteers and make every effort to ensure assimilation into the cultures of our agencies and volunteer service.

34 I would have to rate my satisfaction level at a 8, which would be higher if I was a bit more challenged and if I had the opportunity to go to the front lines and see exactly what my work was going toward.

5 - the whole organization is very chaotic and the founder/director did not want to change anything.

36 5

37 6 - I've struggled with moving so far away from home and not really knowing anyone in a new place. It's also been a struggle to make ends meet on my living stipend, and that's with parental support.

38 8, I love what the program does for people, and how it makes a difference, but you don't know how difficult everyday will be until you get started.

39 10, I am so satisfied to work with the children.

40 8 again because of the frequent changes at the site

41 8 I love my job and I love the people I am serving.

42 10 I have an awesome array of talent surrounding me in regards to not only my fellow VISTAs but also my supervisors and the general Goodwill staff. Where I am weak, they are strong and vice versa. We not only help one another but we literally hold one another up in times of turmoil.

43 9 - Considerate of volunteers as individuals and are not demanding or coercive in getting their own agendas completed -- it has been a real team effort with all concerned.

44 8-If only our program would help the kids when they go home. -Honestly we hardly see our supervisor around, it's the volunteers that are there.

45 8 because I know the supervisor could do a better job.

46 7 satisfied with the little hours I work and the I get out early but with the small pay, getting paid once a month can be stressful.

47 8. It combines 2 of my biggest passions- snowsports and serving youth. I enjoy what I do every day.

48 6. I am very satisfied with the mission of the work I am doing. The goals are very well aligned. However, often it seems, that the methods chosen to meet those goals are not successful. It seems that much money and effort is being
spent without achieving the desired outcomes.

7. Great program which does a lot of good. But I don't like my day-to-day activities.

8. I am working on programs designed to make social service agencies more effective and to try to address the root causes of poverty. The organization I am with is a bit challenging to work within, but overall the experience is excellent because I love working with kids and feeling like I'm an important asset to their education.

9. It's a wonderful volunteer program. It's very diverse and everyone works together. It's like a family when you go to volunteer.

8. Without this organization nothing would be getting the attention it needs.

8. AmeriCorps is truly a rewarding program and there is a sense of unity with the rest of the volunteers. I am dissatisfied, however, that some of the teachers in the classroom overlook me as just extra help, rather than an adult on their level.

7. I enjoy the work I do with the kids. I have complaints with the way the organization is run. I feel my time is not always used to the fullest. I am frustrated when others are disorganized. Overall though, I'm glad I made the decision I did to join this program.

7.8 While they did a good job at motivating and inspiring during our pre-service orientation, it seemed to only touch briefly on the skills and tasks that would be required for the service. This lack of substance was repeated at our in-service trainings and left a good deal of the people I talked with at the training (many of which were at the pre-service with our group as well) felt similar feelings of frustration. The cattle call type method was not as effective, as we were now involved with individual organizations with individual needs. The money would have much better spent (and probably cheaper) by allowing each organization to apply for the funds to send their VISTA member/s to trainings more tailored to the specific needs of the community organization. At the end of the day it has been an insightful and educational process.

8. Because there was excellent training, open communication with supervisors, and could openly ask for additional resources to get the job done, also this program was family-friendly.

5. I am really enjoying myself, but I am a little confused about what exactly I should be doing. The general purpose I am really happy to complete, but I would like some more guidance and help from others to get me there.

8. I am very satisfied with the volunteer program I am involved in. There is great training opportunities on a broad spectrum of topics, great support, interesting projects, and much more. I am often dissatisfied with the attitude of my board members of my organization for not accepting new ideas or strategies.

7. Though my job should be more satisfying, as it is exactly what I have wanted to do, and I feel like all the work I do is much needed, my isolation and anxiety about my experience and job performance has taken away from my satisfaction. I suspect this is just the adjustment process, as I have only been here 4 months.

7. I am enjoying my time here a lot, but the work I'm doing seems rather diffuse. I have too many things I am supposed to do so I get overwhelmed and none of them gets done well. I would rather focus on doing one thing well. On the other
hand, this approach does mean that if one thing does wrong something else is probably going right, maybe.

