


# SELECTING GOALS AND OPTIMIZING PERSONAL RESOURCES:

Contributions to the Development of Older Adult Volunteers

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## Introduction

**M**OST OLDER ADULTS are familiar with the phrase, “Use it or lose it”. Indeed, research shows that remaining mentally and physically active in older adulthood is good medicine. It contributes to increased well-being and better health<sup>1</sup>. Volunteer work is one activity that can contribute to positive outcomes for older adults. Seniors who volunteer have greater life satisfaction and well-being, and live longer than seniors who do not volunteer.<sup>2,3</sup>

Professor Ben Gottlieb and graduate student Alayna Gillespie, both associated with the University of Guelph’s Psychology Department, conducted a study this year (2007) in which 100 older adult volunteers were interviewed. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) funded this study, which is a collaboration among the Ontario Community Support Association, the University of Guelph, and the University of Toronto. The study had three purposes:

- To discover what motivates older adults to volunteer, and which motives are most important to them; What is the appeal of volunteering?
- To discover what personal resources and skills older adults make use of in their volunteer work
- To determine whether certain motives, skills and resources that older adults bring to their volunteer work contribute to their personal development and their attachment to the agency where they work.

The study was guided by a theoretical framework that includes two major concepts about how people adapt and develop during their lives. First, the concept of “selection” tells us that people select certain goals that are meaningful to them at certain stages of their life and in certain life contexts. For example, people who choose to volunteer may have such goals as giving back to the community, staying active, being productive, structuring their time, making new acquaintances, and helping others. Second, the concept of “optimization” refers to the skills, resources, and other assets that people employ to pursue and reach the goals they have selected. Hence, people who have the right or optimal means to pursue the goals they have selected should be happier with themselves because there is a good fit between their means and their ends. These are people who show good adaptation and experience personal development.

This theory has never been applied to older adult volunteers, and so the first step we took was to create a set of questions to measure older adults’ goals for volunteering (selection), and to examine the personal traits, skills, and resources that the volunteers employed in their volunteer work (optimization). The second step was to interview 100 older adult volunteers who were asked to complete these measures, along with several other measures that concerned their personal development and their attitudes toward the agency where they worked. Basically, these other measures gauged whether these older adults were enjoying a positive volunteer experience.

In sum, this report concerns older adults’ goals and motives for volunteering, the personal attitudes, skills, and resources they apply to their volunteer work, and the degree to which both the motives and resources that they employ influence their personal development and attachment to the agencies where they work. We hope that this research will contribute to agency practice by providing managers with insight into ways of marketing, supporting, and encouraging volunteerism.

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## The Participants and Questionnaire

**V**IRTUALLY ALL THE VOLUNTEERS we interviewed were at least 60 years of age and were drawn from community support agencies located in several regions of Ontario. They include: Caledonia Senior Support Services, Community Care Durham, Community Care Kawartha Lakes, Knollcrest Lodge (Milverton), Orillia Helping Hands, Services to Assist Independent Living (SAIL) (Gananoque), Town and Country Support Services (Clinton), VON Hamilton, and Community Care Peterborough.

We aimed for a diverse sample of volunteers who came from both rural and urban communities, and were involved in community support services such as meal delivery, escorted transportation, and friendly visiting. We could not have completed this research without the tremendous help we received from the Volunteer Managers of these agencies who explained our study to eligible volunteers, sought their consent to participate, and scheduled their interviews. The interviews took place at the volunteers' agency, either in a small group format or a private session with the interviewer. Each interview called for the volunteer to complete a questionnaire that took about 45 minutes. The questionnaire included sections about the volunteers' backgrounds (e.g., age, gender, income level), their goals for volunteering (selection), the attitudes, skills, and resources they brought to their work (optimization), and the volunteers' attachment to their host agencies, and their perceived personal development resulting from volunteering. The study was approved by the University of Guelph's Ethics Committee.

## Our Findings

### About the Volunteers

#### Background Characteristics

**T**HIS SAMPLE OF VOLUNTEERS included 40 males and 60 females, ranging in age from 54 to 87 years, with an average age of 73. The marital status of participants showed that 61% were married, 11% were separated or divorced, 5% were never married, and 20% were widows and widowers. As Figure 1 shows, the older adult volunteers had a variety of education levels, with a quarter of the sample not completing high school, another quarter completing high school, and about 50% having had at least some college or university education.

