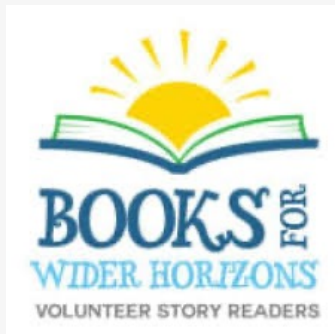




June 23, 2026

California State Library Summit
Scholarship Recipients Present:

What We Learned at the 2026 National Summit on Volunteer Engagement

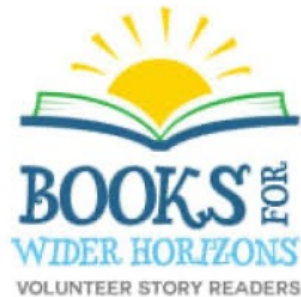


Kam De Leon-Fong (they/them/siya)

Library Assistant – Books for Wider Horizons Storytime Coordinator
Oakland Public Library, Children's Services

Community-Centered Volunteer Recruitment

- ***Key Takeaway***
 - Volunteer engagement grows when community members are invited to contribute their cultural knowledge, languages, and lived experiences in ways that are visible and valued within the program.
- ***Storytime Program Application***
 - Expand outreach through local businesses, faith communities, service clubs, community centers, and caregiver networks to engage multilingual and culturally diverse volunteers who can share nursery rhymes, stories, and traditions that reflect the families served.
- ***Impact***
 - Students experience Storytimes that more closely reflect their languages, cultures, and lived experiences, strengthening engagement and connection to early literacy.

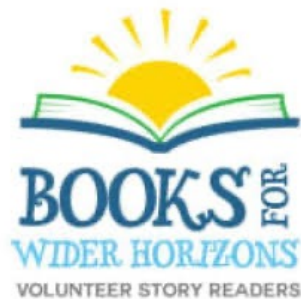


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Fostering Meaningful and Inclusive Volunteer Learning

- ***Key Takeaway***
 - Adult learners thrive when training is interactive, responsive to different learning styles, and includes opportunities for reflection, connection, and engagement.
- ***Storytime Program Application***
 - Enhance volunteer training with brain breaks, icebreakers, and reflection activities while expanding content to include Gender Inclusion, Neurodiversity, and Mandated Reporter training.
- ***Impact***
 - Volunteers will feel more prepared, supported, and confident in creating inclusive Storytime environments that respond to the diverse cultural backgrounds, identities, and learning needs of students.



Kam De Leon-Fong (they/them/siya)

Library Assistant – Books for Wider Horizons Storytime Coordinator
Oakland Public Library, Children's Services

Communicating Clearly, Assertively, and Respectfully with Volunteers

- ***Key Takeaway***

- Volunteer relationships are strengthened when communication is clear, direct, and respectful, with consistent expectations and space for feedback and dialogue.

- ***Storytime Program Application***

- Use consistent, transparent communication with volunteers that clearly outlines expectations, provides timely updates, and addresses concerns directly while maintaining respect and active listening.
- When needed, thoughtfully reassess role fit and transition volunteers into opportunities that better align with their strengths to support strong engagement in Storytime.

- ***Impact***

- Volunteers feel supported, understood, and valued, strengthening trust and accountability while ensuring consistent, high-quality Storytime experiences for students.



Simi Valley Public Library

Jimena Jaramillo, Literacy Coordinator

2 year old program; focus on how to manage/retain a growing volunteer workforce

Key takeaways:

- Pilot ideas and make improvements as needed
- 3 essentials for a positive volunteer environment:
 - Clear values, expectations, and goals
 - Open communication
 - Recognition & appreciation



Simi Valley Public Library Adult Literacy Program

Improvements made thanks to conference takeaways:

Clear Values, Expectations, & Goals

- Revamping volunteer descriptions, intake process, and orientation to reflect expectations and program goals more clearly
- Creating volunteer roles with community and volunteers in mind

Open Communication

- Creating surveys to gather volunteer feedback
- Transparently sharing reasons for making decisions
- Engaging in more informal chat with volunteers

Recognition & Appreciation

- Revamping volunteer shout-out in literacy newsletter
- Investing in program-branded promotional merch to celebrate milestones
- Hosting first volunteer mixer in August



Simi Valley Public Library Adult Literacy Program





Plant the Seed of Volunteerism

Diana Learned, Coordinator Volunteer Services

- **Build Buy In: *Tell your library's story***
 - Make sure volunteers, staff, and community members are all aware of the contributions coming from others. It's a two-way street - **Inform everyone!**
 - Learn how to speak to people in the way that specifically interest them – **Consider what's important to this person.**
- **Start Somewhere: *Give yourself permission to speak a draft***
 - Change is inevitable – **Recognize the difference between managing and leading change.**
 - We are the stewards of this emerging profession - **Ask for a seat at the leadership table!**



Water the Seeds: Plan Strategically

Diana Learned, Coordinator Volunteer Services

- **Develop Mission-Driven Volunteer Goals**
 - Integrate volunteer goals into strategic planning documents
 - Communicate strategic volunteer goals to staff and stakeholders at all organization levels
- **Share Out Strategically**
 - Share volunteer **statistics** regularly
 - Tell the **story** of what was done with the help of volunteers (or what wouldn't have been done without their help)
 - Enhance impact by including volunteer **research** sources

Volunteers are not just a program. They are a critical strategy and the engine that moves so many industry goals.





