

"Eye-opening and thought-provoking...equally beneficial to business and volunteerism." ZIG ZIGLAR

# THE NEW BREED

SECOND EDITION

UNDERSTANDING  
AND EQUIPPING  
THE 21ST CENTURY  
VOLUNTEER

JONATHAN MCKEE  
THOMAS W. MCKEE

Recruiting, Training, Managing and Occasionally Even Firing...Today's Volunteers



## **The New Breed, Second Edition**

Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer

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## ENDORSEMENTS

*“People and money. They are the two undeniable building blocks of any organization, and it sure seems to me that over the past few decades money is the easier one to find. This book is a practical, readable, usable tool box of outstanding training on this new generation of volunteer. It speaks to the most challenging and critical aspects of our work with people with clarity and wisdom. The New Breed will be sitting on the desks of all of our staff as soon as I can get my hands on it!!”*

**Dan Jessup**

Regional Director  
Young Life Pikes Peak Region

*“If you want to better understand how to attract, inspire and guide the modern volunteer read Jonathan and Tom McKee’s, The New Breed. Drawn from real world experience this highly entertaining and easy to read book is an excellent contribution to nonprofit management literature. I recommend it highly.”*

**Dan Taylor**

Vice President  
National Audubon Society

*“Articulate and succinct, the McKees have captured the essentials of recruiting, training, retaining, and occasionally even firing volunteers. They unravel the often conflicting motivations of different generations of volunteers. The easy to read text is loaded with illustrations and helpful, hands-on tools that can be immediately put to work. A must read for anyone who wants to manage a successful volunteer program.”*

**Stephen E. Drew**

Chief Curator  
California State Railroad Museum

*“Working as a Volunteer Coordinator for a leading volunteer center can be inspiring, motivational...and challenging. The New Breed: Understanding and Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer prompted me to revisit our mission and clarify my passion for providing effective opportunities for the modern volunteer. The all too true-to-life case studies conjured several “ah-ha” moments which allowed me to fine-tune my techniques to make sure I deliver the best experience possible for my valued volunteers.”*

**Christine Wallace**

Community Resources Coordinator  
Volunteer Center of Sacramento

*“I found The New Breed: Understanding & Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer more than a little enlightening. The information the McKees share is current, thorough and updated. Their style of writing is hopeful and they offer clear, step-by-step procedures and processes, answering many of the “whys” along the way. Their advice is eye-opening and thought-provoking. I believe this book would be equally valuable and beneficial to business and volunteerism.”*

**Zig Ziglar**

Author and Motivational Teacher

*“Tom McKee and his son Jonathan, have created a wonderfully insightful book to help us all understand and co-create the new world of volunteerism. Every volunteer manager in this country is facing the need to stop doing business as usual and re-think their approach to all aspects of volunteer management - recruiting, rewarding and retaining volunteers. The paradigm has shifted and we must adapt. Tom gives great sage advice in his new book, The New Breed: Understanding & Equipping the 21st Century Volunteer and I love the counterpoint of the fresh, new ideas and approaches suggested by his son. Not only is their banter back and forth very realistic — it’s also very loving and fun — making this book a sure way to get inside the heads of the newest generation. Volunteer managers everywhere need to get this book — it’s filled with great suggestions for changing the way we do our work. Congratulations to this new dynamic duo!”*

**Mary Lynn Perry, M.A.**

Volunteer Coordinator  
City of Sacramento  
Board Member—Directors of Volunteers in Agencies

*"I've never met a youth worker or anyone else in ministry who has a problem with getting too many volunteers. It's not because of a lack of people, rather the problem seems to lie in the approach. That's why The New Breed should be required reading for anyone in a position of recruiting, training, and managing volunteers. The McKee dynamic duo takes this complex and challenging subject and lay it out in understandable and practical terms. Be careful, though — because if you put this book into action, you just might have too many volunteers!"*

**Greg Stier**

President

Dare 2 Share Ministries

*"Jonathan and Tom have teamed together to present a very practical and fun book to read. I cannot think of anything more important in ministry or business than volunteers. The book contains not only valuable ministry enhancing principles but is also filled with stories of real people. The resources section alone is worth the price of the book."*

**Les Christie**

Chair, Youth Ministry Department

William Jessup University

*"The world of volunteerism has changed a lot over the past ten years and the McKee's definitely get it. In this very practical leadership book, they have perfectly described today's 'new breed' of volunteers and reveal recruiting secrets that will not only help you build a team but keep it together for a long long time."*

**Wayne Rice**

Co-founder, Youth Specialties

Founder, Understanding Your Teenager Seminars

*“Leading volunteers has always been among the most vital tasks in ministry. Yet as society has changed, and people’s lives have become more chaotic and fragmented, the task of leading leaders has never been more challenging. In The New Breed, Tom and Jonathan McKee offer us all a comprehensive, thorough and usable handbook for equipping and training volunteers in today’s hectic world. Wellresearched, solidly grounded and filled with practical tips and tools, The New Breed is sure to become the standard for raising up and leading a new generation of volunteers.”*

**Chap Clark , Ph.D.**

Professor of Youth, Family, and Culture  
Fuller Theological Seminary  
President, ParenTeen.com  
Senior Editor, Youthworker Journal

*“I have not seen a more effective book on working with volunteers. The New Breed is practical, relevant, and the generational insight of a Father/Son team is very helpful. I highly recommend this book.”*

**Jim Burns, Ph.D.**

President, HomeWord

*“Excellent book! It’s packed with practical advice on how to recruit, motivate and retain volunteers as well as how to keep them happy and productive. It’s a quick read and well worth every minute of your time.”*

**Vicki Hitzges**

Corporate Motivational Speaker

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TOM

I would never have been able to write this book without three significant people in my life:

**My father.** My dad was an eagle scout, scout master, a Sunday school superintendent, and when I was in high school he quit his job as a carpenter to become the director of education and business manager of our growing church. He had moved from a volunteer who spent most of his time at the church to joining the church staff to recruit and manage the volunteers. Dad was the ultimate recruiter and motivator of volunteers. When I got my first job recruiting and managing volunteers (I was 20 at the time) I would call and visit my dad each week with thousands of questions. He was my mentor.

