

## Our 25th Anniversary Year!

### A Fond Farewell to VRC and Friends

Ten years ago I moved to NYC to have a new adventure...and what a ride it has been! The Volunteer Referral Center introduced me to many volunteer positions around the city and then to many new friends. My past 5 years as President of the VRC have been most exciting and challenging. We came together – Board, staff, volunteers and loyal supporters– to continue our work of matching New Yorkers to volunteer positions at one or more of our 300 partner nonprofit agencies. We were able to do this for twenty-five years! I thank you very much. It was a pleasure working with you all. With the unemployment rate still high and the need for services by the nonprofit world increasing, we were able to help job seekers by engaging them as volunteers where they were able to learn new skills, add interest and value to their resumes, and expand their network. Also, we were able to help nonprofits by introducing them to highly-skilled volunteers who were able to help them further their causes.

The VRC also started several new volunteer recruitment programs in collaboration with partner agencies. These informational seminars inform prospective volunteers about positions in their specific fields:

- **Volunteer Opportunities in Healthcare** co-sponsored with Bellevue Hospital
- **Volunteering Is Ageless** co-sponsored with Health Advocates for Older People
- **Volunteering in the Arts** co-sponsored with The All Stars Project

**VIPP** (Volunteer Interviewing and Personal Presentation) another new program we developed to help volunteers as well as job seekers write resumes and improve their interviewing skills.

I am very pleased to pass the presidency to my successor and long-time friend, Robert Price. He has been instrumental in many of the new programs and the planning of the organization. I am confident that his experience, drive and expertise will bring the VRC to a new level of success while maintaining our valuable services to NYC.

I will be moving to Delaware for another adventure but will miss everyone very much. I will be back to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala. I hope you will join us.

Elaine Orr

### Letter from the President

I am extremely honored to be the new President of the Volunteer Referral Center, and to have the opportunity to lead the VRC into its next quarter-century of “expert placement and personal service.” It goes without saying that my dear friend Elaine Orr (I have known her since high school!) has done an extraordinary job of guiding the VRC during one of the most difficult times of economic challenges in New York City. She is ending her tenure having charted a promising road of great accomplishments. Remarkable work! Kudos, my friend.

My passion for volunteering has been a constant throughout my diverse career in both the corporate and nonprofit worlds. I have organized hundreds of volunteers to work at one of the largest youth conferences in the nation; served as a corporate and nonprofit organizer of “Give Back” days; and my present position is volunteer/intern coordinator at the All Stars Project. In short, I know first-hand the contributions and rewards of volunteer work and applaud the work of our dedicated volunteers—past and present.

In 2011, my partner Douglas and I set off on an ambitious journey to challenge ourselves and fulfill a lifelong dream of

living, working, and volunteering in New York City. I was introduced and recruited to VRC only three years ago, but the warmth, dedication and passion of the staff and board have inspired me during that short time to lead a two-year strategic planning initiative, form an advisory council, and become a VRC spokesperson at numerous events, promoting volunteering and the great work of VRC and our partner agencies.

During the ongoing and often overwhelming surge of technological advancement, it is heartwarming to know that old traditions stand true. The VRC still provides individual, personal service in a welcoming environment where prospective volunteers are comfortable exploring the range of opportunities afforded by our network of almost 300 partner agencies.

I thank you for your support and look forward to working with you to face new challenges and opportunities, and to achieve positive, rewarding and creative results for the future.

Robert E. Price





Food Prep at God's Love We Deliver



Tutoring at Go Project



VRC YPC at Concern Spring Run

## VCR Celebrates Volunteers and Partner Agencies in Action

### Volunteer Opportunities in The Arts



Diane Stiles, *The All Stars Project*; Eileen Condon, *Center for Traditional Music & Dance*; Susan Dennison, *The National Jazz Museum of Harlem*; Robert Price, *VRC*; Stephanie Klocke, *Free Arts NYC*; Maritza Carmona, *El Museo Del Barrio*; Gail Morse, *Big Apple Greeter*; Craig Bannister, *All Stars*; Elaine Orr, *VRC*.

