

THE VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE

*How Your Business
Can Thrive In A
Tight Labor Market
By Hiring Volunteers*

Tony Collette

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Introduction

Hire volunteers for my business, instead of employees? Is that possible?

Not only is it possible, but your “big business” brothers and sisters have been hiring volunteers, and reaping the benefits, for years. In some instances, decades. The profitable use of Volunteer Workforces in American business is an amazing and powerful development with far-reaching implications. **And you should know about it.**

As a business owner, no one needs to tell you how expensive employees are. You already know the actual cost of an hourly laborer is at least 150% of their wage rate. By the time you add the cost of recruitment, FICA, FUTA, workers’ compensation, health coverage, retirement plans, holiday, sick pay and overtime, the true cost of an employee becomes obvious. Not to mention the times you’ve watched your employees being less than 100% productive because of fluctuations in demand for your company’s products or services.

Of course you gladly invest in your employees because you recognize them as the tremendous asset they are to your business success. But what happens when the labor market is extremely tight and qualified people, even for low-end service sector positions, are increasingly difficult to find? What do you do when the response to your help wanted classifieds — which seemed to work fine in the past — is more often than not completely disappointing?

And once you’ve found them, how do you keep your employees happy? How do you avoid burnout and low morale, and worse of all, that unmerciful profit-killing demon of small business owners, employee turnover?

What if someone told you that “big business” has found — or accidentally stumbled upon — a solution to these problems. Would you be interested? If there exists a way to easily and effectively recruit happy, enthusiastic, energetic people who are **thrilled** to work in your business, people who would **thank you** for letting them work in your business, would you want to know more? What if these people were willing to work only the hours you actually need them, completely satisfied with part-time or even occasional work? How about the fact that these people are generally clean-cut, freshly scrubbed, all-American teens and adults? And what if there were

Big business has been ‘employing’ Volunteer Workforces for decades.

***The tightening of
the labor market
demands creative
and effective
solutions.***

no expenses above their base wage rate — no employee taxes, no workers' comp, no health plans, retirement plans, no sick pay or holiday pay, and no overtime, ever.

This solution does exist. Quietly, with absolutely no fanfare or media attention, a small revolution has been simmering in American business. You may have heard a snippet of information about it from an acquaintance or associate. You may have heard absolutely nothing. But for the past 30 years businesses have been teaming up with non-profits, hiring and experimenting with Volunteer Workforces, and enjoying the amazing benefits they provide. With the unemployment rate diving to a 30-year low in the fourth quarter of 1999, and the tightening of the labor market developing into a long-term trend, it's time for all of us to explore and understand exactly what those benefits are.

Rationale

Non-profits need revenue to fulfill their missions. Businesses need workers to accomplish their goals. The Volunteer Workforce presents a compelling and exciting solution. Right at the intersection of these two great needs, you'll find this story — the story of for-profit companies, large and small, teaming up with non-profits and giving back to their communities by using Volunteer Workforces in their day-to-day operations. **Community organizations receive the funds they need to further their causes, and the companies benefit from the energy and enthusiasm of a constant stream of ready workers in a tight labor market.**

This powerful concept can be seen at work in a major amusement park which recruits non-profit groups to participate in their Volunteer Workforce program. The groups supply teen and adult volunteers to work 8-hour shifts in the park. Instead of paying the volunteers for their eight hours of labor, the park pays the money directly to the non-profit organizations.

Businesses benefit tremendously because the volunteer workers are upbeat and cheerful, happy to work in the service of their cause. Volunteers for these programs are extremely easy to recruit, even when qualified labor is hard to find. The business increases its profitability when employing a Volunteer Workforce because there's no need to pay workers' compensation insurance, payroll taxes, health coverage, retirement plans, holiday or sick pay, or overtime. Volunteers receive all of these benefits from their "real" jobs, or they're retired, students or stay-at-home moms. And the employer isn't required to maintain a large staff on the payroll during downtimes because volunteer workers are employed only for the number of hours their help is necessary for the operations of the business. **The business also benefits by being perceived as a "good guy" in the community by helping local non-profits achieve their funding goals.**

The purpose of this booklet and the soon-to-be-published book of the same name, is to identify and popularize this trend within the business sector and the non-profit world. Non-profit fundraisers can effectively use this booklet as a way to introduce the Volunteer Workforce concept to board members and interested business owners in their communities, encouraging them to begin a program in tandem with the non-profit.

Businesses need workers, non-profits need revenue.

**The Volunteer
Workforce is the
perfect solution for
foodservice
franchises and
independent
restaurants.**

Which Industries Benefit From Employing Volunteer Workforces?

Which industries would benefit from the use of Volunteer Workforces? The applications are many and widely varied.

Entrepreneurs wanting to staff their businesses without the hassles associated with hiring regular employees. Start-up businesses are often bootstrap operations, with periodic demands for labor and limited cash flow. With the actual cost of an hourly laborer approaching 150% of their wage rate, the Volunteer Workforce provides the entrepreneur an enticing solution — employ volunteers on an “as needed” basis, and pay only the base wage rate to their charity. This arrangement eliminates the overhead costs associated with regular employees, and provides tremendous flexibility for the entrepreneur as the needs of the business fluctuate over time.

Franchise owners looking for ways to solve their staffing problems. Franchising accounts for over \$800 billion in annual sales in America, more than one-third of all retail transactions, and represents over 20% of the entire GNP. With a new franchise outlet or location opening every ten minutes, it's no wonder there are 600,000 units operating under more than 2,500 franchisor banners, or that one out of every five Americans today works either directly or indirectly in the franchise industry. The largest single segment within franchising is the foodservice sector — precisely the area in which the Volunteer Workforce concept has received the most enthusiastic acceptance so far.

Independent Restaurant Owners. According to the National Restaurant Association, traditional tableservice and fast-food restaurant operators believe that finding qualified labor will be their biggest challenge in the coming year. This isn't a great surprise, considering the fact that on a typical day in 1999, the restaurant industry posted average sales of roughly \$970 million, while paying \$72 billion yearly in wages and benefits. Restaurants are incredibly labor-intensive businesses, with sales per full-time equivalent employee rising to just \$49,320 in 1997 — notably lower than other industries. Independent restaurant operators are looking for solutions to this situation, and the Volunteer Workforce concept is a perfect answer for their concerns.

Convention Centers and Athletic/Performance Venues searching for dependable cleaning crews. Removing the messy trash left behind by a large crowd after an athletic event or concert performance is a demanding task. Later in this booklet you'll find the details of a 20-year-long program created by the Lloyd Noble Arena, an 11,000-seat athletic center that consistently employs Volunteer Workforces to clean the building after events. Besides being a wonderful fit for stadiums and performance venues, the Volunteer Workforce concept is transferable to hotels and convention centers looking for large scale, behind-the-scenes cleaning crews.

Every Human Relations/Personnel professional looking for ways to creatively staff during a shortage of qualified labor. The U.S. Department of Commerce released a report in June of 1999 predicting a shortfall of 1.3 million skilled technology workers by the year 2006. The labor shortage cur-

rently experienced in the lower-end service sector will intensify and expand into other areas of the economy. ABCNEWS.com analyzed the situation on July 1, 1999 reporting: "Where those high-tech workers are going to come from is a question baffling both Congress and the private sector. The shortage of skilled technology workers could have ripple effects throughout the economy, impairing U.S. productivity and creating wage wars as companies compete to hire well-trained information-technology professionals."

