Evaluate Your Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement

By Yvette Boysen

Inviting volunteers into your nonprofit likely means they will have access to clients and confidential information. To protect these individuals and keep information private, many organizations require volunteers to sign a confidentiality agreement, but is yours up-to-date?

Shepherd’s Table (Silver Spring, MD) recently updated its confidentiality agreement to include verbiage that matches today’s technology. The revised document now references digital communication and various media formats — “hardcopy, photocopy, automated and/or electronic form.”

“In an environment where social media is prevalent, we are especially mindful of the sharing of photos and/or information regarding the organization, its staff, clientele and other volunteers,” explains Jilna Kothary, senior development and communications associate.

The one-page document informs incoming volunteers that “all data, materials, knowledge and information” coming from the nonprofit — regardless of how it is obtained (digitally, in person, etc.) — is privileged and cannot be shared with anyone or in any capacity. The document goes on to say if the volunteer does not follow the agreement, he or she may face disciplinary action and possible termination.

Although there is no place for a volunteer to physically or electronically sign the document itself, Kothary says it will soon be housed in the organization’s volunteer handbook, which all volunteers must agree to before registering for a shift.

Source: Jilna Kothary, Senior Development and Communications Associate, Shepherd’s Table, Silver Spring, MD. Phone (301) 585-6463, ext. 6. E-mail: jilnakothary@shepherdstable.org. Website: www.shepherdstable.org

Specify Needed Volunteer Hours by Department

Share detailed numbers of hours required to manage your nonprofit on your volunteer Web page to offer a clear understanding of the importance volunteers have within your organization. Clearly defining volunteer need by department not only helps volunteer managers define and fill their recruiting needs, but also provides a detailed picture to volunteers, staff and the community, the specific hours needed for volunteers to serve at your nonprofit.

An example of how a nonprofit could spell out their departmental volunteer needs is shown below. This simple step can really make an impact on your volunteer program — start tabulating today!

- Member information desk = 110 hours.
- Computer assistance = 57 hours.
- Marketing efforts = 40 hours.
- Processing member requests = 95 hours.
- Youth services = 50 hours.
- Special projects = 20 hours.

Source: Ashley Poirier, Marketing Manager, Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito, Solana Beach, CA. Phone (858) 755-9371. E-mail: ashbgc@gmail.com. Website: www.bgcsandieguito.org

Abraham Rodriguez, Administrative and Volunteer Coordinator, Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito, Solana Beach, CA. Phone (858) 755-9371. E-mail: volunteer@bgcsandieguito.org. Website: www.bgcsandieguito.org

Catchy Titles Capture Attention of Would-Be Volunteers

The socialite, the aquafan, the leader and the foodie are just some of the clever category names Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito (Solana Beach, CA) use to catch the attention of prospective volunteers.

“It’s a fun and playful approach to draw in community members and a great way for people to relate to specific parts of our organization,” explains Ashley Poirier, marketing manager.

In the fall of 2016, the nonprofit grouped its volunteer opportunities into seven main categories, each with its own catchy name (www.bgcsandieguito.org/give/volunteer) in an attempt to highlight the variety of options available and draw people in based on their area of interest or expertise. Under each category name is a brief description of the role(s). Specific responsibilities are available, as well.

“Using these categories really helps organize and streamline our volunteer program from an administration standpoint,” Poirier adds. “It’s been extremely helpful in terms of marketing and recruiting volunteers, because there is a defined and relatable purpose while being exciting to look at and read.”

Additionally, Abraham Rodriguez, administrative and volunteer coordinator, says this strategy has opened the door to intentional conversations about expectations and commitments, to which volunteers have been more responsive.

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