



Congress of Volunteer Administrator Associations (COVAA)

CONGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

*December 4-6, 2006
Denver, Colorado*

“Imagine the coming together of leaders of volunteer manager associations from across the United States, representing thousands of colleagues, for a one-time Congress to envision the future of our profession and build a nationwide constituency.”

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The Congress of Volunteer Administrator Associations is an “event.”

Acknowledgements

The Congress of Volunteer Administrator Associations (COVAA) would not have been possible without the support of committed leaders. This Congress was a culmination of hard work nationwide and we extend our appreciation to the many individuals and organizations that contributed to the COVAA Congress, including:

PLANNING COMMITTEE

The ad hoc planning team's sole purpose was to create a venue where representatives of volunteer manager affiliations could assemble in person. Thanks to the leaders below, the desired outcome was achieved: the creation of an empowered leadership steering committee to carry forth an action plan derived from decisions made at the Congress.

Paula Beugen
Mike Brady
Joan Brown
Angela Caudill
Victoria Eggleston
Susan Ellis
Audrey Harris

Pam Lemp
Pam Mayhew
Todd McMullin
Christine Nardecchia
Nora Simmons Daly
Betty Stallings
Cat Trapp

COVAA SPONSORS



Jane Justis, Executive Director, The Leighty Foundation, whose mission is “to carry on the Leighty Family legacy of service and stewardship by leveraging our time and talents, as well as our financial resources, primarily in the areas of Earth Protection, Education and the Promotion of Philanthropy and Volunteerism.”



Liam Leduc Clarke, The Volunteer Impact Fund, which was developed and supported by the UPS Foundation to assist organizations manage volunteers more effectively.

COVAA FACILITATOR

The impressive progress made during the three days of the Congress in Denver would not have been possible without the incredible leadership of our facilitator, **Elaine Granata**.

Elaine has had over 16 years experience consulting, using the large group process to accelerate change. She has extensive experience in workplace redesign and has co-authored a number of articles using the large group process in organizations and communities.



COVAA HOST



The members of this congress would like to extend their appreciation to the **Denver DOVIA** for planning and hosting the event. A special thank you to Angela Caudill, CVA, DOVIA President and to Pam Mayhew, DOVIA Vice-President for their efforts in making this event a success.

COVAA DELEGATES AND PARTICIPANTS

Finally, and most importantly, thank you to the **delegates and participants**. You brought this meeting—and this movement—to life through your willingness to share, learn, and plan. Thank you for your hard work during the Congress and thank you, in advance, for all you will continue contributing to the creation of the new association.



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE COVAA CONGRESS

Lengthy discussions were held during the Points of Light Conference in Seattle in June 2006 about what might serve the needs of the volunteer management profession after the dissolution of the Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA). An ad hoc group with a sincere interest in the success of a new professional association was formed, all of whom participated in Seattle and wanted to continue the ideas and collaborative efforts that were started there. Specifically, there was a need to intentionally create a much larger venue for this discussion—not just as part of someone else’s conference and not just via the Web. To begin the work towards such a gathering, several colleagues agreed to serve as the initial planning “team”.

After careful consideration and input from the President and Executive Director of American Society of Director of Volunteer Services (ASDVS, in healthcare), it was determined that the tentatively planned Philadelphia meeting in September 2006 was premature. After two conference calls, the team decided on a different approach—one that is exciting in its potential for the field of volunteerism. In an effort immediately to go beyond the ten and invited all interested colleagues to get engaged, notice was posted and a web site was opened for the Congress of Volunteer Administration Associations at www.covaa.org.

A NEW FOCUS: A CONGRESS IN DECEMBER

The Congress of Volunteer Administrator Associations (COVAA) was an event. It was the first-ever convening of official representatives of existing associations of volunteer program managers throughout the United States.