Every corporate department head looking for ways to solve their specific labor problems. Four long-term staffing trends are creating major headaches in corporate America. The generation following the baby boomers is much smaller because 11% fewer Americans were born from 1966-85 than were born in the two decades after World War II. Second, the growth rate of women entering the work force is flattening out, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the rate will drop from 1.8% to 1.4% over the next 15 years. Third, employers won't be able to pick up as many cast-offs from other companies as the rate of downsizing slows, forcing fewer candidates into the labor pool. And the work force is about to become less mobile, as the boomer generation stays longer in the same jobs as they age.

As daunting as the long-term outlook appears, companies are already feeling the squeeze when it comes to hiring, and retaining, competent workers. In an effort to satisfy employee demands, businesses are offering creative and sometimes odd perks to add value to even the most mundane job. Volvo USA provides its employees with extremely inexpensive access to cars, child care, and elder care. Lands' End, the mail-order clothing company, provides its 4,000-plus employees use of a health club, a summer camp for their kids, and on-site college classes. Other companies are wooing prospective employees with coffee shops, concierge services, extremely liberal tuition programs, and even a week-long stay at the boss's condo in Hawaii after they've been with the company for a year.

The shortage of qualified labor in America is real, and will continue to increase over time. This trend will place a tremendous demand on the corporate world to discover and implement innovative staffing solutions. The Volunteer Workforce will satisfy this need.

Which Organizations Would Want To Volunteer In My Business?

Every school organization which fundraises (don't they all?) This would include every band and choir booster club, every athletic organization, every extracurricular activity group. Indeed, every elementary, junior high, high school, prep school, college and university has numerous groups that would be intensely interested in a new and extremely effective way to raise funds. The Association of Fund Raisers and Direct Sellers estimates that schools and school groups in the U.S. generate more than \$ 1.5 billion (with a 'b') dollars each year in profits through their fundraising efforts. School fundraising in America is a very big business and it's taken extremely seriously by the students and sponsors who participate every year. National

The labor shortage in the United States is real, and will worsen over time.

Churches and church groups offer huge numbers of ready volunteers.

Education Association research estimates that there are over 113,218 public and private schools in America. There are also 2,088 two- and four-year colleges and universities, all eagerly searching for new and interesting ways to generate revenue.

Non-profit organizations are constantly looking for ways to increase funding. Local chapters of national organizations such as the American Red Cross, American Cancer Society, and Habitat for Humanity have the discretion to pursue local fundraising efforts to supplement the national campaigns in which they participate. In addition, local non-profit organizations exist in every community. Most of them can find solutions to their funding concerns by teaming up with businesses in Volunteer Workforces.

Churches and other religious groups. The World Almanac estimates there are approximately 353,245 houses of worship in the United States. Within each congregation are groups actively raising funds for their specific causes, along with church-wide fundraising efforts aimed at larger goals. Churches and church groups represent one of the most fertile recruiting grounds for volunteers, simply because their interest in generating revenue is so strong.

Case Studies of Businesses and Non-Profits

In the pages that follow, you'll find six Case Studies which present remarkable stories of large businesses using Volunteer Workforce programs to accomplish their corporate goals. You'll also learn about the needs and motivations of the non-profit organizations which volunteer in their programs. Starting with a very thorough treatment of the Premier Parks, Inc. programs in Oklahoma City and Dallas, the section continues with Case Studies detailing programs created by The Dallas Cowboys, fastfood franchises, and Lloyd Noble Arena. The purpose of these Case Studies is to document that the phenomenon is nationwide, can be used by a surprisingly large variety of businesses, and that there is great latitude in the design of Volunteer Workforce programs.

Built on a solid foundation proven by decades of successful experience, and supported by sturdy columns of useful expertise and information, your business can also thrive by teaming up with non-profits and hiring volunteers.

Case Studies

Case Study #1 — Frontier City, Oklahoma City, OK

It's a beautiful summer day, a Saturday, and the kids have been clamoring for something to do. You've recently taken them to the zoo, and the movies were fun last weekend. How about a trip to the local amusement park?

Welcome to Frontier City — 50 acres of fun and frolic set right in the middle of America — Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. From the moment you drive through the imposing stockade fence entrance, this self-styled "Gateway To The Wild West" transports you and your family back to an 1880s era, rough-and-tumble western town, complete with daily gunfights and period musicals. You'll find the typical theme park offerings: roller coasters, Ferris wheel, petting zoo, Tea Cup rides. The Park also hosts performing groups in concert like Rick Springfield, Blood Sweat & Tears and Captain & Tennille.

Frontier City is one of 31 theme parks owned by Premier Parks Inc., the world's largest regional theme park company. Premier owns and manages 16 Six Flags parks and various other theme parks throughout America and Europe. The parks annually host nearly 40 million guests worldwide.

This is obviously a big business with substantial staffing needs. Premier is quite aggressive in its hiring policies, instituting a "Hire a Friend Program," along with other award and incentive programs to attract and keep employees during their annual seven-month season. As successful as their recruiting and retention programs were, in previous years they still experienced a shortage of qualified staff during peak, high-demand periods on summer weekends. Days like today. But now those labor shortages are definitely a thing of the past.

Let's go back to the Park. As one of Frontier City's 500,000 guests this year, you'll stroll through the streets of a rustic, western town, past D. Higdon's Hardware Store, the colorful red Livery Barn, and the souvenir-filled Trappers Trading Post. You'll encounter the pungent, enticing aroma of barbecued brisket, baked beans and corn on the cob as you walk past Flap Jack's Cookhouse. On your right you'll see the Log Flume, a rustic water

**Volunteers
guarantee patrons'
positive experience
at this suburban
amusement park.**

**Use of volunteers
supplements paid
employees in
multiple service
areas.**

slide, with five riders to a log car squealing with delight as they hit the water, splashing themselves and each other while they wave excitedly to their drier friends on shore.

Be sure to notice the sign above Two Johns' Saloon that reads: "Every Nation Welcome Except Carrie," and the freshly washed but still slightly dingy laundry hanging from the line between the dentist's office, Dr. I. Yankum, and Fink's Overall Store. Everywhere you look kids are running, laughing, singing along to the western music playing over the Park's music system. Happy, relaxed couples are holding hands. Businesses are enjoying their company picnics in one of the Park's five covered pavilions decorated to look like country barns. And everywhere you turn, in and around the Park, amongst all the people and the laughing and the good times, you'll see hundreds of helpful staffers wearing khaki shorts and dark green pullovers, the red and white Frontier City logo embroidered on their left sleeve.

You'll find the Park's khaki-and-green-clad staff everywhere, operating the rides, serving food in the Park's 15 restaurants and snack shops, assisting guests with their purchases at the Frontier Trading Company, a western-themed general store. Down at Matthew Brady's New Fangled-Old Time Photography, workers are snapping souvenir photos of couples and groups in puffy, frilly dresses, Colonel Sanders suits, western hats and red bandanas. Right next door, staffers direct guests to their seats in the Overholser Opera House, an opulent performance venue, its deep red carpet and stage curtain contrasting sharply with the shiny, bone white columns that line the large room and the huge crystal chandelier that hangs from the paneled ceiling. In fact there are over 400 easy to identify workers in the Park this day, all making sure today's guests have a fun and memorable experience.