3 - As an AmeriCorps VISTA Leader I feel like my strengths are not being used to their full abilities. Since I am only on the job for a year, I am not given the chance to make the connections with the VISTAs because of this. The Program manager and Executive director do not let me have a very intimate relationship with the VISTAs because of this. I am not one to make a commitment and then quit, so in order to feel more fulfilled and more like a contributing member of my community, I have joined other volunteer programs.

8 overall. I love my job, despite everything else I do love my job. I have also made some permanent changes in my life and the small decisions I make because of the influence of community members, and a real desire to live simply in keeping with my program's goals. I no longer eat meat, I ride my bike 5 miles to work each day, I take public transportation, I think about consumption, waste, and out environmental footprint. I have also met my amazing people both at work and at home. I do wish there was more meaninful reflection and discussion within my program.

8- the program I'm participating in is both fun and rewarding but the organization and structure could use some work.

8..I enjoy the program a lot. There's always something that can be done better though...or just more people to volunteer at the programs we create.

7 because sometimes there are very rewarding experiences and sometimes very stressful experiences but they seem to balance out.

9, ive volunteered here for many years in the past and i love it here

8. I never give a 10, because then there is nothing to look up for. But I have been very satisfied with the experiance.

8 - Lots of training and support, good people that I work with in the same situations, everyday experience of helping children directly - BUT very few resources to work with, organization can be very disorganized, things move extremely slow when you want to get something done

8. I feel that I am making a positive impact, though I must admit at times it is hard to see that. I also feel like I have learned a lot about myself and have developed important skills that I will use throughout my life. I am constantly learning. I do, however, have little time to reflect on this experience and make time to seek the resources I think would help me create a more successful program.

6. I seem to have a typical desk job and therefore get little personal satisfaction from my work as compared to someone doing direct service.

7. Because my volunteer program is directly related to my degree, and I view this service year as the first step of my career, I find it extremely valuable, which I am thankful for. Unfortunately, I feel that I was not prepared, nor given a proper orientation to the agency. I often feel too independent, unsupported, or bored.

8

8 I highly enjoy what I am doing. I like the fact that I intentionally choose how I spend my time and who I spend it with. I would however like there to be more
emphasis on my faith and more clarity in what I am doing.

8 I am satisfied with the program because I do feel we are making an impact on these children, however, they are only staying for such a short period of time, a bigger impact could be made.

9 - I really love the people I get to work with everyday and I really enjoy the students I interact with everyday.

8. I love the program and working with the kids and am finally starting to settle into the routine. I wish there was maybe a little more everyday touching base with program coordinators, as it often feels as though it's the few of us in our program flying solo, but otherwise, I am satisfied with the experience so far.

8 - I am honestly experiencing what I expected. I think we could use more moderation within our community, but overall I am very happy. In fact, happier than I expected to be right out of college.

5 - just not enough hours in the day or manpower to get all the work done.

8. Although I love the work that I do, I think in retrospect I would have chosen a worksite that involves more time out in the community instead of in an office.

10 #1 reason = SUPPORT: both from service site and program superiors, feel that I am valued and loved as an individual and have people to turn to when I am struggling but these people usually come to me first so I do not feel that I am bothering them. My service site (my school) has several program alumni which makes a huge difference in my daily atmosphere (and is an advantage I have over other volunteers in my program). Retreats, weekly reflection, social events and an open office that I can stop by or call anytime all help me feel connected and valued. My school has a theme of COMMUNITY and strives to build it among staff and students.

9 I am very contented in my program. I live with a wonderful group of people, and though we rub against each other now and then, everyone is open to discussing issues and moving past them. My directors are very supportive and help us balance our volunteer work with community, social justice, and spiritual development.

7 The program is helping me to learn and grow a lot.
Appendix I. Open ended responses to question Rate your satisfaction with the volunteer program on a scale of 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (could net be more satisfied) and describe the reason(s) why? At time B

1. I don’t remember my answer to this question in the first survey but I am no more/less satisfied with the program at this point. I think the research I did before signing on to this project prepared me and I chose a field and city that I knew I felt strongly about serving in.

2. My boss and the rest of the staff have been wonderful, and I have gained very valuable insights and experiences. b) I switched programs halfway through my year of service. The current organization is run much more efficiently.

3. My satisfaction with my volunteer program is strong. I do not regret committing myself to a year of service.

4. Internally, I am satisfied. The AmeriCorps program itself has some serious issues involving health care benefits and loan deferment systems.