**Daisy Chavez, Tulare County Library
Volunteer & Donation Coordinator
Visalia, California**



- Provided me with Brainstorming Ideas:
 - Implement equity trainings, Improve Volunteer website (ADA accessible), where to find support (this group)
- Shifting the idea - from *what volunteers can't do* to *how we can creatively unlock what they can do.*
 - Volunteer Family Days & BIPOC Friendly Days
 - Connect the Friends groups



Is AI Good or Bad?

Madelyn Blaha

Teen Service Librarian & Volunteer Coordinator

Santa Clarita Public Library

Is AI Good or Bad?

What You Think You Know is Not Reality

Dana Litwin, CVA

Wednesday, March 18
Session 1

What works

- **Robotics:**
- Dangerous-to-humans tasks in space, deep sea, volcanoes, volatile chemicals environment
- **Medicine:**
- Detecting and diagnosing diseases (cancer).
- Developing cures for diseases with predictive models

Math:

- Predictive models.
- Quantum computing.
- Structural/civil engineering.
- Technology Physics.
- Astronomy

Is AI Good or Bad?

What You Think You Know is Not Reality

Dana Litwin, CVA

Wednesday, March 18
Session 1

What doesn't

Anything to do with human emotions:

- Therapy apps.
- Crisis lines.
- "Rage-gagement" bots!

Life/Death decisions:

- War.
- Policing.
- Prisons.
- Medical insurance.
- Medical advice (Amazon, Google)!

*Many companies advertise the use of AI but outsource human labor!

- Meta Ray-Band Smart Glasses: **Nairobi, Kenya**
- Waymo: **Philippines**



Generational Trends In Volunteering

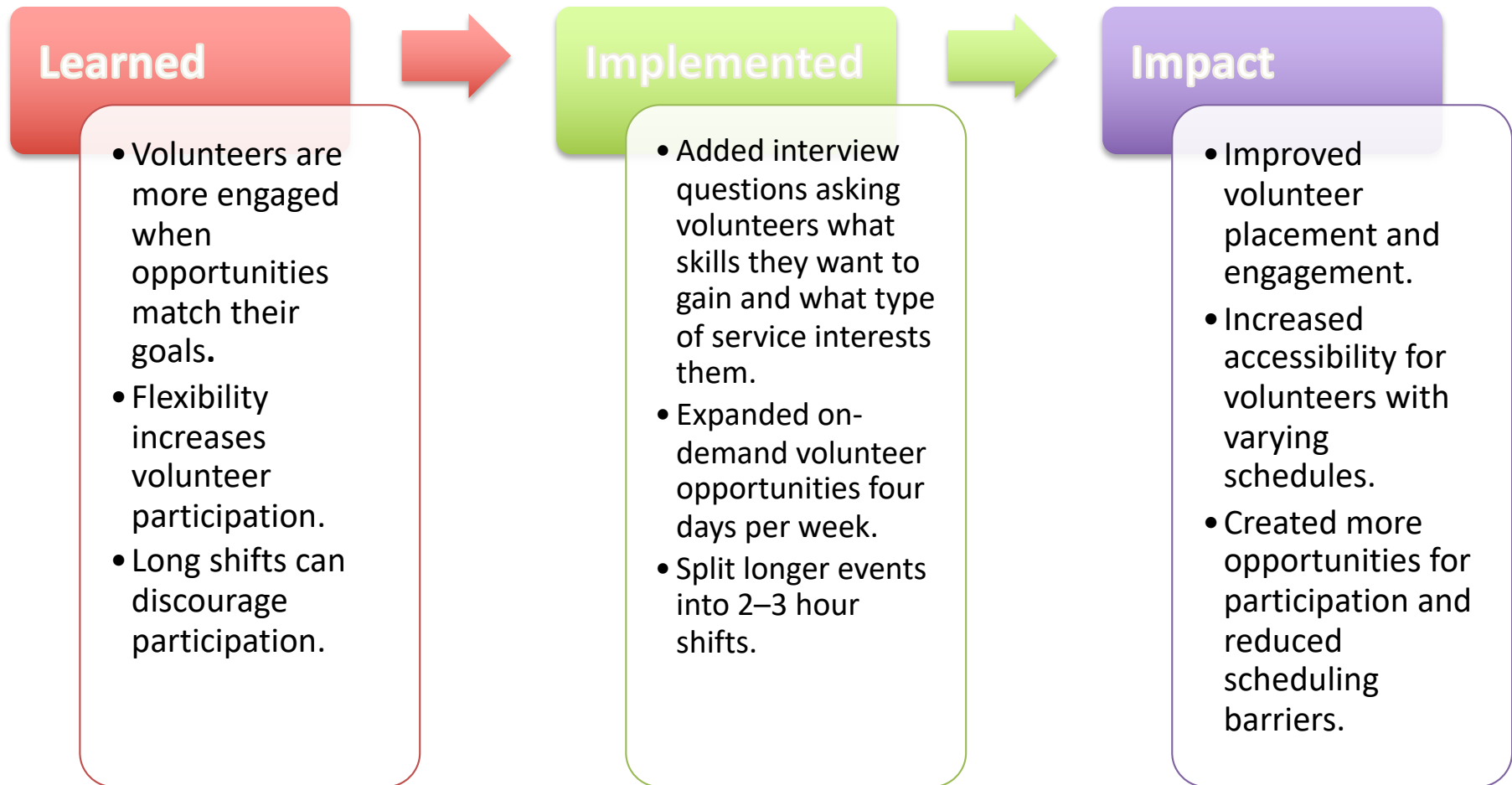
Taylor Wisniewski, Literacy Coordinator, Moreno Valley City Library