That Frontier City's staff manages to successfully pull off such a demanding task each weekend is remarkable. What's even more amazing about these 400+ workers is this: approximately 20% of them are volunteers, not paid staffers. That's right: 20% of those khaki-and-green-clad teen and adult workers won't receive a penny for working their 8-hour shift in the Park today. And they're thrilled with the arrangement, ***because the money they would have earned goes directly to the non-profit organization of their choice.***

For some of those workers it's their church or synagogue. For others, their high-school or college band, choir or athletic group. During the eight years Frontier City's Volunteer Workforce Program has been in operation, they've "hired" a wide range of non-profit groups that have enthusiastically and consistently supplied teen and adult volunteers. Fraternity and sorority groups, community athletic organizations, debate clubs, nursing clubs, health-related non-profits and church organizations of every imaginable kind have met their funding goals by participating in Frontier City's program.

That these willing and reliable volunteers are indistinguishable from the paid staffers confirms the fact that this Volunteer Workforce Program is a powerful and compelling solution to Frontier City's staffing concerns. In

reality the volunteers do everything the staffers do, with one notable exception: although they assist guests at ride areas, they don't actually operate the rides, because that task requires specific safety training and certification. But other than that, you'll find the volunteers assisting in every area of the Park's operation.

Frontier City is in the business of providing its guests with a good time. Having adequate staff on hand is essential to accomplishing that mission. By hiring volunteers, the Park benefits from the energy and enthusiasm of a constant stream of ready workers in a tight labor market. The volunteers are upbeat and cheerful, happy to work in the service of their cause. Since the volunteers typically work only three days during the season, they're fresh and energetic as they assist the public. ***And they're very easy to recruit, even when paid labor is scarce. Frontier City has more groups applying for the program than they can accommodate.***

Frontier City receives another benefit from this arrangement: a very special relationship with the community. The Park is perceived as a model corporate citizen, a "good guy" in the community, because it helps local non-profits achieve their funding goals in a very substantial way. Because the volunteers have such a positive experience during their days in the Park, they take with them a very high opinion of the Park and its management — a high opinion they share with their friends, classmates and co-workers. The volunteers' three-day experience has forever altered the way they view, and talk about, this local business. The added value and goodwill this generates in the community is absolutely invaluable — and couldn't be "purchased" any other way. By any standard of measurement, Frontier City's Volunteer Workforce program is a remarkable success.

Soccer Boosters in Bethany, OK

In the fall of 1998, Bethany High School's soccer program was brand new, and the Soccer Booster Club began looking for ways to raise money. A few hundred dollars wouldn't be anywhere near enough. Their ambitious goal was to raise \$10,000 by the start of the coming school year — \$5,000 for the boys' program and \$5,000 for the girls'. They tried all sorts of fundraisers — selling candy, washing cars, pumping gas during Albertson's Express Grand Openings, volunteering at restaurants for tips. They even wrapped Christmas gifts at a local Wal-Mart on the weekends between Thanksgiving and Christmas. But they needed more.

They heard about Frontier City's Booster Program, so they called the amusement park and requested information. Frontier responded by sending their Booster Information Packet explaining the program and providing all the forms and agreements the group needs to complete and return to the program's administrator. With the paperwork in order, the Soccer Booster Club began recruiting kids and parents for the two Saturdays they agreed to work.

And it was work. The teen and adult volunteers were assigned to the arcade games area, restaurants and the catering operation. Donning the

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same khaki and green uniforms worn by the Park's full-time staff, the kids and parents from Bethany blended in perfectly with their co-workers. They helped the Park's guests find their way through the 50 meandering acres of this re-created western town. They handled money, worked in the gift shop, sold cold water to guests from 50-lb. backpacks. They crafted nachos, tacos and burritos in the kitchen of Labamba's Cantina, the Park's Mexican-themed restaurant. In another location they served hungry diners soft drinks, sandwiches and desserts. An adult volunteer was even recruited to serve beer at one of the restaurants, since the underage staffers were too young to pour or sell it. These were two busy and productive Saturdays — for the Booster Club and the Park.

Frontier City got what it wanted and needed the most — happy, upbeat workers serving its guests on two very busy days. The Bethany High School Soccer Booster Club was thrilled with the money they raised for their new program — \$1,416.

Don't get the wrong impression: if you'll pardon the pun, these two days weren't exactly a walk in the park for the volunteers from Bethany High. It gets mighty hot in Oklahoma in the summer. It's one thing to be having fun on a hot Saturday at an amusement park, quite another to be working in the heat on a weekend. Some of the kids had fun and would be willing to do it again. Some thought it was drudgery. But of all the different fundraisers the booster club participated in, ***Frontier City's program undoubtedly gave the volunteers the greatest return on their investment.*** Considering there were no supplies to buy in advance as they experienced with the gift wrapping adventure, and no need to advertise, set up a space physically and cook a pancake breakfast, their two days at Frontier City were a windfall. All they had to do was show up as agreed, wear the Park-supplied uniform, and volunteer their time.

The Bethany High School Soccer Booster Club raised \$7,500 by the start of the school year. Neil Cagle, the new soccer coach, was recruited and hired by the district, and practice begins at the start of the second semester, after football winds down. Based on the interest and money raised by the parents, the boys and girls soccer program is now completely funded. Kids will be recruited for the teams, uniforms and supplies bought, games scheduled and played.

If, in the grand scheme of things, this seems rather trivial — take another look. These parents are busy people with full lives. They could be doing a lot of other things with their free time besides serving on a booster club. In their eyes, it's not about uniforms, or administrators, or school district politics. It's simple, really. ***They love their children.*** And they realize that the world now is a very different place than when they were teens. Yes, their kids were interested in soccer specifically, but these far-sighted parents are looking beyond the sport itself. They want their children engaged in healthy, wholesome activities that will instill confidence, activities that pass along values of fair play and sportsmanship. They know they can't completely protect their kids from the dangers of the world, but they want to provide their

children with alternative forms of recreation that are saner and healthier than the world generally offers.

That's what this is about, and Frontier City's Booster Program is helping to make it all possible. These kids and parents are bombarded daily by media images of troubled teens on drugs, removed from reality and disconnected from family. Contrast those images with these parents' vision for their children — kids in soccer uniforms, kicking a ball around on a playing field, with friends and family cheering them on. Small stuff? Hardly. Just ask Susan and Errol Russell, or Mona Wenzel or Ken Coleman, or any other parent in the soccer club. These people know what they want, and they know why they want it. Now that Frontier City has helped them achieve their goal, can you understand why their feelings about this local business have changed?

Your business can benefit as well as any 'big' business from the use of the Volunteer Workforce concept.

Imagine for a minute your business solving its staffing woes by becoming involved in the lives of the residents of your community. Like a stone tossed into a pond, your company's Volunteer Workforce program will send out wave after wave of positive feelings. You'll find the workers you need to succeed in business. Parent and teen volunteers will speak glowingly about your company's involvement in their non-profit. Your company's program will help people in ways you can't see or even imagine, as the ripple effect spreads wide and deep, affecting people in your community for the better.

