

The Anthropology of Motivation: A Qualitative Study of Volunteers at Sacred Heart
Community Service

A Project Report

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by

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Service

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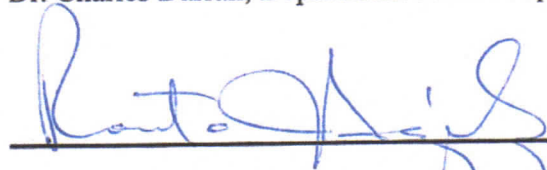
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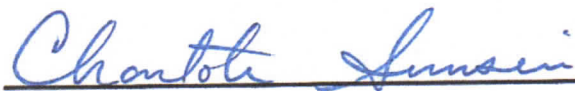
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Abstract

The study of volunteer motivation has been primarily studied by Sociologists and Economists, but an anthropological perspective can contribute to the study of volunteer motivation. I partnered with Sacred Heart Community Service in San Jose, California to do an ethnographic study of five of their volunteers and two potential volunteers. Sacred Heart Community Service's goals were to increase the number of volunteers and donors to their organization while also increasing the engagement of current volunteers. I performed interviews and did participant observation at their facility. The results of this study are Future Areas of Focus for Sacred Heart Community Service to consider in order to continue their mission in serving their community. These future areas of focus are sets of recommendations broken into two sections allowing for Sacred Heart Community Service to choose as it continues its examination of volunteer motivation.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Literature Review	6
Methods	22
Participant Observation Results	27
Interview Results	34
Discussion of Themes	60
Conclusion	72
Bibliography	76
Appendix 1 - Deliverable	80
<i>Future Areas of Focus</i>	91
Appendix 2 – Interview Instrument – Sacred Heart Volunteers	95
Appendix 3 – Interview Instrument – Non-Sacred Heart Volunteers	97
Appendix 4 – Future Research Questions	99

Introduction

From December 2007 through June 2009 the United States (and many other countries) fell into a recession, the worst since the 1930s (Bradhan and Walker 2011:303). During this recession, the unemployment rate doubled from 5 percent of the total workforce in December 2007 to 10 percent in December 2009 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012:2). Some people were unfortunate enough to fall into long-term unemployment (defined as 27 weeks or more). This group reached 4.4 percent in 2010 (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012:2). Several states, such as Michigan, Nevada, and California, had unemployment rates that exceeded 10 percent (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012:5). A great contributor to the increase in unemployed people in the United States during the recession the mass layoffs; which effected over 300,000 workers during this period (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012:14).

Over one million jobs were lost in California between July 2007 and the end of 2009 (Bradhan and Walker 2011:304). California is the nation's largest financial and housing sector; one of the causes of the recent recession was the housing bubble (Bradhan and Walker 2011:304). After the housing bubble had burst, California had more foreclosures and bad loans than any other state (Bradhan and Walker 2011:310). Despite all that, the spirit of charity and volunteerism has remained stable, only experiencing small variances over the last decade (Gallup Editors 2013). Between 2006 and 2014, trends show that monetary donations have fallen from 87 percent of the population to 83 percent of the population, whereas the percentage of people volunteering has gone up from 62 percent of the population to 65 percent of the population (Gallup Editors 2013). Even though Americans fell on hard times, people were still charitable and volunteering. The recovery in Silicon Valley was slow as it has been in the past after major

financial bubble bursts (Bradhan and Walker 2011:318). Silicon Valley is an area of Northern California known for tech companies as well as a wide variety of immigrant populations. The residents of this area fall along the entire spectrum of socioeconomic circumstances; and although this area is diverse, it is divided along income lines. People living at the bottom of the economic spectrum are most likely to be in need of an organization like Sacred Heart Community Service.

Background of Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart Community Services (SHCS) is located in San Jose, which is the de facto capital of the Silicon Valley. It began in 1964 when Louise Benson founded Sacred Heart Community Service to feed hungry neighbors; today it offers services providing basic needs like food, clothing, and housing assistance (Sacred Heart n.d.). Its other mission is to help people obtain self-sufficiency by providing services like adult and child education, employment assistance, family mentoring, and advocating for justice (Sacred Heart n.d.). In 2008, California selected SHCS to be the Community Action Agency for the County of Santa Clara (Sacred Heart n.d.). At this same time, the U.S. experienced a dramatic shift resulting in an economic recession and SHCS became a vital resource to the community. They helped as many people as they could but realized that they needed more volunteers to help more people.

Its overall goal is to rid the community of poverty through hope, opportunity, and action (Sacred Heart n.d.). The board of directors is composed of leading members of the community, including persons from Hewlett-Packard, San Jose State University, Microsoft, and a council member of San Jose (Sacred Heart n.d.). These board members see the need for an organization

like SHCS. With the help of other key members of the organization, they assessed the needs of the community to update and adjust their services (Sacred Heart n.d.). In a needs assessment done within the last two years, SHCS found that most of the jobs created in the area have been high tech jobs which have left some people behind (particularly African-Americans, Latinos, women, and some immigrant groups) (Sacred Heart n.d.). They have also found that budget cuts have had a big effect on the education provided to our children (Sacred Heart n.d.). Sacred Heart Community Services has built programs attempting to help people who are most affected by these problems being experienced by the community (Sacred Heart n.d.).

Needs Assessment

I met with the Executive Director of SHCS, Poncho Guevara, and the Community Engagement Director, Graciela Mann, to help them conceptualize and implement a project. The goal was to help get more adults to volunteer their time and to help the organization reach its goal of, "build[ing] a community free from poverty by building hope, opportunity, and action" (Sacred Heart n.d.). They seemed excited to have a student interested in helping them solve a problem that impacts their goals. I was introduced to their mission and goals, and they presented me with two general paths for my project. One was about their social justice agenda and the other involved learning about their volunteer's motivations and barriers to volunteering and financial donations. I prepared a document outlining what I understood as their needs, as well as methods and possible outcomes for both paths. They felt that the most pressing issue was getting more people to be involved in volunteering and donating. Their main concerns were: How can SHCS get more people to volunteer, and once they begin volunteering how they can keep them

engaged? As we discussed the issue, I realized I needed to understand volunteer motivation for them to meet these goals.

SHCS has created partnerships with local businesses and schools of all levels, to generate a large volunteer base, but now it is looking to expand their volunteer reach further by trying to understand the motivations bringing people to their organization. They also hope to learn about barriers to engaging in volunteerism. As the primary investigator, I reviewed the literature on volunteer motivation and found gaps that I could begin to fill. Among other things, I discovered that networking plays a big part in keeping people engaged and active in their volunteer service. To understand the motivation and the role of social networking at SHCS, I decided to learn more about the experiences of the volunteers already involved. This data might help Sacred Heart Community Services move forward with its goals of attracting more volunteers.

Goals of This Study

SHCS needs more members of the community to be aware and to participate in its organization and to do that they need a better understanding of what gets people involved with non-profit organizations and how they can get people to continue working for them. With this project, I hope to improve the SHCS recruitment process, but also to add to the theoretical frame of motivation and social capital. I feel this project might also contribute to the broader study of volunteer motivation. The study of volunteer motivation has been largely dominated by economists and sociologists. With this study, I would like to create a space for anthropologists and our qualitative methods, especially in-depth interviews. Volunteerism bridges the gap between work and leisure activity, so understanding motivation more holistically – with

qualitative methods – can potentially benefit the study of work and recreation motivations.

Qualitative data takes into account real life experiences in ways that cannot be told with statistics. I hope that a study such as this might change the way people think about volunteerism and how to go from idealism to action.

Literature Review

The study of volunteer motivation developed from the study of employee motivation – typically employees are depicted as being motivated primarily by pay (Garner and Garner 2011; Grube and Piliavin 2000; Perry 2000). In the late 1920's and early 1930's a psychologist, named Elton Mayo, and an anthropologist, named W. Lloyd Warner, observed how multiple factors effected motivation in the workplace. The most important factor was not pay; it was actually workplace culture created by the standards set by peers to produce at an expected rate (Baba 2005:222-5). Today motivation is usually studied by economists and sociologists. Economists and some sociologists tend to rely heavily on statistics, meaning there is little qualitative data on the subject (Aguirre and Bolton 2013; Shye 2010). Nearly all the relevant literature used variations of surveys to gather data (Aguirre and Bolton 2013; Garner and Garner 2011; Gruber and Piliavin 2000; Lu and Schuett 2014; Prouteau and Wolff 2008; Shye 2010). Unfortunately, I did not find any similar volunteer motivation studies that used qualitative data; and I only found one source using auto-ethnography (Kodama et al. 2013).

The two theories I will be using to frame this study will be motivation theory and network theory. Understanding motivation is crucial to understanding why people invest their time as they do and might help find ways to recruit volunteers in the future. Some types of motivation include social networking and relationship building, personal fulfillment, personal growth and self-enhancement, self-expression, and altruism (Aguirre and Bolton 2013; Grube and Piliavin 2000; Lu and Schuett 2014; Prouteau and Wolff 2008). Altruism and personal growth factors are often connected with the individual's life experiences (Aguirre and Bolton 2013) as well as by personal values and beliefs, and financial situations (Shye 2010). It was

found that volunteers who identified with an organization were more likely to continue or increase their level of involvement, perform more effectively, and find their work more meaningful (Dwyer et al. 2013; Garner and Garner 2011; Gruber and Piliavin 2000). Motivation is also an ongoing process between the organization and the individual: successful organizations tend to remind people of the value they bring to the group and the impact they make on the community they serve (Aguirre and Bolton 2013).

Social networks are mentioned as a motivating factor in the literature, and it is included here as a separate theoretical frame from the broader motivation theory. Social networks have played a vital role in many functions of society. In the 1960's and 1970's networks played a big part in getting people on the frontlines of the civil rights and feminist movements. These movements connected people with similar interests, motivations, and worldviews with each other (McAdams 2009 and Freeman 2009). Social network strength can have a direct effect on the retention of volunteers as well as the amount of time they volunteer (Grube and Piliavin 2000; Lu and Schuett 2014). This appears to be especially true for the elderly, adults without children, and members of rural communities (Prouteau and Wolff 2008). Organizations are often the hubs of an individual's networks and can create ways for people to create new (Stauder 2014). Individuals can also bring more volunteers to an organization; this give and take relationship creates a power exchange which benefits both the organization and the individual (Sorenson and Rogan 2014). The more people are involved in a network hub, the more people will be attracted, and the more likely they will be to contribute to its mission (Lin and Lu 2011). By adding new forms of relationships with the same people, SHCS can help create stronger relationships with individuals, ultimately creating a richer volunteer base for organizations (Garcia 2014).

The following sections are generated by non-academic sources. The sources I chose were written by professionals in the field of volunteerism and non-profit organizations. Although none of their knowledge was gained through scientific research, it is the result of many years in the field. The sources were created with the intention to advise others in their field on how to better their organizations and better their relationships with volunteers.

The Difference Between Volunteers and Employees

It is important to understand the value volunteers bring to an organization. Susan Ellis detests the excuse of “I’m just a volunteer” since it creates a feeling that volunteers are less important than the paid staff of an organization. This defeatist attitude may then get internalized by volunteers and eventually, could make those volunteers perform at a lower level, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy (Ellis 1999). Paid volunteers can be bad at their jobs too, and volunteers are not just a resource for lean times in an organization (Ellis 1999). Although Ellis acknowledges the similarities between volunteers and paid staff – such as devotion to the cause – she also points out that there are several important differences between the two groups (Ellis 2010). Volunteers have fewer limitations than paid staff in some ways, such as their availability and their perspectives (Ellis 2010). Employees tend to be limited to an age range of 18-67, but volunteers can be almost any age, as young as five and as old as one can be, so long as one is physically and mentally capable for the job (Ellis 2010). Paid staff are also held back by pay. If there is no funding an organization cannot pay its staff, but volunteers are not restricted by this or other labor board enforced rules (Ellis 2010). Most employees work the office hours of the organization whereas volunteers' hours can be more sporadic, varied, and cover more of the day to continue offering services to clients (Ellis 2010). The way in which they are rewarded is also

different, as staff members get paid and volunteers get recognition and praise for their work. While this is an important difference between the two groups, all paid and un-paid personnel should be recognized for their work (Ellis 2010).

Attracting Volunteers

In her book, *Volunteers: How to Get Them, How to Keep Them*, Helen Little claims that volunteer will increase the amount of time a volunteer dedicates to an organization if the organization fulfills their individual needs (Little 1999:2). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between September 2009 and September 2010, 26.3 percent of Americans volunteered with a median number of hours of 52 (U.S. Census 2011). In this context, many nonprofits are competing for volunteers' time and resources (Little 1999:7). The changes in corporate America have forced workers to do more with fewer resources which, in turn, has resulted in fewer hours of volunteering. The good news is that volunteer hours increase with increased education (Little 1999:8-9), and even though her statistics are from over a decade ago, the trend reads the same on the most current statistics (U.S. Census 2011). People join charitable organizations to 'make a difference' (Little 1999:10), but matching their needs with the organization is key, and it starts by letting them know all their options for participation (Little 1999:13). To do this, Little discusses several needs of volunteers and how to fulfill them.

Steps to Recruitment

For a nonprofit organization to recruit the right volunteers they must follow a three step process; first, it must know why it needs volunteers (Ellis 2002:5-6). Volunteer needs will change for each project or program depending on physical requirements; skills required, and time requirements. These needs can be determined simply by having a meeting in the office and

looking for gaps in existing programs. If starting a new program or project, recruiters can plan out who will be needed to meet the organization's goals successfully (Ellis 2002:12). It will be important to evaluate what the volunteer's role will be, who they will interact with – other volunteers, staff, or clients – and what skills the role requires them to possess (Fader 2010:28). It is important to know what the organization needs from the volunteers because the next step is to create volunteer assignments that are attractive to the audience the recruiters are trying to reach (Ellis 2002:6). The audience for a role might be someone of a particular age, or have certain skills, or simply be free for certain hours of the day (Ellis 2002:6). These assignments may look a lot like job descriptions; this is fine (Ellis 2002:6).

Planning out what roles the organization will have to offer also informs what kind of training programs should be developed (Ellis 2002:16). The organization should create a diverse set of roles as this will allow the recruiters to attract a bigger audience of potential volunteers; having a diverse team strengthens the project in the long run as they will all act like specialists (Ellis 2002:14). There will always be some jobs (usually repetitive jobs) that are less attractive to people; a solution to this is to spread out that undesirable work among everyone so that no one is always stuck with the worst job (Ellis 2002:14). Creating roles also prevents the problem of having a bunch of bored or unfulfilled volunteers (Ellis 2002:6). It also helps to give titles to roles, which can inspire ownership of a task (Ellis 2002:16). Some people will not be reached through these campaigns since volunteering directly competes with social or recreational activities; and the organizations has to convince those people that volunteering can be fun and social too, but for some it will never beat their recreational activities (Ellis 2002:24). Then there are others who disagree with the practice altogether, others lack interest, and for some, it comes

down to a logistical problem (Ellis 2002:25); others even go so far as to compare volunteers to “suckers” since they are willing to work for nothing (34).

The last step is to recruit people. This process starts in the office by planning a strategy for finding the right people before moving out into the community to find a team through a series of mini-campaigns (Ellis 2002:6-7). For each role, the recruiter should brainstorm where the best place to find them would be (Ellis 2002:45-6) and decide what the best method of attracting people to these roles is; this could be print, audio-visual, or face-to-face events such as public speaking events (Ellis 2002:61-2). Mass media needs to quickly deliver the organization's message while public speaking requires a more targeted audience (Ellis 2002:65-6). If the organization is looking for very specific types of volunteers, it may need to do a screening. If this is so, the recruiter will need to create a screening process (Fader 2010:34-5). Finally, the organization will want to create a filing system that will be useful and easy for staff to use during the future recruitment efforts (Fader 2010:36-7).

Another way to find volunteers is to consider people that work hours opposite of the operational hours of the organization (Ellis 2002:47). Additionally, people working at businesses that are in the same neighborhood as the organization, or people that fall into similar spheres of ideology (people with similar interests or motives) (Ellis 2002:51-3) might be good volunteer sources. Once a strategy has been selected, the recruiters must execute it, but it is a big job, and it takes more than just dedicated recruiters to do it (Ellis 2002:104). All staff can share this job, and current volunteers and clients also make great recruiters because sincerity always beats technique (Ellis 2002:104). It also takes more than one person because it is not something that happens once or infrequently, this is an ongoing process. If people do not feel invited to

come volunteer, then most people will not volunteer at all (Ellis 2002:102). Finally, it is important that the whole organization is a part of the recruitment efforts including the receptionist; he/she is often the first person a volunteer interacts with and therefore should be as informed as anyone else about volunteer recruitment (Ellis 2002:106). And since receptionists have such a varied job it is important that they are aware of all the programs and personnel (Ellis 2002:106).