**My youngest son, Jonathan.** Jonathan was high energy when he came out of the womb. Today he probably would have been labeled A.D.H.D. He always had a passion for people and was volunteering for school and church activities. When he graduated from college and married Lori, they began volunteering to impact the lives of teenagers. He soon left his job selling life insurance to work full time for Campus Life—a position that forced him to recruit, motivate, manage and sometimes even fire volunteers. In those early years of his ministry we would often talk for hours about working with volunteers. I thought at the time, “Wow, we are my father’s legacy.”

I had written most of this book about five years ago, but I could not get it off the ground and written the way people would want to read it. Jonathan had already published four other books at that time, so I went to him and asked him if he would like to co-author this book with me, adding the perspective of a whole new younger generation that is ready to volunteer. In a weaker moment he jumped at the opportunity and his addition, bantering, stories, and view point have made this book not only possible, but they turned it into something people will want to read!

**My wife, Susie:** I could never have written this book without Susie’s support, encouragement and tireless hours of manuscript reading. She has always been an active volunteer and would bring her concerns and questions about the reality of what I was trying to say.

I could not have written this book alone.



I have to give “big ups” to my dad for bringing me into this project. As a huge fan of free resources for the non-profit, I’ve always been a big advocate of his free resources at VolunteerPower.com. When he invited me to help him with this project, I was excited to work together on a tool to help the nonprofit recruit, manage, and lead volunteers.

Much love to my family for putting up with me during the writing of this book. My wife Lori is a saint. And Alec, Alyssa, and Ashley all put up with me during the many hours I holed up in our home office to pound this out. I owe them some big time Mongolian Grill the day this is released!

Thanks also to all the youth workers from TheSource4YM.com who shared their input with me about their volunteers—that information from the field was invaluable. A special shout out to Brandon, Lane, Vicki, Sue, Jeannette, Eric, David, Mike, Dan, Angela, Mikel, Rob, Furby, KJ, Danette, and Teddi.

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## **THE COMMON PREDICAMENT**

### *Where It All Begins*

Both David and Alissa desperately needed volunteers.

Both brand-new to very similar jobs, they worked for organizations with identical visions, but in cities an hour apart. Their success depended on their ability to mobilize and empower volunteers.

Alissa succeeded.

David didn't.

In the spring of 2012, Alissa and David each began overseeing a neighborhood youth center in their respective cities. These teen drop-in centers served as safe places where teenagers could play basketball, work on computers, get help with homework, play video games, or participate in the favorite activity of teenagers today—just “hanging out.”

The similarity of David and Alissa's situations was uncanny. They both served at nearly identical facilities located in urban areas of large cities. Both teen centers brought in a similar number of kids. David's facility had couches, TVs, and computers in an open and well-lit room next to the basketball court. A mural painted by local teenagers covered an entire wall. Alissa's center had a similar room connected to the gymnasium with a high-tech computer station, a snack bar, and beanbag chairs scattered across some old shag carpeting.

Both David and Alissa replaced someone who left.

Both had very small budgets to work with.

Both knew going in that their facility was entirely “volunteer-run.” Each would be the only paid staff in the building.

David retained two volunteers from his predecessor. One local mom came in at 2 every afternoon to open the center and “chaperone.” Mrs. B., as kids called her, wasn’t very relational. In fact, she seemed a little quirky. Still, David could rely on her, and she came in 10 minutes early every day. David’s other volunteer, a college student named T.J., grew up in the neighborhood playing in the facility. Basketball was T.J.’s life. He loved playing ball with kids and came in three afternoons a week to do just that.

Alissa also inherited two volunteers from her organization. James, a city employee, got off work at 2 p.m. daily and showed up at the facility shortly after. He usually perched himself on a stool behind the snack bar, keeping an eye on the place and occasionally interacting with kids. Alissa’s other volunteer, a history professor from the community college who the kids called “The Doc,” ran the center’s computer station. He came in two or three times a week to help kids with the computers and with their homework.

A week into their new jobs, both David and Alissa started the process of looking for more volunteers.

David had done this before. A decade earlier, he staffed an entire camp with volunteer workers. He knew the job ahead, so he got organized and began focusing on his goal. Knowing exactly what kind of workers he wanted to recruit, David outlined job descriptions, expectations, and the hours they would work before he ever picked up the phone. He was ready to “fill the slots.”

Alissa had some experience with volunteers as well. She served as a children’s director at a local church for several years where she recruited and trained volunteer teachers for all grades, first through 12th.

David and Alissa both began looking for volunteers, but it didn’t take long for them to realize that things had changed.

*They were dealing with a new breed of volunteer.*

## ***A New Breed of Volunteer***

The first week, David talked with 15 people. He followed some personal leads and some that the center's board of directors handed to him. But for some reason, David hit a wall of rejection unlike anything he'd experienced before. After all, David had a way with people, a magnetic personality, and a gifted management style. Yet every person he talked to didn't seem interested in fitting into David's prearranged puzzle.