It's Amazing How One Phone Call Can Make All The Difference

"You've got to deliver the service." Pete Fingerhut, Marketing Director of Frontier City, distills his corporate mission into those six words. At his suburban amusement park, **delivering the service** means providing a fun, enjoyable, memorable experience for the hundreds of thousands of families who visit his park every year.

Premier hasn't just focused on its physical facilities, however. All the new hardware doesn't mean a thing without properly trained staff to run it. Each year, Frontier City hires more than 500 seasonal employees who serve throughout the Park. Drawn from the local pool of students, teachers on their summer break, and senior citizens, these new hires are thoroughly trained and ride-certified before being let loose on the public.

Recruiting this huge number of workers every year is quite a challenge. Premier invests a great deal of money in programs to encourage candidates to apply, and new hires to stay through the season. "As a company we spend millions of dollars on incentives," explains Pete. "We give away cars, you can see one right outside the office here," he says, pointing out a nearby window. "We give away trips, and TVs, VCRs. We do parties, employee functions — two or three each month. We have movie nights, casino nights, midnight volleyball, picnics — our employees get to bring their friends to the Park."

Pete tries his best to create a sense of community among the workers, anything to help them realize that what they're engaged in is more than just

"We get the really high-class individual that we're looking for."

a job. This approach pays off handsomely when satisfied employees encourage their friends to join them as seasonal workers. And numerous friendships have begun among the staff as they serve the public. According to Pete, some marriages have developed out of the camaraderie created by all the social activities engineered for the employees.

But with all of the success they've enjoyed over the years in recruiting and retaining seasonal workers, the Park still experienced, as Pete describes it, "that gap, when we can't find enough staff." Bridging the distance between their personnel efforts and their staffing goals was a constant challenge. From time to time, Park management brainstormed about possible solutions, and during one of these periods a local church group contacted them and asked if there was anything they could do in the Park to raise funds for their congregation. It seemed like a reasonable idea, so Park management tested the concept with this group, and discovered that it worked extremely well. The church supplied teen and adult volunteers who worked in various locations throughout the Park, and Frontier City paid the church directly for the hours donated. Pleased with the results of this initial experiment, Pete Fingerhut expanded the idea into its current incarnation, ***"The Fun-Raiser Program."***

Pete knew he and his management team had stumbled onto something very good, which would serve the needs of a wide variety of non-profit groups in the community. "It's an excellent fund raiser for the groups," he says, "because you see a lot of organizations out there washing cars, and they may or may not make very much. **But this is guaranteed.** If they come out, and work seven hours, the check goes directly to their organization."

But what sort of person would volunteer, would donate their time, to a for-profit business? Over the years, Pete's experience has been consistently positive. "We've found that we experience a good quality individual who volunteers, from groups that are sports related, or church related. Actually the cream of the crop, the ones that are wanting to get involved with their organizations," he explains, understandably proud of his volunteer program. "We get the really high-class individual that we're looking for. It's the all-American boy and girl." In his business, image is a high priority. So these squeaky clean, smiley-faced volunteers are the perfect solution.

Pete's convinced the volunteers may be even better at serving the public than his full-time staffers. "We get a high-caliber person, and they don't mind working. When you have someone working for 30 days, it's a little monotonous, doing the same thing every day. But with the volunteer being here for only three days, they're fresh."

Monika Anderson, the Park's Human Resource Director and administrator of their volunteer workforce program, is quick to compare the benefits of the Fun-Raiser concept to more conventional revenue generation avenues non-profits usually pursue. "I have one college group that worked one day this year so far, a seven-hour shift. They brought 34 people and their check was \$1,400. And there's no way you could do that in one day washing cars." No one's arguing the point with her; she's absolutely right.

At \$5 per car, these college kids would need to wash 280 vehicles — in one day — to equal the windfall they received from their seven-hour shift at Frontier City.

The Park currently works with about 50 charitable organizations every year. Each agrees to volunteer three times during the seven month season. When an organization calls and requests information about the program, Monika sends them a **Booster Information Packet**. Inside, the group finds:

- **The “Fun-Raiser” Brochure**, describing the benefits of the program, the types of assignments available, how days and shifts are assigned, information about breaks, age restrictions and behavior and grooming standards.
- **The Volunteer Group Contribution Agreement**, a simple contract between the Park and the volunteer group that details the terms and conditions of their relationship. Although the group-supplied volunteers work under the supervision of the Park supervisors and must abide by the Park rules governing dress code, hours of work and standards of conduct, they remain under the general direction and control of the charitable organization.
- **Individual Booster Information Receipt**, to be completed by each volunteer, acknowledging that they've read and agree to the terms and conditions specified by the Park concerning dress, behavior, age and courtesy in dealing with the public.
- **IRS W-9 Form, Request for Taxpayer Identification**, which the charitable organization completes and returns to the volunteer program administrator.

Monika contacts the organization and schedules days and shifts that work well for both the Park and the group. Volunteers are instructed to arrive at the Park's Operations Office 30 minutes before their shift begins to sign in, receive a green pullover, complete a short orientation, and get their job assignment. From there, volunteers are dispersed throughout the Park. Paid staffers then quickly train the volunteers at their assigned locations. Volunteers and regular staffers work together, side by side, wearing identical uniforms.

All in all, a very simple idea. **But it's a great idea.** Sometimes the simplest concepts are the most powerful. Like a huge people magnet, Frontier City's Volunteer Workforce program draws charitable groups from all over the state. Teens and adults come from towns and cities 75 miles away to participate.

Musing on the amazing success their program has become, and the great need in the community, Pete Fingerhut offers this assessment — “When you have thousands and thousands of organizations and associations, and in this day and age when funds are tight, when schools don't have the money to buy uniforms, this is one way to help raise funds for those schools.”

As the old saying goes, Pete Fingerhut and his team are doing well by doing good. Hearing him speak about their volunteer program, it's obvious

Volunteers remain under the direction and control of the charitable organization.

Paid staffers are pleased with the help they receive from volunteers.

Pete truly relishes his role in the process. By giving to the community in this remarkable way, they bridge that persistent gap between their employee recruiting efforts and their staffing goals. The Park's paid staffers are pleased with the help they receive from the volunteers. **The charitable organizations are thrilled with the revenue their donated hours generate.** And Frontier City's 500,000 annual guests — the reason behind all the effort — enjoy their day in the Park. They laugh, eat, scream on the rides and delight in the gunfights; they play with their children and remember what it was like to be a child. At least for this one day, away from the cares of their daily grind, a burden or two evaporates from their shoulders, they breathe a little deeper, and life is a little more fun.

Case Study #2 — Six Flags Over Texas, Arlington, TX

When Six Flags Over Texas opened near Dallas in 1961, the original design of this massive amusement park included six themed areas representing each one of the nations that claimed Texas as its own. Spain, Mexico, France, Texas, the Confederacy, and the U.S. were each featured in a section of the Park showcasing their unique flavor and history. Employees wore fun and colorful uniforms specific to the culture of each area, and the music, food and entertainment varied appropriately depending on the country represented. Over the years these offerings were substantially expanded, so that today Six Flags features eleven themed areas spread over 221 acres of what used to be rambling Texas prairie.