New Volunteers

When trying to get new volunteers involved in the organization, it is best to start things off on the right foot. So when they apply, whether it is online or in person, it is important to make sure that they are thanked for their interest and informed that the organization looks forward to working with them (Brystrynski 2015). According to Helen Little volunteers need to have a safe, welcoming, and comfortable environment (Little 1999:57). People choose organizations for many reasons, but one of them is socialization, so allowing volunteers to invite a friend to work with them could be a great option and may even entice another new volunteer to join (Brystrynski 2015). Once volunteers are working with the organization it is important that they know their responsibilities; and creating a handbook is a great way for them to learn what the organization expectations are (Fader 2010:44-5). It may be wise to ask many members of the staff and some experienced volunteers to help create a handbook that reflects the experiences they may encounter (Fader 2010:53); this may also help the organization identify issues that need to be worked out in order to be clear for new volunteers.

When a new volunteer joins the team, it is important to make him/her feel like they are part of the team. The recruiter can do this by introducing them to the other staff and volunteers

(Fader 2010:128). This is also the time to show him/her where any supplies they might need can be found, where to find the bathroom or refreshments, and how to use any equipment they might need training on (Fader 2010:128). Volunteers should be given specific tasks to do (Getty 2013). Not everyone has the same skill set, so it is important for training to happen at the beginning of a volunteer project as well as getting them set up with all the tools they will need to do their job right (Brystrynski 2015). When taking volunteers to their workstations, it would help motivate them to know how their specific task is contributing to the overall goals of the team and project overall; this will give them a sense of both personal and group accomplishment (Brystrynski 2015). The organization could also start their first day off with a small token showing they are part of the team, such as a t-shirt or lanyard, or even a bumper sticker (Fader 2010:125).

Volunteers' Relationship with the Organization and Staff

Volunteers at all levels should be consulted throughout the project (Brystrynski 2015). These check-ins are a good time to find out if any issues need attention, as well as a chance for the staff to hear the volunteers' ideas (Brystrynski 2015). This also gives the staff a chance to see the volunteers' skill set in action (Brystrynski 2015) to keep track of progress and future team building, as well as making them feel valued and needed (Getty 2013). When a project is completed, it is important to share that success with the entire team so that everyone feels valued (Brystrynski 2015). This is also an excellent opportunity to point out to them how each one of them contributed to the project reaching its goal (Getty 2013).

It is important to stay connected with the volunteers and keep them up to date on the latest news in the organization (Getty 2013). This connection can easily be made now through social media and other online forums (Getty 2013). Staying connected with volunteers starts

with a relationship between the staff and the volunteers; they should be working together to reach goals (Fader 2010:162). This is also vital for showing the staff that they are not going to be replaced by volunteers (Fader 2010:163), rather they should be invested in the volunteers' success (165). To create these relationships, it might be smart to pair up volunteers and staff based on interests or skills (Fader 2010:182). Staff might consider inviting volunteers to lunch (164), or one group could throw an appreciation gathering for the other group (180). Another need of volunteers is to be thanked; getting acknowledgment can come in many forms, and the thanks should be fitting to the project or work (Little 1999:75-6). They should be thanked every time they complete their obligation to the organization, and it is best to use their name and acknowledge the specific contributions they made that day or on that project (Little 1999:72-3). This will express to the volunteer how much the organization appreciates their time and work, as well as help the coordinators remember names and contributions, and ultimately, strengthen the relationship between the volunteer and the organization (Little 1999:72-3).

Another way to show volunteers that they are appreciated is by getting useful feedback from them. This feedback can be vital to the continual improvement of an organization's volunteer program. Feedback is a valuable resource that allows the organization to learn about the volunteer experience in order to improve its programs. It also gives the volunteer a voice and a feeling of value; it should be gathered during and after the volunteer's shift, or project is complete (Little 1999:68). This feedback can be done with an evaluation sheet that sums up their shift or project work (Little 1999:71) at the end but during the shift or project it might be easier to get it verbally. Ellis suggests adding volunteers to your planning committees or reflection meetings; this allows them to contribute feedback on a project or program (Ellis 1998).

Not all of their ideas will be useful, but it is up to the staff to decide if the feedback usable and how they will implement it (Ellis 1998).

Volunteer perspectives and feedback can also be featured in the organization's newsletter; volunteers should also be receiving these newsletters so that they can be aware of important changes in policies (Ellis 1998). When eliciting the feedback of the volunteers, it is important to ask open-ended questions so that the organization gets useful data; which should be recorded and circulated to all the staff responsible for making decisions regarding volunteers (Ellis 1998). Project reports and summaries could be a way to get feedback from staff and leadership (Little 1999:71). These reports could be used to create better programs in the future or to improve the organization overall (Little 1999:71). The completion of this report could be the ticket into the thank you event and is also an excellent way of evaluating the performance of volunteers, perhaps even advising future leadership choices (Little 1999:71).

Motivation

It is important to take into consideration the motivation of the volunteer. The recruiter could ask volunteers in person, but to organize a large group, this could be assessed at the beginning of a project or during volunteer enrollment with a checklist. There are many different motivators for volunteer work, first is socialization, these people work well groups (Little 1999:29). Volunteers seeking independence can be useful doing solitary work (Little 1999:30). Some people want to be leaders; those volunteers could make for strong leaders (Little 1999:30-1). Their leadership role should be determined by their skill level (Little 1999:30-1). Some volunteers enjoy the repetitiveness of their work while others want a challenge (Little 1999:31). The best way to utilize them is goal driven work such as fundraising (Little 1999:31). People

who have a sense of duty might not be the best volunteers but are there when the organization needs them (Little 1999:31-2). Those with an interest in a cause are excellent resources for reaching out to the community and industry professionals due to their enthusiasm (Little 1999:31-2). Many people wish to improve themselves through doing volunteer work, and they should be paired with an experienced member or trained. These people typically do well in leadership roles (Little 1999:30). Finally, the creative, self-expressive types should be used to channel their natural abilities towards completing a goal (Little 1999:30).

Fader asserts that volunteers need two basic things: recognition and the opportunity to use their skills for good (Fader 2010:147). But it is not the only reason they would volunteer. Sometimes people volunteer out of gratitude; these people have usually been personally or know someone who has been positively affected by the organization (Fader 2010:138). It may also be their way of contributing to something they hope will positively affect a loved one or themselves (Fader 2010:138). People who have skills they no longer need for their careers will sometimes volunteer to use those skills within a nonprofit setting to keep those skills sharp (Fader 2010:139). This is most common for retired people such as teachers, lawyers, or accountants, for example. At the other end of the spectrum, some people volunteer to develop skills that they will need in the future, and some young people will use these unpaid experiences as work history if they do not have any yet (Fader 2010:139). For people of faith doing volunteer work is a way to “live their faith” (Fader 2010:140-1).

Some people come from a family tradition of serving the community. Sometimes this can lead to peer pressure and coercion, but if the volunteer coordinator can keep them engaged and find that person's motivation they will be able to keep him/her engaged beyond family time

(Fader 2010:141). Others just want a sense of accomplishment, sometimes because they are worn out from a tedious job (Fader 2010:140). These people can be useful for short term projects (Fader 2010:140). Volunteer motivation can be varied; Ellis compiled a list of motives that were shared with her. Her list was composed of reasons from “to explore a career” to “pride” to “guilt” (Ellis 2002:23). My interviewees also expressed many of these motivations (see below). Most people volunteer for more than one reason (Ellis 2002:22) and those reasons may change over a lifetime (Ellis 2002:24). But no matter the reason for volunteering it is no doubt the best when both the volunteer and the recipient get something out of it (Ellis 2002:22).

Limited time Projects

For programs that have clear start and end points, projects carried out by its members have a whole different set of volunteer needs. The first is the need for success and to accomplish this means that the organization needs to define the achievable tasks for each person from beginning to end (Little 1999:20). To fulfill this need, it takes a lot of planning ahead of time by the organization (Little 1999:20). This would also be a good time to think about how these goals can be quantified for funding report purposes. A project can be broken into teams of phases allowing for the organization to create a variety of roles. A standard worksheet can be a useful way if tracking the progress of each team or phase (Little 1999:22).

A timeline should be established, and the number of volunteers required needs to be determined (Little 1999:22). Recruitment of volunteers with specific skill sets should be part of the organization's early planning (Little 1999:24). Staff and Project leaders can help assess what skill sets are needed for a project. The volunteer teams need instructions on the objections of their roles (Little 1999:40). If volunteers do not know how to do a task, the organization should

provide training (Little 1999:53). They will need reasonable deadlines and materials to do their jobs (Little 1999:44, 50). Frequent communication about progress will show support to the volunteers (Little 1999:61-2). This also allows for staff to quickly identify problems and address them on the spot.

Having a Successful and Empowered Volunteer Crew

Some volunteer work may be repetitive and possibly unfulfilling for the volunteer. Reminding volunteers of the importance of their work to the organization could ease their feelings of unfulfillment (Fader 2010:186). The “thank you” should include an acknowledgment of how mundane the tasks are, and it should be sincere (Fader 2010:187). Many things about running a nonprofit are not always in the organization's control, but how the recruiters and staff obtain, train, and utilize volunteers is something that can be controlled, so it is important to set them up for success and empowerment (Fader 2010:201). If the volunteers are dealing with a particular portion of the population such as low-income families, it would be a good idea to teach them a little bit about the population so that they can avoid awkward situations (Fader 2010:189-90). Through training the organization can start creating a connection with the volunteers (Fader 2010:190). This connection can be further strengthened by giving volunteers the opportunity to develop skills and training (Fader 2010:195).

To empower the volunteers the organization needs to include them in the process and utilize their feedback when possible or appropriate (Fader 2010:202). Empowerment is mostly about including them in the creation of and reflection on projects and new programs (Fader 2010:206). To show appreciation, an honor roll could be distributed on the organization's website and newsletter; the staff can show that the organization cares about volunteers as

individuals by remembering information about their personal lives, even if the volunteer leaders have to use a cheat sheet (Fader 2010:207). Volunteers can be empowered through working on teams as they build a camaraderie and mutual respect (Fader 2010:210). It is important that when using team building as a method of empowerment that the focus is on the experience and not the amount of productivity (Fader 2010:211). These teams should be composed of experienced volunteers and new volunteers as well as a staff member or two (Fader 2010:212). Evaluation is a valuable tool for empowering volunteers. It shows that the organization is paying attention to their work and wants them to grow as a volunteer and an individual through their service (Fader 2010:213).

Trends in Volunteerism

The days of an organization simply asking for community members to give their time to help out are over, the volunteers themselves have agency and desires of their own. Fritz claims that some people are turned off by the label of “volunteer” since they associate it with a “time suck” in which the only reward for doing volunteer work is more volunteer work (Fritz n.d.). Instead, organizations should be praising the work that volunteers have done for their organization (Fritz n.d.). People prefer short-term projects because it gives them a feeling of accomplishment (Fritz n.d.). People want to feel that they have made an impact, if people feel experience that satisfaction with an organization they will come back for more short projects (Fritz n.d.). As the volunteer base grows and reaches out to all age groups and backgrounds the roles of volunteers must reflect this growth (Fritz n.d.). This means designing roles that can be met by a senior citizen, and roles that can be met by young children, and others that are group projects or even roles built for families (Fritz n.d.). Most of all, people want to be challenged by

their service to the community (Fritz n.d.). Organizations need to build challenging project roles to encourage and inspire people to give up their free time.

Issues, Obstacles, and Why People Quit

Volunteer conduct can be hard to establish since they are not employees, but the recruiters and staff can start by defining what types of conduct are acceptable by creating a volunteer handbook (Fader 2010:231, 234). If there are problems on volunteer teams that do not get resolved on their own, then it is the job of the team leader to handle the problem clearly and directly (Little 1999:64). It is important to keep an open door policy and look at minor infractions as a chance to reteach (Fader 2010:234-5). Sometimes logistical problems are the cause for people to turn down volunteer work. Some of those problems that directly affect SHCS were listed in Ellis' book such as difficulty finding parking, repetitive work in the Clothes Closet and Food Pantry, and the available volunteer time does not match many peoples availability (Ellis 2002:25).

Often people will turn down volunteer opportunities by saying, "I do not have time." Thomas McKee claims there are seven reasons why people do not volunteer (McKee n.d.). Some of the reasons are: volunteer leaders do not know how to lead properly, no feedback on how a volunteer is performing, a general lack of communication, wasted time in unproductive meetings, and no flexibility in volunteer opportunities or scheduling (McKee n.d.). If there is no way to discuss the real problems volunteers will use the blanket statement of "I'm too busy," when turning down your invitation to work on a project (McKee n.d.). To fix this problem, volunteer managers should be involved directly in the training of volunteers, treating them professionally, and holding volunteers accountable for their contributions (McKee n.d.).

Susan Ellis believes that time use of staff and volunteers should be examined to eliminate waste and make volunteering a more valuable use time (Ellis 2006). One way to use time better is having it meet more than one of the volunteer's needs such as meeting new friends, having fun while working, getting in some family time, or learning a new skill – especially if it helps them with their career (Ellis 2006). Another way could be to reexamine the time requirements of each role and adjust accordingly (Ellis 2006). Time can be handled differently by the staff or organization. The organization can open up their hours of operations especially if it has a service that can be offered around the clock or into the evening (Ellis 2006). The staff can also hold regularly scheduled time for reflecting on what volunteer assignments are working, what should be added or eliminated, or how the organization's image is being communicated to the community (Ellis 2006). When volunteers find their time is being used well, they will continue to give it to the organization.

Methods

The methods I chose to use are classically ethnographic, relying on observations and interviews. Since the needs assessment was composed of broad questions both methods are done in an exploratory manner. For both methods, I first made contact with the organization and the individuals without leads. I believe this led me to see things as clearly as possible through the volunteers' eyes. I began with the participant observation in hope that I would find people to interview, but the work site presented a busy scene from which I often could not hold a conversation long enough to get past people's names. I was hoping that I would be able to get access to other work sites on their campus. I had decided to see if they would extend an invitation to me to check out other volunteer options, but that never happened. I could not make strong contacts at the work site, which I would have had a greater control on the samples. Instead, I had to cast a wide net and reach out to anyone I could.

After doing a quick search through google, I found that there was a yelp.com page for SHCS where volunteers had left reviews of their experiences. I sent out over 40 messages to everyone that still lived in Santa Clara County – according to their profile information – and had left a review within the last two years. From those messages I only heard back from two of them; one person responded back asking for more information, but after I responded I never heard from them again. The second person that responded scheduled an interview with me but ended up canceling because her work was sending her on a last minute business trip. I also used Facebook as I described below. SHCS's Facebook page was a dead end since it seemed only to be a way of informing volunteers about major events and not a social site with a dialogue. I was hoping that my social media approach would allow me to have a large pool of interviewees so

that I would be able to make substantial statements about volunteers sorted by different characteristics. However, this did not work out for me. With the lack of examples of a qualitative study or comparable metrics, I would have to develop my own.

Participant Observation

To best understand the volunteer experience I signed up as a volunteer working in the Food Pantry and the Clothes Closet. These are the two entry-level work sites on their volunteer scheduling website, any other program they offered for volunteer participation required personally contacting the head of that program to participation. It is also not possible for you to pick the Food Pantry or the Clothes Closet specifically when signing up for the volunteer shift. These volunteer shifts were the only participant observations I did on site, and they were not focused on a particular part of the experience, so all the data I collected remained broad. From these observations, I learned how volunteers do work on-site, how volunteers receive on-site training in providing services, and how volunteers interact with each other. I examined the area to see if it is set up for teams or for individual volunteers to work in and how this affects socialization at the work site. If people asked what I did for a living, I would tell them I was a graduate student, and I was doing a project about volunteerism with SHCS. Since it was so busy, the conversations usually did not get past the basic exchange of personal information.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to the participant observation in entry level volunteer activities, I used convenience and snowball sampling to conduct in-depth exploratory interviews with two different categories of people. The first category was current volunteers; I interviewed five

people in this category. As I talked with people in my community about the subject of my project I learned that many people were familiar with SHCS. So to find interviewees I reached out through my own network on Facebook and asked if anyone is or knows someone who is a volunteer at SHCS. This led me to my first, second and fifth interviewee; after that, I used references from those interviewees to meet my third, which led me to my fourth interviewee. By answering questions about topics such as their personal connection to the services they are providing, how often they volunteer, their thoughts on how SHCS is living up to their goals they include in their mission statement, and if they have friends or family volunteering at the organization, the interviewees provided data about why they began volunteering and why they continue to volunteer (see Appendix 2).

I also interviewed two potential SHCS volunteers; I identified them as potential volunteers by the fact that they self-identify as current volunteers with other organizations and are currently living in San Jose, California. I found these two interviewees through my own social network on Facebook when they responded to my call for current volunteers for interviews. I asked questions to learn about how they came to volunteer with their chosen organizations, about their experiences, and about what they know about SHCS and about barriers between them and volunteering at SHCS (see Appendix 3). My sample size described above is small but the individuals that comprise the group were varied in their engagement levels and their positions in the organizations, making my data more diverse.