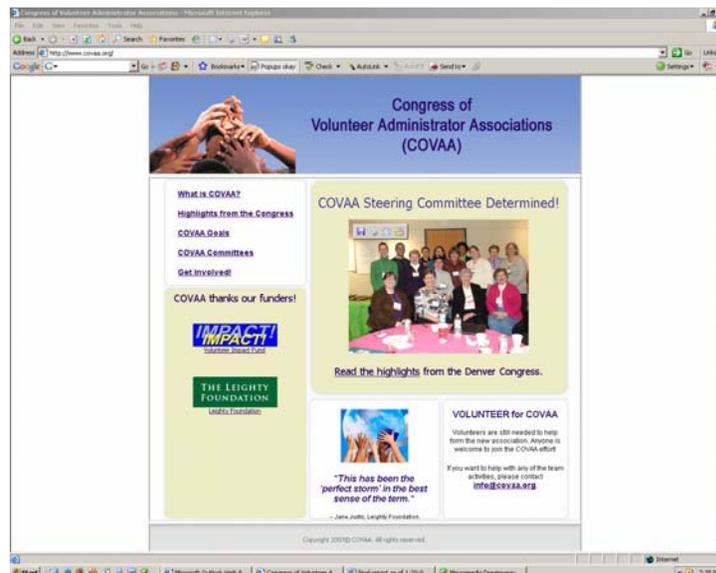
Our field today has many local, state and regional associations of volunteer program managers as well as a number of field-specific “affinity” associations with national and local groups. While these associations range in size and effectiveness, they clearly already formally represent a substantial percentage of practitioners in our profession. However, in the past, most of these bodies have rarely collaborated or even communicated, except for the few groups that joined the now dissolved AVA as “affiliate” members.

1. Any such existing association was invited to send one official representative with voting authority to the two-day meeting in Denver in December 2006.
2. The two-day meeting was structured and facilitated to allow participants to discuss such things as:
 - What are existing associations already doing well and don’t need a national organization to do for them.

- What might a national organization provide that is value-added.
 - What might a “congress” of associations permit existing groups to do together? Is the “congress” model the best method?
 - How might a “congress” encourage the formation of new associations in geographic areas without such a group now?
 - What might be the interrelationship between a national “congress” and local associations?
3. The immediate goal of the “congress” was to create a working network of associations with a designated steering committee to, in turn, carry any organization forward.

There remains a strong desire to reach out to all previous AVA individual members, colleagues who have chosen not to join their professional organization, or those who do not have an association to join, and there will be future opportunities for individual colleagues to be involved. In this preliminary state, the Congress began with a clearly identifiable group of 75-150 people who represent probably 3,000-6,000 practitioners through existing associations. Strategies will continually be developed for the engagement of individual leaders.

The challenge inherent in this plan is to identify and invite all existing professional associations in our field. To that end, Samaritan Technologies made the generous offer of opening a new Web site focused solely on this project. The new site is www.COVA.org and new information will be posted as it becomes available.



“We need to start thinking like architects”

— Christine Nardecchia

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONGRESS

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONGRESS: DAY 1

December 4, 2006

The Congress started with a reception to get acquainted and the energy in the room was palpable. For some, it was a welcome chance to see long-time colleagues and friends, and for others it was the beginning of assimilating into this unique group of delegates. Ninety people made the trip to Denver, most paying expenses on their own. We had colleagues from every area of the country and at all stages of their careers in volunteer management. Represented were local DOVIAs from cities large and small; state associations of volunteer administrators; affinity groups such as health care settings, volunteer centers, museums, local government, and animal shelters; and networks within national organizations such as volunteer program managers at the American Red Cross and Volunteers of America.



Here are some highlights of the opening session:

- Delegates were welcomed to the history-making convening—a true Congress. We were also reminded that there are really 6,000 people represented in the room.
- We spent a few moments acknowledging our sense of loss at the demise of AVA. Using the Kubler-Ross model of grieving, we traced how, as a field, we went through the “emotional process of change”, moving from denial to fear to anger to sadness and then from acceptance to hope and excitement (with other steps in between). We have now come to the final stage: “realignment” and are ready to start again.
- Facilitator, Elaine Granata, outlined the agenda and process of the next two days and introduced us to the decision rule of “common ground” (as opposed to consensus): finding those areas that we currently hold in common or discover through dialog that we hold in common. We kept a “disagree list” to be worked on at another time. We explained that we would do actual voting for the selection of purposes, structure, and leaders.



- Elaine led us through a highly interactive session identifying the trends, events and forces affecting volunteering today, and then what the implications were of this long list on the Congress as we deliberated on planning what our field needs at the national level.
- Having looked at the present and near future, we next stopped to look at the past. Todd McMullin of Samaritan Technologies showed a slide presentation that explored the history of the profession of volunteer management. Delegates also applauded Marlene Wilson, pioneer in our field, who attended the entire Congress as a non-voting participant.
- The last segment of the evening focused on developing our top three “proud” and top three “sorries” from our history.