The newest addition is Gotham City, a unique fantasy setting depicting the battle between good and evil, based directly on Batman, the DC Comics superhero. As guests begin their tour in the newly-constructed “Wayne Foundation Industrial Park,” **Batman the Ride** carries guests swiftly out of harm’s way as an experimental power system threatens to go out of control. Once aboard the unconventional train, the bottom drops from beneath the riders and they soar out of the Batcave at 50 mph with nothing beneath their feet but earth and sky. Guests swoop down a 10-story climb, up and over a 77-foot-tall vertical loop, then race alongside the tallest and fastest rollercoaster in the Southwest — and Batman’s archenemy — Mr. Freeze.

As any native of the Lone Star State will proudly tell you, everything’s just a little bit bigger in Texas. While Monika Anderson in Oklahoma City keeps tabs on 40 to 50 volunteer groups a year, her counterpart in Dallas, Cindy Whitley, somehow **manages to effectively utilize 170 non-profit organizations.** On a busy day at Frontier City in central Oklahoma, perhaps 50 to 80 volunteers will work in the Park. On a busy Saturday at Six Flags in Dallas, **up to 250 volunteers report for duty assignments in catering, park services and security.**

Six Flags Over Texas attracts the same cross-section of non-profit organizations as Frontier City: churches, schools, boy scout troops, athletic organizations, nursing associations and drill teams. Six Flags also benefits from the nearby military base. Seven different base-associated groups fund their civil work by volunteering at the Park. Cindy also recruits numerous high school Jr. ROTC and police academy alumni groups to work security.

The greatest need for volunteers is in the Park’s catering operation, where a busy day will require 200 volunteers in that department alone. Meeting the needs of the Park’s catering clients means that more than 50% of the workers are volunteers, eagerly supplementing the efforts of paid staffers. Walk out of Cindy’s office into the tented catering area, and you’ll be greeted by a sea of cheerful foodservice workers wearing red and white gingham checked shirts. It’s impossible to miss them, no matter which way you turn — **exactly the high-touch customer service effect Cindy is trying to achieve.**

**170 non-profits
participate in this
massive Volunteer
Workforce
program.**

\$19,400 in six months — it pays to volunteer.

The front gates of the amusement park are another important assignment for volunteers in Cindy's program. With more than 32,000 people flowing through Six Flags' inviting entrance on a busy day, crowd control and screening is vitally important. Police academy and ROTC volunteers don white polo shirts with the word SECURITY emblazoned in black letters across the back. Their job is to provide imposing visibility — and alert nearby professional security officers if anything unusual catches their eye.

Non-profit organizations receive \$6.25 for every hour their members donate, and one complimentary admission to the Park for each worker. Shifts vary in length from just 4 hours to 11 hours on busy catering days. The money is used to buy uniforms, sheet music, and athletic equipment. School groups fund their trips to contests and sporting events, churches generate revenue for mission activities. Some organizations volunteer just one time in the Park and meet their goals, others schedule shifts numerous times throughout the year.

Berkner High, a 5A school in northeast Richardson, Texas, earned **\$19,400 in six months volunteering at Six Flags**. It began when the football team received an invitation to participate in an exhibition game in Florida, along with some local educational opportunities. They needed to raise a lot of money, very quickly. So Debbi Littrell, dedicated mother of the team's kicker, Robert, volunteered to spearhead the project, organizing up to 70 kids at a time.

Traveling 35 miles one way to the Park, the kids and adults worked 5 days in a row straight through their Spring Break. The cheerleaders and drill team showed their support by joining the team when possible. Initially assigned to work in food service, they were quickly "promoted" to security, and soon became one of the favorite and most dependable groups in Cindy's volunteer program. Within six months the football team had raised the remarkable sum of \$19,400 — all through the Six Flags program — and went on their trip to Florida. The school's basketball team has taken their place now, and is raising funds for additional equipment the school simply can't afford.

Hands-On Education

"If you're willing to give your time, we're willing to give your child the world." With these words Candi Roberts begins her explanation of the educational opportunities Hands-On Education provides to at-risk and underprivileged children in the Ft. Worth, Texas area. Four years ago a dedicated middle school teacher wanted to provide her students an opportunity to experience government up-close and in person by taking them on a trip to Washington, DC. Margie Miller and Candi Roberts formed the non-profit corporation, began raising funds, and gave those kids an experience they'll never forget.

Since that first experiment, Hands-On Education has blossomed, creating two or three educational trips for students every year. The organization's board of directors meets with local educators and determines subjects to

be covered in the coming year's curriculum. Trips are designed to include aspects of each subject area — literature, science, math, geography and history. On a trip to New York and Philadelphia, students visited the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, learning about the experience of immigrants as they entered the country through this famous processing point. At Philadelphia they encountered the Liberty Bell first hand, learning important issues about government in the process.

During an upcoming trip to Michigan and Canada, students will initially fly to Dearborn and visit the Henry Ford Museum, Green Field Village, Thomas Edison's laboratory, and the Wright Brothers' cycle shop. They'll also tour Noah Webster's home, the Firestone Farm House, and continue from there with a stop at Niagara Falls, complete with a Maid-of-the-Mist boat ride right up to the pounding falls itself. Then the kids will travel to the Ontario Science Center, a hands-on museum featuring over 800 educational exhibits. They'll actually touch a tornado, take stress tests, and row against Olympic rowers. A side trip to Fort York, which was attacked three times during the War of 1812, and a visit to the CN Tower, the world's tallest freestanding structure, will round out the nine-day experience.

Most of the kids who participate in these trips come from middle- to low-income areas. Most of them are enrolled in free-lunch programs, so there's simply no way these types of educational opportunities would be available to them without the volunteer efforts of everyone involved in Hands-On Education. But Candi sees far more value in these programs than the obvious. The kids and their parents participate in various fundraisers all year long to generate revenue for the trip. The goal keeps the kids focused — and very busy. **They don't have time to get into trouble.** They make new friends, and they learn the value of money. Candi also prepares folders for the kids, stuffed with information about the places on their itinerary. They study the materials throughout the year, so when they're actually on-site, the experience is even more rewarding.

Although Hands-On Education can take advantage of great package tour discounts available for students, the trips still cost money, and it's got to come from somewhere. "Six Flags has been an absolute Godsend to us," she says. A typical weekend for the Hands-on Education group will involve 15 parents and their children volunteering at the Park. The Six Flags' program provides approximately one-third of the funds necessary to send the 120-180 at-risk kids on these educational trips every year. They simply couldn't do it without Six Flags' help.

On a tour next year to New Mexico, the kids will visit Indian Pueblos, hike up the Santa De Cristo mountains, and participate in a starlight gazing tour. "We're making up study kits now, so that when the kids actually get there, they'll be able to find the nebulae and constellations they're reading about," Candi explains. "We're trying to bring their textbooks to life. I don't think you can ever give a greater gift to a child than an education."

It's a striking image — taking an at-risk child from a difficult neighborhood and bringing them to the top of a mountain to view the stars.

Six Flags' Volunteer Workforce program is a Godsend to local non-profits.

"We couldn't have done it without you."

Temporarily at least, there's no crime, no drugs or gangs. No street violence to anxiously avoid. Just the sky — dark and clear and crisp. And stars, millions of them. Candi gives children a chance to leave behind the life they've known and experience something new and exciting. Not only will the kids pick out the stars they've studied. But standing there in the cool, dry New Mexico night, they'll reach for them.

