THE CITY OF
BLOOMINGTON
VOLUNTEER CENTER

a case study

Celebrating 39 Years!

GetConnected
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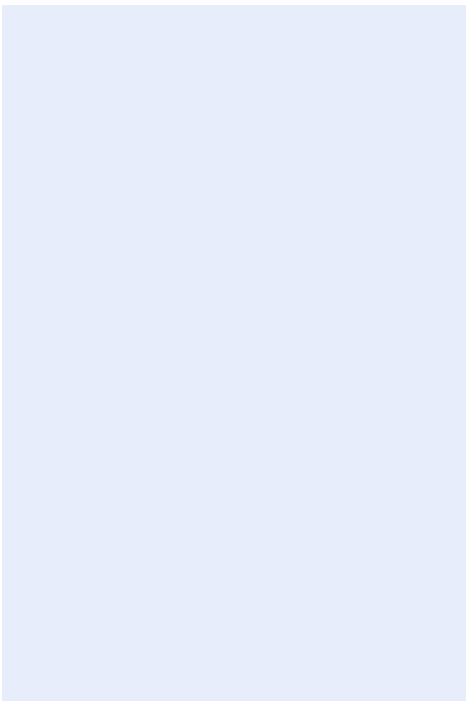
THE CUSTOMER

The City of Bloomington Volunteer Network is the go-to volunteer resource center for Bloomington, Indiana.

In 2016, the Network adopted Get Connected as its volunteer-management system, and since then, it has linked thousands of volunteers with service opportunities for several hundred area agencies. In 2018 alone, nearly 300 needs were added, yielding over 2,200 responses with more than 7,800 volunteer hours submitted. Initiatives such as the Community Wish List, Be More Awards, and One Community have served to engage and recognize volunteers and nonprofits.

One initiative in particular, the Summer of Service, focuses on teen volunteerism and has resulted in 3,944 summer volunteer hours logged by teens in 2017. It's no surprise that this Get Connected site has such robust engagement by both agencies and volunteers. A wealth of custom pages help make the site both more informative and easier to navigate, and a combination of spotlights and images direct volunteers to specialized areas.

the FIGURES | 2018

+ 300 needs added

+ 2,200 volunteer responses

+ 7,800 volunteer hours logged

An active social media presence also helps ensure that the community knows about the latest volunteer opportunities available. Whether it's a dad looking for family-friendly opportunities, a teen looking for a summer volunteer project, or an agency manager looking for online communication tips, site visitors don't have to look very hard to find what they need. Much of this ease of use is due to the efforts of the Volunteer Network's interim director, Lucy Schaich.

MEET LUCY SCHAICH

As the primary manager of the Bloomington Volunteer Network Get Connected site, Schaich uses a mix of the latest technology and established best practices to bring nonprofits and volunteers together to meet countless needs in the community.

Schaich joined the Network's staff back in 2000, when the focus was more on sharing printed resources to engage volunteers with nonprofits. As technology became more affordable over the years, Schaich's role morphed. In 2016, she researched and set up Get Connected as the Network's new volunteer management software—and she's been managing it ever since.

For Schaich, however, managing a Connect platform isn't primarily about working in technology; it's about relationships. As such, she wears the dual hats of site manager and customer relationship manager every day. For her, site management involves extensive and ongoing "communications with the agencies, and being that liaison" between the Network and area nonprofits. "That has always been my thing," she explains. "It goes along with updating the information [in Get Connected, ensuring that agency profiles and needs are current]. I basically build these relationships with the agencies and answer any questions, as kind of their local customer service person."

Schaich also works with volunteers, fielding requests about service opportunities as needed. "I actually use [the site] from the front end, the public end" she says, explaining that she acts as a "concierge" for those volunteers who contact the Network by phone or email.

Of course, much of the Volunteer Network's volunteer engagement occurs through the site itself, and Schaich's skillful management of Get Connected has resulted in a site where any volunteer can find the service opportunities that meet their skills and interests.
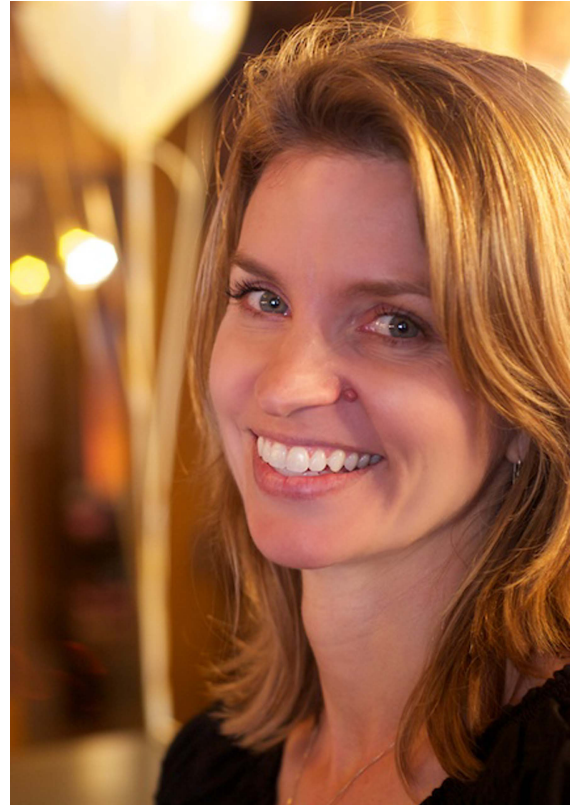
Schaich's experience working with both agency managers and volunteers has given her a unique understanding of the people who use Get Connected in her community. This understanding has, in turn, guided her in the building and customization of the Volunteer Network's Get Connected site. For example, in managing and marketing the 2017 Summer of Service initiative for teens, Schaich worked diligently to provide an online experience that would appeal specifically to the younger demographic.