Alissa wasn't as gregarious as David. Although people loved Alissa, she had to make a conscious effort to be relational. Yet that first week, Alissa recruited three potential volunteers to help out—just a sampling of what would come. Within a year, Alissa built an incredible team of volunteers.

David and Alissa both came into contact with a new breed of volunteer.

Alissa had success. David, a natural at recruiting, didn't.

## ***What Happened?***

David didn't consider the new breed of volunteer. Should you? First, of course, you're probably wondering, "Who is this new breed of volunteer?"

Glad you asked. The 21st century volunteer differs greatly from volunteers David had worked with just 10 years earlier.

Let's take a peek and see why Alissa had success, because her success gives us a glimpse at what this book is all about—the new breed of volunteer.

Alissa hadn't done anything magical. She just called a list of contacts: people who cared about kids, people who loved the mission of the youth center. Alissa talked a little and listened a lot. In nine

of the conversations, she heard something that related to an aspect of the “drop-in center.” For example: Mrs. Ventura mentioned her familiarity with a popular social networking website that she used to keep in contact with her own youngest daughter in college. Alissa had noticed that every kid in the drop-in center spent hours on this website. So she simply asked Mrs. Ventura if she had time to stop by in the next week or so to coach her how to use this site better.

Mrs. Ventura was thrilled to help. After all, she wasn’t asked to give up every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, attend a weekly staff meeting, and go to an all-day Saturday training session. Alissa just asked her for a one-time session on the computer, something Mrs. Ventura really enjoyed and understood.

Alissa had a similar experience with a college kid named Josh, who had grown up playing basketball in the center. Yet unlike David, Alissa didn’t have any volunteers who played basketball with the kids, even though the gym was full of kids wanting to play basketball every afternoon. So she asked Josh an honest question: “Do you have time to pop by the center some afternoon this week and take a peek at our basketball court? I’m new here and I think the kids enjoy using the facility, but I really need an opinion from someone who knows both the area and basketball. Could you come by, play with the kids some afternoon, and give me your thoughts?”

Josh couldn’t think of any reason to say no to someone asking him to just come play basketball some afternoon, whenever it worked best for him.

That same day, Alissa talked on the phone with Emily, a close college friend who lived across the country and owned her own web design company. Alissa asked Emily if she’d take a few minutes to log on to the center’s old, out-of-date website and help her figure out if it was tweakable or in need of a complete overhaul. Before they knew it, Emily was digging through the web code while still on the phone with

Alissa. As the conversation ended, Emily offered to help rework the whole website. After all, she could do it on her own time, in her own house across the country, during her usual late-night productive time.

How was Alissa able to open the door with three potential volunteers—one of them living 2,000 miles away? No strings attached, she asked them to just come by, “check it out,” or “give her their thoughts.” These three volunteers liked their little *tastes* so much that they all helped again the next week just to taste it all again. This marked the beginning of three long-term volunteer relationships with the youth center.

### ***Dealing With the New Breed of Volunteers***

Somehow, Alissa realized she was dealing with a new breed of volunteers. These individuals aren’t interested in working under old management styles. And who are we to tell them they should? After all, what are we going to do—cut their pay?

The new breed of volunteer works well with the new breed of volunteer manager. If you’re reading this book, that’s you! You might be a youth pastor, a parent coordinator at a school, a director of a community center, a children’s worker, a librarian, a museum curator, or an association executive. You name it. If your job involves volunteers, you’re a volunteer manager.

We’ve identified three essential hats you must wear for working with the new breed of volunteers:


- *The volunteer recruiter.* With this hat on, you understand how to recruit the new breed of volunteer, who is “cause” driven.


- *The volunteer manager.* As you step into this role, you understand how to empower the new breed of volunteer, who wants to be led instead of managed.
- *The volunteer leader.* While wearing this hat, you understand how to establish the power and passion of your volunteer team.



These three roles serve as the section divisions in this book; we'll explore each in depth in the chapters ahead.

### ***Quick Notes on Format***

Two authors created this book—father and son, Tom and Jonathan McKee. We've included many of our own personal experiences and insights. On occasion, in order to differentiate between us, we include titles bearing our names, as follows:

 TOM Jonathan and I will both be sharing, but Jonathan is the better writer.

 JONATHAN Yeah, but you're old and wise. I'm just a Gen X brat!

 JONATHAN  TOM We've also included "links" throughout the book to help you jump to relevant topics.



***For example, go to the first "link" on page 00.***

OK. Enough glimpses. Let's take a deeper look at this new breed of volunteer.



## SECTION ONE

# THE VOLUNTEER RECRUITER

In this role, you understand how to recruit the new breed of volunteer, who is driven by the “cause” of your organization.

### **Chapter 1: Who Is the New Breed of Volunteer?**

*A Profile of the 21st Century Volunteer*

### **Chapter 2: Recruiting the New Breed of Volunteers**

*The “Courting” Relationship*

### **Chapter 3: Finding the New Breed of Volunteers (and Not Scaring Them Away)**

*The Seven Deadly Sins of Recruiting Volunteers*

### **Chapter 4: Tapping Into Two New Breeds of Volunteers**

*Retiring “Boomers” and Incoming “Generation Y”*



## CHAPTER 1

# WHO IS THE NEW BREED OF VOLUNTEER?

### *A Profile of the 21st Century Volunteer*

Volunteers don't look like they did yesterday. Yesterday's volunteer programs were designed for a different world. And it worked great—back then. Volunteer managers who still operate like they did in the 20th century are the managers who keep asking the following questions:

- Where have all the volunteers gone?
- Why aren't people as committed as they used to be?
- What's wrong with these young people?
- Why are people so busy these days?