As you might imagine, the task of juggling 170 volunteer groups, often composed of teenagers, is a demanding and sometimes overwhelming assignment. But Cindy Whitley loves it. She enjoys working with people. She's on a first-name basis with many of the group sponsors, calling them at home and getting to know their families. She's been invited to attend an upcoming concert of an adult singing group which volunteers in her program. Kids often tell her about the trips their groups take, how much fun they had, how much they learned, and what a wonderful experience it was. She's heard "We couldn't have done it without you," more than once. Groups send her thank you letters and snapshots. The past few years have been a wild but intensely enjoyable ride.

But it's not just about raising money for athletics and trips. Cindy is profoundly impressed by the critically important work done in the community by Hands-On Education. And the idea of playing a role in the work of churches and relief organizations as they travel on humanitarian missions deeply affects her. Who can gauge the good that will come from kindnesses shown to people in ravaged areas? Even assisting just one family in a distant country will create ripple effects throughout the years no one can predict. This one thought brings a warm and knowing smile to Cindy's face. As the administrator of Six Flags' Volunteer Workforce program, she's found her place in the world — and it's a perfect fit.

Case Study #3 — The Dallas Cowboys, Irving, TX

Giving back to the community is the number one priority for Amy Phillips' Volunteer Workforce program. The Cowboys' V.P. of Food and Beverage contracts with 46 non-profit organizations each season to staff 46 concession stands in Texas Stadium through a six-month season, August to January. The groups agree to supply volunteers for the Cowboys' 10 or 11 home games, along with 4 to 7 additional events such as concerts or college games scheduled in the stadium.

On game day **more than 1,500 volunteers** descend on Texas Stadium, cheerfully raising funds for their organizations by selling hot dogs, nachos, pretzels and soft drinks. Sixty beer booths also ring the open dome arena, and some of the organizations supply additional volunteers to man those concessions, too. Some stands require 8 or 10 people, others 20, 30 or 40 depending on how large the concession booth is and how varied the menu.

During the 25 years Amy's program has been in operation, they've "hired" volunteers from local churches, schools, booster organizations, groups providing services to underprivileged children and even a battered women's shelter. But the Dallas Cowboys Program has also served to meet the funding needs of local affiliates of national organizations such as the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, and the American Heart Association.

Non-profits are paid a percentage of sales generated, and have the opportunity to expose the Cowboys' fans to their charity. "It's nice that when someone comes up to a stand we have a sign which says, This concession is being operated by 'such-and-such' a non-profit organization," Amy explained. **The added visibility and positive association may very well encourage a patron to respond favorably to a future request for donations by the organization.**

Bringing in an army of 1,500 concession workers could be done by hiring temporaries. But Amy is convinced the Volunteer Workforce option is a superior choice. Thinking of the amazing win-win situation they've created from their need for periodic, high-volume manpower, Amy comments "We would prefer to give back to the community, and allow these organizations to be a part of the Cowboys association as well. We use them as a vehicle to promote goodwill within the organization and the community." The Cowboys' reputation is substantially enhanced, and the business office has access to an eager and dependable flow of energetic concession workers.

Since the Cowboys' program has been in continuous operation for over 25 years, Amy has no trouble finding organizations willing to participate. In fact, she's done absolutely no advertising or marketing of the Program at all. Since the Program's existence is well known within the Dallas/Fort Worth area, non-profits constantly contact her requesting information about possible openings.

When asked if the program has been difficult or relatively easy to admin-

**1,500 volunteers
man concession
stands on game
days.**

Small business can benefit by adapting these large-scale programs to their smaller operations.

ister over the years, Amy responds by explaining that although scheduling the groups requires a considerable amount of telephone time, it's not difficult at all. "They're just really nice people who come in to perform a job," she says.

The Dallas Cowboys' Volunteer Workforce program is a perfect example of how big business has been teaming up with non-profit organizations and enjoying the benefits that hiring volunteers provides. But the average small business person, even one who may have noticed this program or something similar, does not realize that those same benefits enjoyed by the Cowboys' business office are available to them in their business. Of course the entrepreneur, franchisee or independent small businessperson's implementation of the concepts and ideas would be drastically scaled down, but the core ideas remain intact. **Big businesses in America have employed Volunteer Workforces for decades because they solve their staffing shortages and they promote goodwill within the community.** The small business owner can do the same with a well-designed and properly managed program whatever the size of their business, no matter what industry they're involved in.

Case Study #4 — Lloyd Noble Arena, Norman, OK

For the past 20 years, the Lloyd Noble Arena in Norman, Oklahoma has hired volunteer groups to clean this 11,000-seat athletic and performance venue. Removing the trash and litter left behind by rowdy fans and excited concert-goers is quite a challenge for Henry Loyd (no relation) and his operations staff. Since 1980 Henry has come to rely on and enjoy the many benefits of working with a wide variety of groups including student associations, churches, engineering clubs and social service organizations.

35-45 volunteers arrive at the Arena just before the event is scheduled to conclude. Henry and his staff conduct a quick orientation for the volunteers, and once the majority of the crowd is dispersed, the volunteers begin systematically emptying drink cups, checking each seat, and sweeping every aisle. Trash is swept into large piles in the major center walkways, then shoveled into monstrously huge garbage bags. Volunteers transfer these “trash bags on steroids” to a refuse pickup point using an oversized cart specifically designed for the purpose. The Arena’s paid staff shifts into gear, using industrial scrubbing machines to clean the floors and walkways. Before long the entire Arena is squeaky clean, ready for the following day’s event.

The job is hard work and takes an average of 4 to 5 hours for a crew of 35-45 people. Since the volunteers typically begin cleaning at around 10pm, their job isn’t complete until the early hours of the next morning. Thankfully they’re not responsible for cleaning restrooms or floor areas — Henry’s paid staff handles those duties.

Since the amount of food consumed at an event is directly related to the quantity of trash generated, volunteer group compensation is based on concession sales and the quality of the job done. The average payout for a night of cleaning is \$500. But Henry is more than willing to give special consideration to a group which responds to an unexpected need on short notice or when their crew is required to wait because a concert or game runs overtime. Flexibility is important in this arrangement, on both sides. A quick calculation clearly demonstrates that the Lloyd Noble Arena is “hiring” energetic and enthusiastic volunteers for less than three dollars an hour to do a messy and difficult job. But no one’s complaining. Far from it, everyone involved is extraordinarily happy with the arrangement.

Reneé and Jeff Burns are the Ministers of Music at Heartland Harvest Church, a suburban congregation of approximately 400 members. Heartland’s a fun and energetic place on Sunday mornings, where the style of worship is upbeat and involved. Every July, Heartland’s younger members participate in the Youth Choir Tour, traveling around the country performing for other churches in their denomination. Funding the two-week educational experience requires determination and creativity, so when Reneé heard about Lloyd Noble’s program, she jumped at the chance to participate in a fundraising solution that didn’t require selling food, candy, or other items. Those types of projects haven’t worked out well for Heartland’s

**Trash, churches,
and youth groups.**

This new Worship Center was paid for entirely by funds generated through volunteers cleaning up after sports fans.

youth in the past; in fact, they even lost money on occasion. So this opportunity to exchange volunteer time for a guaranteed payout was impossible to turn down.