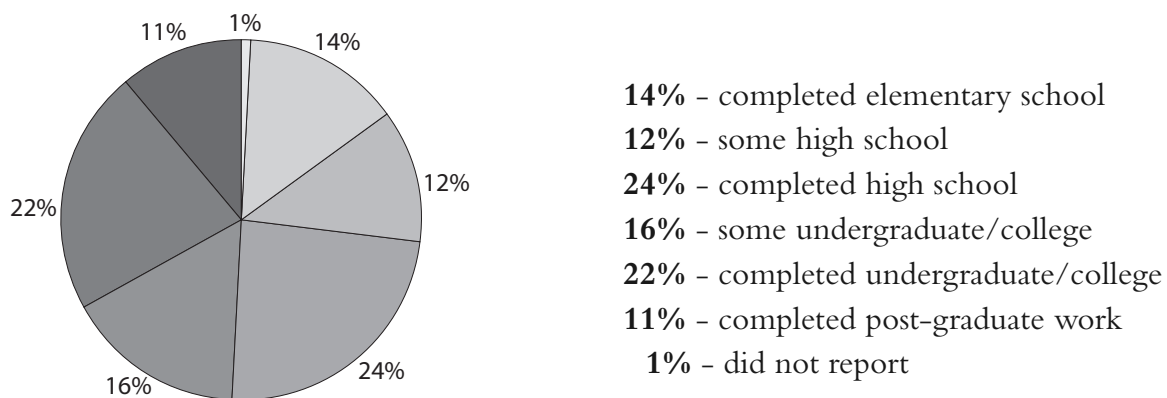


Figure 1. Level of education completed

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of the volunteers were retired and not working any other paid jobs (87%), but 7% were working part-time, 3% were unemployed (and presumably looking for paid work), and 1% was working full-time. As shown in Figure 2, based on total annual household income levels, the majority of volunteers were middle class.

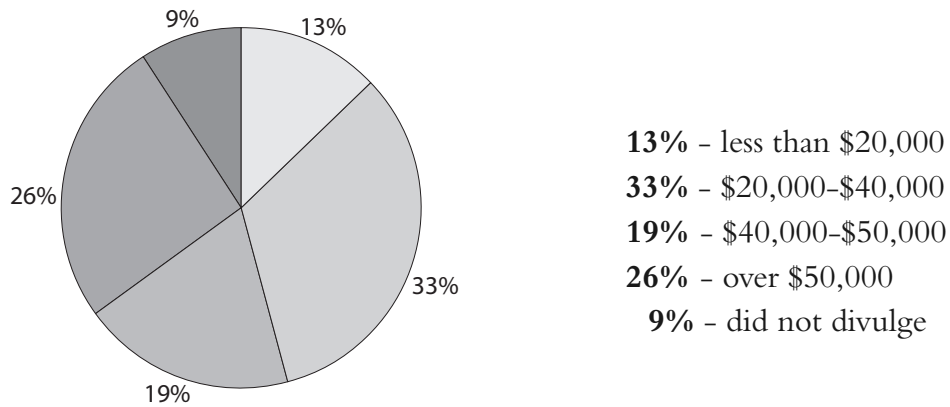


Figure 2. Annual household income

### Volunteer Experience

**O**F THE VARIOUS TYPES OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS reported, 36% were meal delivery, 35% were escorted transportation, 5% were congregate dining, 11% were friendly visiting, and 11% participated in some other form of volunteering (e.g., administrative work, member of agency board) (see Figure 3).