Each interviewee went through a traditional semi-structured interview lasting from half an hour to two and a half hours. The interviews focused on the topics listed below. My categories remained broad since the needs assessment led to broad questions and nothing on the

work site caught my attention as needing further examination. Interviews were conducted in a place of the interviewees' choosing, allowing them to be at ease and be as truthful as possible about their experiences. Four interviews with SHCS volunteers were held in a public place away from the SHCS campus; one was held on the SHCS campus at the interviewee's discretion. In the case of the interview held on SHCS work site, it was conducted in a private conference room. The interviews with non-SHCS volunteers were held at a private residence in a separate room away from others in the house. The interviewees ages ranged from 28 – 74, four were female, and three were male, six were residence of San Jose and one was a resident of Sunnyvale at the time of the interview. All but one of the interviewees are regular volunteers spending several hours a week volunteering; one of my interviewees volunteers regularly a couple of hours a month.

Most of my interview questions were centered on topics such as overall volunteer experiences, the building of new relationships and the strengthening of people's relationships that exist in their social network, and potential conditions that SHCS can adjust or change in order to improve the volunteer experience (see Appendix 2 and 3). Previous studies have focused on motivation and barriers to volunteer work, and I hope that the data gathered from these interviews will add to the knowledge base while also contributing to SHCS's mission. The data has helped me understand the motivations and barriers to both volunteering in general as well as the volunteering at SHCS. Understanding these barriers will inform my suggestions to SHCS to help them reach their goals.

After the interviews had been completed, I transcribed and coded them; this allowed the categories I would use in the final report to emerge from the data. I was then enabled to find the

relevant themes upon which to base my analysis. The literature review above informs me that I should find categories such as enjoyment, self-growth, altruism, relationship building, community building, self-identification with those they serve, and career goal fulfillment. Some of the categories that emerged from the data were: how they feel valued by SHCS and their work there, the work site, engaging with the community, the use of social media, the use of previous skills, and donation habits. In a later chapter, I will illustrate through information gathered from the interviews how these categories were chosen. After analyzing the data, I will form some suggestions and strategies for SHCS to use for improving the acquisition, retention, and deep engagement of their volunteers. These suggestions will be found in the Future Areas of Focus section of Appendix 1.

Participant Observation Results

I decided that I would do it like any other new volunteer, meaning I would not arrange it through my contact at SHCS. I followed the process to become a volunteer designed by SHCS; I used their internet interface to apply and sign up for hours. Like all volunteers at SHCS, I had to do an orientation. My orientation was a large group of people, so it was hard for us all to see or hear the speaker as the orientation took place. There was a short tour of the whole work site and then we finally settled in a conference room upstairs. Our orientation leader was a young woman, no older than 25 years old; she told us she had started off as a volunteer and quickly became more and more engaged in the organization. She eventually became an employee of the organization and was clearly passionate about the work she does at SHCS. She shared considerable quantitative data about the impact of SHCS on the community. It was mentioned that it was an option to volunteer for other programs (other than the Clothes Closet or Food Pantry), we were told that we would have to reach out to the leaders of those programs if we were interested.

I did a total of four volunteer shifts; two in the Clothes Closet in January of 2015, and two in the Food Pantry in March of 2015. All but one of my shifts were from twelve noon to three in the afternoon (the other was from nine in the morning to twelve-thirty in the afternoon). Since it was a fast paced work environment and you needed both hands, and your mind focused on the work, there was no option for me to take notes or ask other volunteers in-depth questions. Since I did not have any of my belongings on me during the hours I was volunteering all my notes had to be written down in the car or at home afterward. Due to these factors, my notes focused mostly on space use, workflow, customers, and other volunteers.

As I arrived for my first shift, I made sure to get there early as I remembered it was hard to find parking when I went for my orientation. After parking, I made it to the volunteer office, but the door was locked, and there was no one at the desk to open it for me. I stood outside until someone waiting inside opened it for me. Once inside I checked in at the computer terminal, and I waited for someone to come collect the volunteers or to tell me what to do next. Finally, the girl behind the desk asked if I needed help and I told her it was my first time volunteering and I did not know what to do. She walked me over to the work site and informed me in on how it usually works when checking in; she told me that in the future I just need to find someone who works there and to ask them where they need me. I was assigned the task of taking the freshly hung clothes from one set of racks and sorting and hanging them in the appropriate section. Through this work assignment, I learned how the Clothes Closet used space; they had arranged the racks of sorted clothes like a department store. There was a section for men, women, shoes, formalwear, coats, and children. Behind the counter, there were two racks, one rack with home goods such as sheets and towels and another with accessories. The racks were further sorted by size making it easier for customers to shop; anyone who has shopped for clothes in any other store would easily figure out where things should be. There was also a small bookcase that had children's books.

All the volunteers working had specific jobs in order to keep the work flow at a reasonable pace, but everyone was so busy that I did not see anyone socializing. The only volunteers that talked were the ones stopped by customers asking for help. I was stopped several times by customers asking for specific things. With little knowledge, I struggled to answer questions about specific items and finding someone else in the chaos of customers, busy

volunteers, and employees was difficult; so I stuck to asking people behind the 'check out' counter. It was hard to know how many volunteers were working based on sight alone. My guess was four or five (including me) putting clothes away, three or four sorting and hanging clothes in the back, two or three people behind the 'check out' counter, and one person checking people in and assigning them the amount of time they had to shop. The volunteers were a diverse group, some were young teen boy scouts, some were older women of Caucasian, Latina and Asian backgrounds, a couple of younger women, and one elderly Caucasian male. All communication I witnessed between the volunteers was work based conversations.

Every few minutes I heard someone behind the counter call out a name and announce that their time was up because each person has only a little amount of time to shop. Even though people had limited time to shop I did not see any customers fighting over the same items and people were generally polite. Many customers made special requests for a few items such as coats and heavy jackets, blankets and sleeping bags, and backpacks. The customers were all adults, mostly women shopping for whole families with a few single adults. Some customers were homeless, but most appeared to be low-income families; there was no way for me to know for sure, these profiles were derived from the requests for items like sleeping bags and backpacks or adults shopping for several different children as well as adults. The customer's ethnic backgrounds were diverse but many appeared to be from Asian or Latino decent.

I also got to work behind the counter checking people out. Checking customers out was as simple as counting items and putting them in bags. The volunteer checking people in that I mentioned above would ask the customer questions like "how many people are you shopping for?" and "do you also need to get food today?" and fill out a sheet with their name and answers

to those questions. A time stamp of when they should be finished shopping was written at the top, and the slip was then passed it to the volunteers behind the counter. When the time came up we called their names to be checked out; when they came up, we made sure the number of items they had matched the number on their slip of paper. For each family member a customer is shopping for they were allowed to get five items of clothing, two pairs of shoes, one jacket, and two items from the racks behind the counter (the housewares and accessories section); children's books were unlimited. The customers had fifteen minutes to shop for the first person in the group they were shopping for, and an additional five minutes for each extra person they were shopping for. They could do this once in the first half and once in the second half of the month. Only ten customers could be shopping at once. Since there were no registers needed, there were not set stations and volunteers could create a station wherever there was space to check customers out.

My time in the Food Pantry was spent at the produce counter. This area had two racks, one was for bagged produce, and the other was pantry goods such as milk or juice and packaged foods like treats, canned goods, or pastries, depending on what stock they had that day. There I helped two kinds of customers: members of the Produce Club and customers with vouchers. The produce club people had small laminated cards with an apple on it; they only received produce products (for example two cabbage heads, a bag of peppers, a bag of carrots, a bag of oranges, and their choice of a bag of apples or a watermelon). The other group were people with vouchers; these were the slips written out by the check in person in the Clothes Closet. They received the same produce as the Produce Club members but also got their choice of milk or juice and one additional pantry item. For the people getting vouchers, they also got a bag of

refrigerator and freezer goods such as meats, as well as bread and some extra overstock produce (if there was any that day).

There was a clear flow of traffic for the customers; they first passed by the cold storage foods then they came to me, and finally over to the bread. There were also volunteers that had large carts to help the customers carry their foods out to their cars or the edge of the SHCS. Behind the produce counter, I was working at was the other half of the room that was filled with pallets of produce and stations with other volunteers filling produce bags with set amounts of each produce available that day. Those workstations were the closest things to social work environments in either work sites; although it appeared that those workstations were occupied by groups of friends volunteering together. My station did allow for some light conversation during lulls in the flow of customers, but it was never calm for more than five minutes; if it looked like it would be calm for longer one person would get pulled to do something else. In my brief conversations, I meet three volunteers; Steve, Andy, and Sylvia. Steve, a middle-aged man, and I chatted about the work we were doing together. Andy, an elderly man who also volunteered in the Clothes Closet, talked with me about the teens there to get volunteer hours. The most social person I meet was Sylvia, an older woman; we talked about the differences between the Clothes Closet and the Food Pantry and general conversation. Unlike the Clothes Closet, I was stationary. Occasionally, people brought stuff to restock the shelves of the produce racks; this is how I met an employee named Lisa, she answered questions I had, but was too busy to have any conversations with me.

Reflections

As I reflected on my experiences as a volunteer, I realized that all those statistics shared in the orientation were inadequate to prepare me for the volunteer work I was about to do. Another missed opportunity in the orientation was a focus on other volunteer programs at SHCS; it was briefly mentioned and she could have given us information about those other programs – what kind of time commitments or skills would be required – for those who were interested in doing something a little less monotonous or more engaging. If someone was looking to become more engaged in their mission, they might be put off easily by the type of the work options that appear to be available. All the knowledge I gained about other programs came from the interviews I did with current volunteers.

Parking was the first obstacle I faced on my volunteer days; the streets around SHCS were residential causing them to be crowded and have many different signs with odd and specific hours listing when you can and cannot park. This was further compounded by the fact that the DMV is one block over and has very little parking itself. Once I started-volunteering, I faced more challenges; first was being stranded without instruction on what to do after arriving in the volunteer office, then again when I was left to find someone in a sea of people only by their name. It seems obvious that a staff person would be in the office, but this was seldom the case. The work itself was hectic and could be overwhelming at times. I did, however, notice that the people who thrive in that environment were working hard. People were not shying away from doing the work that needed to be done. As a new volunteer, it was hard for me to keep up, since getting a simple question from a customer had me searching for someone to answer it. The work in the Food Pantry was a little bit less chaotic and more consistent, but with all the groups of

friends there working together I was shocked at how quite the environment was. Overall, I would say that this environment was perfect for teens or seniors giving back to the community, but for younger adults it might not be as engaging as some of the other programs such as La Mesa Verde, the Homework Club, and their Social Justice activities.

I was impressed with how the spaces were set-up to be very productive and yet so accessible to the customers. It was a work environment that customers could enter and use without feeling like it was all handouts or charity; they had some choice of what they could take home based on needs and tastes. Working in those environments definitely delivered the face-to-face contact that many of my interviewees treasured in their experiences. At the end of my shifts, no one asked me if I had a good experience, or if I had questions they could further answer, or asked if I was interested in other programs.

Interview Results

My interviewees were enthusiastic and forthcoming with their experiences at SHCS and other volunteer sites. Although the bulk of the conversation was upbeat and positive, my interviewees did not shy away from being honest about serious situations and criticisms of the organization. The interviews were engaging and enlightening, and although the interviewees were all at different levels of engagement and experience, several themes emerged from their experiences. Below, I will present data from each interview in the form of Case Studies; all the names have been changed for their anonymity.

Sacred Heart Volunteers

Volunteer Case Study #1 – Sue

Sue is a 66-year-old retired special education teacher (Sue 2015:1) and first became involved in SHCS's mission by donating a turkey for Thanksgiving several years ago (Sue 2015:14). She began volunteering her time in the Homework Club a few years ago where she volunteers twice a week from three to five in the afternoon (Sue 2015:4). Before working with SHCS, she has been volunteering through her church for about 20 years (Sue 2015:2). Some of the activities her church does are an extension of SHCS drives such as the backpack program (Sue 2015:1). For the backpack drive her church collected all types of school gear and money to donate to SHCS (Sue 2015:2). Since she was a special education teacher, she required no training for her volunteer work (Sue 2015:19). She brought many skills to the program, as she put it, "... I can probably pick out those kids that are probably circling the drain academically, ... sometimes they, the staff, will... come and ask me [if a child needs special education], and I

appreciate the fact that they respect... my experience..." (Sue 2015:11). She also helps advise the children in good academic strategies and helps them gain independence (Sue 2015:6). She also knows how to be tough and when to hold back with children and often uses her skills as a teacher to motivate and guide the children (Sue 2015:11).

Sue volunteers at SHCS because she can use her teaching experience to help children, so having a social circle on the work site is not a top priority for her. She does, however, have a friend there, another former educator who she looks forward to seeing on days they volunteer together, saying that, "...I just enjoy being in her company.... I do not stay in contact with any other volunteers" (Sue 2015:21-2). Sue feels that the SHCS Homework Club program stands out because it is directly connected to schools in the area and through this relationship they can help the student's teachers with the parent-teacher conference feedback, "...I think it is important that they do that, and I respect the fact that they ask for my input..." (Sue 2015:6). More broadly, she feels that SHCS is impacting the community through some unique programs:

I think, recently, they are trying to educate families, like [La] Mesa Verde program to help them plant, sustainability, gardens... and trying to make them aware of ways that they can get by, by growing their own food.... SHCS has a program called Job-Link, which helps people get counseling about job skills and interviewing... the Job-Link Closet and it has more career type of clothes... they will take you to find something for an interview that will be more appropriate... (Sue 2015:21)

Sue recognized that people become more engaged when they can see the results of their work. She mentioned that she would write a newsletter for her other members of her church letting them know how their donations helped the community. She noted that, "I think for some people they need to read those because it gives them a sense of 'my donation makes a difference'...." (Sue 2015:8). During the holidays, she helps with food and toy giveaways. She

told me that she really enjoyed helping parents shop for presents for their children at the toy giveaway and seeing, "... how thrilled they are to realize, you know, [they can get gifts because] they couldn't have afforded" (Sue 2015:9). She also deeply enjoys doing the food services during the holidays, and says that, "... by the end of having done that, you really feel that you have done something that is appreciated by the community, and certainly by the people that receive the food or clothes or toys" (Sue 2015:17). She further emphasizes the importance of direct interaction with her statement comparing Second Harvest Food Bank to SHCS Food Pantry and Clothes Closet programs,

...I know Second Harvest does a wonderful service, but [volunteers] don't see the connection, but at SHCS you definitely feel the connection to, just, the smiles on their faces, um, when they are handed the bag of food, or they get their 15 minutes in the [Clothes] Closet to grab as many things they want.... I could just see her expression, she was enjoying, uh, the um, being able to make the choice herself. I just thought that was, was pretty neat. (Sue 2015:22-3)

But it is clear that for Sue, helping the kids she works with succeed academically is the main reason she volunteers at SHCS (Sue 2015:15); she adds, "I'd say it's the direc-, direct interaction with, with students, that's really the biggest thing" (Sue 2015:25). It is the kids that make the experience stand out for her, "... with the kids I'm there every week and I see, and you know, sometimes they say 'thank you' and sometimes they don't... even though they don't say it they appreciate it..." (Sue 2015:10), one experience, in particular, stood out,

... there's this one little student... it was at least two years ago, but she was doing a project about panda bears.... and, I went to China five years ago with my husband and we went to the panda research facility... so I had pictures, actual photographs of pandas.... So I said, I'll bring you a picture,... of the pandas out on the platforms and one of the red panda, and her eyes just got huge.... that little connection I felt... uh, real deep connection with her... and, uh, that was really, really important for me to have had that. (Sue 2015:7)

She knows that SHCS values the experience and skills she brings to her volunteer service there (Sue 2015:5). She shared that "... at the end of the year, they have a dinner or a picnic... [and] it's impressive to see that, the number of people that show up for appreciation..." (Sue 2015:22), and,

... the Homework Club has an end of the year celebration, and the kids get little certificates saying, 'you completed the year', and they had one this year, and I haven't gone to all of them, and I have been there six years now, the longest of all the volunteers there that evening. My name was announced, and that's when they gave me this [the certificate with her name on it]. It's only a piece of paper, but it's also, it acknowledges to the parents, somebody came in and worked with your kids, you know, week in and week out, all year. It's nice to be acknowledged. (Sue 2015:18)

She also gets thanked by parents; she shares one experience, "... at the end of the year [a child's] mother, um, brought me one of those balloons that said 'thank you' on it... she wanted to say thank you for what I'd done..." (Sue 2015:26).

Sue treats her volunteer work at SHCS more like a job than volunteer hours, "... I think it is only fair that, to SHCS, too, if you say you are going to be there I think they can count [on you being there]," (Sue 2015:5):

... Monday and Wednesday that is my time to go to SHCS, and I think I feel I need to be there, I do not slack off, and not go in one week, or if I have something coming up like a dentist appointment or getting a haircut, or whatever it may be, I know I do it then because I have committed to being at SHCS,... I've made that commitment until the end of the school year; I will be there every Monday and Wednesday... (Sue 2015:17)

She even counts up her hours and includes it in her annual tax report (Sue 2015:18). She also said that she would be happy to do more if asked to (Sue 2015:5). There are many factors while

working in the Homework Club that Sue cannot control such as other volunteers, "...I see some of the kids, especially high school, they come from, even like Notre Dame [college preparatory]... I know that they are getting community service hours but they... come and just chill out" (Sue 2015:15).