Reneé is convinced that when her youth group pulls together and earns the money needed, they grow in character and appreciate the trip more than they would if the church simply provided it for them. Each late-night excursion to the Lloyd Noble Arena builds excitement as the youth, and occasionally their parents, sacrifice their time for the fun and enjoyment they know they'll enjoy later when they travel the country, perform and visit with other kids.

Heartland's youth learn another valuable lesson from their experience at the Lloyd Noble. Often while cleaning they'll find articles left behind by fans and concert-goers: binoculars, pagers, cell phones, cash, even wallets. Henry Loyd allows the group to keep the loose cash they find, but of course the other articles are returned to their owners. When a grateful patron is reunited with their cell phone or wallet, and they learn that a non-profit group found it for them as they cleaned the Arena raising funds, the volunteer group usually receives a welcomed gratuity from the happy owner.

Another congregation participating in Lloyd Noble's program is Calvary Tabernacle. You might say Calvary Tabernacle is the church that trash built, but however true the statement may be, surely the congregation wouldn't appreciate the sentiment. Calvary constructed a new worship center in 1986 and **paid for the entire building** with funds generated from the Lloyd Noble volunteer program. From the blueprint stage of the 250-seat building, to ground breaking, through construction and eventual decoration and dedication into service as their new church home, every penny was generated through the dedicated efforts of volunteers cleaning up after sporting fans and concert-goers at Lloyd Noble Arena.

Jim Tucker is the congregation's volunteer coordinator, and he's quick to point out that during the new building's early years Calvary's members spent a few evenings per month volunteering. But currently the congregation participates in the program just twice a month during basketball season.

Since the mortgage is completely paid off, the money is now used for maintenance, remodeling and upkeep, with the remainder flowing into the church's general fund. Since Calvary is a smaller congregation with limited resources, Jim is certain the building project wouldn't have been possible without the ongoing relationship the church developed and nurtured over the years with Lloyd Noble Arena.

And on those Sunday mornings when they're a little sore from bending, hauling and pushing a broom, Calvary's volunteers can glance around and take comfort in knowing that their efforts made the dream of a beautiful new church home a reality. And on those occasions when Henry Loyd drives past Calvary Tabernacle, he takes pride in knowing that his Volunteer Workforce program is at least partly responsible for the sturdy and attractive building that serves its congregation so well.

Case Study #5 — Sonic Drive-Ins, Oklahoma City, OK

Foodservice franchise operators use the Volunteer Workforce concept to give their regular staffers time off. Remember when you were 16 years old? The prospect of working on a Friday night or a Saturday wasn't the most exciting thought. Because weekends are often difficult to staff, these final Case Studies focus on two programs used by franchise restaurants — one a drive-in similar to A&W or Coit's, the other a healthy Italian quickservice concept featuring casual inside dining.

Sonic Drive-Ins

In the summer of 1999, Sonic Drive-Ins celebrated the grand opening of its 2,000th location — in Oklahoma City, where its corporate headquarters is based. This milestone location featured the chain's new whimsical, futuristic look, quickly reminding its diners of the brightly colored and spherically shaped buildings seen on the cartoon program The Jetsons. Like the '60s tv-show, the new look is a huge hit, but Sonic's perennial quickservice offerings were tremendously popular before the building program underwent a facelift. Grilled Cheese Sandwiches, BLTs, and Bacon Cheeseburgers served with Tater Tots, or made-daily Onion Rings have been satisfying drive-in diners for decades. And the chain's Cherry Limeaid is a regional favorite.

Carhops make it all possible. With a tip of the hat to an era gone by, Sonic Drive-Ins serve their patrons quickly and efficiently with thousands of teenage carhops — on rollerskates. Pull your car into a parking space, push a button on the menu board, then order from the comfort of your seat. Within minutes a smiling carhop will deliver your meal, take payment, make change, accept a gratuity if offered, and happily skate away. It's a fun, unusual dining experience. And it presents a remarkable opportunity to create a relationship with the community.

In order to give their regular staffers an occasional Saturday off, one suburban company-owned store instituted "Carhopping for Tips." Through this program, the store contracts with a local non-profit, usually school-related, to supply a group of teen and adult volunteers for two four-hour shifts on Saturdays. Drive-in diners pull into the car bays, and order their meal through an intercom system. The volunteers cheerfully deliver the meals and collect payment. Management prepares and places 3" x 5" notices on the menu boards alerting patrons that today's carhops aren't regular staffers, but volunteers from the local high school donating their time in an effort to raise funds for a specific purpose — and generous tips would be greatly appreciated. Of course this one-day event is highly publicized at the school and among the friends and parents of the group raising funds, all in an effort to draw supportive friends and family members to the restaurant that day — leaving sizeable tips behind for the eager volunteers.

The manager of this unit relates a story involving one high school group that raised enough money through his program for a trip to an important

**Since weekends
are tough to staff,
why not give your
employees the day
off and hire
volunteers instead?**

**\$16 per hour
donated by
supportive patrons.**

music festival. The volunteers donated their time carhopping, and generated enough funds to send their entire group. Bill enthusiastically tells about receiving a postcard from them relating how their performance was extremely well received. He talks about a greater sense of accomplishment he feels by being involved in the process, and how the experience raised his own self-esteem by helping his community.

The scene is repeated at another Sonic Drive-In location across town where eight teenagers from a church youth group volunteer as carhops to raise funds for a choir trip. In six hours the group raised approximately \$400 in tips, some diners leaving \$20 to express their appreciation for the group's determination and hard work. In effect, the teens raised a little more than \$16 per hour donated, and they had fun in the process. Most of the patrons that day knew about the church event in advance, that's why they showed up and offered their support. But the few that didn't were eager to hear about the upcoming trip and what it meant for the kids participating in it.

Although Sonic doesn't have a company-wide Volunteer Workforce program in place yet, its locations are experimenting with the concept and refining their approach on a case-by-case basis. Based on the successes they've experienced so far and the goodwill generated in their drive-ins' communities, Sonic hopes to roll out a national program in the near future.

In August of 1999, readers of the *Oklahoma Gazette* rated Sonic's offerings in the top three for "Best Burgers" and "Best Meal To Go." But everyone here already knew Sonic's food was popular. Far more significant, the same readers voted Sonic the "Best Community Spirited Business" in Oklahoma. Most businesses would **kill** for this kind of recognition. All Sonic has to do is give its employees the day off, let volunteers come in, and watch its reputation — and profits — improve.

Case Study #6 — Fazoli's Restaurants, Oklahoma City, OK

Fazoli's doesn't look, sound or smell like a fast food restaurant. From the dried, hanging onions, garlic and peppers at the drink station to the red, black and gold tins of Medaglia D'Oro espresso coffee casually displayed on ledges in the dining room, it's immediately obvious that this fastservice restaurant is up to something different. Italian arias fill the room from the overhead sound system, serenading talkative business people on their lunch break. And the powerful aroma of simmering red sauce, garlic and sausage smells like Sunday in an Italian household. All of the elements of the standard fastfood experience are missing, except for the 'fast' and the low prices.