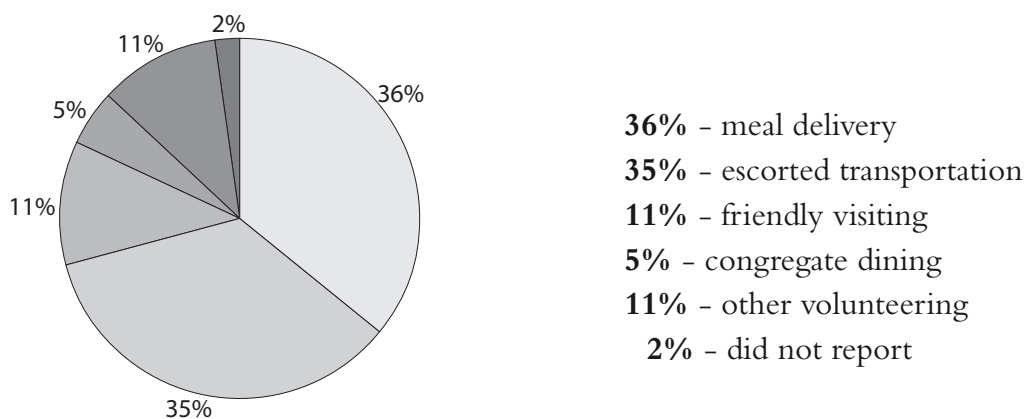


Figure 3. Types of Volunteer Positions

The participants had a variety of past careers as volunteers. Figure 4 displays information about how long the participants had volunteered at the current agency, number of years of volunteer service over the volunteers' lives, and number of hours spent volunteering per month. The average length of service at the current agency was 6.6 years, with a range from less than one year to 34 years of volunteer service. Over their lifetime, the participants had volunteered for an average of 23.3 years. The participants volunteered an average of 21 hours per month, which totals to an average of about 250 hours per year, equivalent to more than 7 full-time weeks of work annually.

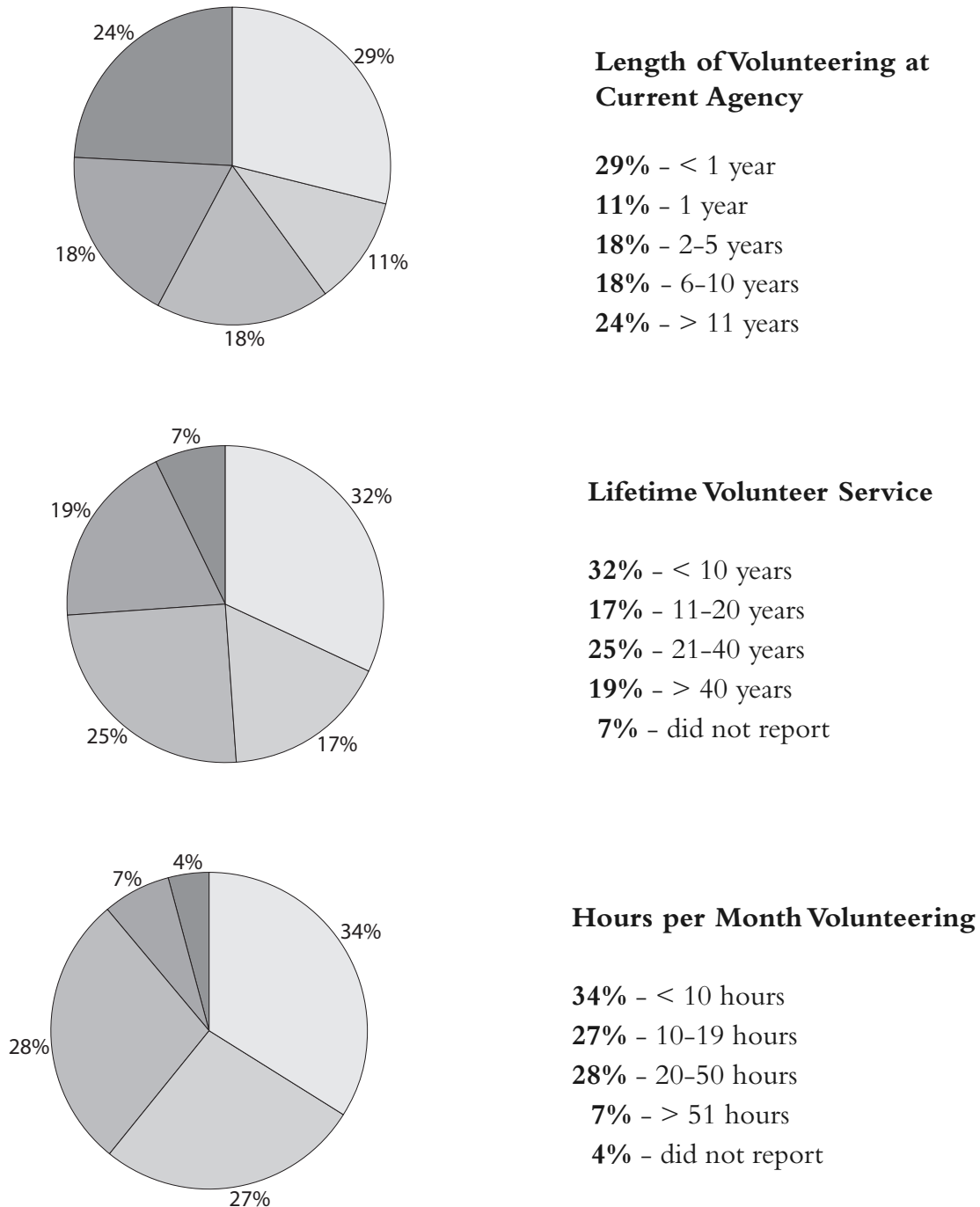


Figure 4. Length of volunteering at current agency, lifetime volunteer service, and hours per month volunteering