She has tried to recruit volunteers with skills needed in the Homework Club but understands that it is hard for some people to give up their time (Sue 2015:24). She also has no control over the materials that are available such as the books, she explains, "... they're outdated.... and you know a lot of the books, the obsolete books from the school district... they get to us because they haven't been handled gently or [they are] written in..." (Sue 2015:16-7). Luckily, she has many years of experience, occasionally, she has, "... to step in and be a disciplinarian, whereas the people that work at SHCS are not doing it, or they are ignoring it. I'm not going to let the kids get away with what they shouldn't get away with. I do not like to have to do that, but I think it's necessary to do it" (Sue 2015:10-1). Even with all her training, some students speak only Spanish and need help with assignments in Spanish. She speaks a little Spanish, but it is not good enough for some of the assignments they have to do, so she just sends them over to someone who can help them (Sue 2015:6).

During the holiday drives and giveaways the volunteer numbers explode as groups from corporations come in, Sue acknowledges that they might be there because they were asked to come by their companies, but she doesn't mind, stating, "...if it's that, that's the way they volunteer then it is fine" (Sue 2015:22). But resources are not always the best to work with during the holidays either, many things that are donated are for young children which often excludes the teens that parents are shopping for (Sue 2015:13). Sue has known someone who

receives services from SHCS but has not seen them volunteer (Sue 2015:20). In addition to the clothes she donates (Sue 2015:9) and the turkey for the holidays (Sue 2015:11) Sue also collects cans and bottles that have been left out in the neighborhood and recycles them; the money from those recyclables gets donated to SHCS, "...I give about \$200 a year, in cash.... you know, I feel like I'm doing something a little bit for the environment, cleaning up my neighborhood, and also, I know the money is going to a good cause" (Sue 2015:12).

Sue loves to work with the kids in the Homework Club, but she is not happy with the parking situation (Sue 2015:25). As for improvements that affect the volunteer experience she had two things to say; first, she thinks that there should be some training for the people that work with children, she says that she, "... would even be glad to, to be involved in that, um, uh, suggestions and things that, you know, they could do" (Sue 2015:26). The other thing she thinks could be improved is, "... for the staff that works there to really, um, um, engage with the volunteers and ask them, 'do you like working there?' 'Is there any way I can make your experience fulfilling?'" she want to see the staff directly acknowledging and showing appreciation to the volunteers (Sue 2015:29).

Volunteer Case Study #2 – Rob

Rob is 56 years old and works as a fundraiser and non-profit consultant (Rob 2015:1); this is his second career, originally an IT consultant he changed careers when his children had gone away to college and his financial demands were less pressing (Rob 2015:3). While searching for a non-profit to work for he volunteered at Second Harvest Food Bank, Sunnyvale Community Services and Habitat for Humanity as well as volunteering at SHCS before

becoming a staff member (Rob 2015:1), "I heard about SHCS through a group that was addressing anti-poverty issues called Step-Up Silicon Valley. I was, um, interested in nonprofit work... and I heard that this is a place that everybody goes to, so I [came] and volunteered here" (Rob 2015:3). He is now no longer a staff member but continues to volunteer four to five hours a week (Rob 2015:1). Like Sue, he knows someone who has received services, but he does not know if they have ever volunteered (Rob 2015:6).

Rob likes that it is so easy and inviting to become a volunteer at SHCS, he noted that other organizations were harder to get into,

... it's typically very hard to volunteer, and it's almost like they do not want you to, even though everyone needs volunteers.... this agency invested in the ability to engage volunteers and staffed it accordingly, so it's different from other places.... Second Harvest didn't care a bit that I was there.... and that's not uncommon.... I find that you have to... push to get involved, or you have to be at the right place at the right time.... sometimes even groups struggle.... [it depends on] if you catch them at their desk or does your email go to the bottom of the list. (Rob 2015:3-4)

Rob described three things about SHCS that he really likes; the first is that the programs are, "more engaging [that other organizations programs]" (Rob 2015:9), "I really like the [La] Mesa Verde, when I'm helping people plant, once again you are talking directly to the individual..." (Rob 2015:2). He noted that while working on the La Mesa Verde program he was helping an elderly lady set up a garden in her backyard with her grandchildren, and he felt that, "the lines of class and the lines of rich and poor disappear to people working together" (Rob 2015:9). Secondly, he appreciated how involved with the community SHCS is, "... you really feel like the things you say make a difference on decisions our community makes... 'my voice makes a difference' And SHCS actively encourages people to advocate" (Rob 2015:2), "we're

directly addressing social issues” (Rob 2015:6). Thirdly, he felt like SHCS wanted him there doing work with them (Rob 2015:9). He compared this to the experiences at the Humane Society and Second Harvest Food Bank saying that he felt like they were hard to get into due to lack of communication and when he was there he was only there to solicit for money (Rob 2015:9). What he most appreciates about SHCS is that people have an, “...invitation to really address social concerns here, and there is also an invitation to get more deeply involved, and there are many ways in which you can do that” (Rob 2015:2), and that invitation is always open (Rob 2015:10).

Rob also emphasized how SHCS uses every minute of a volunteer's shift time so that the volunteers feel like they are valuable and making a difference (Rob 2015:5). Rob says that the work environment is very busy, and this allows the volunteers to see the impact they are making through their volunteer service (Rob 2015:1), but also notes that he was not prepared for the surrounding environment. SHCS is located in a low-income neighborhood which could be alarming for new volunteers (Rob 2015:6). However, SHCS is not the only location that people can do service through SHCS at, he cited the La Mesa Verde program and food donation pickups, "if you make it clear how people can be involved the opportunity for increasing engagement is usually pretty, uh, significant" (Rob 2015:5). Rob described his own contribution to SHCS as so, "... I am an active [financial] donor, um, I have talked it up to my own friends at places of donations.... Um, and just being available if people, you know, if they have something that they need some help on..." (Rob 2015:3).

He sees the people that he volunteers with at SHCS more like work colleagues, "... that you develop a working relationship.... your level of respect for them, for that person goes up.

You see them giving their time for the same things that you believe in," and since your relationship with these people is based on the work you do at SHCS you have the potential to relate to advocates and organizers that you otherwise may not ever have met (Rob 2015:7-8).

The strong work relationships come out of the everyday conversations of the volunteers,

... you always talk to people there, and that's why I thought this place was interesting,... the folks that volunteer here more regularly, I think their relationship(s) are mostly within the context of the work, but they are strong friendships... [because] you are dealing with things on an ideological level or you're challenging your own worldviews and your own understanding of the world. (Rob 2015:8)

The work relationships can turn into friendships, "... [because] you have that shared experience that would deem it a friendship. And by volunteering regularly in one area you build those, you know, there's folks that have been here forever and are lifelong friends, who, they only see [at SHCS]" (Rob 2015:8). He also feels that you build relationships with some regular customers as well (Rob 2015:8). But he also acknowledges that in an organization that hosts 9,000 volunteers a year, "it's easy to be anonymous" (Rob 2015:8). He does not spend time with most of his fellow volunteers off site but notes that corporations, church groups, and other cohorts do volunteer as groups and that it contributes to their group bonding (Rob 2015:8).

Although Rob was initially concerned about being surrounded by a low-income neighborhood he now thinks, "... that shock level was good, we can use that as a way of opening people up" (Rob 2015:6). It instantly makes people aware of the need for these programs. He seemed aware of another issue with SHCS, which is the hours that are open to volunteers, he remarks that they need, "... more Saturday [and] weekends. We offer Saturday mornings, and it fills up so fast," and if the hours available are not convenient for you, then that will hold some

people back from volunteering (Rob 2015:10). He also acknowledges that more effort needs to be made to thank people for their time and money (Rob 2015:10).

Volunteer Case Study #3 – Kathy

Kathy is a 74-year-old retired elementary school librarian, she volunteers through her church and has volunteered at SHCS for four years (Kathy 2015:1-2). She has worked in two totally different environments at SHCS; the Clothes Closet, and the Homework Club. She feels it takes a little more discipline to work with the kids in the Homework Club than it does to work in the Clothes Closet (Kathy 2015:3) but she has had good and bad experiences in both settings. Both services bring her a lot of good feelings but a problem for her in the Homework Club is that they have had a new person in control every year, and the person in control sets the tone for the year, and she noticed that some do better than others (Kathy 2015:4). She realizes that little can be done since it simply due to whoever volunteers that year (Kathy 2015:4), "... they're happy to have whoever they can get" (Kathy 2015:9). Another thing that is out of her control is the customers that come into the Clothes Closet; she has witnessed customers fighting for the same item, and it made the day tense (Kathy 2015:8). For Kathy the regulars in Clothes Closet have a "family feeling" (Kathy 2015:3), this has a positive effect on the work output, "I think you're working as a team, you know, there is something special going on there... I feel very fulfilled after I spend my Wednesday there. Yeah, it's a good feeling [as she smiles]" (Kathy 2015:7). Even though they are close on site, they do not get together outside of SHCS, "... I think one of the reasons is, um, there's age discrepancies, um, we live in different parts of the city, and, and, and I think, speaking for myself, I am pretty busy [laughs]" (Kathy 2015:7). She adds,

"... actually I have... a couple of volunteers emails, and we do communicate every once and a while..." (Kathy 2015:7).

Kathy feels that, "... they're bringing an awareness to, um, the community... as to what the need is and how great it has grown over the years" (Kathy 2015:6), she feels this is being done by, "... coming more in contact with those who... have less in the world" (Kathy 2015:3). She says that this is different than any other volunteer work she has done before (Kathy 2015:3) and that it gives her, "... a feeling of, um... contributing... more so than anything else that I've done up to now.... we are touching the lives of those who really, really need it.... that's the big difference" (Kathy 2015:7). Kathy donates clothes and money to the backpack program at SHCS because that program is close to her heart (Kathy 2015:4). Although she knows recipients of services at SHCS, she does not know if any are volunteering now (Kathy 2015:6). Kathy thinks that some volunteers need more training (Kathy 2015:9) and thinks that there should be someone on site that can take the fingerprints of the volunteers working with the children (Kathy 2015:8).

Volunteer Case Study #4 – Rebecca

Rebecca is a 46-year-old stay at home mom and has spent her time volunteering at her children's schools and participating in fundraisers and book fairs (Rebecca 2015:1). After all that time taking the lead on school projects she likes that she can just do the volunteer work and doesn't have to worry about the management or dealing with angry customers, she can just disappear (Rebecca 2015:6). Rebecca enjoys helping people at SHCS, and she describes the connections she makes with people as rewarding (Rebecca 2015:2). When a customer asks for

something specific, and she can help them find just what they are looking for she can see what it means to them (Rebecca 2015:10). She feels that the programs at SHCS help relieve some of peoples' financial pressures, "you know, there are a lot of families, and it is so expensive to live here. I think it helps, a little with the food and the clothes" (Rebecca 2015:6).

Rebecca donates food, clothes, and money many times a year (Rebecca 2015:3), and like the other cases above, she did not know any recipients that had become volunteers (Rebecca 2015:6). Most of my interviewees did not seem to have considered that there would be any overlap between recipients and volunteers, but Rebecca gives some insight with, "...I would think I would be almost less, I do not know, maybe less engaged because you would want to separate yourself from them" (Rebecca 2015:6). Of all my interviewees Rebecca was the only one who knew another volunteer before becoming a volunteer herself. When Rebecca first started volunteering at SHCS, she had a family friend that also volunteered there, but he left the organization (Rebecca 2015:7). As Kathy mentioned above, the regular Wednesday volunteers of the Clothes Closet had become curious about what the old volunteer coordinator was up to so they all went out to lunch to catch up as a group (Rebecca 2015:7).

Every Wednesday Rebecca works in the Clothes Closet; she sticks to the Clothes Closet because she has back problems and could not do some of the jobs in the Food Pantry (Rebecca 2015:3). She told me that she did not get any training before beginning volunteering, "... you kind of learn as you go. I mean, they give you basic instruction, but it took a while to really start figuring things out and getting comfortable.... now, I just see what needs to get done, and I do it.... it can be a little intimidating at first, and there's all different personalities of the volunteers..." (Rebecca 2015:4-5). In the beginning, she did not really like volunteering there

because some of the volunteers acted like they were in charge (Rebecca 2015:4-5) and one even was yelling at customers (Rebecca 2015:10-1). Additionally, she was not used to dealing with customers, especially ones that were angry or may be dealing with mental illnesses (Rebecca 2015:6). Nonetheless, she believes, "... the biggest thing is being respectful to the customers, they have a stressful enough life.... most of the customers are very nice" (Rebecca 2015:11). However, there are limitations to how much she can help them; there are usually not enough volunteers working for her to help individual customers, and this makes some customers frustrated (Rebecca 2015:11). Now after a couple of years of experience, she feels comfortable instructing new volunteers on what to do on their first days while the volunteer coordinator is busy with other things (Rebecca 2015:5).

Rebecca feels that daily volunteer activities could be managed better by giving individuals tasks that are need based instead of general things, she gives an example, "... the volunteers are just, like, given a job, like hanging clothes but... it would be more helpful,... [to tell them] 'we are really short on baby clothes', or 'we're really short on, uh, women's tops, but we've got tons of pants,'..." (Rebecca 2015:13), and have them focus on that. She also noted that communication could be better in order to utilize volunteer time better, she recalled that, "... the volunteer coordinators used to be better about sending out messages when they are really desperate for help, you want to feel needed... I would prefer it if [they] told me that they have tons of volunteers that day, and they don't really need me, and say... 'can you come another day instead?'" (Rebecca 2015:13). She also felt that the mandatory orientation did not really give her information that was helpful for the job she was doing and that it holds potential casual volunteers back,

...I sometimes felt [it] was inconvenient.... 'cause I don't know if it is necessary... they have companies come in all the time and I don't think they've been to the orientation, like what we have to go to.... But, when I started you were required to, you had to do [orientation]. And, it's too bad, my husband is like, "oh. I would love to do that, but, I'm not gonna, you know, take the time in the evening to take the orientation," when he is just gonna help me hang clothes for an hour or two.... Yeah, I didn't find it really useful at all. And anytime you do a group thing for the holidays you meet for like a half hour,... upstairs and it's the same speech they have every time, and it always seems like a waste of your time, like, I could be out there volunteering... (Rebecca 2015:12-3)

Volunteer Case Study #5 – Alison

Alison was the youngest of the SHCS volunteers I interviewed at the age of 29 (Alison 2015:1), she is also the first unpaid intern SHCS has ever hired. Thus, her role is different as she works more directly with the staff in planning projects and workshops (Alison 2015:3). She has been involved in volunteer work since she was 15 and it has remained a passion for her and a major part of her life, "if I'm not involved with the community, even as little as it is, like, just going to a meeting, I feel like I have something missing. Like I have to, like, I should be doing something" (Alison 2015:3), "so, I always felt like I had the need to... go out and do something in the community, so I started by... being a participant in... student organization[s]..." (Alison 2015:8). Her love for volunteer work grew from there, and eventually, she began volunteering for Somos Mayfair "... when I wasn't in school, like, I was always super involved, I think a little too much to the point where, like, I jeopardized my grades for being out there and doing the work" (Alison 2015:2). When it comes to gaining advocacy experience, Alison feels that, "... there's no way that just by reading you're going to learn how to run an organization, or how to, like, agitate people to come and help you out, you know, like, you definitely have to do it yourself to be able to know what it is like" (Alison 2015:2), and she uses her past advocacy work at SHCS in the *Promotoras* program.

Alison loves the freedom they give her to do her own projects and events, "... they're very supportive when it comes to you having your own ideas about something, and I feel like in other places there's a lot of politics involved in you being able to run an event... if SHCS say no it's because of money" (Alison 2015:3-4). Alison feels that SHCS supports her when she takes initiative on a project, "... they give me anything I need to run the event, basically" (Alison 2015:4) and that the employees value the mission of SHCS. She has noticed that SHCS has been moving in a direction of community organizing and social advocacy, Alison thinks this is great,

... I think the direction in which [SHCS] is taking now... where you train people to be self-sufficient and go out to the community and, uh, provide that knowledge.... I think that that's the best thing that [SHCS] is doing right now.... What's really going to make a difference in your life? Is it going to be that we're providing [food and clothes] for you or is it that you're going to learn how to get it yourself, and teach other how to get it themselves. (Alison 2015:9-10)

She is personally involved in one of the programs doing that kind of work,

... we run a leadership program, um, in which we train these... Spanish speaking clients... how to organize, how to lead, how to run a meeting... how to talk to people, you know, little things like that... (are) very important when it comes to organizing.... It's very important work, and it makes them grow... as a person and as a community leader to go out in the community and, like, teach other people... we also do a 40-hour domestic violence training, um, for domestic violence advocates. (Alison 2015:4)

Alison believes that without people like the *Promotoras*, SHCS could not take these big steps, "... we can't do the work ourselves, you know, we, like, we need a lot of people to go and do that in their communities, so, uh, and it's happening everywhere. It's happening everywhere in the states, it's happening everywhere in Mexico, it's just a matter of being able to give them the importance that it needs, you know" (Alison 2015:10). Alison emphasized the role SHCS plays in passing vital training and information along and how this can directly impact a community. In

one project very close to her heart she described the main purpose of her work as, "... to be able to provide knowledge to our *Promotoras* and clients about what domestic violence is ... [and] to have a core group of *Promotoras* that will help us with the awareness outside in the community.... the next thing would be to get people to come to the meeting... and the third one would be to actually get people to and be a part of the group" (Alison 2015:4).