- **Baby Boomers**
 - Busier than ever, looking for flexibility
- **Gen Xers**
 - Value sense of community, seeking skills-based or mentorship opportunities
- **Millennials**
 - Value impact, looking for family volunteering opportunities
- **Gen Zers**
 - Passionate about causes, inclusivity
 - Looking for virtual opportunities, on-demand volunteering



Turning Learning Into Action

Leticia Soria-Acosta, Volunteer Coordinator
Long Beach Public Library





Key Takeaways and Future Goals

What Stood Out

Volunteers are more likely to stay engaged when assignments align with their interests and personal goals

Volunteer opportunities can help participants develop transferable skills and gain experience for future employment

Creating opportunities for individuals with disabilities strengthens community engagement and expands access

Future Goals

Develop a formal Volunteer Recruitment Plan

Expand volunteer opportunities for community members with disabilities

Create more meaningful and skill-based volunteer assignments

Implement volunteer appreciation and recognition tools

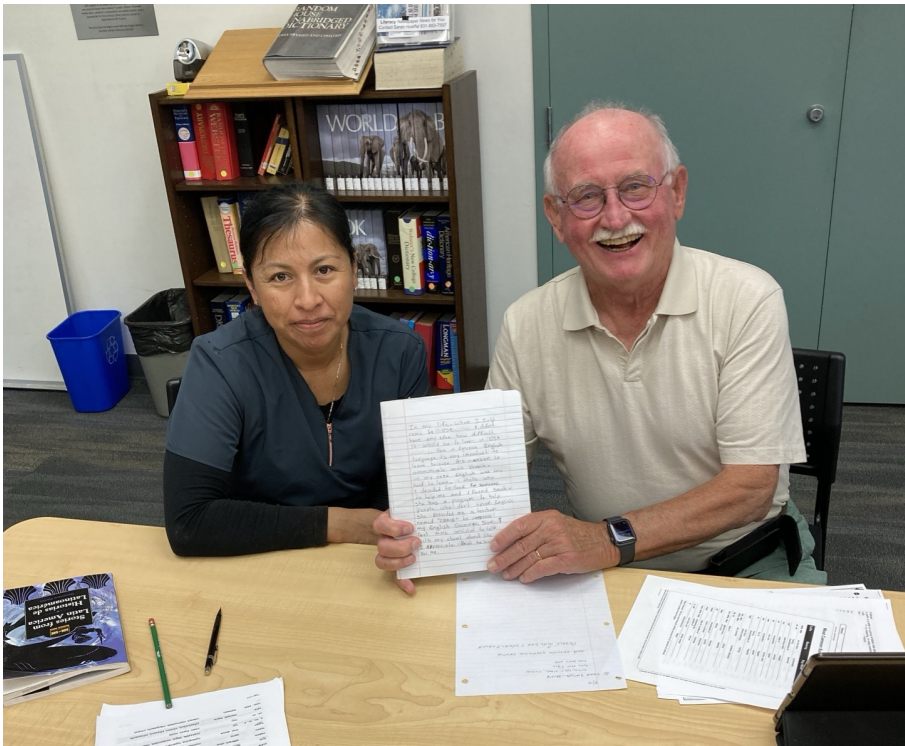
Offer LinkedIn recommendations



Takeaways

**Sarah Hoeffel, Literacy & Volunteer Services Manager
Monterey County Library**

- There are difficulties and joys to every Volunteer manager job.
- Of those joys and difficulties we have many in common and some are location/industry specific.