The first session of the Congress closed at 9:00 pm.



“In the years to come I want some of us to be on a slide honoring the pioneers of our field.”

—Joanna Johnson

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONGRESS: DAY 2

December 5, 2006

The group reconvened at the Colorado History Museum on the morning of International Volunteer Day. After a brief recap of the previous night's session, we heard a report on the Pre-Congress Survey we conducted and to which 236 people responded. You can read the full survey report on the website: www.COVA.org.

Next, Christine Nardecchia gave a presentation on research she did on the options for the structure of a national organization. She focused on two types:

1. **Associations:** Broadly defined, common interest can be individual and/or group members. Members typically have two memberships: a) at local or regional level and at b) national level.
2. **Federations:** Somewhat more defined, common interest in building consensus in field, usually a "union" or membership by group, region or state.



She highlighted three associations:

- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, www.shrm.org)
- Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP, www.afpnet.org)
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA, www.icma.org)

She then explained three federations:

- International Association of Athletics Organizations (IAAF, www.iaaf.org)
- International Federation of Accountants (IFAC, www.ifac.org)
- World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO, www.wfeo.org)

Common denominators of all are:

- Highly-defined focus
- Succinct products and services
- Clear focus on strategy
- Perceived at THE authority for field and profession
- Strong advocacy relationships
- Exclusive in nature
- Most are hybrids

So the delegates were charged to be “architects”, creating a structure that meets today’s environment and needs. Elaine next led a “Keep, Drop, Create” brainstorming exercise to prepare for the major work assignment of the morning:

Imagine it’s 2010. Write 5 outcome statements in the present tense that describe “who you are” as a profession with a national entity. Do not focus on activities (websites, etc.) but on purposes, constitutional or chartering issues and model structures. All statements must be “common ground”.

The delegates began working diligently and thoughtfully. It was a slow, detailed process that was both exciting and sobering. Nine sub-groups articulated their five statements for 2010 and then the entire body “clumped” similar ideas from each group into 11 distinct areas:

- Standards for the profession
- Resources
- Advocacy
- Education/Professional development
- Structure
- Values/Culture/Beliefs
- Individual networking and communication
- Certification
- Collaboration and partnerships
- Technology
- Branding and Marketing



VOTES

We stopped to take two critical votes, using Parliamentary procedure. Both motions were accepted by the delegates.

1. “That this group form a ‘national entity’”
2. “That this entity be a national membership association”



(See page 12 for full description of voting and discussions.)

Based on the clear agreement to move forward, delegates and non-voting participants next physically lined up in front of whichever of the 11 areas spoke to their individual passions. These “passion groups” then met to develop a single statement of purpose and to determine one or more people from each group who were willing to commit to a year of leadership work around that topic.

We ended at 5:00 with a preliminary team meeting together for dinner and plan to give passion group reports tomorrow morning._



Special Note:

At lunchtime, a unique meeting was hosted at a Denver restaurant by Liam LeDuc Clark and Jane Justice Leighty, the two funders of COVAA. They invited funders from the Denver area to meet together and learn about the needs of the volunteer management community. Thirty-five funders attended.

“This has been the ‘perfect storm’ in the best sense of the term”

— Jane Justis

VOTING BY DELEGATES

After several working sessions where discussion centered on past associations, what organizations are presently available to leaders in the volunteer management field, and the future of the movement, it was time to take a consensus of the members as to the direction of the movement. Before moving forward, two key votes were needed. The outcome of these votes would determine the congress's subsequent direction.

Vote #1: Question: Will a new national entity be created?

Motion made by Joanna Johnson, seconded by Gretchen Jordan that a new national entity would be created.

Discussion: Is there a need to create a national entity? This vote will be taken to create a national entity with the thought of future growth to an international one. Discussion was also brought forth on the question of should we just collaborate with other organizations? We are gathered because there was a June meeting where a question was asked if there was a need for a new organization. This Congress was to get everyone together to make this decision. Possibly this may be premature, may want to look at other options.

Vote Taken:

YES	57
No	0

Vote #2: Question: Will it be a national membership association?