Do artistic efforts excite you? If so, New York City provides myriad opportunities to work closely with creative professionals as a volunteer. For example, on February 11, the VRC, together with the Castillo Theatre/All Stars Project, presented **Volunteering in the Arts**, during which representatives of the following nonprofit arts organizations explained how volunteers can become involved with their programs:

**Castillo Theatre/All Stars Project** brings young people, ages 5 to 25, into multi-cultural presentations that encourage participants to see possibilities for themselves and to take risks performing plays and hip-hop displays that draw directly on performers' backgrounds.

**Free Arts NYC** goes into schools and community centers where its staff encourages children to collaborate with their families on a range of arts projects designed to improve communication and cooperation among family members.

**Center for Traditional Music and Dance** is dedicated to the preservation of folk arts, including music, dance, handcrafts, and more. The Center creates programs that encourage local folk artists, while displaying and recording their efforts.

**El Museo del Barrio** preserves, displays, and celebrates Latin American cultures. It mounts exhibits and stages presentations both in its own museum and at other venues.

**The National Jazz Museum of Harlem** similarly preserves and celebrates cultural traditions, but these are all related to jazz. The museum presents exhibits, offers performance workshops, and stages live performances both at the museum and in theaters and schools around the country.

**Big Apple Greeter** introduces visitors to unscripted volunteers who lead the out-of-towners into neighborhoods that the visitors want to see and that are unique to the city.

If these or other volunteer opportunities appeal to you, the Volunteer Referral Center can connect you with arts-focused institutions. To contribute your time and skills to a nonprofit group, call the Center at (212) 889-4805 to schedule a free appointment.

### Volunteer Referral Center

#### Welcomes New Agency Partners:

Bottomless Closet

Micro Museum

NYCpublic.org

Northside Center for Child Development

Presbyterian Senior Services

Project Renewal

Riverstone Senior Services

Saint Barnabas High School





Activities with children and seniors at the YM &amp; YWHA of Washington Heights/Inwood

Mentoring at Go Project

M a k i n g   a   D i f f e r e n c e   i n   N e w   Y o r k   f o r   2 5   Y e a r s

### Free VRC Workshop Helps Volunteers Write Resumes

Taking time and care to prepare a resume tailored to a specific job is a well known and accepted tenet of effective job search. Today it is equally true when you are applying for volunteer opportunities, says Prema Menon, Board member of the Volunteer Referral Center (VRC), New York City, who created and leads the Center's free workshop "Volunteer Interviewing and Personal Presentation Program" (VIPP). "Prospective volunteers not only need a resume, but also one that is well prepared," she says.

Menon advises workshop participants to determine which skills are needed in the volunteer position they are applying for and to list those that they have, in bullet format, in the skills summary section of their resume. "It is also helpful to list your previous volunteer work and interests closer to the beginning of the resume rather than at the end," she says. "Busy volunteer directors only have a few seconds to review your resume."

Menon's perspective on job hunting and volunteerism is well honed and holistic. A master coach, professional trainer and Director of Human Resources and Volunteer Services for the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter, New York City, she has been recruiting, interviewing and hiring candidates seeking both paid and volunteer positions for several years. "This economy no longer makes a distinction between these two types of positions in terms of hiring practices" she notes.

The interview for volunteer positions also requires advanced effort. According to Menon, interviewees should research the organization, develop a brief oral summary of their most relevant skills and experiences, and determine their availability (hours and days of the week). "Interviewers like to see that you have invested time in preparing for the interview," she points out.

A consummate professional, Menon is passionate about her work and the importance of volunteers. "Don't be afraid of suggesting a volunteer opportunity that is not listed, especially if you have a specific interest, talent or skill that might be useful to the organization. Nonprofits are always looking for new ways for volunteers to make a difference." Call VRC at 212-889-4805 to sign up for the next VIPP.

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Save the Date!

25th Anniversary Gala

Central Park Boathouse

September 16, 2014