5. I really enjoy the work that I do, the only reason I gave an 8 instead of a 10 is that it can be tedious or boring sometimes. Perhaps I am feeling a bit burned out. I don’t remember what rating I gave a few months ago, however, I believe it has gone up since I feel like I have been given power to do the projects I want to do, and I have more direction than I did at the beginning. I just feel more comfortable in my surroundings and more confident. I think others value my opinion more than they did before.

6. Most often a 10 except at the beginning of the month when I have to do numerous reports. I do understand that they are necessary. I just would like to be able to give the task to someone else.

7. I am very satisfied with the overall experience.

8. a) 8 I was able to work on all the areas of my life I wanted to when entering the program and learn a lot about myself, where I want to go, and what I want to work on more. Often I did feel that the program was too constraining and almost parental.

9. A.) 2 - Had almost no clients, no rewards, no difference in community. B.) I have grown sour towards the program.

10. I love my job! I give everything a 10! The staff I supervise (also volunteers) the paid staff I work with all make my day. My job just gets better.

11. 7. I love my program, but feel as though many of my fellow volunteers do not put in the effort needed in a situation like ours, which often results in me carrying a heavier burden.

12. 10 very rewarding and satisfying feeling.

13. a) 8 b) not much change.

14. 8 - it was a great program which focused.

15. 10 because I love children and the fact that I get to work with them on a daily base is just awesome.

16. a.) 8, I feel as though I grew exponentially during this year of service. I found good mentors and in turn was able to act as a positive mentor for youth. b.) This past month, my regular responsibilities have died down and I am now focusing
on transitioning out of the program and providing support for the incoming volunteers. This has allowed me to have some time to reflect on the experience and as such, being away from the day to day stressors, realized I have grown and accomplished a lot. As such, I think my satisfaction has increased in hindsight.

6 I think there could have been more involvement in the schools and with parents. However, I am just the volunteer and I do not get to make suggestions directly to the school board. I have to go through my supervisor and since we do not see eye to eye it is hard for me to get my opinions out.

10 I have changed in ways I didn't think possible and I have become such a better person b/c of this job. It has been the source of my greatest stress but my greatest joy and I can't even begin to thank everyone and what they've brought to my life.

8 I learned more than i ever dreamed i would. americorps is highly challenging and in no way, an entry-level position--which is what i was looking for post graduation. id be more satisfied if my host agency appreciated me and the community offered better incentives for volunteerism (ie free bus or museum passes).

6--I like the program. I think it's really important. But I don't think I am the best candidate for the program. Or at least not at my site. The program is geared towards families with small children, and I don't really have any experience in that area.

8. I very much like the VISTA program and I enjoy participating in it. I think the volunteer aspect, from my perspective, was very rewarding. My level of satisfaction has not changed.

a) 7. It's been a great learning experience but i don't think i have been very effective. I needed more support and more defined expectations and didn't know how to ask for them.  b) I have been increasingly satisfied with my experience because the things that bothered me I stopped worrying about and just let them happen or not happen on their own. but i guess with the program i've been less satisfied but the unsatisfied feeling has bothered me less because i stopped thinking about it as much.

9 - This experience has been tremendously valuable for me both in developing my professional skills and in learning more about myself

a) 8 - there is always room for improvement. We have a lot on our plates with volunteering as teachers, so having program stuff put on our plates too is overwhelming at times.  b) I feel about the same.

4 - This organization does a good job of allowing volunteers to mold their positions and be creative.

9 always room for improvement, so folks are against any change and work as hard to prevent it, as some do to make it.

5 we need more help in the office as well as out in the field. recruitment should never end.

7- Can be lots of fun but also MUCH drama.

10. I think I have found a calling through this work. I love what I am doing and the people I work with. I think I am more satisfied now than I was at the beginning because I understand now what I am doing and how to do it without
supervision.

6 - more support from "higher ups" would be nice. Some recognition of the importance of volunteer resources would go a long way in improving my satisfaction.

10. It's a great program if you are Catholic. I personally wasn't thrilled with it, but I knew it was Catholic going into it so that was my choice.

8, I love the staff.

8. I absolutely love where I work (volunteer). I'm a volunteer with AmeriCorps, so I work full time as an unpaid employee (with a stipend). The only reason I don't say "10" is because I've been stressed out for money reasons, since the stipend pays about $2.00 less than minimum wage.