Full Employment Act



- Both sharing about our great ideas and venting about challenges is paramount to survival and thriving.
- While it's important to advertise how fun it is to be a volunteer, preparation is key (policies, training, etc)



Desireé Castro-Manner

Library Assistant - Volunteer Services & Early Literacy

Contra Costa County Library

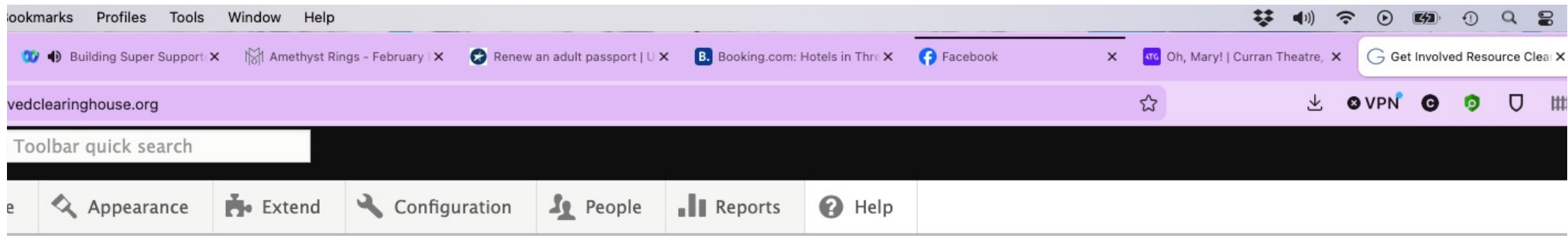
**Volunteer
Engagement
as Outreach**

**Telling the
Volunteer
Story**

**Volunteer
Engagement &
Library
Strategic Plan**

**Diversifying
Volunteers**

getinvolvedclearinghouse.org



[Home](#) | [Management Tools](#) | [Position Descriptions](#) | [Training Materials](#) | [Photos](#) | [Search](#)

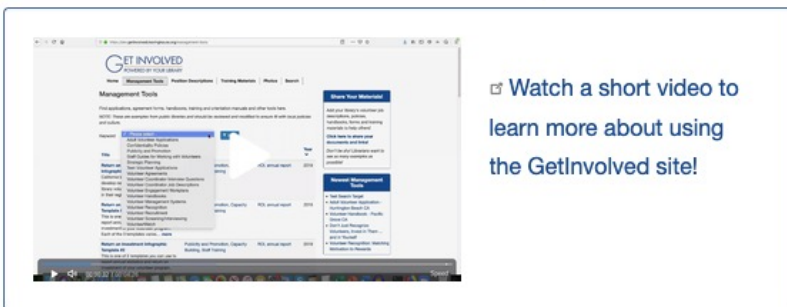
[View](#) | [Edit](#) | [Delete](#) | [Manage display](#) | [Revisions](#)

20440 views

Learn from your public library colleagues who are creating effective volunteer engagement strategies, tools and practices that will keep you from re-inventing the wheel! Search the database of *Get Involved* resources and enhance your success in volunteer engagement. Resources include:

- **Management Tools**, Policies, and Handbooks
- High Impact Volunteer **Position Descriptions**
- **Training Materials**, Videos, and Tutorials about best practices
- Professional **Photos** related to position descriptions

Learn more about the Get Involved Resource Clearinghouse.



Watch a short video to learn more about using the GetInvolved site!

What's New for June 2026

Recently Added Materials

9 Proven Ways to Boost Volunteer Morale

State of Corporate Volunteering 2026 Report; Finds Growing Chasm Between Corporate Interests and Nonprofit Needs as Employee Volunteering Reaches Record Levels

A Guide for Creating Inclusive Volunteer Position Descriptions (Note: For more inclusiveness strategies, use the

Upcoming Events

June 17 - 10:30 am Pacific Time
- **National Library Volunteer Engagement Leaders: FREE** live open ZOOM discussion. **We meet every Wednesday on Zoom** - All are welcome! Join us any time with a problem or just to listen in at
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85199850785?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85199850785?pwd=WHorb3h2ckgvZjhZT1B...)
[pwd=WHorb3h2ckgvZjhZT1B...](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85199850785?pwd=WHorb3h2ckgvZjhZT1B...)
access code: Volunteer

FREE WEBINARS

Jun 16 - **From Overwhelmed to Organized: Priority Setting Tools for Volunteer Managers** - Register here: <https://volunteerfairfax.app.neoncrm...>
<https://volunteerfairfax.app.neoncrm...>
[path=%2Fportal%2Fevents%](https://volunteerfairfax.app.neoncrm...)