Sound familiar?

At times we've found ourselves asking the same questions. But contrary to what many of us might feel, plenty of volunteers in the 21st century are willing to get involved. In actuality, a whole arena of new volunteers exists who'll get involved and be committed to our organizations and churches. But they'll become involved according to their rules, not ours.

As we approached the end of the 20th century and entered the new millennium, developments and trends evolved that changed the way we need to operate. Whether we like these changes or not, they've produced a new breed of volunteer.

These new developments and trends were like seismic shifts—small changes and adjustments that caused a massive transformation. In nature, a series of seismic shifts often result in an earthquake. In the last 20 years, we've observed 10 seismic shifts that have shaken the world of volunteer management and have catalyzed this new breed of volunteer:

1. **Family Dynamics:** From *Father Knows Best* to *Two and a Half Men*
2. **Isolation:** From community to individualism
3. **Flexibility:** From rigid scheduling to volunteer availability
4. **Generations:** From experienced veterans to novice Gen Y
5. **Technology:** From face-to-face to cyberspace
6. **Professionalism:** From skilled workers to knowledge workers
7. **Episodic Volunteering:** From long-term commitments to short-term projects

8. **Slacktivism:** From hard work to easy, “feel-good” tasks
9. **Micro-Volunteering:** From big-time commitments to bite-sized projects
10. **Speed:** From slow movements to fast responses to change

Let’s look more closely at each of these.

### ***Seismic Shift 1***

#### **Family Dynamics: *From Father Knows Best to Two and a Half Men***

In 1954, TV painted a picture of the “ideal” American home with a new show, *Father Knows Best*. Fast-forward to the new millennium. The nuclear family has shriveled, and *Father Knows Best* has segued to *Two and a Half Men*, a single parent raising a kid. The days of Mom, Dad, Bud, and Kitten are long gone. Think about how this cultural shift in families affects the new breed of volunteer.

In the early 20th century, many people who volunteered were stay-at-home mothers or retired people—most likely your grandmother or great-aunt fell in this category. This trend continued through the mid-20th century; the volunteer system was designed for the ideal volunteer: a retired person or a woman who had plenty of extra time. In the 1950s, most church volunteers and Sunday school teachers were women. But in the latter half of the 20th century many women began to work outside the home. The demographics of many American families changed from the traditional or nuclear family of Mom, Dad, 2.6 kids, and a dog, to a single-working-parent home. Movies like Steven Spielberg’s *E.T.* gave us a glimpse of one typical 1980s American home with the single working mom and her three kids.

During the 1980s, volunteer managers adapted and recruited volunteers from these nontraditional homes, including many single

professional parents. The New York Times reported that according to U.S. census data, in 1950, 78 percent of all households were headed by a traditional married couple. In 2010, that figure dropped to 48 percent; changes in life choices are a contributing factor.<sup>1</sup>

Most often, Mom works and, in many situations, doesn't have Dad's hands to help her—so she has much less time to volunteer. TV shows like *Two and a Half Men*, *Parenthood*, and *Modern Family* often reflect some of the various shifts in today's family roles. These new family dynamics have dramatically affected the way we recruit volunteers.

Susan Ellis, president of Energize Inc., writes: “How we define ‘family’ continues to undergo change. The statistics that began to emerge in the 1960s have continued unabated: high divorce rate (even higher for second marriages), single parenting, same-sex partnerships, older children moving back home with parents, multi-generational homes in which grandparents raise grandchildren, couples delaying having children until well into their thirties. All these trends affect volunteering in that we need to change our assumptions about who is available, when, and to do what.”<sup>2</sup>

## ***Seismic Shift 2***

### **Isolation: From Community to Individualism**

Many Americans today have fewer close friends than their parents did. Despite the popularity of social networking sites and the constant desire of teenagers to “hang out with friends,” Americans overall are choosing a smaller number of *close* relationships, and far fewer face-to-face relationships. Greg Stier, from the youth ministry organization Dare 2 Share, describes this contradiction as follows: “Teens will continue to be a generation that is a study in contradictions, i.e. being involved in the community while isolated in their bedroom.”<sup>3</sup> In fact, that picture describes many Americans of all

ages today—alone in their homes, on the computer with hundreds of “e-friends.” Isolated, yet surrounded.

How deep are these virtual “friendships”? In June 2006, researchers reported a “remarkable drop” in the size of people’s core network of confidants—those with whom they could talk about important matters. As of 2004, the average American had just two close friends, compared with three in 1985.<sup>4</sup> But in 2009, the Pew Internet & American Life Project came out with a fascinating new report titled *Social Isolation and New Technology*. The gist of the report seems to contend: *Yes, technology does lead some people to become more socially isolated, but not as much as some have argued.*<sup>5</sup>

Understand that this is a topic of debate in many circles. One side really wants us to believe that social networking is good for our society. The other side highlights the numerous dangers of social networking and other technologies. The level of social isolation is one of these debated facts.