A)7 At first I feel that I was given more responsibility and things were clear. Things became stagnant and got muddled in the last few months.

7 - I do not remember what I put on here previously. I really like my job and what I do, but the organization is not manage well. Thus, it takes a lot of extra unnecessary work to get things done right. I still get frustrated very often. If I did not enjoy working with the kids here so much, I would have left long ago.

8- Now that I have gone through a program season I understand it a lot better

5. More than completely satisfied with the experience on a personal level. Am also satisfied with the professional experience, though it was not at all what I expected it to be, and I didn't get to do a lot of what I wanted to do. Nonetheless, it has been a very good experience professionally. I choose 5 because, for everything I got out of it, I didn't get to do something because lack of organization on part of organization/boss.

5 - I do not like the lack of direction, and feeling of importance in the office.

5 - i think there is a lot of good that can come from my volunteer program, however i think it takes a special kind of person to really make it successful. i have found myself becoming increasingly frustrated with other members of my organization because of their lack of maturity and professionalism. i have become less satisfied with the program, but more satisfied with the work i am doing, mostly because the time has come where i can see the fruits of my labor and that brings more fulfillment. the longer i am with this volunteer organization the more flaws i become aware of.

8- While I really enjoy the cooking classes I teach, I don't always enjoy my time in the office because of the pessimistic attitudes. There are too many rifts between coworkers.

7 - I love working with you, I believe in the programming and curriculum, I enjoy my fellow VISTA's but the organizational culture is not the best and because of the economy my work has changed drastically from when I signed up. I was hoping to be more involved with the youth and realistically have spent much of my time in the office, on the computer or on the phone.

a) 7; I love that this program is small and the individuals running it truly care about the volunteers. I love my school placement and have been warmly welcomed by coworkers and the school community. Living in community with other volunteers helps keep me motivated, but at the same time it is the source of much frustration which leads me to question b) As an undergraduate I lived in
community during my senior year with a program that had pillars very similar to what I am doing now. That year was the best of my life and the positive experience convinced me to join this particular program. I knew I needed to empty myself of expectations, however, since every community is different. Still, I am very disappointed with my overall community experience. This is an issue I have reflected on greatly and have yet to determine the main cause. Perhaps it is because we are all so stressed and busy that we do not have time to be present to one another and build community. I think the nature of our work (we are all teachers) leads to strange competition; I often hear my housemates discuss who has it harder because of the school their at, the number of students, the grade level etc. I also supposed it is because we are all here for different reasons. Since this is an alternative certification program, many volunteers' main reason for participating was to become a teacher... and do so cheaply. Even worse is our partnership with a prestigious university through which we can earn our masters. A few of my housemates appear to have this "I'll but up with teaching in the ghetto in order to get a free degree" attitude that frustrates me. We do not discuss our pillars enough and lack guidance from our support people in order to discover what Simple Living or Teaching as Service means to us.

3, I feel that VISTA is a useless program. While it is good to help the community, I do not think it is worth the 40 hours a week to sit around and wait for the phone to ring. Additionally, the benefits of the program do not begin until the end of service, thus it is impossible to transition from this to another job/program. I unfortunately do not remember what I put last time, but I would bet it's lower than that time.

a) 9. I loved being part of this program, grew quite a bit from it, and felt very supported.  b) no change

9, I don't think my satisfaction has changed. I have loved what I was doing from the beginning and still love it

7 - I have enjoyed my site and the programs with which I work, especially as I have become more familiar with the expectations of my position. I have really enjoyed the flexibility my organization gives me; I feel like I have as much input as the staff, as well as the freedom to create and change programs within reason. There have been some financial difficulties, and I would say those were my main frustration, along with not having enough time to spend on my personal life.

8 I am very satisfied. We recently hired another person in my department, and this will make work go even more smoothly.

7. The reason being is because I enjoy my time but because I get project done in a quick time period and thus have lag time where I would take on a new project.

I rate my satisfaction as a 9. All in all the experience has been good in terms of work and training. I was completely enthused at the start of my program and have since become only slightly less enthused based on the fact that when I finally did get a co-worker some problems ensued and I have little support from my site supervisor.

7 - 8.5 It's been really pleasant. I applied the skills I already had, and have been able to develop and grow my skill set further. In addition to that, I've learned how vital and impacting volunteerism and organized charity are to
communities. It would have/could be a bit better, were there a stronger and more informed board in place.