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## Social Support

**V**OLUNTEERS REPORTED a high level of social support from family and friends. Approximately 97% of respondents reported having at least one person in their life who they could trust and confide in. In addition, 54% reported having met at least one person while volunteering who they considered to be a friend.

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## Physical and Mental Health of Older Adult Volunteers

**A**S REPORTED IN OTHER STUDIES, the volunteers we interviewed are quite physically and mentally healthy. On a scale that measures physical functioning from a low of 10 to a high of 30, the average score was 24.18, with scores ranging from 11 to 30. The volunteers reported a high level of general mental health as well, with an average score of 25.6, and a range of scores between 16 and 30. Of course, our study was not designed in a way that could determine whether these older adults began volunteering in such good health or whether volunteering contributed to their good health.

## Value/Importance of Volunteering and Agency Attachment

**V**OLUNTEERING WAS HIGHLY VALUED by the volunteers we interviewed; when we asked them 4 questions about the importance of their volunteer work to them, they provided an average rating of 12.7 out of 15. Also, on a 5-point scale, they rated volunteering as quite important to them (average of 4.32), and gave an average rating of 4.1 or “quite a bit” to the question about how much they would miss volunteering if they had to stop for some reason. Similarly, participants reported volunteering was quite important (4.4) to their overall life satisfaction.

Volunteers were highly motivated to remain at their volunteer agency, disagreeing strongly with the item that stated: “I would be happier if I left this agency” (average of 4.6; item was reverse scored, meaning a higher average represents more disagreement with the statement). Volunteers also reported a strong sense of attachment to the agency where they worked; they strongly agreed with the following three statements: “There are great things about this agency that make me want to stay with it”, “This is the greatest agency to stay with in the long run”, and “I would miss volunteering if I had to leave this agency.” All three statements received average ratings above 4 on a 5-point scale.

## Perceived Personal Development from Volunteering

**I**T SHOULD BE GRATIFYING TO THE AGENCIES that hosted this study that their volunteers reported a strong sense of personal development gained from their volunteer work; 8 of 13 statements about the personal development resulting from their work received average scores at or above 4 on a 5-point scale. Examples of these statements include: “My volunteer work makes me feel like I am making a differences somehow,” “My volunteer work has given me a sense of accomplishment,” and “My volunteering gives me a sense of purpose in life.”

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# Selection and Optimization among Older Adult Volunteers

## Selection of Goals for Volunteering

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**T**O MEASURE THE CONCEPT OF SELECTION, a set of statements about a variety of possible goals for volunteering was prepared. The goals were drawn in part from past research and in part from informal discussions with older adult volunteers and their agency managers. Each of these goals was then rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from 1 (“Did not attract me at all”) to 5 (“Attracted me strongly”). The resulting scores showed that the goals of helping other people and giving back to the community had the highest average scores, meaning volunteers felt these two goals were the most important to them. Relatively least important were the goals of structuring their time and keeping loneliness away, suggesting that volunteering is not motivated by needs to compensate for a lack of structured time or deficiencies in the volunteers’ social relationships (please see Figure 5 for all averages for the goals of volunteering).

### Goals for Volunteering

1. Giving back to the community
2. Helping other people
3. Keeping mentally active
4. Having an outlet for my energy
5. Keeping physically active
6. Keeping occupied
7. Learning new things
8. Making new friends
9. Structuring my time
10. Having a routine
11. Participating with friends who volunteer
12. Keeping loneliness away