Regardless of where you stand, you can’t deny these realities from this Pew report:

- *The average size of American’s core discussion networks has declined since 1985; the mean network size has dropped by about one-third, or a loss of approximately one confidant. (Note that this finding is consistent with the 2006 American Sociological Review report we cited.)*
- *Users of social networking services were 26 percent less likely to use their neighbors as a source of companionship.*
- *Internet users are 40 percent less likely to rely on neighbors for help in caring for themselves or a family member.*

- *Internet users are 38 percent less likely to rely exclusively on their spouses/partners as discussion confidants.*

Draw your own conclusions, but the fact is, people today have one-third fewer friends who they can really open up with and share their hopes, struggles, or fears. Furthermore, they don't tend to engage in as many face-to-face relationships.

In 2000, Robert Putnam of Harvard University wrote a groundbreaking book discussing where Americans spend their time. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* described how people have become increasingly disconnected from family, friends, neighbors, and our democratic structures. Putnam used bowling as a metaphor. Years ago, thousands of people belonged to bowling leagues. Today, however, they're more likely to bowl alone.

As people in America choose a fewer number of close friends, they become less likely to be involved in groups that volunteer. That's depressing.

But wait. *Any good news?*

Yes! Despite social isolation, volunteering is actually on the rise! With the September 11 attacks—and then the devastation of Hurricane Katrina four years later, then the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, then the quake in Japan and the tornado in Joplin, Missouri, in 2011—Americans significantly increased volunteer activities in their communities, from 59.5 million volunteering in 2002 to 64.3 million in 2011.<sup>6</sup>

In other words, the places where you'll find volunteers are changing. Twenty years ago, organizations recruited the vast majority of volunteers through local networks of religious and civic associations. Today, volunteer recruiters are reaching outside this traditional volunteer network. In fact, the rate of volunteering among people

who never attend church or a civic organization has nearly tripled in the last 20 years. Churchgoers and club members still provide the greatest number of volunteers, but those numbers are shrinking, while the number of *individual* volunteers is booming.<sup>7</sup>

The Katrina and Haiti disasters illustrate this trend of individual volunteering. While churches and service clubs definitely took action, a huge influx of individual volunteers also responded to serve with organizations like the American Red Cross. This trend is new to the last decade.

### ***Seismic Shift 3***

#### **Flexibility: From Rigid Scheduling to Volunteer Availability**

One factor that contributes to a greater number of volunteers is a willingness to be flexible—many volunteers today demand it.

**Kim**, a 35-year-old volunteer, is the chairwoman of her company's United Way campaign. Kim is used to "high-tech" endeavors and doesn't want to waste her time sitting in boring board meetings. She says, "Email me what you want me to do and I'll get it done."

**Sally**, a new board member at her church, is retired. She and her husband travel a great deal. At the first meeting, she shared that she could only attend 11 of the 12 monthly meetings, and she couldn't make the training retreat. While the pastor wanted her resignation because he felt the training retreat was essential for all board members, Sally held her ground. She got the training material in advance, listened to tapes of the sessions, and caught up on her own. Sally represents the new, retired, active volunteer. She is gifted and wants to be involved.

**Anthony**, a 20-year-old college student, volunteers for his church's youth group. As much as he'd like to help out each week, his school,

work, and personal life monopolize most of his weeknights. But that doesn't stop Anthony from acting as the volunteer webmaster for the youth group website. Anthony made the youth pastor a simple deal: "Anything you email me by Wednesday at midnight will be up no later than Saturday night at midnight." Sometimes Anthony works in bits and pieces through the week. Other times, he crams in all the changes late Saturday night. But Anthony is completely reliable as long as he can work according to his own schedule. The youth pastor gains a reliable volunteer because he flexes to Anthony's bizarre hours.

**Alan**, a busy professional in his 40s, gets up at 4:30 a.m. and arrives at work by 5:45 a.m. He often works until 6 or 7 p.m. Once a month on Tuesday evenings, he attends the monthly board meeting for a local homeless shelter that starts at 6 p.m. The first two meetings he attended lasted until after midnight. Alan felt that the board wasted a lot of time arguing over details when its members should have been doing bigger-picture work. He finally told the chairman that if meetings weren't over at 10 p.m., he'd leave because of his early work time. Some of the other board members frown on it, but Alan makes sure he fulfills all his board responsibilities, and he's a very talented and dedicated board member.

The 21st century calls for a new system and for a greatly expanded definition of what it means to be a volunteer. Rather than always recruiting for specific volunteers to fill existing roles, organizations are empowering a new breed of volunteers to work their own way and according to their own schedules. The new breed of volunteer demands flexibility. Rather than recruiting volunteers for preset slots, organizations ask this new breed of volunteers how they want to be involved.



TOM

This “new” trend in volunteering might not be as new as we think. Years ago when I was in graduate school and our oldest son, Thom, was in first grade, we got a note from his teacher asking for moms to volunteer as room mothers. My wife, Susie, worked full-time as a high school English teacher while I took a full load of courses. As we looked at the room-mother schedule, we knew Susie couldn’t be available when they needed help, but I could. So I filled out the form, crossing out the words “room mother” and writing in “room father.” I received a call from Thom’s teacher saying that she’d love to have me help.

I’ll never forget the first meeting at the home of one of the moms. Most of the volunteers were wealthy, well-dressed women who didn’t work. I arrived in jeans—a poor graduate student living in student housing. The women talked about making cookies and arranging for holiday goodies for the school. I kept thinking, “*This isn’t what I signed up for.*” I felt completely out of place, even though the women were gracious and tried to find a place for me.