52 a) 9 - I love helping people, but I'm rarely frustrated by the volume of work that needs to be done by a deadline.  b) I am more satisfied as I learn more about the work my program does and become more familiar with what needs to be done.

53 4, I believe I received little direction from management during the year, which did not help me accomplish very much.
Appendix J. Open ended responses to: Rate your commitment to the volunteer program on a scale of 0 (I would prefer to quit right now) to 10 (I would not even consider quitting) and described the reason(s) why.? At time A

1 10. I would not quit at all right now. There is far too much rebuilding to be done, and my work here is very fulfilling. Also, I believe the work here will be good experience for any future career I might take.

2 9. This is my only job and I make very little income. I would consider quitting if another job position presented itself or if my husband needed to relocate for work.

3 8. Despite the disappointing start, I don't want to give up, I trust that I will develop goals for myself that will challenge me and be rewarding in the end. I don't want to give up in trying to contribute something worthwhile to this organization and to the greater community.

4 10. I could never quit my job because I feel so invested in it since I have been doing this for a year and 6 months. It has completely altered my worldview and changed my opinions on people and has made me such a happier person and more loving person to all.

5 10. I am very committed to the mission of the organization. I waited a year for a commitment from the organization for this volunteer opportunity.

6 10. I believe wholly in the mission of my volunteer program (if not the persons running it) and I am proud to be working for this particular sponsoring nonprofit organization.

7 10, because I made a commitment to this program and I'm excited to see where it goes.

8 10. I've made a commitment to this position.

9 9. Truthfully, at the beginning, I had a rational thought of "what the heck did I get myself into?" after ascertaining of what my new roles will be and all the bureaucratic work I will now have to do. It almost felt like I was swindled into taking this position, because I was not given 100% of the vital information upfront. However, the lease was signed, I just drove from California to Texas, we are in an "economic crisis and I have a steady stipend, and ultimately I now have an opportunity to gain an experience in a prestigious position helping those who have been severely affected by the recent hurricanes. In my position I will the frontman that closes cases and at the same time a person who builds lasting capacity; this will serve to aggrandize my own personal transformation and give me the experience needed to successfully become part of the Peace Corps, which I plan to join in the near future.

10 10. I find a sense of purpose in my work that calls me to be a better person in order to make the world a better place.

11 9. I have considered quitting, just because then I wouldn't have to worry about recruiting families every hour of every day, but the benefits outweigh the hassles. Plus, I want to exit my program this fall knowing that I have accomplished something very difficult.

12 10. Thru this volunteering I have begun to appreciate more what I have, supportive family and friends, and money doesn't always fix everything. DO NOT be wasteful!!

13 7. I have always been of the mindset that one does what one says he/she will do. I
will complete my term, if allowed.

10 for the organization I am volunteering with 8 for AmeriCorps--though there are a lot of hiccups, the organization and impact I will make on the community far outweigh the negatives.

10. I made a promise to fight poverty for one year for this program and I want to help everyone realize the issues in our community and how we can face them. I can't imagine leaving my supervisor high and dry in the middle of the projects we are working on.

10

10, number one, this is a personal challenge for me. I committed for a year and I will not let myself down. I enjoy serving, its who I am and what I was meant to do.

18 - I have only 6 more months to go and I have really enjoyed it thus far.

19 - I love my program, and all the people who work and volunteer for it, but I might quit if I found a job that paid very well, and that I would be equally or almost equally satisfied with.

20 - I would not consider quitting because I have made a commitment to the students I am supposed to be working with. I plan on seeing this through and taking the necessary steps to make sure things change for my position.

21 - Again, because I am still getting used to how things have worked around here in the past. Also because I have yet to learn all the aspects of service that my organization encompasses.

22 - 6.5

23 - I like my co-workers and the mission of the organization, but I dislike the board and executive director's attitudes and their belief that they don't have to put any work into the organization.

24 - 7 Company is not a great company to work for, lots of turnover, employees fired frequently, lack of willingness to spend money to grow programs.

25 - 8, Because it has been a learning experience but I may want to do similar just with another organization.

26 - 10 - I am fully committed to the mission and vision of this organization and have intentions of moving elsewhere at this time.

27 - 5 I am a retired person who could use the stipend, but it isn't all that necessary. I think I am chaffing from the number of hours required, too many of which are frustrating.