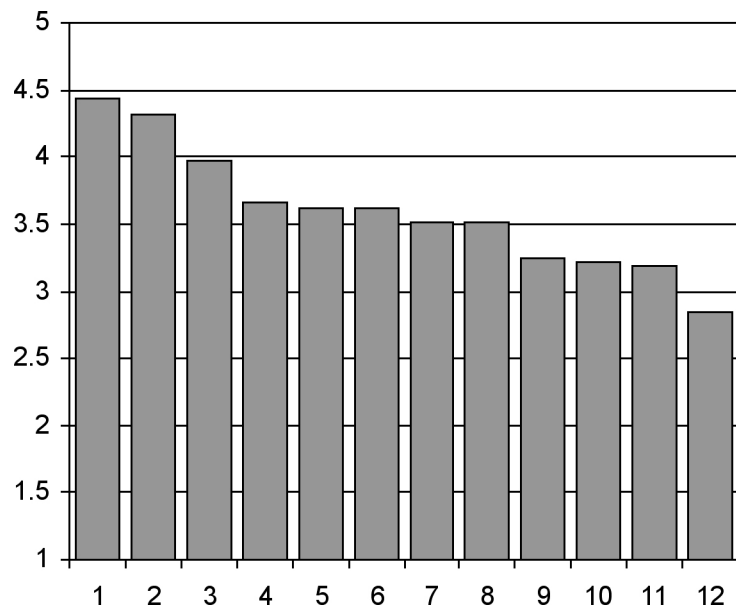


Figure 5. Averages for goals for volunteering

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## Optimizing Resources for Volunteering

**T**O MEASURE THE CONCEPT OF OPTIMIZATION we asked the volunteers an open question and we also gave them a set of statements to rate concerning the attitudes, skills, and resources they brought to their volunteer work. The open question asked: “What do you offer that you think you make good use of in your volunteer work?” The results of our analyses showed there are three categories of traits, skills, and resources that volunteers apply to their work. The first category is prosocial attitudes, meaning a set of positive attitudes toward helping people, such as friendliness, compassion, and concern for others. These prosocial attitudes represent one of the three types of resources the volunteers employ in their work and they were highly rated by the volunteers. (Please see Figure 6)

### Prosocial Attitudes

1. Friendliness towards others
2. Concern for the well-being of others
3. Enthusiasm
4. Compassion
5. People skills

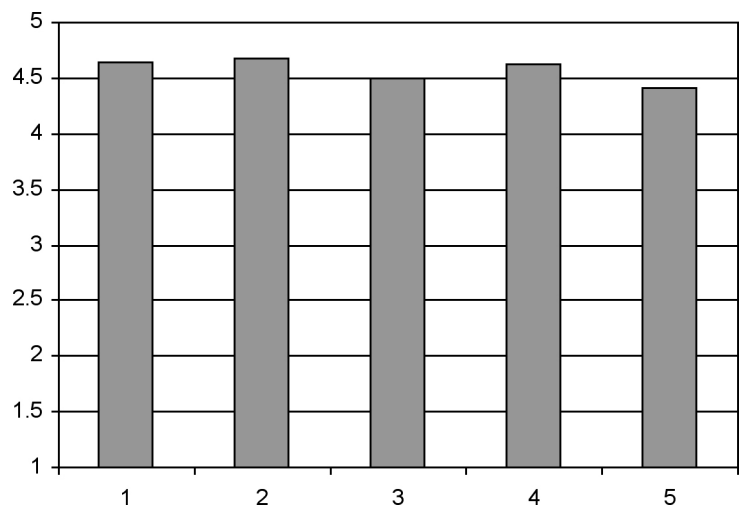


Figure 6. Averages for prosocial items (out of a possible score of 5)

The second set of resources the volunteers bring to their work is executive and management skills. These skills include: organizational skills (average of 1.9 on a 3-point scale), time management skills (average of 1.9), problem-solving ability (average of 1.6), and leadership ability (average of 1.3).

The third cluster of resources that these older adults optimize in their volunteer work is composed of mental and physical resources. The volunteers reported that personal energy (average of 4.02 on a 5-point scale), effort (average of 2.39 on a 3-point scale), attention and concentration (average of 2.43 on a 3-point scale), and physical strength (average of 3.22 on a 5-point scale) were all resources they employed while doing their volunteer jobs.

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## The Contributions of Goals and Resources to the Personal Development of Older Adult Volunteers

**S**TATISTICAL ANALYSES were conducted to understand whether and how much the volunteers' goals and the three types of resources the volunteers apply to their work contribute to such positive outcomes as their personal development and their attachment to the agency where they work.<sup>4</sup> We first present some noteworthy correlations or associations we found among these variables, followed by the results:

- The more goals older adults have for volunteering, the more likely they are to report employing their prosocial attitudes and their mental and physical resources while volunteering; note that, since this is a correlation, it could also be phrased in the reverse, namely, that the more the volunteers employ their prosocial attitudes and their mental and physical resources while volunteering, the more goals they have for volunteering.
- The stronger the motivation to volunteer, which is reflected by selecting more goals for volunteering, the stronger their attachment to the current agency and the more personal development gained from volunteering; this relationship can also be stated in the reverse.
- Volunteers who reported strong agency attachment were likely to also report a strong sense of personal development from volunteering.