She is very proud that they, "... actually put the first Spanish [language] domestic violence [counseling] training [program] in the state of California" (Alison 2015:5). She also feels valued through her work training others and watching them become community organizers, "... I get,... [smiles enthusiastically], really excited when I start talking about these things... for me to witness her (a *Promotora*), like, I was getting chills the whole time, I was, like, I can't believe that we have been able to provide something to make that switch in her, you know" (Alison 2015:10). But the greatest value she gets from her work there is self-discovery, "... I would say it's, it has been a way for me to identify myself... for a long time I thought that by doing volunteer work I would be helping the community and do something positive and hopefully try to get other people to try to do the same. But at the end of the day, I found that, uh, most of the benefits of me doing this work was basically for me to get to know myself better" (Alison 2015:2).

Alison is deeply engaged with SHCS (Alison 2015:3), and works there as an intern, so even though she volunteers her time she still has tasks that have to be accomplished within a designated time frame, "... I have probably been putting in anywhere from 10-20 hours a week.... I come in three to four times a week depending on the amount of work that I have to do.... because I do have a job... besides this" (Alison 2015:3). Of all the interviewees from

SHCS Alison was the only one that knew people who had received services and volunteered. The *Promotoras* that she works with receive food, clothing, and other services, but they are also volunteers in the *Promotoras* program as well as helping to organize advocacy events and being teachers assistants for classes conducted by SHCS (Alison 2015:9). Alison contributes clothes, but she feels she does more than donate items,

... whenever I have actually told people about what SHCS is... I'm even amazed.... all the random programs that they have and all the things that they do.... So I feel like the biggest way that I have contributed to their organization, besides the work that I've done is actually spreading the word about everything that the organization does and how amazing it is that it is mainly ran by volunteers and their donations... (Alison 2015:7)

Alison was the only SHCS volunteer I interviewed that was under the age of forty, so her use of social media is significantly different from other interviewees in this category. Due to her length of time working with advocacy groups and other organizations she is very networked in person and on social media, "... some people that volunteer I know from college, so I always, always, always run into people that I knew from a class or from some kind of... student organization.... Social networks also has a lot to do with it... the people that I have met... I'm also friends with them on Facebook..." (Alison 2015:12). She uses her network to promote events, but she also uses it to hear of others events in the community; she and her fellow advocates encourage and support each other's efforts this way (Alison 2015:12). Alison uses three social media platforms for three different purposes; the first is Facebook. She uses this to stay connected with friends, family, and fellow advocates, "... it's also a great way for me to advertise events that I go to or happen at SHCS, so you know if I am advertising that I don't want to put out a wrong image of who I am and be known at SHCS as that person" (Alison 2015:14).

The second platform, Instagram, is more private so she can show a little more of her personality (Alison 2015:14). The last is Snapchat, and that is for goofing around with close friends (Alison 2015:14-5). She describes herself as an extrovert, "...I feel that I learned from college, like, I've always been social... (and) making yourself known is definitely a way for you to [be a resource].... that's the only way that you can get things done, you know, and that's why I use social media.... it's definitely a great way for me to... put an event out there and hopefully get someone to come and help out..." (Alison 2015:15). Alison doesn't spend time with other volunteers or staff other than her uncle's wife who also happens to be her supervisor, she believes, "... collaborating with her has made [their] bond stronger.... we work on everything together..." (Alison 2015:12). Since she is an intern, her job is to support her supervisor and help manage the workload; she describes her jobs as, "... it's more like trying to make sure that she's okay and that she has the assistance that she needs" (Alison 2015:14).

Alison enjoys her work environment,

...all the interactions that I have... are very pleasant to the point where I come in... my trip from my cubical to go get coffee is probably, like, 20 minutes, because I say 'hi' to everyone and... we start talking... [And] I feel really comfortable, like it's a home, everyone's really friendly, um, also I feel like... (on a) personal and emotional level it has definitely benefitted me, you know... it has definitely, uh, helped me build myself to who I am now, you know. (Alison 2015:15)

Every day she sees how many long days the staff and community organizers put into accomplishing their goals, and it makes her appreciate the work they do even more (Alison 2015:16). Her main job is to help her supervisor organize events but before they can host them there is a financial conversation that goes on about how successful it will be and if it will be worth spending money on (Alison 2015:4).

She told me that her boss has to keep track of all the expenses to show how funding was used, but due to the sensitive nature of dealing with victims of domestic violence, "...how do you expect us to show you numbers when we don't have people that want to come up and say that they have gone through, through something like that. So in that case I think it would be more effective for us to... get [away from] individual levels, you know, like, what that has done for our community" (Alison 2015:13). To have successful meetings and to develop effective programs they will have expert speakers come out to events (Alison 2015:5). Sometimes they cannot find a speaker that will do it for free or for a low rate and the staff have to fill in (Alison 2015:5). Most speakers do this type of work for free as it is required by their employer; however, some speakers are paid (Alison 2015:5). The group of *Promotoras* that she has been working with recently had some conflicts within the group, and she was put in a position of telling some of them that they are not performing well, a task that makes her uncomfortable (Alison 2015:6). Some people left the organization which she feels made the remaining members a stronger group (Alison 2015:16-7).

Alison had a couple of ideas of how SHCS could show their thanks to the volunteers, "... I know it sounds bad, but an incentive... like, throwing, like, a volunteer party, you know, and just inviting, like, all, everyone... an annual event, you know... just the fact that you're, like, recognizing them and their work..." (Alison 2015:18). She also thinks it would be great to do,

... a follow-up email, you know, saying 'thank you'.... for volunteering, this is the impact that your... work is doing to the organization, or, like, maybe throw in some statistics... then saying, hopefully, we can see you back soon... so that they know you're recognizing that they came in, like an automatic email... I think that would be awesome.... If you give them specifics, today we served this many people, or, you made this happen, you know, make them feel like... they're work is making an impact... you're not just rearranging things in the closet or anything, you're making the difference.... I

feel like when you recognize people's work, they feel useful, and they feel that they've made a difference, and it leads to them coming back... (Alison 2015:19)

She is aware of occasional communication breakdowns between the staff and the volunteers, "from what I heard, I think sometimes the communication between the person in charge and with people... I've heard it's just a little bit difficult to, uh, deal with the people in charge. So, maybe... [if the] staff gets training, but I don't know how in-depth trainings are in terms of being able to have full competency, to be able to provide for the needs of different people because [the volunteers are] so diverse..." (Alison 2015:20). Alison definitely thinks that the volunteers should know more about how their actions have an impact on the community, not just the individuals that they personally encounter, "... if the volunteers had a little bit more knowledge about the, like, the extent to, like, where SHCS is going by doing all this work, I guess there's only so much you can tell them, but for me I like knowing that the change that I am actually making. Like, making it clear, like, what am I doing for these people" (Alison 2015:18). She thinks that it would change the way people think about the recipients of the services,

...do you really know where those cans are going and the population that it's feeding and what the needs are, and, and like... what is the image of the people you are serving, their homeless people, but what do you think about homeless people. It's like changing the perspective of the volunteers to understand the depth of the work they are doing, you know, like, a lot of these homeless people are homeless because their mentally ill and they haven't had the resources, or they are veterans, you know.... but as a volunteer, I feel like if they had a little more sense of, like, the populations that they are serving and, like, [the] real issues that go into it. (Alison 2015:20-1)

She thinks this would help people embody SHCS's mission to restore dignity to low-income individuals in the community (Alison 2015:21). Embodying the mission is part of how she knows what she does is different from the usual casual volunteer,

... I am lucky enough to be able to have those personal interactions with the *Promotoras*... we always check in when we are doing a meeting, like, yeah, we're here for business, but we want to know how you're doing as a person, we care about you... That's how I know how important my job is because I have those interactions with those people, but there's a lot of people that come in, and they really don't learn anything... it would really be awesome to be able to make them see... how much their work means to SHCS. (Alison 2015:21)

Non-Sacred Heart Volunteers

Volunteer Case Study #6 – Marcus

Marcus is 33-year-old Tech Industry worker who occasionally struggles with depression (Marcus 2015:1); he grew up in a single-mother home with his sisters in Sunnyvale (Marcus 2015:2). He was a beneficiary of two programs growing up – Extended Family (EF) and Hope for Depression (H4D) – and as an adult he returns the favor by contributing to these organizations. He discusses the difference between the two organizations he works with,

...I think the thing with EF is I don't get to see it... there's no face attached to it, there is nothing I can see or engage to see that I'm making a difference, or I feel like I'm doing something different. Where with H4D I can kind of see it or hear from it... I guess it's kind of a selfish thing, but, to know that what I'm doing is making a difference somehow, I don't really get that with EF. (Marcus 2015:6)

Marcus expands on why he enjoys working with H4D, "...I personally enjoyed doing... something that I was desperately looking for when I was going through depression, and someone to connect with that wasn't family.... I kinda got the feeling that I was doing that for somebody else..." (Marcus 2015:1-2). While volunteering at H4D Marcus had a particularly good experience where a kid he was talking to about video game development took an interest and

began planning to learn to code and eventually get a job in the video game industry (Marcus 2015:9). Future planning is a huge step for kids struggling through depression management and was a moment that made him feel like he was making a difference (Marcus 2015:9).

For Marcus, most of the other volunteers at H4D were people that he already knew, and they rarely have a chance to spend time outside of their volunteer activities, meeting up maybe every six months or so (Marcus 2015:10). Despite the lack of time spent socializing the relationships have benefits for him, "...they are people that are, almost like a comfort zone for things that I'm uncomfortable with. They're people that I know for a fact that went through something similar to what I've been through, so it is a little easier to talk to them about those things. So it comes with a little comfort" (Marcus 2015:10). If he needs to reach them when they are not volunteering, he can contact them through Facebook (Marcus 2015:11). He focuses his time at H4D working with the kids there, and it is these interactions that keep him engaged in the organization (Marcus 2015:11).

Marcus has used his existing skills, such as drumming, to help charities like, "...Toys for Tots... in San Francisco... we would take our drums and horns, and we would play Christmas songs in front of the ice skating rink" (Marcus 2015:6). He also likes to donate money to disaster relief fundraisers and, "... when friends pass away, or family passes away, uh, they'll do, like, the GoFundMe(.com) thing, I did a bunch of those for people" (Marcus 2015:7). Marcus used his volunteer experience to work through his own struggle, "...before that I hadn't really talked [about depression] with anybody.... I kinda wanted to get it structured and make it more meaningful so I felt that that was kind of the way to do it..." (Marcus 2015:8). And, though he mainly does it for the kids at H4D sometimes he needs it for himself, "... I've lost too many

friends because of this, too many people.... so I really love to think that I am helping someone not give up, 'cause there were times when I wanted to, and there were always people that wouldn't let me do it.... it kind of helps me get up in the morning, you know [laughs]. When days are shitty, it's like, I would like to think I am helping someone..." (Marcus 2015:2). He had not heard of SHCS until I told him about it, so his recommendation was simple, "... make your presence a little more known, especially to the younger audience.... Awareness is the biggest thing..." (Marcus 2015:13).

Volunteer Case Study #7 – John

John is a 28 year old Psychology graduate student at San José State University working towards a Marriage and Family Therapy degree (John 2015:2). He works at a counseling center for autistic children while also volunteering at two mental health centers (John 2015:1). He found out about Suicide and Crisis Services (SACS) while in school, "... I looked into it online, and I was, like, 'wow, I really want to work on this,' because I feel like it's going to give me the proper training I need in this field" (John 2015:6), and uses this volunteer experience for the required 3,000 hours he needs to become a marriage and family therapist (John 2015:2). He feels that interacting and trying to make positive changes in people's lives by volunteering can be emotional, and nothing replaces firsthand experiences, "... you have no idea of the feelings associated with it, the anxiety, the fear, or the, the uneasiness, the, you know, the confusion of what's going to happen at the end of this call.... And, until you're put in that situation and you see it firsthand you, you honestly have no idea" (John 2015:7-8). One valuable quality John has gained through volunteer work is empathy, "... of really being there with somebody and experiencing their pain, and listening. I've learned to listen, which is something that I didn't

know I was terrible at before” (John 2015:9). He also said, “...I think that the biggest lesson, um, the biggest... success to my humanity in volunteering is that I’ve let go of cynicism. It has removed all cynicism from my life and I like that” (John 2015:10).

At the beginning of his volunteer work with SACS John felt depressed coming off a shift, but now that he has had enough positive experiences he feels uplifted by the overall experience (John 2015:12). One experience, in particular, was a very positive; a man called and was planning to commit suicide but he was able to talk to the guy and change his mind. To show that he really cared he asked the caller for a favor,

... “all I want is for you to call me back tomorrow”.... I came in the next day, and sure enough he called... and we talked the next day and he was a completely different person, and it’s because we’ve all had that one moment, we’ve had that one moment of darkness.... I’ll still get a call from him every now and then. So, that, to me, is success. There are many people who never call back, there are people that you never hear from again... I don’t feel like I failed, but in that one case I will take it as a success, I felt great. (John 2015:13)

Overall John described the benefits of working directly with people as,

... you do enjoy the connections you make with people.... you do find glimmers of hope, where somebody says, ‘thank you, I really needed to talk to someone,’ [or] ‘you really helped me,’... [in] those moments you feel like you made a breakthrough, you made a difference in someone’s life by being present and showing somebody that not everyone in the world is out to hurt them, there are people out there who care. So those moments I do enjoy a lot. (John 2015:5)

Although there are some social activities as a group of volunteers (John 2015:14-5), John mostly uses social media such as Facebook and Instagram to keep in touch with other volunteers outside of SACS; but contact is usually about SACS (John 2015:16). While he is there, he usually works with one or two other people and they talk between calls, “... when you’re there,

it's weird, it's like a neutral zone.... you're all there for the same goal.... When you have a common goal, I mean, it, it helps, people from all kinds of backgrounds come together" (John 2015:17-8). While working a shift at SACS, he described the way they interact with each other as,

... after a heavy phone call... you can, well, just talk to each other and really just listen, and that really helps out. Um, you encourage each other, you give each other words of wisdom.... you always have something new to learn, different counseling techniques, uh, different experiences and comfort.... there's definitely a lot of benefits, uh, not just knowledge wise, but emotionally. You know, I think that in any field speaking to other people involved in that field is always beneficial. You always, it's somebody to relate to... (John 2015:15)

John, like Sue and Alison, treats his volunteer work as a job, but it is not set up as an employer setting and so it is up to him and the other volunteers to communicate with each other to get shifts covered,

... it is nice to have them as friends on Facebook because if you want somebody to cover your shift ... we have a Facebook group of people who volunteer there so we can post our shifts, uh, it's not run by the center, it's run by, somebody created it, one of the volunteers. And, so, we post up, "hey, I'm not going to be able to make it next Friday, can somebody come in and cover it?" ... someone will cover it. It really helps... (John 2015:17)

For SACS John does college fairs to promote the program to the community advertising to psychology department students telling them, "... 'this is where you learn the techniques you- the necessary traits that you will need to become a successful counselor or psychologist- therapist in the future'" (John 2015:6). He also participated in the Out of Darkness walk to promote suicide prevention and awareness (John 2015:6).

Although John had never volunteered at SHCS before he has heard good things about the environment, “Well, [my brother and sister] did really like it and... I know that they treat their volunteers really well, [and] that it was a really positive experience for them” (John 2015:20). John suggests that SHCS should do more outreach to college students and young adults. John told me that,

... they should really go to the college campuses and recruit there.... remind people that you exist. Uh, also it would be good to have a team of people to go do presentations, uh, for different [academic] programs, in social sciences and say, “hey look, you guys are working towards a degree in sociology or psychology and at SHCS this is where your knowledge will apply, this is what we can teach you.” Like a mutual benefit. (John 2015:20)

Discussion of Themes

As I read over the transcriptions of the interviews, certain themes began to emerge, and even though my interviewees were diverse in careers, age, and position in the organization there was still a great amount of overlap in the themes. The themes that I chose to highlight in this section come mainly from the interviews with contributions from my experiences as a volunteer at SHCS. Although the direct cause for motivation is not usually stated by my interviewees, they are revealed through the themes below and are implied through the responses I shared above. Some of these themes were more likely to appear in the data due to the questions I asked (see Appendix 2 and 3), but others were not so foreseen. These themes acknowledge the positives and negatives of volunteering at SHCS, and they also expose gaps in the interaction between the staff and volunteers that can be addressed by SHCS in order to strengthen the relationship between the two groups.