28 - 8 - If I find a job (in this economy) that pays more, I might leave, but it would be a hard decision to make.

29 - 10, because I have made that commitment and I do not break my promises.

30 - I would rate my commitment as a 5. I am committed to completing my one year term with AmeriCorps*VISTA, though I would not be opposed to moving to another non-profit to complete my service, if the opportunity came up.

31 - 10; I spend more time for my job and volunteering than most anything else.

32 - 6-I am not volunteering for the sake of volunteering--I took this position because it is something I am very interested in, and am passionate about. If someone came to me, offering a comparable position with a salary and job security, I would probably take it. I wouldn't quite this job out of the stresses or anxiety it causes me or any other factors related to the job itself.
Commitment would be a 8, and again, for reasons mentioned above. Should this continue, I would potentially consider early termination.

6 I am committed to other areas of my volunteer work more than my actual position. As a VISTA I love doing the AmeriCorps volunteer work and activities more than my placement of every day.

4 - I'm already halfway through my term of service, so it seems like it would be a waste to quit now. However, if it wouldn't bankrupt me to leave and move back home, I would.

9, I want to quit sometimes, but knowing that if I can just help one student, then I've done my job keeps me coming back.

8, for the sole reason that being in school and working so early in the morning drain me.

I love that fact that I am helping people and I can see the results but I am considering changing sites because I am no longer comfortable in my position.

10 I never would quit after I have made a commitment. If I quit there would not be an advocate for the people I serve.

10 Goodwill is my family and TMC-my program (The Mentoring Coalition) is my baby

10 - would only quit if health issues become too challenging to fulfill the needs of the organization

10-Sometimes I do get frustrated because I can't do much for these kids, but it's because of them that I would never want to quit.

10 because I wouldn't consider quitting. I love those kids way too much!

9- I can't give things up once I have started them because I feel obligated and responsible for them. Also, I love what I am doing.

9. I have committed myself fully to this program. I spend all of my daytime hours, and many nights and evenings to this work. However, I also have a family. I have a beautiful 9 month old boy that I cherish. Parenting is the only responsibility I have that takes precedence over my service.

3

10 - This is an incredibly valuable experience which I have made a commitment to and would not consider leaving before my term is over

9. Since I'm in college, classes come first so if I ever have trouble balancing work and school I would quit.

10. I love working at both places (Open Door and Lucy Reads). They are wonderful people and the children are awesome to work with because they are excited about learning and the whole process is new to them. I wish there was more time in the time to help each and every child individually.

10 I have a vested interest in the outcome, I have children and grandchildren living here.

8 I would not consider quitting because they are very flexible with my schedule, it makes me feel good to be giving my time and services to my community and I want to be a inspire these kids that quitting is not an option.

6 I have considered quitting mostly for practical reasons- better hours, better pay,
etc. But my commitments to the children (which are much stronger than my commitment to the organization) have led me to stick it out for the rest of the time.

7.8 I feel fairly committed, as I feel that after my first year of service, I am just now at a point where I am equipped with tools and information to make and see actual impacts. It would be nice to see some of the fruition of the work. I'm not totally committed because I came here from the northwest and I am planning to return there at some point in the near future.

10. I would want to continue because of the positive difference the work has already made and want to see that move forward.

7 - I don't want to abandon something I haven't finished, and because it is really important to me to do what I am trying to do. But it is a little discouraging, mostly because I feel really isolated and alone.

10...I would not consider quitting right now. There are so many projects that I am involved in where I am learning a great deal. People here are greatly dependent on me and I would not let them down. While I have plans for the end of my service, right now I am just beginning to develop my independence and able to work efficiently and effectively on projects that I was not able to do at the start of my term in July.

10. I have faith that this is just the normal process of adjusting to a new place and job, and I will feel much more satisfied and confident in the future. Also, the discomfort is an invaluable learning experience to me.

10. I am very happy living here and I don't like to quit things. Also I would not get the education award, and I would be broke and unemployed and without a place to live.

10. -- I am fully committed to making my volunteer experiences the best that they can be. I want to make my community, country, and world a better place!!

10. Partly because it is not in my personality to quit, but mainly because I like the person I am becoming. I once told a community member that I want to see the worst this world has to offer right in front of me, so that I'm prepared and cannot be caught off guard by it's ugliness. I think I get to see that ugliness everyday, and even if it's damaging, I do believe it makes me stronger. I don't want to be blind to the fact that everything is not okay, it's never been okay, and it never will be okay.