Motion made by Joan Brown, Linda Jahns seconded that this will be a national membership association.

Discussion: Will there be some liberty as to structure of the association. We are not yet voting on an organizational chart or structure. Some may not be able to vote without input from association (such as DOVIA) who sent them here. There was some fear of individual membership as opposed to organizational membership. Vote on table does not exclude any entity.

Vote Taken:

YES	58
NO	0
ABSTAIN	5

NOTE: Delegate numbers vary

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CONGRESS: DAY 3

December 6, 2006

The new steering committee was deep into discussion when the rest of the Congress arrived in the morning—they decided the previous night to reconvene at 7:30 am. Enthusiasm was running high.

The last session of the Congress opened with reports from the passion groups: Goal statements and preliminary action plans. The following are NOT final, but are shared here to allow non-attending colleagues the chance to get a flavor of what is being considered. This new entity will be guided by goals in these areas:



STANDARDS:

Establish, disseminate and adhere to volunteer program management industry standards of excellence.

RESOURCES:

Be the knowledge resource for leaders of volunteers.

ADVOCACY:

Increase the recognition and respect for the profession of volunteer management.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Provide professional development opportunities at a variety of levels, utilizing a variety of means.

VALUES/PRINCIPLES/MARKETING:

Create a statement of philosophy, a set of guiding principles, and marketing strategies that reflect the organization's spirit and brand that attracts a growing and diverse membership.



COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING:

Provide leaders of volunteers opportunities for interactive dialogue and information sharing through the [organization name] website, e-mail, and written correspondence.

CERTIFICATION:

Within the next 12 months, develop a memorandum of understanding with the new Council on Certification in Volunteer Administration.

COLLABORATION:

Develop strategic partnerships and relationships linking with existing national organizations.

TECHNOLOGY:

Explore and apply user-friendly, innovative and emerging technologies to support organizational goals.

The **STRUCTURE** team next committed to “research and recommend a structure for a strong national membership association, with the following elements:

- Membership criteria
- Entity name
- Fiscal, business plan
- Resource development
- Membership benefits
- Governance (by-laws, articles of incorporation, board development)
- Communication

The co-chairs of the Structure team are also the co-chairs of the steering committee, now calling itself the COVAA Steering Committee are **Rita Chick** and **Joanna Johnson**



“The most popular you’ll ever be is on election night.”

— Christine Nardecchia

The Steering Committee then asked all Congress participants to step up to the plate and contribute financially to the new entity. Forty-four participants wrote a check on the spot to be the FOUNDERS CIRCLE of donors. Everyone committed to return to their sponsor associations and raise more money. In addition, there were pledges of technical expertise assistance, ranging from accountants to lawyers to grant writers.



Next **Liam LeDuc Clarke** of the UPS Foundation spoke to the Congress and applauded the progress made. He also shared two critical questions that must be answered when approaching any resource, whether seeking money, expertise or time:

- 1. What good, for whom, at what cost—make the value proposition**
- 2. So what? Why this work is so important? What measurable, tangible things can be produced?**

He then committed the Volunteer Impact Fund to help us make the connections between this effort and potential funders once we are in the position to make our case statement and know what resources we want.

Jane Justis shared her favorite definition of philanthropy:

“The practice of returning to the community pot of assets what which you have taken out...and perhaps a smidgen more.”

And so you can't separate the giving of money and volunteerism—we are part of the philanthropic movement. Volunteer program managers tend to avoid (run from) fundraising, but no funder will contribute to something that is not supported first by its members. She then committed her Leighty Foundation to a matching grant of up to \$5,000.00 for all money raised from individuals.



Being good volunteer administrators, we did all the thank-yous to everyone involved in planning this Congress, especially to our incredible facilitator, Elaine Granata.

NEXT STEPS

The Congress ended with the following promises to field:

- The new COVAA Steering Committee committed to continuing the work started in Denver and, in turn, having the confidence and support of all Congress participants.
- Continued ongoing communication with the field (using the www.covaa.org site), including full financial transparency.
- Taking the naming of this entity seriously and waiting until research can be done on the best term for future outreach.
- Not permitting the various task forces formed here to operate in silos, but to find the overlapping circles of concern and activities.
- To seek involvement and input from the widest range of colleagues.



GET INVOLVED

All are welcome and encouraged to join the COVAA effort!