Recipients Seldom Become Volunteers

The SHCS volunteers that I interviewed had all known people that have received services, but only Alison knows recipients that also volunteer. No mentioned those recipients as inspiration for volunteering; this could mean that SHCS's mission is what gets people engaged, not a personal story. Rebecca felt that the recipients of the services at SHCS might even want to put distance between themselves and the organization; this could be a reason for why most of them did not know any recipients who became volunteers. In Marcus' case, he was a recipient of goods and services of the two organizations that he talked the most about noting that his personal relationship with the organizations was a major deciding factor in picking those organizations as

good uses of his time. This means that direct personal connection to an organization might influence organization choice, but it is not the only factor.

Donations are Common amongst Volunteers

All of the volunteers I interviewed who volunteer at SHCS had all donated either food, money, clothes, or multiple of these; but several of them considered spreading the word of what SHCS is and what they do for others as a contribution to SHCS. They often put this contribution above the others. Of the non-SHCS interviewees, this feeling was the same; a likelihood to volunteer was connected to a likeliness to donate goods and money. Something that was different with the non-SHCS interviewees was that they included categories like GoFundMe.com and doing charity walks as other types of related donations. This could be that they do not have an organization that offers so many programs. Instead, they rely on a network of organizations to approach one issue, in this case, depression.

Use of Previous Skill Sets and Experience

All the volunteers from SHCS had donated their time to other organizations, for example, Sue still works with her church and has created a connection between the two through various drives. Some of the organizations named were Second Harvest Food Bank, Humane Society, ASPCA, Habitat for Humanity, Somos Mayfair, and other local organizations. This experience informs them on the procedures and resources needed to accomplish certain goals. But most often they serve to remind the volunteer how different SHCS is (see section below) and informs them on what the community actually needs from service organizations. Some of the interviewees brought professional skills, such as IT, community organizing, and fundraising experience; and of the group I interviewed two had education experience. Sue especially

brought her professional skills to the Homework Club and is involved in the feedback to parents regarding a student's educational progress and helps SHCS detect whether a child has special needs. Even Marcus used an existing skill set of playing the drums to do volunteer work and knowledge of how his chosen volunteer organizations benefited the recipients to further the organizations' missions.

Treating SHCS Like It is a Job

Throughout the interviews, I heard people describe several different engagement levels, but there were a few that talked about it as they would a job. Sue is a retired teacher, and she takes her time commitment very seriously. She considers the time she promised to be with the students in the Homework Club as her time to work and will schedule other obligations around that. She also counts the hours that she volunteers there and includes that on her taxes and would even be happy to increase her responsibility level in the Homework Club. As the first intern, Alison puts in part-time hours at SHCS to help the staff and volunteers, and she treats the work she does there as she does her paid job. This treatment comes from a feeling of responsibility to meeting the goals of the organization not as a consequence of payment. This interaction between volunteer and organization also showed up in John's narrative about his volunteer work; he described himself as very dedicated to the work done by SACS. Also, he and his fellow volunteers have networked together to make sure all the shifts are covered, much like co-workers do in a traditional workplace.

Environment and Work Site

Because the environment at SHCS is varied and my interviewees were not all from just one program, their feedback was varied. Sue mentioned that she thought it was a good thing that

corporations came during the holidays to volunteer as the need for volunteers is highest at that time. She also liked that it exposes new people to the organization. Two of my interviewees brought up the importance of time management; Rob claims that every second of a volunteer's time is used to better their community, but Rebecca did not always feel that her time was well spent. She continued to say that when it was busy in the Food Pantry or Clothes Closet it felt like the time she volunteered was more useful and valuable. Rob felt that during busier times it led to an exposure to more recipients and a wider variety of volunteers, which he felt was a good thing. Alison felt her environment was supportive and that the people working there really care about each other. Although John had never volunteered at SHCS himself, he did hear from his brother and sister that they enjoyed doing volunteer service there and felt like they were treated well.

In the Homework Club, there are things that are out of the volunteers control such as the leadership. Both Sue and Kathy made comments in their interviews that the leadership has not always been clear, which puts extra pressure on them and other former educators to take control. Sue also felt that SHCS sometimes leaves them to handle the problems that arise with some of the students, instead of handling it. Another concern was about the materials; the books that are available are often not in great condition, and the selection in Spanish is inadequate. The Homework Club also needs volunteers with a desire to work with, or previous experience working with, kids, but Sue and Kathy both acknowledge that that is out of SHCS's hands since they have to take what volunteers come to them. They also would like more Spanish speaking volunteers so that they can help the Spanish-speaking students better. When the holidays come

around Sue hopes that in the future they can get more gifts for teenaged kids, so they do not get left out of the gift giveaways.

Rebecca mentioned that there was no training, and you have to learn as you go, which doesn't work for everyone. She also noted that it is difficult to get clothes out in a timely fashion while also trying to help customers; having more volunteers are needed on the floor. Alison's problems were different, as an intern working to develop programs she often has to consider budgeting. To justify the use of funds they have to keep records of the impact of a program, but this is hard to do when it is centered on issues that people do not want to talk openly about. But a problem that will never be completely avoidable will be minor personal dramas, and for some, this is a turn-off to working with a mixed group of volunteers. For those working in the Food Pantry, and especially in the Clothes Closet, they need some level of customer service skills. This means being kind to the customers no matter how exhausted or frustrated one becomes. In the Homework Club, the tutors take on a teacher-like role and often have to balance between being the kids' mentor and disciplinarian. An organization should try to match the needs of the volunteer with the needs of the service they will be providing to create a positively perceived environment.

On-Site and Social Media Personal Connections

While working on site at SHCS, the volunteers make friendships within that environment; they do not have time to spend time with each other outside SHCS. Although they would be called work friends, their bonds tend to be deep as they are based on shared goals and ideologies. People that already know each other may strengthen their bonds through working together towards a common goal at SHCS. One exception was made, and that was the

Wednesday Clothes Closet crew; they had exchanged email addresses, and after a volunteer coordinator had left SHCS, they all got together with him to have lunch. This was only possible because it was a group of consistent regulars that had developed a family type bond.

If a volunteer or advocate has worked at other organizations consistently or for a long time, they may run into people that they have met at other events or organizations. Often, they will already be part of the volunteer's network; and as Alison told me, the people in her network are not just friends but also resources. They support her events, and she supports theirs; this support system stays alive through social media, for the younger generations at least. All my interviewees under the age of forty use social media to keep in-touch with other volunteers or peers that may be potential volunteers. Facebook seems to be the vehicle of choice for maintaining a large and diverse network of friends, family, and co-workers for people to reach out on to get resources, time, and money. Through volunteers' social media networks, the organizations have huge extended networks that are largely untapped.

For the non-SHCS volunteers, I noticed the use of networks to remain connected and as a way to become involved; Marcus got involved with H4D through a friend who had been working there. He is bonded to them through similar past experiences, so they do not need to spend time together outside of H4D to maintain their bond; this allows all of them to focus their time at H4D on the kids that they serve. John's volunteer group will occasionally get together for group outings, but it is their mission, encouragement, and the constant support that unites them.

Seeing the Results of Their Actions Within the Community

It was clear from the interviews that what people valued about their experiences at SHCS was the direct interaction with the people that they served. Many of their previous experiences

were through organizations that act as a third party. A couple of volunteers made a direct comparison between Second Harvest Food Bank and SHCS. All the SHCS volunteers noted that the direct interactions such as handing food directly to customers, working with people directly in programs like La Mesa Verde, Gift Giveaways, and Homework Club makes their experiences at SHCS stand out and more rewarding. It was clear that being able to see, immediately, how their actions impact the lives of people in the community was a central reason for them to continue giving their time to SHCS. All of the SHCS volunteer interviewees enjoy being active members of their community. For her fellow church patrons to feel connected to the community through their donations, Sue started a newsletter for them.

It also may be helpful for people to feel that their specific skill sets are being used to accomplish a goal, as this adds to the enjoyment of the experience of volunteering. For people that have not been exposed to the struggles of low-income families, it is good for them to see the results of their work as well. For Alison, she enjoys working with the community directly because she can help spread useful information and help create programs that are needed or in high demand. Knowing the specific needs of the community can only come from working with them directly. Even though they do not specifically work with a local community both Marcus and John enjoy working with a community of people that suffer from depression. Marcus was a former member of H4D when he was younger, so for him, they are part of his "community". For John, he takes great joy in working with people in their darkest hour and finding a connection with them and talking them out of taking an irreversible step.

Feeling Valued by SHCS and the People They Help

The joy that the volunteers experience may be due to feeling like they are valued by the customers of SHCS. They can see their value through the direct interaction with the customer. Everyone also felt valued by SHCS taking advantage of their skill sets towards a variety of programs there; this gave them a feeling of belonging at SHCS. Time usage also came up; some felt that the scheduling flexibility was maximizing their volunteer time while others felt like there was still room for improvement. Sue shared that she felt valued by SHCS when they do the completion ceremony in the Homework Club at the end of the school year where the volunteers get recognized by SHCS, the kids, and the parents. For Alison, she felt valued by the trust SHCS puts in her to create new events and programs. She also felt valued by watching new community advocates develop leadership skills. But the most important thing about her experience at SHCS that makes her feel valued is the self-discovery that she gets through her work. She feels that advocacy has helped her find her place in the world and that SHCS has never held her back and has allowed her to flourish.

How SHCS is Different

When trying to get involved in working with the community, there are many choices of organizations. It may take a while for potential volunteers to get in touch with other organizations, whereas, SHCS makes it easy for anyone with a web browser to become involved. While working a shift at SHCS, a volunteer is working face-to-face with the community that they are serving. This offers exposure to people with very different beliefs and values as well as people that are at different levels of engagement with the community. As an intern at SHCS Alison found that they gave her a great amount of support to create and lead new projects. She

found this valuable to her personal growth since she knows, that such support is not common. Probably the most important way that SHCS is different is the variety of experiences they offer. Rob felt that SHCS stands out from other volunteer organization because the environment allows for people to pick their hours, to come in and do their work, and then leave with a feeling of contributing to their community. At the same time, SHCS leaves the offer on the table to get more engaged by taking extra steps. This is unique and allows for people to grow as volunteers within a single organization. During my interviews, I did not hear anyone mention another organization that does this.

Impact of SHCS

The regular volunteers were aware or have even participated in some of these lesser-known programs such as the *Promotoras* leadership program, Job-Link and the adjoined Clothes Closet, and La Mesa Verde. Unfortunately, most non-volunteers or even volunteers from other organizations may not know about these programs or that they could take part in them. SHCS also has advocacy programs which are growing, but with little public image, it is hard to get new volunteers. Rob noted that the door is always open to become an advocate or a volunteer, but this makes little difference if no one knows the door exists. Even after going through the orientation and some volunteer shifts I still was unclear on how to become involved with those programs that might have been more engaging for me. Even with the large impact of the programs offered by SHCS, some people still do not even know the organization exists. I did not until I started this project, and the non-SHCS volunteers I interviewed did not know the full reach of SHCS's programs.

Personal Benefits

For both Marcus and John, the volunteer work gives them a chance to connect with people who are struggling and gives them a chance to help those people manage through their struggle. Like the people he helps through volunteering, Marcus struggles as well. Volunteering help eases his struggle and he feels doing work like this gives him the opportunity to pass that “favor” on to the next generation of kids struggling with depression. John enjoys the work for the personal connections, but he also uses the volunteer work to reach his educational and professional goals. He plans on making a career out of helping people through hard times, but he has also seen personal benefits from his volunteer hours. He has learned to listen, empathize, and has let go of his cynicism, all skills that will aid him in his pursuit of helping others. What SHCS volunteers value is using their skills and experiences to help people living in their community. Behind all the stories I heard it was clear that they would not do it if they did not enjoy making personal connections with the people they serve. Volunteering brings them joy and some life fulfillment.

Opportunities for SHCS as Identified by the Interviewees

At the end of the interviews, I gave each interviewee a chance to talk about suggestions they would make to SHCS; this is a compilation of those ideas shared by the interviewees. These opportunities may not be reasonable choices at the moment, but they may serve to inspire SHCS as it continues to reach its goal of obtaining greater numbers of volunteers. Some of these opportunities build on strengths of SHCS while others are about breaking down barriers to becoming a volunteer.

Building on Strengths

Some volunteers commented that there might be a breakdown in the communication between the staff and the volunteers on occasion. I found that I did not know who was a volunteer or who was a staff member. I would be told to check in with the volunteer coordinator, by name, not title, but I had no idea who they were; therefore wandered around searching for someone I had no way of identifying besides a name. During the time I spent there, no attention was paid to what I did that day. As I left for the day, I was thanked verbally, but there was no invitation to come back. For Rebecca, her first experiences there were difficult because she did not receive any training or direct communication from staff, leading her to take orders from other volunteers who she thought were staff. Another thing Rebecca mentioned about the Clothes Closet was the need for communication of what products are needed on the floor so that those items can be focused on by the volunteers sorting and hanging clothes. She believes this would help the flow of work. I know from experience that this was a problem for me when working in the Clothes Closet. Fortunately, they seem to be more on top of those details in the Food Pantry. The volunteers I interviewed want more interactions with the staff so the volunteers can stay informed about changes at the work site. Maintaining an open line of communication seems vital to the volunteers feeling comfortable in their environment.

Another opportunity that was brought up was acknowledgment and knowledge of their personal impact on the community. A couple of suggestions from the interviewees from SHCS to show thanks to the volunteers came up in the interviews, and I have created a couple of concepts that might be helpful. After a shift in the Clothes Closet or Food Pantry, it was suggested to send out a “thank you” email with some information about what the work

accomplished. This could be a very general notice, but could still show the impact of their work in a quantitative format. It could also provide a way to inform volunteers of other opportunities at SHCS. I was told that thanking events used to happen, but it does not happen every year; some volunteers I interviewed thought it would be fun to have a social or celebratory gathering that would bring them together as a team. This could also be a way to deliver some of the same information that would be in the email I described above. Other opportunities that came up were regarding improving the parking situation and offering services to the volunteers such as thumb printing on-site.

Breaking down Barriers

Another opportunity that was presented in the interviews was the need for more shifts on weekends or evenings. Although this would mean staff would have to extend their hours as well, it may attract new people. It could also be an opportunity to get some menial tasks done in the evening or weekends; this may allow the weekday volunteers to provide more focused and better service to the community. The two non-SHCS volunteers I interviewed wanted SHCS to make themselves more known to the public. Once they knew about their mission and about the programs offered there they were interested, but people cannot help out if they do not even know the organization exists. John suggested that they set up a booth at San José State University and work with some of the departments there to get volunteers for their organization. This would get new volunteers and get young people exposed to SHCS's mission and programs. It might encourage further contributions or, if they fall on hard times, they will know where to go. Building a relationship with local young adults would benefit all involved.

Conclusion

The goals of this project were to help SHCS find new ways of engaging more people in their mission by volunteering and donating money and materials. This is a huge and ongoing goal that they will have to face continually to keep up with the demands of those in need. The goals of this study were broad, and so are my findings, and surely this is only step one in the ongoing mission to reach their goal. As an anthropologist, I wanted to learn more about the motivation of volunteers; I used the ethnographic methods of interviews and participant observation. These methods yielded a rich source of data which I sorted into themes.

The themes were selected from reoccurring patterns in the data; some of the themes discussed SHCS on a macro-level while other themes focused on the micro-level. The message behind a lot of the data was that people deeply enjoy doing volunteer work, and find that it adds to the quality of their lives. And although they admit there is always room for improvement, the negatives outweighed by the positives of volunteering at SHCS.

Some of their responses about possible improvements coincided well with the information I received through my literature review. In my literature review, I discussed ways that volunteer work has been studied in the past, and I saw a gap in the data. I felt that the missing data was the narratives of volunteers and saw how a qualitative study was necessary. Information provided by professionals in the field of volunteer work suggested ways to utilize volunteer motivation, and how to get the right volunteers doing the right jobs. Overall, their main message was: if you invest in your volunteers you will get more out of them. If SHCS can continue to find ways of empowering their volunteers, then they will always discover new ways to engage the community.

Hindsight

This project had some issues that should be addressed to give it context. First of all, my sample size was quite small considering the number of volunteers SHCS sees every year. A problem with asking volunteers to give time for an interview is that they may already be working with a limited amount of free time to give. Many of the volunteers I talked to do not have typical day jobs or were retired; this may have had an effect on the responses. I believe it had an effect on the number of people in my extended network that were free for interviews. My sampling strategy was somewhat weak as I had to rely on people in my extended network and then get recommendations from them.

As I mentioned in the literature review section, there were no published studies similar to what I was trying to do that included qualitative methods such as interviews. I also only read sources from academic journals before doing my research. I think I would have put together a more productive interview protocol if I had read some of the books written by the professional volunteer organizers. I think it would have made my interview questions better informed and would not have been so broad and exploratory. Also, it should be noted that this was the first project for which I created the questions on my own.