### Determinants of Volunteers' Personal Development

**T**O DETERMINE WHETHER the two concepts of selection (goal setting) and optimization (resource mobilization) do have an influence on personal development, as proposed by our theory, we used a statistical technique called "regression analysis". Regression analysis is a statistical tool for the investigation of relationships between variables. Usually, the investigator seeks to ascertain the causal effect of one variable upon another. What we found is that volunteers who had more goals or reasons to volunteer (selection), and volunteers who had more of all three types of resources to optimize (prosocial attitudes, mental and physical resources, and management/executive skills) achieved the highest levels of personal development. This finding makes sense because, if one has a variety of goals for volunteering, it is more likely that at least some of these goals will be reached. Similarly, if one invests more of one's resources to optimize goal achievement, then one will experience a greater sense of personal development. In short, those who give more get more!

### Determinants of Volunteers' Attachment to their Agency

**R**EGRESSION ANALYSIS was also employed to identify the factors that most strongly determine the volunteers' agency attachment. Here we found that only the female volunteers, not the men, were most likely to feel strongly attached to their host agency, as were volunteers with more goals for volunteering, and volunteers with stronger prosocial attitudes. This means that the volunteers who are most committed to their agency and who are most likely to be retained are women who have many reasons to volunteer and who have the most favourable attitudes toward helping others. Note that the other two types of resources, namely executive-management skills and physical and mental strengths, were not significant determinants of agency attachment.

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## Implications for Agency Practice

**I**NFORMED BY THEORY, the aim of this study was to identify the goals older adults have for volunteering and the personal attitudes, skills, and resources they apply to their volunteer work, and then to determine whether these goals and resources influence their personal development and attachment to their host agency. Our findings have implications for agency practices, especially for recruiting and sustaining older adult volunteers. Some important implications for agency practice are discussed below:

- To select volunteers who are likely to volunteer for a long period and who get a great deal personally from volunteering, agencies should focus on recruitment strategies that advertise the various goals of volunteering. For example, the scale in the Appendix that measures goals for volunteering could be used in the intake process to review the various goals new recruits may have and to make them aware of goals they may not have considered previously and which could add to their reasons or motives for volunteering. This is because we now know that more goals for volunteering relate to a stronger sense of personal development gained from this activity and more attachment to the host agency.
- The screening process could be adapted so that volunteers are asked their goals for volunteering and those individuals with a variety of goals could be placed in positions that are more suitable for long-term volunteers (e.g., friendly visiting, because loss of a volunteer visitor can be difficult on a client).
- After volunteering for some time, it may be beneficial to remind volunteers of the various reasons they got involved and their achievements in volunteering. This too can increase agency attachment and the sense of personal development.
- It would be useful and informative to make volunteers aware of the variety and richness of the resources they bring to their volunteer work. In particular, their prosocial attitudes should be spotlighted because our findings show that this resource contributes most strongly to their sense of personal development from volunteering. These attitudes of compassion, concern for others' well-being, and friendliness should be highlighted during volunteer training and continuously throughout the volunteer's agency tenure.
- As part of recruitment and training (both training prior to beginning to volunteer and follow-up training), agencies could adopt such slogans as "the More You Give, the More You Get" and "Helping Others Helps You" to emphasize the idea that volunteers who put more effort and more of themselves into their work will in turn get more out of it.

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## In Conclusion

**T**HE OLDER ADULT VOLUNTEERS who participated in the current study were physically and mentally healthy, well supported, and enjoyed their volunteer experience. The volunteers reported strong motivation to remain working at their host agency and perceived that volunteering contributed to their personal development in important ways. Volunteering does appear to provide a means to develop a larger social network because over half the volunteers reported meeting at least one friend while volunteering, and many reported meeting more than one.

The goals associated with volunteering, and the attitudes, skills, and resources that are applied in volunteer work are highly consequential for both the volunteers and their agency hosts. Having more goals for volunteering and putting one's "heart and soul" into volunteering can bring about more personal development for the volunteers and greater attachment to the agencies where they work.