9- again, one of the reasons I would consider quitting is lack of communication and organization.

10. I dedicated this year to service so I'm going to see it through. I'm not a quit in the middle type of person.

6 only because of my current financial situation.

9 I'm very committed but I know there are times when I should be a little more committed.

9. I have been very committed to this program. 40 hours a week, and sometime attend meetings even after work.

9 - I know that my work makes a difference and enjoy it.

10. I committed myself to this project for a year and I will honor that commitment. This year is a learning experience, both good and bad. I also feel a strong responsibility to the people I work with and to those I commit my time and energy to.
70. I am not a quitter and because most of my programs get rolling in the spring I have reason to keep focused and to stick with everything through my year term.

71. 9. There are days when I become so frustrated that walking out seems like the only viable option. I do, however, love my clients and I know they appreciate me. This is also an essential experience for my career.

72

73. 9 I would not consider quitting as I gave my word to be here in this program. I want to get all I can from it. However I can not say 10 as there are days when I dream of quitting (but won't do this).

74. 10 I love my program and the people I work with.

75. 10 - I have made a year long commitment to my program and I plan to follow through with that commitment.

76. 8. I enjoy the work, the incentives given to me to see my year through, but if the perfect job came along, I can't say I wouldn't think about leaving.

77. 10 - I am a very committed person. I am here to see it through to the end. Regardless of good or bad, I would always see it through. A major problem would have to arise for me to leave.

78. 10 this is the work I love to do.

79. 10. This is exactly the type of post-grad service program that I was looking for and I am very satisfied with all aspects of the program.

80. 10 again, support is key. I am also in love with Chicago. I could never abandon my students like that.

81. 10 I entered this program knowing that it would be hard at times, and am committed to completing it. It would take a very major problem or outside circumstance to make me consider quitting.

82. 8 There have been times when I have wondered why I decided to do this, but I would not quit because hopefully this year will help guide the direction of the rest of my life.
Appendix K. Open ended responses to: Rate your commitment to the volunteer program on a scale of 0 (I would prefer to quit right now) to 10 (I would not even consider quitting) and described the reason(s) why? At time B

1. 9 I can stay in my program for up to three years but I have to stay on a full year to year basis. My supervisors have asked me to stay the full three years and at this point the only thing holding me back is that I don't know if I am willing to live at this poverty level for 2 more years. I love the work I am doing however. If that were the only factor I would definitely stay.

2. 9. I only have a month left

3. 10 - I have committed myself to a year of service and I would not break that commitment or take it back.

4. 10

5. 7, like I said, I really like the work that I do, however I'm a bit burned out (I'm used to a college schedule where the summers are more easy going). Also, while I like the work, it doesn't require too much brain activity, which I miss - that's why I am looking forward to going back to grad school.

6. 9

7. 10 I really like my job and the people I work with

8. 10 I would not quit because I have committed to helping the people

9. 10 because it has been beneficial, my worksite needs my service, and I have enjoyed it overall

10. 4 - I don't quit.

11. 10, 10. 10! I will continue to volunteer as long as the program allows. Rightnow there is a three year cap so I have a littleover two years left to serve.

12. 10. The program is actually 1 year and I have already committed to doing one more because I love the work and feel passionately about our program.

13. 10 the program is very worthwhile and i want to complete my service requirments with them.

14. 7 I enjoy what i do however, sometime I become overwhelmed by other commitments.

15. 10

16. 8 because I'm super busy most of the time. Even when I try to volunteer more hours, I'm not able to due to classes.

17. 5. I would no longer work for this program as a volunteer. Though I enjoy the work, my needs and goals have changed. I need compensation and more flexibility in pursuing outside activities. This volunteer experience no longer offers that.

18. 5 I wanted to quit this whole time. I feel useless, there is nothing for me to do. I wanted to be more involved and take on more projects. I am never really informed of things going on related to our project. My supervisor leaves me out of things and then the Director of our project gets upset with me for not knowing. I am bored with nothing to do, but also have tons of stuff thrown at me that I have not information about when my supervisor is not in the office. I never know when she is going to be present.