When I got home, I called Thom’s teacher and told her I’d love to volunteer to help in the classroom, attend field trips, and perhaps even bring my guitar to the class and lead the group in a singing-and-story time. But I didn’t think these home meetings were a good fit. The teacher quickly changed the program and classified me as the room father. I had a great year volunteering because the school was willing to let me use my strengths and be in the classroom when it fit our busy schedule. But I certainly didn’t fit the mold of the stay-at-home moms who organized class parties and baked cookies.

Through this experience, I witnessed the flexibility of a shrewd volunteer manager. She adapted her program to me, allowing a shift from “you have to fit into our program” to “we can change our program to your strengths and time to help us fulfill our mission.”



## *Seismic Shift 4*

### **Generations: From Experienced Veterans to Novice Gen Y**

The 21st century has introduced a whole new set of volunteers, the generation that many call Millennials. This generation of young people, born after 1981, is also called Gen Y, or what we call “The Texting Generation.” Many volunteer recruiters and managers ignore these potential volunteers, but that’s a huge mistake.



The Texting Generation (Gen Y) is an interesting breed. They’ll answer their cell phones in the middle of meetings or lunch appointments. Like Gen X (born 1965-1981), they’ll wear torn jeans and T-shirts to your fund-raising dinners. Almost a third of them have a body piercing somewhere other than their ears (compared to 22 percent of Gen X).<sup>8</sup> They prefer texting to talking on the phone. They constantly seek times to just “hang out” with each other. But these teenagers and 20-somethings—raised on MTV reality shows, social media, and video games—willingly volunteer if they think they can make a difference.

Many of these Millennials get a bad rap. They’re often stereotyped as narcissistic or entitled. Older generations struggle to understand their mindset. To a young professional in the workplace, “loving what I do” trumps a large salary. Nick Shore, in his 2012 Media Post article about Millennials, contends that half of Millennials would “rather have no job than a job they hate.” In addition, they want to be recognized for what they bring to the company, with “a desire to have their tech skills and savvy tapped by senior managers.”<sup>9</sup>

- 76 percent believe “my boss could learn a lot from me”
- 65 percent believe “I should be mentoring older co-workers when it comes to tech and getting things done”

When I think of Gen Y, I think of a volunteer named Spencer. He was extremely busy, but he loved his church’s college group and wanted to help. Spencer didn’t want to attend meetings or even commit to a weekly program, but he was a wiz on the computer and offered his services where needed.

The college pastor shared several places where he might volunteer, but Spencer didn’t find any of them interesting. Just when the pastor was about to give up, Spencer asked him, “Do you know how to use a social networking site for marketing?”

Within a half hour, Spencer was giving the youth staff a tour through the cyberworld of college kids within a 20-mile radius. Spencer showed them doors of opportunity for marketing outreach events, contacting students from different campuses, and even creating their own pages within some of these social networks.

The pastor didn’t know much about it, but he took a chance, letting Spencer run with it. Spencer worked his own hours (often midnight to 2 a.m. several nights a week). Within weeks, students showed up at the church college group as a result of Spencer’s online invitation.

Gen Y volunteers might not always like your ideas. But don’t hold that against them, because some of their ideas are better. They are indeed individuals—individuals who often enjoy the community that volunteering offers.

JONATHANTOM

Is Gen Y really different from Gen X? Is Gen Y really much different from when Boomers (born 1946-1964) were “20-somethings” proclaiming, “Don’t trust anyone over 30”? These are questions that we dive into in Chapter 4. We believe that a whole new group of retiring Boomers and a group of Gen Y’s represent an untapped resource of people who are ready and available if we only know how to reach them.

## ***Seismic Shift 5***

### **Technology: From Face-to-Face to Cyberspace**

One of the most dramatic developments greatly influencing volunteer management is the Internet. The Internet and smartphones open doors to entirely new avenues of volunteering that cross all geographical borders. We can use these practical tools to enhance our existing volunteer program, and we can now recruit a new type of volunteer that never existed before—the virtual volunteer.

We can probably thank Web 2.0 for the rise of the virtual volunteer.

TOM

Marilyn Pratt, who calls herself an evangelist for online networks, startled her audience by saying, “Email is old school. Web pages are so last century.” Then she asked the audience of several hundred how many had ever heard of Web 2.0, and less than half the people raised their hands. I have to admit—I didn’t raise mine. I wasn’t familiar with the term at all. But that’s no surprise, because I’m not an early adopter. When everyone else on my block had a microwave, I was still heating up meals on my good ol’ stove.

JONATHAN

I can vouch for that!



TOM

I was the last one to get a cell phone, a PDA, an iPod® , a GPS, an HDTV, and a Blu-ray player. I usually go boldly forward when everyone else has already made the change.

As I sat there in that workshop, in Chicago in June 2007, listening carefully to Marilyn tell us about this tool that had been around for several years, it was no surprise that I hadn't heard of it before. But after only a few minutes sharing the stage with Marilyn, community manager/SAP developer network, I was intrigued, especially when she demonstrated the potential of this tool.

Her workshop followed my presentation about the new breed, during which I proposed that we have to change the way we recruit and lead the 21st century volunteer. But Marilyn took my presentation to a whole new level with Web 2.0.

Web 2.0, simply put, is an online location where users can interact and collaborate with each other about an idea. Forget cluttered email chains, phone calls, and ancient yellow pieces of binder paper with ink smudges. Replace these outdated tools with one simple-to-use central website where a group can post documents, lists, links, pictures, and more, sharing resources and ideas to achieve a goal.