Another thing that would have helped this study would have been to sit down with some staff members to talk about current strategies and failed past strategies. It would have given me a new perspective to account for and possibly even refine some of the future areas of focus. I would like to have interviewed them to get the staff's angle on some of my interview topics. In general, my communication with SHCS was not often enough, in my opinion, and it did have some effects on the project. I knew going into this project that nonprofits work on limited

resources and must stay focused on their organization's goals, which I understand, but it caused the project to move slower than I had anticipated. This slow communication led me not to reach out to SHCS for help choosing interviewee candidates. This may ultimately have been good for the honesty of the interviewee's responses, but I my sample size would have benefited from the help getting interviewees.

Broader Implication, Intellectual Merit, and Paradigm Shifts

My goal with this project was to improve recruitment practices for SHCS by understanding the motivations people have for volunteering, but SHCS is not the only organization that can benefit from this knowledge. Many other similar or affiliated volunteer service centers could use this information. Social networking within and between organizations can be improved to better serve the community. As organizations become more networked, the community may grow stronger as a unit, and possibly even become less dependent on the government. This work will help SHCS and other volunteer organizations understand what brings people to their organization to providing services to members of their communities. Understanding and fostering those motives will help the organization hold on to volunteers, allowing them to better serve the goals of their organization. SHCS can enhance the volunteer experience and welcome new members by better understanding the goals and motives of their volunteers. I also hope to bring added value to the real life experiences of volunteers at SHCS through the narratives that come out of this project.

The study of volunteer motivation has largely been driven by sociologists and economists, but with this study, I hope to bring an anthropological perspective. This may also encourage future anthropologists and other social scientists to add their perspectives and carve

out a place for their methods and interpretations. This study may help others outside of anthropology to see the contributions our field can make to the study of human behavior. Ultimately, I would like to inspire multidisciplinary teams to come together to study this and other related topics.

I hope to add to the existing knowledge of volunteer motivation by showing how qualitative data can add a greater depth of knowledge. Through the use of qualitative data, we can construct more dynamic ideas about how to motivate people to volunteer; these dynamic ideas can also be used to understand the difference between paid and unpaid work motives. Through this study, I hope to construct a better image of the motives and barriers to doing volunteer work. Even if a person is motivated to volunteer, they may still be held back by unforeseen barriers. By talking to the volunteers and learning personal stories that have led them to actually volunteer, we can better understand what role motives play in the process of taking action.

In the future, I hope to inspire a more holistic approach to the study and create theory that can be tested and triangulated. Volunteerism is a social act and could benefit from multiple social scientists contributing to the study of it. Studies like this may also change the way current non-volunteers think about volunteerism, opening them up to considering the activity as worth their time. It may also just enlighten them to see the value and contribute in other ways. This type of study may also show the value to more social scientists encouraging them to engage in studies like this one to better understand human behavior. Finally, I think it may change the way we theorize motivation of paid work; there is more than money on people's minds when it comes to work, paid or non-paid.

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Appendix 1
Report to SHCS

March 29, 2016

Sacred Hear Community Service
1381 South First St.
San Jose, CA 95110

Poncho Guevara, Executive Director:

I am writing to let you know that I have completed my research for Sacred Heart Community Service. In May of 2014 I was introduced to you and Graciela Mann by Professor Chuck Darrah; in our meeting we discussed how my interests may also benefit your organization. In that meeting, you explained to me that the organization was seeking to increase its number of volunteers as well as increase donations. We agreed in principle to a project that would support Sacred Heart Community Service in achieving these goals, and then in subsequent discussions with Graciela, the final project plan was settled.

In the following pages, you will see the results of my work towards an understanding of volunteer motivation and how it may serve your interests of understanding how to acquire and further engage volunteers. For this exploratory project, I engaged in participant observation working in the Food Pantry and the Clothes Closet; I also did five in-depth interviews with current Sacred Heart Community Service volunteer as well as two potential volunteers. The interviews provided the data used to generate the results that I will be sharing with you in the following pages.

My hope is that you will use this data and report to continue to work toward the goals we discussed. If you have follow-up questions for me, I will make myself available to you and Sacred Heart Community Service. Below you will find an executive summary guiding you through the rest of the information. I am thankful for the opportunity to have contributed to Sacred Heart Community Service's mission and continued commitment to the community I live in. If you have any follow-up comments or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at my perspnal email address.

Sincerely,

Danielle Anderson

Executive Report Summary

Purpose

To investigate Sacred Heart Community Service's (SHCS) volunteers' motivations and barriers to volunteering and financial donations. Main concern was how can SHCS increase its number of volunteers and then retain them?

Methods

For this study, I relied on ethnographic methods such as participant observation and in-depth interviews. To support these findings I used both academic and professional literature sources and I have included a short bibliography, including where you can find my full report, at the end of this report (see Appendix 4) that can be good resources in the future. I did my participant observation over four days in the Food Pantry and Clothes Closet. I did a total of seven interviews, five with SHCS volunteers and two with non-SHCS volunteers. The questions focused on motivation, environment, and relationship building and retention (see Appendix 2 and 3).

Findings

As I analyzed the data, I identified major themes emerging from the interviews and observations. The findings range in subject from how volunteers feel about their work environments, the impact SHCS has on the community, how SHCS is different from other volunteer work sites, and suggestions mentioned by the interviewees. Some of my own thoughts are included as a response to my participant observations.

Recommendations

Since this project was broad and exploratory, I further developed areas for future focus with a few recommendations for you to discuss with your staff; that section is also included in this report. I created these areas of future focus based on questions still open or new questions that have been uncovered by this project. I broke it into two larger topics, and both directions could develop into productive studies or simply be the questions used for the next study as a whole.

Conclusion

Motivation and the study of volunteer behavior will surely be a never-ending endeavor for SHCS. I hope this study can act as a good starting point for further investigation and discussion about improvements within the organization.

Goals of this project

To investigate Sacred Heart Community Service's (SHCS) volunteers' motivations and barriers to volunteering and financial donations. Main concern was how can SHCS increase its number of volunteers and then retain them?

Methods

The methods I chose to use are classically ethnographic, relying on participant observations and interviews. Since the needs assessment was composed of broad questions both methods are done in an exploratory manner. For both methods, I made the first contact with the organization and the individuals without leads from the Sacred Heart Community Service (SHCS). I believe this led me to see things as clearly as possible through the volunteers' eyes.

Participant Observation

To understand the volunteer experience I signed up as a volunteer working in the Food Pantry and the Clothes Closet. These volunteer shifts were the only activities I did on-site, and they were not focused on a particular feature of the environment, so all the data I collected remained broad. From these observations, I learned how volunteers do work on-site, how volunteers receive on-site training in providing services, and how volunteers interact with each other. I examined the area to see if it is set up for teams or for individual volunteers to work in and how this affects socialization at the work site.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In addition to the participant observation, in entry level volunteer activities I conducted exploratory in-depth interviews with two different categories of people. The first category was current volunteers; I interviewed five people in this category. I used convenience and snowball sampling. To find interviewees I reached out through my own network on Facebook and asked if anyone was or knows someone who was a volunteer at SHCS, after that I used references from those interviewees to meet my other interviewees. Data about why they began volunteering and why they continue to volunteer was provided by the interviewees answering questions about their personal connection to the services they are providing, how often they volunteer, and their thoughts on how SHCS is living up to their goals, and if they have friends or family volunteering at the organization (see Appendix 2). I also interviewed two potential SHCS volunteers; I identified

them as potential volunteers by the fact that they self-identify as current volunteers with other organizations and are currently living in San Jose, California. I found these two interviewees through my own social network on Facebook when they responded to my call for current volunteers for interviews. I asked questions to learn about how they came to volunteer with their chosen organizations, about their experiences, and about what they know about SHCS and about barriers between them and volunteering at SHCS (see Appendix 3).

Each interviewee went through a traditional semi-structured interview lasting from half an hour to two and a half hours. All but one of the interviews were conducted outside the organization grounds for the comfort, anonymity, and honesty of the interviewees and their responses; in the case of the interview held on SHCS work site, it was by choice of the interviewee and was conducted in a private conference room. After the interviews had been completed I transcribed and coded the interviews by topics of their statements; this allowed the categories I would use in the final report to emerge from the data. Doing it this way allowed me to find the relevant themes upon which to base my analysis. After analyzing the data, I will form some future areas of focus for SHCS to use for improving the acquisition, retention, and deep engagement of their volunteers (see Appendix 4). Most of my interview questions were centered on topics such as their overall volunteer experiences, the building of new relationships and the strengthening of people's relationships that exist in their social network, and possible things that SHCS can adjust or change in order to improve the volunteer experience (see Appendix 2 and 3).

Themes

As I read over the transcriptions of the interviews certain themes began to emerge, and even though my interviewees were diverse in careers, age, and position in the organization there was still a great amount of overlap in the themes that emerged. The themes that I chose to highlight in this section come mainly from the interviews with contributions from my own experiences as a volunteer at SHCS. Although direct cause for motivation is not usually stated by my interviewees, they are revealed through the themes below. The following themes come directly from the interviewees' and my own experiences, they are a reflection of those experiences. Because this project is exploratory and my sample size was fairly small, these themes should be taken as topics

to spark further discussion; directly following this section I will address next steps in reaching your goals.

Recipients Seldom Become Volunteers

The SHCS volunteers that I interviewed had all known people that have received services, but only Alison knows recipients that also volunteer. No mentioned those recipients as inspiration for volunteering; this could mean that SHCS's mission is what gets people engaged, not a personal story. Rebecca felt that the recipients of the services at SHCS might even want to put distance between themselves and the organization; this could be a reason for why most of them did not know any recipients who became volunteers. In Marcus' case, he was a recipient of goods and services of the two organizations that he talked the most about noting that his personal relationship with the organizations was a major deciding factor in picking those organizations as good uses of his time. This means that direct personal connection to an organization might influence organization choice, but it is not the only factor.

Donations are Common amongst Volunteers

All of the volunteers I interviewed who volunteer at SHCS had all donated either food, money, clothes, or multiple of these; but several of them considered spreading the word of what SHCS is and what they do for others as a contribution to SHCS. They often put this contribution above the others. Of the non-SHCS interviewees, this feeling was the same; a likelihood to volunteer was connected to a likeliness to donate goods and money.

Use of Previous Skill Sets and Experience

All the volunteers from SHCS had donated their time to other organizations, for example, Sue still works with her church and has created a connection between the two through various drives. Some of the organizations named were Second Harvest Food Bank, Humane Society, ASPCA, Habitat for Humanity, Somos Mayfair, and other local organizations. This experience informs them on the procedures and resources needed to accomplish certain goals. But most often they serve to remind the volunteer how different SHCS is (see section below) and informs them on what the community actually needs from service organizations. Sue especially brought her professional skills to the Homework Club and is involved in the feedback to parents regarding a student's educational progress and helps SHCS detect whether a child has special needs.

Treating SHCS Like It is a Job

Throughout the interviews, I heard people describe several different engagement levels, but there were a few that talked about it as they would a job. Sue is a retired teacher, and she takes her time commitment very seriously. She considers the time she promised to be with the students in the Homework Club as her time to work and will schedule other obligations around that. She also counts the hours that she volunteers there and includes that on her taxes and would even be happy to increase her responsibility level in the Homework Club. As the first intern, Alison puts in part-time hours at SHCS to help the staff and volunteers, and she treats the work she does there as she does her paid job. This treatment comes from a feeling of responsibility to meeting the goals of the organization not as a consequence of payment. This interaction between volunteer and organization also showed up in John's narrative about his volunteer work; he described himself as very dedicated to the work done by SACS. Also, he and his fellow volunteers have networked together to make sure all the shifts are covered, much like co-workers do in a traditional workplace.

Environment and Work Site

Because the environment at SHCS is varied and my interviewees were not all from just one program, their feedback was varied. Sue mentioned that she thought it was a good thing that corporations came during the holidays to volunteer as the need for volunteers is highest at that time. She also liked that it exposes new people to the organization. Two of my interviewees brought up the importance of time management; Rob claims that every second of a volunteer's time is used to better their community, but Rebecca did not always feel that her time was well spent. She continued to say that when it was busy in the Food Pantry or Clothes Closet it felt like the time she volunteered was more useful and valuable. Alison felt her environment was supportive and that the people working there really care about each other. Although John had never volunteered at SHCS himself, he did hear from his brother and sister that they enjoyed doing volunteer service there and felt like they were treated well.

In the Homework Club, there are things that are out of the volunteers control such as the leadership. Both Sue and Kathy made comments in their interviews that the leadership has not always been clear, which puts extra pressure on them and other former educators to take control. Sue also felt that SHCS sometimes leaves them to handle the problems that arise with some of the students, instead of handling it. Another concern was about the materials; the books that are

available are often not in great condition, and the selection in Spanish is inadequate. The Homework Club also needs volunteers with a desire to work with, or previous experience working with, kids, but Sue and Kathy both acknowledge that that is out of SHCS's hands since they have to take what volunteers come to them. They also would like more Spanish speaking volunteers so that they can help the Spanish-speaking students better. When the holidays come around Sue hopes that in the future they can get more gifts for teenaged kids, so they do not get left out of the gift giveaways.

Rebecca mentioned that there was no training, and you have to learn as you go, which doesn't work for everyone. She also noted that it is difficult to get clothes out in a timely fashion while also trying to help customers; having more volunteers are needed on the floor. Alison's problems were different, as an intern working to develop programs she often has to consider budgeting. To justify the use of funds they have to keep records of the impact of a program, but this is hard to do when it is centered on issues that people do not want to talk openly about. But a problem that will never be completely avoidable will be minor personal dramas, and for some, this is a turn-off to working with a mixed group of volunteers. For those working in the Food Pantry, and especially in the Clothes Closet, they need some level of customer service skills. This means being kind to the customers no matter how exhausted or frustrated one becomes. In the Homework Club, the tutors take on a teacher-like role and often have to balance between being the kids' mentor and disciplinarian. An organization should try to match the needs of the volunteer with the needs of the service they will be providing to create a positively perceived environment.

On-Site and Social Media Personal Connections

While working on site at SHCS, the volunteers make friendships within that environment; they do not have time to spend time with each other outside SHCS. Although they would be called work friends, their bonds tend to be deep as they are based on shared goals and ideologies. People that already know each other may strengthen their bonds through working together towards a common goal at SHCS. One exception was made, and that was the Wednesday Clothes Closet crew; they had exchanged email addresses, and after a volunteer coordinator had left SHCS, they all got together with him to have lunch. This was only possible because it was a group of consistent regulars that had developed a family type bond.

If a volunteer or advocate has worked at other organizations consistently or for a long time, they may run into people that they have met at other events or organizations. Often, they will already be part of the volunteer's network; and as Alison told me, the people in her network are not just friends but also resources. They support her events, and she supports theirs; this support system stays alive through social media, for the younger generations at least. All my interviewees under the age of forty use social media to keep in-touch with other volunteers or peers that may be potential volunteers. Facebook seems to be the vehicle of choice for maintaining a large and diverse network of friends, family, and co-workers for people to reach out on to get resources, time, and money. Through volunteers' social media networks, the organizations have huge extended networks that are largely untapped.

For the non-SHCS volunteers, I noticed the use of networks to remain connected and as a way to become involved; Marcus got involved with Hope for Depression through a friend who had been working there. He is bonded to them through similar past experiences, so they do not need to spend time together outside of Hope for Depression to maintain their bond; this allows all of them to focus their time at Hope for Depression on the kids that they serve. John's volunteer group will occasionally get together for group outings, but it is their mission, encouragement, and the constant support that unites them.

Seeing the Results of Their Actions Within the Community

It was clear from the interviews that what people valued about their experiences at SHCS was the direct interaction with the people that they served. Many of their previous experiences were through organizations that act as a third party. A couple of volunteers made a direct comparison between Second Harvest Food Bank and SHCS. All the SHCS volunteers noted that the direct interactions such as handing food directly to customers, working with people directly in programs like La Mesa Verde, Gift Giveaways, and Homework Club makes their experiences at SHCS stand out and more rewarding. It was clear that being able to see, immediately, how their actions impact the lives of people in the community was a central reason for them to continue giving their time to SHCS. All of the SHCS volunteer interviewees enjoy being active members of their community. For her fellow church patrons to feel connected to the community through their donations, Sue started a newsletter for them.

It also may be helpful for people to feel that their specific skill sets are being used to accomplish a goal, as this adds to the enjoyment of the experience of volunteering. For people that have not been exposed to the struggles of low-income families, it is good for them to see the results of their work as well. For Alison, she enjoys working with the community directly because she can help spread useful information and help create programs that are needed or in high demand. Knowing the specific needs of the community can only come from working with them directly. Even though they do not specifically work with a local community both Marcus and John enjoy working with a community of people that suffer from depression. Marcus was a former member of H4D when he was younger, so for him, they are part of his "community". For John, he takes great joy in working with people in their darkest hour and finding a connection with them and talking them out of taking an irreversible step.