19. 10 - If I wasn't leaving to pursue another job overseas, I would probably end up staying even though the amount of stress that I always have is not healthy and I
wouldn't be able to keep doing it long term
20 10. i am almost finished with an entire year long commitment. i've worked hard and success is my reward.
21 5--I've already technically finished my hours, so I could "quit" right now. I will continue serving at my site because I want to help and because they need my help. But I wouldn't worry any more about AmeriCorps if I wasn't getting a living stipend.
22 10. I am so close to being at the end of my term of service and I will be working here as a full time employee after.
23 10 I like what i do and where i live and its a million times better than moving back with my parents. plus i like to see things through.
24 10 - I made a 1 year commitment to AmeriCorps which I would not break except in extreme circumstances. Also, AmeriCorps provides a financial incentive at service completion
25 10 - I participated in everything that I was able to.
26 10 - I committed to a one-year term and would not consider leaving early unless extreme circumstances arose. Also, the AmeriCorps program provides financial incentive for completion of service.
27 10, until some others step up and work as hard for the right reasons, I will keep on doing what I do.
28 5 family problems as well as health problems make this volunteer work very hard.
29 8- Best job I've ever had but exhausting physically, mentally, and emotionally
30 10. I would not consider quitting. I am actually extending my commitment for an additional year.
31 8 - I enjoy what I am doing and gain personal satisfaction.
32 10. I was doing work that had an amazing purpose.
33 9, due to the restricted nature. But I love what I do.
34 9. I *love* where I volunteer. The only reason I would consider quitting was if someone offered me a lot of money for a job just as cool as my current one.
35 5 I haven't been doing a lot of the work I want to do. I've been stuck with secretarial work since the lady who did that work quit back in February.
36 10 - I would not quit as I only have a month left to go, however, I will continue to work here after my volunteer commitment, but I do not know how long I can continue to do so. For my ongoing work, I would rate that a 4.
37 8- I am returning for an additional year of service
38 7. Would not quit, because I want to fulfill the commitment I made and I care about the mission of the organization. At the same time, I want to quit almost every day I go in the office, because I feel like I am being taken advantage of and not appreciated by my boss, who has me do things that are not in my work plan and prevents me from doing the work I believed I was going to do.
39 5 - I could go either way.
40 5 - i am ready for it to be over. i will not quite because i am so close to finishing, and i want to see my projects through to the end. but, if i could still have that sense of completion, i would quit right now.
41 3 I have considered quitting several times throughout my service. One reason I
don't is because I am determined to fulfill my promise and contract with the organization.

42 10 - I believe it is the job of every citizen to make positive change in their communities. Organizations, like the one I am currently working with, cannot get everything done with the limited staff they have. Volunteers make it possible for great programs to expand and for problems that were before overlooked to be adequately addressed and changed.

43 Overall, I give this as 6. If I could separate program aspects I would give community a 0 (I would prefer to move out right now) and give teaching at my school a 10 (I plan on staying as long as possible).

44 3, because I do not want to put my agency into a bind. However, if the right opportunity came along, I would not hesitate to leave early.

45 N/A: Program finished.

46 9, I have enjoyed my year of service and am actually doing another

47 8 - I love the center where I work, but the Americorps* VISTA stipend and the work restrictions the program places on me (can't hold another job to make ends meet or take contract work) are the main reasons I am choosing not to continue in this position when my contract is up. If a position were to open here, I would take it, but I feel like my skills might be better utilized elsewhere.

48 10. This is fulfilling and very interesting work.

49 7 Because I'm happy but I'm thinking about exploring new options.

50 10. I would not consider quitting the program at large because my desire is to help others and to assist in as many ways as possible to fight poverty. However, I would consider relocating to a different site as I would like more consistent support.

51 5 - 8 I'm very dedicated to the Americorps VISTA program and my site, however, were I presented with a job opportunity to do something similar to that which I'm doing now, I would definitely take it. I've been poor for most of my 20's. It starts to get old after a while.

52 9 - I would only leave for a very good paying job.

53 0 or n/a, I have already completed my term and have not renewed any service commitment.
Appendix L. The program names and locations that had volunteers participate in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Number of Volunteers Responding</th>
<th>Location(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amachi Pittsburgh</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Americorps</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Larafayette, CO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Americorps for Community Engagement</td>
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<td>Austin, TX</td>
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<td>AmeriCorps VISTA</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Lexington, KY</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Meadville, PA</td>
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<td>Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team</td>
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<td>Appalachian Forest Heritage Area</td>
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