- **Stay informed** – If you are interested in receiving updates, please visit www.covaa.org and register an individual or association profile.
- **Lend your skills and talents** – Volunteers are still needed! If you want to help with any of the committee activities, please contact info@covaa.org.
- **Spread the word** – Tell as many colleagues as you know about this effort and direct them to www.covaa.org.
- **Support COVAA** – Support this effort through your contributions to keep the momentum alive. Contact info@covaa.org to find out how you can make a difference with your contributions.



APPENDIX A: STEERING COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs: **Rita Chick**, American Red Cross
 Joanna Johnson, DOVIA Austin

- Betty Aldworth, Project Angel Heart
- Deirdre Araujo, San Francisco Volunteer Manager Coalition
- Erin Barnhart, Action Without Borders/Idealist.org
- Vickie Bateman, Volunteer Center National Network Council
- Jeri Bush, Florida Association of Volunteer Centers
- Sherry Davis, Arkansas DHHS Division of Volunteerism
- Beverly Epps, American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services
- Audrey Harris, American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services
- Tiffani Hill, Best Friends Network
- Mary Kay Hood, Indiana Society of Directors of Volunteer Services
- Joanna Johnson, DOVIA Austin
- Laura Kinder, Colorado Volunteer Center Network
- Barbara Levine, Cincinnati Association for Volunteer Administrators
- Kenneth Manns, Cultural Volunteer Managers Council of Greater Philadelphia
- Betsy McFarland, Humane Society of the United States
- Todd McMullin, Samaritan Industries
- Frank November, Human Rights Campaign
- Nora Simmons Daly, Denver Metro Volunteers

Advisory

Christine Nardecchia

Sara Jane Rehnberg

Catherine Trapp

APPENDIX B: ALL COMMITTEES

Advocacy Committee

Chairs:

- Beverly Epps, American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services, H2U John Randolph Medical Center
- Erin Barnhart, Action Without Borders/Idealist.org
 - Joan Brown, Civic Center Volunteers, Marin County
 - Susan Cairy, DOVIA of the Inland Northwest, Spokane County Juvenile Court
 - Susan Eggert, Delaware Volunteer Resource Center
 - Gail Elberg, New York Association for Volunteer Administration, All Stars Project, Inc.
 - Theresa Kerry, Northwest Michigan Association of Volunteer Administrators, Catholic Human Services
 - Sally Kutyla, Delaware Valley Association of Volunteer Administrators, Kimmel Center, Inc
 - Heather Lombardo, Volunteer Administrators' Network of Central Ohio, COSI
 - Debbie Macon, Metropolitan Detroit Volunteer Administrators Network, Charter Township of West Bloomfield
 - Wanda Repke, Northwest Michigan Association of Volunteer Administrators, MSU Extension 4-H
 - Marlene Wilson, Volunteer Management Associates

Certification Committee

Chairs:

- Sherry Davis, Arkansas DHHS Division of Volunteerism, Ark. Dept. Of Health and Human Services
- Jeri Bush, Florida Association of Volunteer Centers, VolunteerLEON
 - Brenda Barkley, Rochester Area Administrators of Volunteer Services, Highland Hospital Auxillary Board
 - Sandy DeMarco, DOVIA LA, Pasadena Humane Society and SPCA
 - Mary Matayoshi, Volunteer Resource Center/CVM-HI Alumni Assn., Volunteer Resource Center of Hawaii
 - Sarah Jane Rehnborg, Volunteer Champions Initiatives, University of Texas
 - Gigi Rolfles, Georgia Association of Volunteer Administrators Volunteer Macon
 - Amy Vandegrift, Mid Valley Volunteer Managers Association A.C., Gilbert's Discovery Village
 - LaVerne Campbell, Volunteers of America/National Organizations' Volunteerism Network
 - Sarah Christian, National Multiple Sclerosis Society Volunteer Managers

- Jacqueline Close, American Association for Museum Volunteers, Denver Museum of Nature and Science
- Jean Doty, Wisconsin Association of Directors of Volunteer Service, St. Joseph's Hospital
- Kenneth Manns, Cultural Volunteer Managers Council of Greater Philadelphia, Free Library of Philadelphia
- Paula Meadows, American Association for Museum Volunteers, Denver Museum of Nature and Science
- Donna Stutler, Central Indiana Assoc. for Volunteer Administrators