But as I listened I had a major concern. Wasn't this premature for me when I hadn't even mastered email? *I'm barely caught up with Web 1.0!* This is a valid concern, but Marilyn answered my objection when she claimed that Web 2.0 isn't just for the geeks or "first on the block" entrepreneurs. And it is not just our younger generation that is using Facebook®, YouTube®, blogs, and Twitter® . Many boomers who are retiring are tech-savvy and love to get involved in making a difference through technology.



To read more about virtual volunteers and using technology to enhance your volunteer program, go to “Chapter 7: Using a New Breed of Technology.”

## Seismic Shift 6

### Professionalism: From Skilled Workers to Knowledge Workers

In the 1980s the rise of the knowledge worker not only changed the workplace; it also affected volunteer management. A knowledge worker is someone who wants to make decisions. Knowledge workers want to be empowered. They want to volunteer, but they want to influence how the volunteer project should be accomplished. Many volunteers today are professionals and want to be treated like professionals.

Tim, a volunteer as a board member for a youth ministry organization, is a computer programmer by trade. He’s meticulous, incredibly organized, and insanely busy. But whenever the organization has computer questions or tech needs, Tim loves to help. Tim hasn’t always been so eager to help out. He previously worked for two other volunteer organizations, but each left a bad taste in his mouth.

Tim never brags about it, but he’s worth about \$300 an hour. He can’t stand having his time wasted—and that’s exactly what the other two organizations did. They didn’t provide some of the basic preparations that Tim needed to get the job done right, and they didn’t follow through with promises they made. In short: They were unprofessional. Tim hates “unprofessional.” So he took his \$300-an-hour skills where they were appreciated and put them to good use.

Tim provides a perfect example of a knowledge worker. He wants to be empowered and treated like a professional. If we fail to remember this, we might lose valuable assets like Tim.



To read more about empowering volunteers, go to “Chapter 6: Empowering Volunteers to Do It Their Way.”

## **Seismic Shift 7**

### **Episodic Volunteering: From Long-Term Commitments to Short-Term Projects**

Some volunteer managers report that about 75 percent of their volunteers are episodic, way up from the 25 percent it was 25 years ago. Episodic volunteers prefer short-term volunteer projects to long-term commitments. This trend is here to stay, and many volunteer managers are taking advantage of using the episodic volunteer as a “first date.” (See “Chapter 2: Recruiting the New Breed of Volunteers.”)

A study by the Corporation for Community and National Service, *Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends in Volunteering Since 1974*, reported the following:

While volunteering rates appear to be at a 30-year high today, the last 15 years also suggest some change in how people volunteer. According to our findings, episodic volunteering (serving 99 or fewer volunteer hours in a year) has increased since 1989....The critical role that time constraints have on the potential for people to volunteer may help to explain the reason why episodic volunteering became more common between 1989 and 2005. Around the same time as the term “episodic volunteer” was coined, a 1989 survey showed that 79 percent of non-volunteers said that they would volunteer if given a short-duration task....Current trends suggest

many of America’s charities and volunteer associations may have taken this reality to heart and made shorter, more flexible volunteering opportunities available to “episodic volunteers”—those who are willing to volunteer, but cannot or will not serve as a regular, ongoing volunteer throughout the year.<sup>10</sup>



This is very popular for young volunteers. My own kids needed 40 hours of community service to graduate from high school. As I watched my kids and their peers look for volunteer opportunities, one of their first questions was, “Do you have something I can do that would take just 40 hours?”

Chuckle if you will, but don’t dismiss this. Can you imagine what local organizations could accomplish with more than 500 students in a graduating class having to serve 40 hours each year? And what if we learned how to use these 40 hours to give them a taste for our “cause”? (Yes, we’re definitely going to talk about this strategy some more.)



## ***Seismic Shift 8***

### **Slacktivism: From Hard Work to Easy, “Feel-Good” Tasks**

For those who love the oxymoron, you will love this one that is coined from two words—*slacker* and *activism*. How can a slacker be an activist? “Slacktivism” is the ultimate feel-good that comes from the desire to give back to society without actually getting one’s hands dirty. Examples of slacktivism including signing Internet petitions,

wearing wristbands (awareness bracelets) with political messages, putting a ribbon on a vehicle, joining a Facebook group, posting issue-oriented YouTube videos, taking part in a short-term boycott, or making a small donation for a cause with the click of your mouse.

Although we are insulted by the term *slacker*, and the allegation of such a word gets our defenses up, we have to agree with Nancy Lublin, CEO and Chief Old Person of Do Something. She challenged our resistance when she responded to her negative feelings about slacktivism by saying, “If we really could save the world with a few clicks of the mouse, then only a fool would protest.”<sup>11</sup>

Slacktivism at its best can deliver results far more quickly than the phone tree or your small-town gossip. In 2011 Lady Gaga raised millions for Japan relief efforts<sup>12</sup> by selling wristbands. A year prior, the American Red Cross’ Haiti campaign raised money so fast, phone companies could barely keep up. Phone companies were receiving up to 10,000 “Haiti” texts per second. As of the writing of this second edition of the book, those \$10 pledges by text have amounted to \$32 million for the American Red Cross alone.<sup>13</sup>



JONATHAN

As a not-for-profit leader whose organization depends on donations, if that is slacktivism, *sign me up!* The bottom line, really, is the bottom line. We shouldn’t judge any activism—online or off, old-fashioned or newfangled—by its medium. Nor should we look down on those who raise money or mobilize workers using these “slacktivist” methods. Results are results.