Feeling Valued by SHCS and the People They Help

The joy that the volunteers experience may be due to feeling like they are valued by the customers of SHCS. They can see their value through the direct interaction with the customer. Everyone also felt valued by SHCS taking advantage of their skill sets towards a variety of programs there; this gave them a feeling of belonging at SHCS. Sue shared that she felt valued by SHCS when they do the completion ceremony in the Homework Club at the end of the school year where the volunteers get recognized by SHCS, the kids, and the parents. For Alison, she felt valued by the trust SHCS puts in her to create new events and programs. She also felt valued by watching new community advocates develop leadership skills. But the most important thing about her experience at SHCS that makes her feel valued is the self-discovery that she gets through her work. She feels that advocacy has helped her find her place in the world and that SHCS has never held her back and has allowed her to flourish.

How SHCS is Different

When trying to get involved in working with the community, there are many choices of organizations. It may take a while for potential volunteers to get in touch with other organizations, whereas, SHCS makes it easy for anyone with a web browser to become involved. While working a shift at SHCS, a volunteer is working face-to-face with the community that they are serving. This offers exposure to people with very different beliefs and values as well as people that are at different levels of engagement with the community. As an intern at SHCS Alison found that they

gave her a great amount of support to create and lead new projects. She found this valuable to her personal growth since she knows, that such support is not common. Probably the most important way that SHCS is different is the variety of experiences they offer. Rob felt that SHCS stands out from other volunteer organization because the environment allows for people to pick their hours, to come in and do their work, and then leave with a feeling of contributing to their community. At the same time, SHCS leaves the offer on the table to get more engaged by taking extra steps. This is unique and allows for people to grow as volunteers within a single organization. During my interviews, I did not hear anyone mention another organization that does this.

Impact of SHCS

The regular volunteers were aware or have even participated in some of these lesser-known programs such as the *Promotoras* leadership program, Job-Link and the adjoined Clothes Closet, and La Mesa Verde. Unfortunately, most non-volunteers or even volunteers from other organizations may not know about these programs or that they could take part in them. SHCS also has advocacy programs which are growing, but with little public image, it is hard to get new volunteers. Rob noted that the door is always open to become an advocate or a volunteer, but this makes little difference if no one knows the door exists. Even after going through the orientation and some volunteer shifts I still was unclear on how to become involved with those programs that might have been more engaging for me. Even with the large impact of the programs offered by SHCS, some people still do not even know the organization exists. I did not until I started this project, and the non-SHCS volunteers I interviewed did not know the full reach of SHCS's programs.

Personal Benefits

For both Marcus and John, the volunteer work gives them a chance to connect with people who are struggling and gives them a chance to help those people manage through their struggle. Like the people he helps through volunteering, Marcus struggles as well. Volunteering help eases his struggle and he feels doing work like this gives him the opportunity to pass that “favor” on to the next generation of kids struggling with depression. John enjoys the work for the personal connections, but he also uses the volunteer work to reach his educational and professional goals. He plans on making a career out of helping people through hard times, but he has also seen personal benefits from his volunteer hours. He has learned to listen, empathize, and has let go of his

cynicism, all skills that will aid him in his pursuit of helping others. What SHCS volunteers value is using their skills and experiences to help people living in their community. Behind all the stories I heard it was clear that they would not do it if they did not enjoy making personal connections with the people they serve. Volunteering brings them joy and some life fulfillment.

Opportunities for SHCS as Identified by the Interviewees

At the end of the interviews, I gave each interviewee a chance to talk about suggestions they would make to SHCS; this is a compilation of those ideas shared by the interviewees. These opportunities may not be reasonable choices at the moment, but they may serve to inspire SHCS as it continues to reach its goal of obtaining greater numbers of volunteers. Some of these opportunities build on strengths of SHCS while others are about breaking down barriers to becoming a volunteer.

Building on Strengths

Some volunteers commented that there might be a breakdown in the communication between the staff and the volunteers on occasion. I found that I did not know who was a volunteer or who was staff. I would be told to check in with the volunteer coordinator, by name, not title, but I had no idea who they were; therefore wandered around searching for someone I had no way of identifying besides a name. During the time I spent there, no attention was paid to what I did that day. As I left for the day, I was thanked verbally, but there was no invitation to come back. For Rebecca, her first experiences there were difficult because she did not receive any training or direct communication from staff, leading her to take orders from other volunteers who she thought were staff. Another thing Rebecca mentioned about the Clothes Closet was the need for communication of what products are needed on the floor so that those items can be focused on by the volunteers sorting and hanging clothes. She believes this would help the flow of work. I know from experience that this was a problem for me when working in the Clothes Closet. Fortunately, they seem to be more on top of those details in the Food Pantry. The volunteers I interviewed want more interactions with the staff so the volunteers can stay informed about changes at the work site. Maintaining an open line of communication seems vital to the volunteers feeling comfortable in their environment.

Another opportunity that was brought up was acknowledgment and knowledge of their personal impact on the community. A couple of suggestions from the interviewees from SHCS to

show thanks to the volunteers came up in the interviews, and I have created a couple of concepts that might be helpful. After a shift in the Clothes Closet or Food Pantry, it was suggested to send out a “thank you” email with some information about what the work accomplished. This could be a very general notice, but could still show the impact of their work in a quantitative format. It could also provide a way to inform volunteers of other opportunities at SHCS. I was told that thanking events used to happen, but it does not happen every year; some volunteers I interviewed thought it would be fun to have a social or celebratory gathering that would bring them together as a team. This could also be a way to deliver some of the same information that would be in the email I described above. Other opportunities that came up were regarding improving the parking situation and offering services to the volunteers such as thumb printing on-site.

Breaking down Barriers

Another opportunity that was presented in the interviews was the need for more shifts on weekends or evenings. Although this would mean staff would have to extend their hours as well, it may attract new people. It could also be an opportunity to get some menial tasks done in the evening or weekends; this may allow the weekday volunteers to provide more focused and better service to the community. The two non-SHCS volunteers I interviewed wanted SHCS to make themselves more known to the public. Once they knew about their mission and about the programs offered there they were interested, but people cannot help out if they do not even know the organization exists. John suggested that they set up a booth at San José State University and work with some of the departments there to get volunteers for their organization. This would get new volunteers and get young people exposed to SHCS's mission and programs. It might encourage further contributions or, if they fall on hard times, they will know where to go. Building a relationship with local young adults would benefit all involved. Fortunately, there is a great body of literature offering many suggestions on how to address these opportunities (see the Bibliography).

Future Areas of Focus

Before I begin with recommendations I have for SHCS, I think it is important to acknowledge the constraints of this project. While doing this project, I did not have a chance to sit down with any of the employees of SHCS to learn about current strategies for attaining and

keeping volunteers. I would like to have asked them about how they reach out to the community, on how they solicited donations, on how they motivate volunteers and staff, on their strategies on communicating with the volunteers, or how they are training volunteers. This means that all my knowledge came from the interviews and experience described above. Due to these constraints, this section should be read as areas for potential growth in the direction of getting more people to become volunteers for their organization. I chose these areas of potential growth based on a list of exemplary secondary questions that I generate from the Themes section of this paper. These exemplary questions (see Appendix 4) arose from the exploratory findings I made and should be the areas of focus moving forward in their goals first laid out in the needs assessment at the top of this paper.

Acclimating and Keeping Volunteers

The first area of further research could be how SHCS acclimatizes (trains and educates) their new and ongoing volunteers. As was mentioned in my themes and literature review it is imperative that an organization makes productive use of all the time a volunteer spends with it; this means orienting, training, and educating them on how they should be working. If there are ways for volunteers to increase their engagement with an organization it should be communicated to the volunteer as well as potential time and resource commitments, and how to get to that new role. Also revealed in the interviews was the need for scheduling adjustments; part of a future study should look critically at what hours people need available to them for volunteering and how you can utilize the schedule to get the most productivity out of volunteers. Volunteering does not compete with work; it competes with leisure activities, so it is important for the environment to offer a few comforts; for SHCS this might mean improving the break room, parking or offering services like finger printing on site.

The interaction that occur on site also need to be evaluated, some further investigation may be in order to look into how the staff interacts with volunteers, how volunteers interact with each other, are they being social or silent, and assessing what interactions are desired by the staff and volunteers. As I reviewed the literature I saw that a lot of attention was being paid to the creation of roles; and the assessment of volunteer's skills, qualities, personal goals, and limitations were all factors needed to be accounted for when choosing which volunteers would fill certain roles. A volunteer's motivation can be a factor in role selection as well, and the trick there is to find a way

for creating roles that help an individual's goals acquirement match up with the organization's goals. Usually, their individual goals will be for the improvement of personal or professional skills, and SHCS might want to find a way to let people know that they offer ways for people to do that. The creation of a dynamic work environment may help all these goals be reached, and it may require an assessment of the work site and roles volunteers play in it. Finally, an assessment of the appreciation programs might be advisable as I learned, in the interviews, people feel valued through the work they do. But my literature review emphasized the user of appreciation programs as a way to send a message to the volunteers that you value their time, effort and the opportunity of working with them.

Outreach and Networking

Another question brought forth to me from the original needs assessment was how SHCS can get more people to donate; what I found through the interviews was that those volunteers I interviewed do all donate money and material goods to SHCS. Perhaps it would be a good idea to investigate further why they donate or which programs they donate the most to so that you can understand what encourages people to donate. Getting professionals to volunteer their time at SHCS is vital in the continuation of some of their programs, so it may be a category of people that deserve a further investigation. All volunteers bring with them a skill set, so perhaps a reassessment of skill sets that already exist could be an additional strategy. The idea of former SHCS customers becoming volunteers seemed not to have crossed the mind of some of my interviewees, but the example of the Promotoras shows that they are a category of potential volunteers, this should be looked at further.

One thing I noticed about the recruitment process is that SHCS puts it all in the hands of the individual; a community member must first hear of SHCS then act on their desire to act. Perhaps there are other ways to reach people that want to become engaged in the community through action or support in the way of money and resources. It may be advisable to look into how you can reach people looking for outlets to make a difference in the community. While assessing how to get the message out to those interested, it may also be advisable to share the range of options for engagement; my literature review suggests that you create roles that people can imagine themselves in and help them meet some of their personal goals. A great way to help them imagine themselves volunteering at SHCS might be to share other volunteer's experiences.

All of my interviewees under the age of forty heavily relied on social networks to stay connected to the organizations and peers they work with, it could be a valuable resource going forward for SHCS to invest in social media outlets. This could be a vehicle for potential and new volunteers to investigate where they fit in the organization and to make connections with existing members and volunteers. It could also function as a way to keep lapsed volunteers engaged in the mission. As I learned from one interviewee, she used social networking sites to stay connected to other advocates, having a social media site presence might be a way to access more resources. I would recommend investigating the value this strategy might bring to SHCS in order to connect with a whole new generation of volunteers.

Appendix 2
Interview Instrument – Sacred Heart Volunteers

Basics

Age:

Profession:

Gender:

City of residence:

Other than SHCS, where else have you volunteered?

Contributions

Think about your total time volunteering,

How would you describe your volunteer work history including but not limited to SHCS?

How often do you volunteer? How would you describe your level of engagement with volunteer organizations?

How would you describe your experience during an average volunteer shift at SHCS? How does a shift at SHCS differ from your other experiences?

Which services have you volunteered to provide at SHCS? Which have you enjoyed the most? Which the least? What made them enjoyable or not?

In what other ways have you contributed to SHCS's mission other than volunteering (Donation of Money/Goods)?

First Experiences

Think back to the time you first became a volunteer at SHCS,

How did you hear about SHCS? When did you first volunteer? What motivated you? What steps did you take to becoming a volunteer?

How would you describe the process in which you became a volunteer? How did you learn how to be a volunteer?

In the beginning what ways did you feel prepared for volunteering? And, in what ways did you feel unprepared to volunteer?

Community

SHCS has a mission to end poverty, with that in mind I want you to think about SHCS's connection to the community and ending poverty,

Have you ever received services from SHCS? If so, which ones? Do you know other people that have receive services there? Which Services? How does this make you feel more connected to the mission of SHCS? Does this connection make you feel are making a difference in the community?

How else do you feel you are making a difference in the community through SHCS?

Social/Social Media

How are you socially connected with other volunteers at SHCS (ex. friend/family)? How do you spend time with these people outside of the volunteer center? What are the benefits of these relationships?

How do these relationships affect the times and services that you volunteer for at SHCS? How do these social relationships affect the quality and quantity of work you do at SHCS?

Which Social media platforms do you use to stay connected with family and friends? How do you use these platforms to connect with SHCS and/or any associates you have made there? How has this affected your relation to SHCS and your fellow volunteers?

Overall Experience

Keeping in mind everything we have talked about,

How have your experiences at SHCS differ from previous community service work you have done in the past?

What significant positive experiences, if any, have you had at SHCS?

What significant negative experiences, if any, have you had at SHCS?

What improvements would you make to the process of becoming a volunteer?

What problems did you face in becoming a volunteer? What problems do you face in continuing to be a volunteer? How do you think SHCS can solve those problems?

What are some ways to improve the effectiveness of being a volunteer at SHCS in order to fulfill their mission statement?

What could SHCS do to make your volunteer experience more rewarding?

Appendix 3
Interview Instrument – Non-Sacred Heart Volunteers

Basics

Age:

Profession:

Gender:

City of residence:

Where have you volunteered?

Contributions

Think about your total time volunteering.

How would you describe your volunteer work history?

How often do you volunteer? How would you describe your level of engagement with volunteer organizations?

How would you describe your experience during an average volunteer shift? How do shifts at different organizations differ?

Which have you enjoyed the most? Which the least? What made them enjoyable or not?

In what other ways have you contributed to volunteer/charity organizations other than volunteering (Donation of Money/Goods)?

Experiences

How did you hear about the organizations you have volunteered for? When did you first volunteer? What motivated you? What steps did you take to becoming a volunteer?

How did you learn how to be a volunteer? In the beginning what ways did you feel prepared for volunteering? And, in what ways did you feel unprepared to volunteer?

What significant positive experiences, if any, have you had?

What significant negative experiences, if any, have you had?

Social/Social Media

How are you socially connected with other volunteers at you work with (ex. friend/family)? How do you spend time with these people outside of the volunteer center? What are the benefits of these relationships?

How do these relationships affect the times and services that you volunteer for? How do these social relationships affect the quality and quantity of work you do?

Which Social media platforms do you use to stay connected with family and friends? How do you use these platforms to connect with your volunteer organizations and/or any associates you have made there? How has this affected your relation to those organizations and your fellow volunteers?

Knowledge of SHCS

What do you know about SHCS and their mission to end poverty?

Have you ever taken steps to become a volunteer? If so, how would you describe the process of becoming a volunteer there?

What kind of relationships with people that are volunteers at SHCS? Are you connected through social media to any SHCS volunteers? How does this impact your knowledge of SHCS mission?

What are the biggest barriers to you becoming a volunteer at SHCS? What recommendations can you make to fix this? How can they make their programs more accessible to potential volunteers?

Appendix 4

Future Research Questions

Acclimating New Volunteers

How can SHCS restructure their orientations to inform new volunteers better?

How can they communicate that open door to become further engaged with their volunteers?

How can SHCS communicate the time and resource commitments that come with each role?

How can SHCS better train their volunteers?

How can SHCS create a dynamic schedule for volunteer hours allowing for more volunteers to join while also getting the most from their volunteers?

Keeping Volunteers

What other services can SHCS offer to their volunteers (thumb printing, parking) to make volunteering more possible?

How can the staff better use their presence to make the volunteer work environment better?

How can the staff and current volunteers of SHCS promote that they offer volunteers the opportunity for personal and professional growth to their current and potential volunteers?

How can SHCS create new roles for volunteers that allow them to use their skill sets?

How can SHCS create meaningful experiences for each volunteer role in their organization to show each volunteer how valuable they are to SHCS and the community?

How can SHCS best assess the qualities, skills, goals, and limitations of their volunteers in order to place them in the best work environment that will benefit both the individual and the organization?

How can SHCS use the time of the volunteers to serve the community best and also create a work environment that is welcoming and dynamic?

How can SHCS create an environment that encourages people to interact socially in addition to interacting to achieve a goal?

How can SHCS improve their current appreciation programs to communicate their appreciation to the volunteers?

Outreach

How can SHCS reach new community members to volunteer and donate to their organization?

How can SHCS attract professionals to their organization for volunteer work?

What other resources are already available through their pool of volunteers and donors?

How can SHCS keep lapsed volunteers engaged in their mission?

How can SHCS attract former recipients to volunteer?

How can SHCS reach out to potential new volunteers instead of waiting for them to reach out to SHCS?

How can SHCS communicate the full range of programs they offer to potential and current volunteers?

How can SHCS introduce potential volunteers to this connection their current volunteer's experience?

How can SHCS better communicate their mission and contributions to the community in San Jose to the general public?

Networking

How can SHCS harness the strength of their volunteer's social networks to strengthen bonds between themselves and volunteers as well as volunteer to volunteer?

How can SHCS become a vehicle for people to network and connect with through common goals?

How can SHCS offer new ways of connecting community members with one another?