Welcome to Fazoli's #1738, one of 365 locations nationwide, one of only two in Oklahoma, and the only location in Oklahoma City. Since this corporate-owned store opened in May of 1996, its management has actively pursued Volunteer Workforce opportunities with local school and church groups. Naomi Frederick, General Manager, has seen with her own eyes during the past few years how incredibly effective bringing volunteers into her restaurant can be. Because hers is the only location in this major metropolitan area of over one million people, TV and radio advertising is simply not an option. **In order to effectively compete with other units in the Fazoli's system, Naomi aggressively builds her business by using a Volunteer Workforce program.**

Naomi's restaurant experiences its heaviest traffic on Friday nights. And that's exactly when she prefers to schedule volunteers. The process starts a few weeks earlier, when an eager school or church group agrees to supply teen and/or adult volunteers for a particular night. Typically the group promotes the event well in advance, placing notices in their newsletters and even alerting their entire neighborhood by announcing "Fazoli Night" in big letters on their outdoor marquee.

The kids arrive by 5:00pm, arrange a table with information about their group and a tip jar up front by the order area, and place posters inside the restaurant. Naomi offers a special "all-you-can-eat" dinner, not usually on the menu, for the group's supporters that night. A dollar donation is added to the cost of the meal, and at the end of the night, the donations are tallied up and given to the non-profit organization.

Naomi requires school groups to come dressed in uniform because three years of experience have convinced her that groups raise more funds this way. If diners not connected to the group's cause recognize that the kids are raising funds for a non-profit organization, they often donate money simply to be supportive. So cheerleaders arrive fully dressed in their outfits, and when soccer, basketball or baseball teams participate, they serve guests wearing their school colors and uniform.

Fazoli's goal is to "wow" their guests by offering a level of service far above what the customer will experience in an ordinary fastfood restaurant.

**Franchise employs
the Volunteer
Workforce concept
to effectively
compete with other
units in its national
chain.**

**Use of volunteers
replaces paid
employees in fast
food setting.**

To this end, Naomi normally schedules two employees to work the dining room, offering free refills on guests' drinks and unlimited, free breadsticks. This is where the volunteers come in. Because the increased business generated by the volunteer group's marketing for that evening would otherwise overwhelm the employees, volunteers refill drinks and constantly ply diners with those delicious, steamy breadsticks. Of course they're also meeting, greeting and generally schmoozing with folks in the dining room, some of them familiar faces from their school or church group. On a busy Friday night, Naomi schedules 10 regular employees and at least five volunteers in the dining room. ***Of all the workers that evening, approximately one third are unpaid volunteers.***

Naomi is convinced that bringing volunteers into the restaurant has increased her business. "I have guests now that drive 12 miles, who came here originally for a fundraiser. And so we see these folks sometimes two or three times a week. I know that by the time you have grandma and grandpa come out to support their grandchild . . . once I get them in here, I keep them. So it's the new guests we target," she explains. ***Naomi has even hired workers from among the ranks of the volunteers.*** In effect she made good use of the opportunity to "test drive" them in advance, watching them interact with her regular staffers before hiring them. And what of the younger groups? "Some of them may be just little league soccer teams right now, but in a few years they're going to be looking for jobs," she says.

Through volunteering at this Fazoli's restaurant, school groups have raised funds for uniforms, equipment and trips. One group proudly represented their school by marching in the Rose Bowl. A church group raised funds for an important mission trip to Africa. And Naomi packed her dining room on Friday nights, cementing her restaurant's relationship to the community, while marketing her unusual Italian fastservice concept to people who might not otherwise dine with her.

Listening to Naomi talk about her Volunteer Workforce program, the pride in her face and the sparkle in her eye are obvious. This lady is proud to be part of something that allows her to give back to the community. Certainly the rewards have been economic when measured in terms of sales goals achieved and increased business. But when asked what makes all of this worthwhile, she talks about being invited to throw out the first basketball at a home game for one of her neighborhood high schools. It was their way of saying "thanks" for helping them meet their fundraising goals.

In these two foodservice examples, non-profit groups generated the funds they needed to achieve their goals. And the restaurant operators gave their regular staffers a precious Saturday off, or supplemented their regular employees to avoid overwhelming them with increased business. In effect, they ***replaced paid staffers with non-paid volunteers,*** volunteers who received no compensation from the business owners. Because the one-day event was highly publicized by the volunteer group in advance, the store owners experienced increased traffic and higher profits for the day.

The restaurants enjoyed the patronage of people who might not otherwise dine there. Of course the positive goodwill generated in the community cannot be overstated. These grateful families will always think of — and speak about — these two restaurants as “the people who helped turn their kids’ dreams into realities.”

This Volunteer Workforce program generates lasting goodwill in the community.

**Now you know
what 'big business'
has known for
30 years —
Hire Volunteers.**

The Volunteer Workforce — An Exciting Solution

Can you appreciate the significance of this remarkable development, the Volunteer Workforce? With one easily administered program, these businesses have:

- Solved their labor shortage dilemmas by recruiting volunteers to work only the days and hours necessary to meet their corporate goals; while at the same time increased profitability by reducing personnel costs associated with regular employees;
- Improved their full-time staff's morale by ensuring an appropriate number of workers on hand during peak periods and an even-handed distribution of work;
- Raised and improved their profile in the community, creating a very special relationship with local non-profit organizations and the individuals who passionately support them;
- Solved management's deep-seated need to give back to the community in a meaningful and tangible way.

This is absolutely amazing, but the best news of all is this: **you can do the same in your business**, no matter what industry you're in, no matter how large or small your operation is.

Are you an entrepreneur in the early stages of creating a business, wanting more than anything to concentrate on the core issues at hand, not wanting to be distracted by the complexities and technicalities required when hiring employees? Are you concerned about fluctuations in demand for your service or product, worried that you're not ready for the responsibility of another person's livelihood? **Hire volunteers instead.**

Are you the owner of an established business with demands for labor that peak periodically? Have you experienced the discomfort that seasonal or periodic lay-offs create? **Then hire volunteers.**

Do your employees feel overworked or put upon because they're required to do tasks not specifically related to their job descriptions; tasks they'd prefer someone else would do? **Hire volunteers.**

Your production goals will be met, you'll sleep easier at night, your regular employees will be happier. Your operation will be more profitable and you will be seen as the good-hearted person you are — someone who gives back to the community in a way that makes peoples' lives better.

If you think it's difficult now to recruit qualified employees, just wait. The problem will worsen in the future, not improve. Although the outlook is dreary, the solution is already available. It's been tried, tested and proven by large businesses all over the country. They've been pretty tight-lipped about their Volunteer Workforce discoveries and successes so far. But those days are over. Now you know what they've known for 30 years — **Hire Volunteers.**

SHARE THIS IDEA!!!

Here's what you can do to spread the word about *The Volunteer Workforce*:

- 1.) Send this file to a friend.
- 2.) Send them a link to www.thevolunteerworkforce.com so they can download it themselves. It's available as a letter-size pdf, and as an ebook for Palm and Pocket PC.
- 3.) Buy a copy of the whitepaper in printed form from amazon.com at <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0615115152/thevolunteerwork/102-9242656-3234546>. Or, you can buy it directly from me, and I'll throw in some additional cool stuff for free: www.thevolunteerworkforce.com.
- 4.) Print out as many copies as you like.