Volunteerism is a wonderful avenue for older adults to pursue their interests while contributing in an important way to society. Agencies are always in need of volunteers, and can always benefit from new knowledge and strategies of recruiting, enriching, and retaining resource-rich older adults. In turn, older adults can gain pride, esteem, and personal development from their volunteer activities. They can also lead the way for the next generation to engage in this valuable expression of altruism and civic engagement.

Finally, our sincere thanks to the Volunteer Managers who gave their time and energy as collaborators, helping us to explain our research to their volunteers and encouraging their participation. Our thanks also to Susan Thorning, the Executive Director of the OCSA for partnering so generously with us, and to the several interviewers who were such effective ambassadors for the project. For further information about our research on volunteerism among older adults, please contact Prof. Ben Gottlieb by e-mail at [bgottlie@uoguelph.ca](mailto:bgottlie@uoguelph.ca) or by phone at (519) 824-4120, extension 53513.

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- <sup>1</sup> Baker, L. A., Cahalin, L. P., Gerst, K., & Burr, J. A. (2005). Productive activities and subjective well-being among older adults: The influence of number of activities and time commitment. *Social Indicators Research*, 73, 431-458.
  - <sup>2</sup> Adelman, P. K. (1994). Multiple roles and psychological well-being in a national sample of older adults. *Journal of Gerontology*, 49, S277-S285.
  - <sup>3</sup> Oman, D., Thoreson, C., & McMahon, K. (1999). Volunteerism and mortality among community-dwelling elderly. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 4, 301-316.
  - <sup>4</sup> Volunteer strain was a third attitudinal variable that we have not reported but is available upon request. We measured volunteer "strain" in terms of feelings of being overworked and under-appreciated

## Goals for Volunteering (Selection) Items

Now can you tell me how much each of the following factors attracted you or appealed to you about getting involved in volunteering in the first place. (What did you expect to get out of volunteering)?

### 1. Helping other people

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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### 2. Making new friends

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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### 3. Keeping occupied

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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### 4. Keeping physically active

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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### 5. Participating with friends who volunteer

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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### 6. Keeping mentally active

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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### 7. Giving back to the community

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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## 8. Keeping loneliness away

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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## 9. Learning new things

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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## 10. Structuring my time

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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## 11. Having a routine

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
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## 12. Having an outlet for my energy

Did not attract me at all 1	Attracted me a little bit 2	Attracted me Somewhat 3	Attracted me Quite a Lot 4	Attracted me Strongly 5
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------	----------------------------

\*\*To calculate an overall score for goals for volunteering, add up ratings from items 1 to 12. Scores will range from 12 to 60. The overall mean for this measure for the current study was 43.14. Below are the means for each individual item (provided for comparison purposes):

1. Helping other people - 4.32
2. Making new friends - 3.51
3. Keeping occupied - 3.61
4. Keeping physically active - 3.61
5. Participating with friends who volunteer - 3.19
6. Keeping mentally active - 3.98
7. Giving back to the community - 4.44
8. Keeping loneliness away - 2.84
9. Learning new things - 3.52
10. Structuring my time - 3.25
11. Having a routine - 3.21
12. Having an outlet for my energy - 3.66

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## Optimizing Resources for Volunteering

To measure the optimizing of resources for volunteering, two scales were created. The first set of items assesses personal resources and the second measure assesses behavioural skills and resources.

I'm interested in knowing a bit about what you personally bring to your volunteer work. Can you please tell me how much you use or draw on each of the following in your volunteer work??

### 1. Friendliness to others

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
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### 2. Concern for the well-being of others

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
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### 3. Physical strength

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
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### 4. Personal energy

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
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### 5. Enthusiasm

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
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### 6. Compassion

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
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### 7. People skills

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
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And what about the following kinds of resources that might be required to do volunteer work? How much do you use each of the following in your volunteer work?

