**Library Volunteer Leaders - Notes**

**11-10-21 1:30 EST**

**Host: Wendy Johnson, Indianapolis Public Library**

[**wjohnson@indypl.org**](about:blank)

Hello, Friends,

It was great to see everyone today. Yes, today. I’m actually putting the notes together on the same day. It may not happen often, but I’m celebrating this occurrence.

Thank you all for your thoughtful insight while discussing the situation with the Snarky Librarian and the Volunteer. Once again you shared your depth of knowledge and support. You’re awesome!

Take care,

Wendy J

Meetings will be held every Wednesday at 1:30 EST for an hour until further notice. We’ll use the same Zoom link each week. Please share the link with fellow library volunteer leaders…**the more smart people the better**.

Zoom:  [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85199850785?pwd=WHorb3h2ckgvZjhZT1BOVWxEMzhlZz09](about:blank)

Meeting ID: 851 9985 0785

Access Code: Volunteer

**Topics Discussed**

**Volunteer Database Selection**

* Volunteer Hub
  + Used by one of our group with little success: great tech support, nice people, just not right for their library
  + Heard it was designed for Habitat for Humanity and is great for them. But I've heard it's not as great for other types of organizations. I've known a few people that have used it and moved away from it.
* Wendy J is developing a product comparison chart with “what we’d need” and “what we’d love to have”. She’ll share when it’s as close to finished as can be. She’s integrating pieces from Liza’s comparison chart.
* Jennifer B. is also evaluating products
* Volunteer Management Software Comparisons - <https://getinvolvedclearinghouse.org/management-tools/volunteer-management-software-comparisons>

Bonus: [Volunteer Hub’s blog](https://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/) has some great data and ideas. Wendy J appreciates that they are backed by studies and data like this one: <https://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/40-volunteer-statistics/>

**The Snarky Librarian and the Volunteer (and the Volunteer Leader stuck in the middle)**

* Situation: I just got out of a meeting with another staff member where I was gathering intel about a negative interaction between a snarky librarian and a volunteer. The volunteer has resigned. He was very valuable and I'm kinda beside myself.
* The background: Volunteer has been valuable gardening on the rooftop and helping with maintenance activities around the library. Recently they were asked to help build tables (a priority job) to which they agreed. The volunteer asked to come in on a different day and received the go-ahead from the volunteer leader. When they began work, they were told they would have to stop because the work was too loud. The volunteer inquired about later the same day and was told “no”. As they were leaving they were engaged in conversation with a different staff member in a hallway. Yet another staff member told them, with an attitude, they were too loud and to take their conversation elsewhere. This was the final straw for the volunteer who indicated to the volunteer coordinator they would no longer be volunteering in this hostile environment.
* The result: The volunteer coordinator no longer wants to bring any new volunteers to the library for fear they will also be treated this same way. She also worries about the existing volunteers.
* Suggestions:
  + Go to HR: the volunteer is a taxpayer, the environment is impacting your ability to do your job, there is no support for volunteers, share that the volunteer is planning on writing a letter to the board/city leaders
  + Training for “how to talk to volunteers” – respect. Consider an outside expert.
  + Ask the volunteer to share experiences with top leadership
  + Do these actions match the values of the organization?
  + Be prepared for the hard questions AND the hard answers

**Difficult Conversations**

* Prepare by using an outside person to hear your ideas, help formulate the words, bounce off ideas, and help determine the important parts
* Book recommendation, *Difficult Conversations*, we’re all part of the situation. <https://multcolib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S152C412805>
* Have the conversation. Waiting will only make it worse.
* Decide what you’re going to say – write it down (get ALL your emotions and thoughts out) – wait 24 hours – then cut it in half – have an outside person listen – are you getting your point across clearly
* Schedule a time to meet with the person
* Be sincere, matter-of-fact, but understanding and being willing to listen.
* Remember to document
* Conflict comes from unmet expectations or mismatched values
* Episodic Future Thinking or getting stuck. Imagine the scenario of the future…baby step-by-step
* Calling In (obtaining deeper understanding) vs. Calling Out (words or actions are unacceptable, stopping them in the moment)
* Be prepared to LISTEN. Remember they haven’t had the time to prepare.
* It can all start at the beginning…set expectations

**Training Opportunities**

* [MAVA Dismantling Inequities Conference](https://mavanetwork.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=286912&module_id=484644), virtual and interactive, Dec 9 & 10, 2021
* Niche Academy Library Online Learning Conference, January 21, 2022. [FMI](https://www.nicheacademy.com/library-online-learning-2022?utm_campaign=Library%20Online%20Learning%20Conference%202022&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=146863292&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--3cVBwJ-Q-lv0G6yXlSEDODwrLH6naND1JkxoEJ9XxptErrjMOwPp1TBWV-DM72TaQ2fTIryrwwBcq85sqF9WmpyvisA&utm_content=146525130&utm_source=hs_email)

**On-going Educational Resources (just a few)**

* Volgistics National Peer Group – online – 2nd Tuesday of the month – free!

FMI contact Jessica Link, [linkj@crlibrary.org](about:blank).

* Better Impact User Group – online – 1st Tuesday of every other month – free!

December 7, 2021, February 1, 2022, April 5, 2022, and June 7, 2022,

2p EST/11a PST <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86131303138?pwd=RlBWN2U4SWpZZEdXNEhOem9uTUZJdz09>

Meeting ID: 861 3130 3138

Passcode: 240307

* Join the GetInvolved listserve by emailing Carla, [clehn@califa.org](about:blank). Fabulous resource with samples, weekly news & updates. <https://getinvolvedclearinghouse.org/>
* VolunteerMatch. Free sessions on many of the topics we discuss in this group: [https://learn.volunteermatch.org/](about:blank)

**Future Topics**

* When a **big change** is coming to their Library, how do you keep volunteers excited/encouraged/looking forward to the change? (Steven)
* Volunteer Manager Ethics
* Staff working with volunteers: tips
* Volunteer Orientation/Training
* Opportunities without onboarding barriers? Pop-up volunteering, Informal Volunteering
* Circle Back for updates:
  + University of North Carolina – Charlotte (UNCC) Class Project Update – Chauna
  + Chauna –“that troublesome patron” update?
  + Our leadership role, what new things are we doing? Resources to share?