Communications Committee

Chair:

- Betsy McFarland, Association of Animal Shelter Volunteer Managers, The Humane Society of the United States
 - Esther Cantu, San Antonio Volunteer Administrators, The Volunteer Center at United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County
 - Judy Frazier, So. Calif. Association of Directors of Volunteer Services, City of Hope
 - Karen Jackson, DOVIA Des Moines, Mosaic
 - Sonja Preston, St. Louis Council of Directors of Volunteer Services, St. Louis Arc

Fiscal/Business Planning Committee

- Audrey Harris, American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services
- Barbara Levine, Cincinnati Association for Volunteer Administrators, AIDS Volunteers of Cincinnati

Professional Development Committee

Chairs:

- Vickie Bateman, Volunteer Center National Network Council, Volunteer Action Center of Bartholomew County
- Tiffani Hill, Best Friends Network, Best Friends Animal Society
 - Rita Alexander, Denver DOVIA, University of Colorado Hospital
 - Loretta Bacon, Association for Volunteer Administration of Central Arizona, City of Phoenix - Human Services Dept.
 - Betty Greene, Cultural Volunteer Managers Council of Greater Philadelphia, The Pennsylvania Horticulture Society
 - Diane Hentges, Kansas Association for Volunteer Centers, United Way of Wyandotte County

- Cheryl North-Dickerson, Council of Volunteer Administrators or Metropolitan Atlanta, Inc.
- Joy Pearce, North Carolina Association of Volunteer Administrators, Volunteer Wayne & RSVP/Wayne Community College
- Mary Lynn Perry, DOVIA Sacramento, City of Sacramento
- Linda Kay Russell, Greater Williamsburg Association for Volunteer Administration, Sentara Hospice

Resouces Committee

Chairs:

- Betty Aldworth, Project Angel Heart
- Laura Kinder, Colorado Volunteer Center Network, Volunteer Connection of Boulder County
- Nora Simmons Daly, Denver Metro Volunteers
 - Adam Molzer, DOVIA of Larimer County, United Way of Larimer County
 - Gretchen Jordan, Northwest Oregon Volunteer Administrators Association, AARP Oregon
 - Nancy Young, Managers of Volunteers for the Environment, Colorado Division of Wildlife

Standards Committee

Chair:

- Mary Kay Hood, Indiana Society of Directors of Volunteer Services, Hendricks Regional Health
 - Donna Gardner, Colorado Springs DOVIA, Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs
 - Andrea Littleton, Delaware Association of Volunteer Administrators, Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children
 - Kathy Perun, Greater Richmond Association for Volunteer Administration
 - Angela Wells, Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains/PPFA

Structure Committee

Chairs:

- Rita Chick, American Red Cross
- Joanna Johnson, DOVIAustin, Town Lake Animal Services
 - Wanda Lee Bailey, DOVIA San Diego
 - Betsy Carr, American Red Cross
 - Kathy Fialho, Wisconsin Volunteer Coordinators Association
 - Linda Jahns, Wisconsin Volunteer Coordinators Association, Columbia St. Mary's Hospital

- Valerie Jones, Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration, Community Volunteer Service and Senior Centers
- Joseph Martinez, DOVIA Albuquerque, Habitat for Humanity
- Karen McDonald, Coordinators of Volunteers for Anne Arundel County, Anne Arundel County Dept. of Detention Facilities
- Joe Spain, Metropolitan Detroit Volunteer Administrators Network, The Guidance Center

Technology Committee

Chairs:

- Deirdre Araujo, San Francisco Volunteer Manager Coalition, Exploratorium
- Todd McMullin, Samaritan Industries
 - Mike Brady, Samaritan Industries
 - Joan Cardellino, California Association of Hospitals and Health Systems
 - Jon Cirome, Volunteer Match
 - Susan Ellis, Energize, Inc.
 - Russ Finkelstein, Action Without Borders/Idealist.org

Values/Principles Committee

Chair:

- Frank November, Human Rights Campaign
 - Pam Feldmann
 - Vickie Leigh, National State Parks Volunteer Coordinators, Colorado State Parks
 - Kristen Lueth, DOVIA SE South Dakota, Center for Active Generations

Congress of Volunteer Administrator Associations

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