8. The attention and concentration I (can) give to my volunteer work are:

None or N/A	Low	Moderate	High
0	1	2	3

9. The energy and effort I (can) give to my volunteer work are:

None or N/A	Low	Moderate	High
0	1	2	3

10. The organizational skills I (can) give to my volunteer work are:

None or N/A	Low	Moderate	High
0	1	2	3

11. The problem solving abilities I (can) give to my volunteer work are:

None or N/A	Low	Moderate	High
0	1	2	3

12. The leadership abilities I (can) give to my volunteer work are:

None or N/A	Low	Moderate	High
0	1	2	3

13. The time management skills I (can) give to my volunteer work are:

None or N/A	Low	Moderate	High
0	1	2	3

**NOTE:** Using a statistical technique called “Principal Components Analysis” the preceding 13 items were found to reflect three sets of resources that volunteers apply to their volunteer work. The first is **prosocial attitudes** and can be assessed by summing up items 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7. The overall mean for this set of items for the current study was 22.87 with possible scores ranging from 5 to 25. The item means were:

1. Friendliness to others - 4.65
2. Concern for the well-being of others - 4.68
5. Enthusiasm - 4.50
6. Compassion - 4.63
7. People skills - 4.41

The second set of resources is **executive and management skills** and can be assessed by summing up items 10, 11, 12, and 13. The overall mean for this set of items for the current study was 6.75 with possible scores ranging from 0 to 12. The item means were:

- 10. Organizational skills – 1.93
- 11. Problem solving abilities – 1.64
- 12. Leadership abilities – 1.31
- 13. Time management skills – 1.87

The third set of resources is **mental and physical resources** and can be assessed by summing up items 3, 4, 8, and 9. The overall mean for this set of items for the current study was 12.06 with possible scores ranging from 2 to 16. The item means were:

- 3. Physical strength – 3.22
- 4. Personal energy – 4.02
- 8. Attention and concentration – 2.43
- 9. Energy and effort – 2.39

### Personal Development Items

So this next section asks about what you may get from your volunteer work. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1. My volunteer work has taught me some new skills

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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2. My volunteer work has made me more bitter about people

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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3. My volunteer work allows me to do things that are challenging mentally

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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4. My volunteer work has given me some new experiences

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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5. My volunteer work gives me a sense of purpose in life

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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6. My volunteer work is boring

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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7. My volunteer work has broadened my perspective on life

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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8. My volunteer work has given me a sense of accomplishment

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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9. My volunteer work has contributed little to my personal development

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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10. My volunteer work makes me feel like I am making a difference somehow

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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11. My volunteer work makes me feel exploited

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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12. My volunteer work makes me feel that I have grown in some important ways

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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13. My volunteer work has made me feel more compassion for people

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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\*\*To calculate an overall score for personal development associated with volunteering, add up ratings from items 1 to 13 (you must reverse score items 2, 6, 9, and 11, meaning change a rating of 1 to 5, 5 to 1, 2 to 4, 4 to 2, 3 remains the same). Scores will range from 13 to 65. The overall mean for this measure for the current study was 52.51. Below are the means for each individual item (provided for comparison purposes):

1. My volunteer work has taught me some new skills - 3.58
2. My volunteer work has made me more bitter about people - 4.50
3. My volunteer work allows me to do things that are challenging mentally - 3.34
4. My volunteer work has given me some new experiences - 4.05
5. My volunteer work gives me a sense of purpose in life- 4.18
6. My volunteer work is boring - 4.42
7. My volunteer work has broadened my perspective on life - 3.94
8. My volunteer work has given me a sense of accomplishment - 4.27
9. My volunteer work has contributed little to my personal development - 3.63
10. My volunteer work makes me feel like I am making a difference somehow - 4.33
11. My volunteer work makes me feel exploited - 4.41
12. My volunteer work makes me feel that I have grown in some important ways - 3.84
13. My volunteer work has made me feel more compassion for people - 4.03

## Agency Attachment

Here are some questions about your attitudes toward the agency where you volunteer. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

1. I would be happier if I left this agency

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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2. There are great things about this agency that make me want to stay with it.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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3. I would be disappointed if I needed to find a different place to volunteer

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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4. This is the greatest agency to stay with in the long run

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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5. I would miss volunteering if I had to leave this agency

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
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★★ To calculate an overall score for the agency attachment, add up ratings from items 1 to 5 (you must reverse score item 1, meaning change a rating of 1 to 5, 5 to 1, 2 to 4, 4 to 2, 3 remains the same). Scores will range from 5 to 15. The overall mean for this measure for the current study was 12.7. Below are the means for each individual item (provided for comparison purposes)

- 1. I would be happier if I left this agency – 4.64
- 2. There are great things about this agency that make me want to stay with it – 4.34
- 3. I would be disappointed if I needed to find a different place to volunteer – 3.90
- 4. This is the greatest agency to stay with in the long run – 4.10
- 5. I would miss volunteering if I had to leave this agency – 4.22

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