## *Seismic Shift 9*

### **Micro-Volunteering: From Big-Time Commitments to Bite-Sized Projects**

The smartphone won a huge victory in the summer of 2011. That June, for the first time ever, people spent more time on their mobile apps than on Web browsers on their PCs.<sup>14</sup> The mobile apps that smartphones offer have become such a raging success, people have tilted the scales. Basically, more people are beginning to check their Facebook status from their iPhones® and their tablets than on their traditional computers.

So it's not surprising that some volunteer organizations have tapped into this growing arena of mobile "time." What if we were able to harness the hours upon hours that people spend waiting in line, or sitting and waiting for an appointment? Is it possible to harness these minutes that add up to hours of volunteer time?

Micro-volunteering is just another way to take advantage of the volunteering trend in which people are reluctant to volunteer for extended periods of time. Micro-volunteering takes this trend to a new level by offering people the chance to feel good by using their smartphones to make a difference in just minutes.

Jump on [Sparked.com](http://Sparked.com) to see what this concept looks like in action. Click the button that stays "Volunteers START" and they'll ask you what "causes" fire you up. Click on the picture of a hungry child, an animal, or a poor person with their hand out. Tell them what skills you have (design, marketing, web development). The site will then present a number of current challenges that match your profile. If you log in, you can edit and narrow your skills and interests. Then

organizations like Habitat for Humanity will ask you for advice or ideas about a current project. Your expertise helps them make a difference.

## **Seismic Shift 10**

### **Speed: From Slow Movements to Fast Responses to Change**

How fast are you responding to change? How quickly do you respond to shifts in culture? Are you even aware of the changes in culture? How quickly do you make decisions? How long does it take for you to respond to your volunteers' requests? These are huge questions because one of the most significant seismic shifts that has changed volunteerism in the opening years of the 21st century is "speed."

Nick Shore, senior vice president of strategic consumer insights and research at MTV, is responsible for all of the research efforts across MTV, MTV2, mtv.com, and the rest of the network's platforms. He blogged this in March 2011:

*If we had to identify someone who is the face of the (Millennial) Generation, the way that Bob Dylan perhaps was for the Boomers or Kurt Cobaine for Xers, then today that face would be Lady Gaga's. Considered beyond doubt the "most interesting person today" by the generation the core characteristic of Gaga is the **speed** [emphasis ours] and ferocity of her self-reinvention. She is doing in 10 minutes what it [took] Madonna ten years to achieve.<sup>15</sup>*

TOM

But speed is not just for the young. We all have become addicted to speed. A few months ago I was invited to dinner by a couple of "movers and shakers" of an organization. They wanted to meet with me before I led a workshop the next day. They had

some concerns about how their organization was missing a great opportunity of involving the new breed of volunteers. But it is the age of these men that is significant to this story. One man was in his 60s, and the other in his early 70s. The man in his 60s had developed a software company and had marketed it around the world. The man in his 70s had used Twitter and Facebook to mobilize thousands of volunteers to respond to a crisis. These two men knew how to get it done. But their frustration was that their organization's infrastructure was so layered with bureaucracy and so-called safeguards that they couldn't use their skills and talents as volunteers. Both said to me, "If we ran our business like this organization, we would be out of business in a month."

As I listened to these men ask me what they could do as volunteers to change the culture, I understood. Too many organizations are afraid of change. They are intimidated by this new breed of volunteer who wants to get it done—quickly. In fact, I believe that these individuals are not afraid of the young—they are afraid of losing control.



### ***The Profile of the New Breed of Volunteer***

These seismic shifts together represent the biggest change in volunteering in the 21st century. Simply put, the new breed of volunteer drives the program. The new breed of volunteer wants to call the shots. These volunteers want to be asked what they see as the needs in the organization and how they can help accomplish the mission. They have a passion for the cause of the organization but can't always fit into the old mold or organizational pattern. The old system worked well with stay-at-home moms and the retired senior adults. But the new system needs to be more flexible and able to customize the job for the volunteer.

Today, many volunteer managers feel like, “Toto, I don’t think we are in Kansas anymore.” (Ironically, many of their Gen Y volunteers don’t even know where that line comes from!) From the organization’s perspective, volunteering might feel a little like a mishmash of unconnected programs. But from the perspective of the volunteers, they feel like they’re making a difference and they tell others about the positive experiences with our organizations. Because their volunteer work specifically meets their schedules and passions, these individuals want to get involved.

## **THE NEW BREED OF VOLUNTEER**

Do you recognize people like this in your organization? The new breed of volunteer:

- is very busy, has many obligations, and often volunteers for multiple organizations.
- wants flexibility.
- expects to be empowered.
- won’t tolerate working alongside incompetent volunteers.
- is tech-savvy.
- doesn’t want to simply make a contribution; the new breed of volunteer wants to make a difference.
- doesn’t want to be micromanaged.

Volunteer programs need to expand to include the new breed of volunteer or else they’ll face extinction. For you, this expansion

might be radical, or maybe you've been adapting to many of these developments for the last decade.

As you evaluate what you read in the pages ahead, take some time to look at your own volunteer history. Do you provide opportunities for the new breed of volunteers? Or are you scaring them away?

You might already be asking yourself, *"How will I manage these kinds of volunteers?"* or *"How will I train them?"* These questions won't even be an issue if you don't have any volunteers. So before we explore managing and training (in Section Two), let's take a peek at an effective strategy for recruiting the new breed of volunteer.



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