For Lucy Schaich, managing a Connect platform isn't just about technology; it's about relationships.

SUMMER OF SERVICE INITIATIVE

A collaboration between the Bloomington Volunteer Network and the Monroe County Youth Council (MCYC), Summer of Service was developed as a way to document and commend high-school students for their service and impact over the summer months. The initiative began in 2017, with 88 students taking on the challenge of 20+ hours of service that summer. Sixty-one students reached that goal, and the participants logged 3,944 hours that summer--well over the original, 1000-hour goal! Those hours equalled $92,221 * in volunteer impact for those organizations receiving service.

+ In summer 2017, teen volunteers' impact on the community was worth $92,221.

The 2017 Summer of Service kicked off with a spring Global Youth Service Day. "It's a big deal," says Schaich. "We get the kids out of school [and] the buses get them to the service sites, and they do a rally at this big community center." Following an appearance by the mayor, teens "get back on the buses and they go out to six or seven service sites," where they "volunteer for the day, have lunch together and reflect, and come back. And then they have ice cream together" before finally going back to class.

The kick-off event was meant to inspire teens to embrace volunteerism while introducing them to area nonprofits and service opportunities.

CITY OF BLOOMINGTON VOLUNTEER NETWORK'S
SUMMER OF SERVICE
MAY 30-AUGUST 8, 2017
READ MORE AND REGISTER ONLINE
BLOOMINGTONVOLUNTEERNETWORK.ORG

10 WEEKS
Summer is here! Make your time off count. Hang with friends, learn a new skill, meet people, and build your college resume. Volunteer.

ONE GOAL
The challenge is on for high school teens to log 1000 hours over the 10 weeks of summer. How many can you add to the challenge total?
1000 hours

GET STARTED
Add your name to the SOS roster at BloomingtonVolunteerNetwork.org/summerofservice

VOLUNTEER
Use the website to search, browse, and connect to opportunities open to high school teens. Make the connection and start volunteering.

LOG HOURS
Log your hours online to count them in the totals for the summer and be eligible for monthly prizes.

RECEIVE AWARDS
Monthly rewards and all participants who log at least 20 hours this summer receive a certificate & commendation
Looks good on college apps

SOS Details

Summer of Service Participants Receive:
- Receive perks according to your hours logged
  - June 20 Rally Tally – perks for 7+ hrs logged
  - July 11 Rally Tally – perks for 7+ & 14+ hrs logged
  - Aug 1 Rally Tally – perks for 7+ / 14+/ 20+ hrs logged
  - Aug 8 Rally Tally – special perk if 1000 total hrs logged by all participants
- Shout outs for the best #BtownSOSServiceSelfie in Bloomington Volunteer Network weekly promos
- An official City of Bloomington pin
- Participants logging 20+ hours receive a personalized certificate of achievement and a note of congratulations from the Mayor of Bloomington, John Hamilton and the Bloomington Volunteer Network certifying your participation and hourly achievement.

Guidelines:
- You must register to participate by entering your name as a Summer of Service participant for your hours to be counted.
- Hours must be logged through the Bloomington Volunteer Network website to be counted towards your hours total.
- All teens currently in high school or preparing to enter high school in the fall of 2017 are eligible to participate.
- Hours logged between May 30-August 8 will be counted towards your Summer of Service Totals.
- Hours do not need to be performed through a Bloomington Volunteer Network partner organization. Service may be informal - such as walking a neighbor's dog - or helping an existing organization such as Habitat for Humanity or the Community Kitchen.
- Hours must be verified to be included in your hours total.
- Volunteer activities must have been performed in Monroe County, Indiana.

Restricted Activities:
- Lobbying
- compensated service
- serving family
- proselytizing of personal beliefs and/or related church-affiliated activities

For the ten weeks following, teens would respond to needs posted on Get Connected, volunteer throughout Monroe County, and then log their hours, which are tallied and posted weekly. At the end of the summer, they would be rewarded based on how many volunteer hours they'd logged, receiving prizes such as tumblers, gift cards, Volunteer Network swag, and a letter of appreciation from the mayor.

Before all of that could happen, Schaich needed to set up a robust platform in Get Connected—one that would appeal particularly to teens, engaging them consistently over the ten weeks of the initiative and motivating them to continue volunteering and logging their service hours.

* Using the value of volunteer time ($23.38/hour) as calculated by The Independent Sector.

USER GROUPS
A TOOL FOR REPORTING & COMMUNICATION

Effective reporting and communication are vital for consistent volunteer engagement. Schaich knew that Summer of Service would need both. She needed simple way to measure volunteerism for the initiative. Teens needed ongoing, informative communication that included reminders to log hours, along with handy links to make logging hours as effortless as possible.

Not long before the Summer of Service kicked off, Galaxy Digital released Connect version 2.8. This version included the user groups feature, which site managers can use to group, track, and report on the work of volunteers participating in various service opportunities over time. Schaich set up the Summer of Service 2017 Volunteer user group that spring, making The Bloomington Volunteer Network among the first Galaxy clients to adopt the user groups tool.

Area teens were encouraged to sign up for the spring Global Youth Service Day, the kick-off event for the Summer of Service. To register, they needed to create an account on Get Connected. Once the accounts were in place, adding them to the user group was simple.

"We started with a group of about 50 kids [from the Monroe County Youth Council], Schaich explains. "They invited their peers to participate in the Global Youth Service Day" in the spring, "and so we had another 350 names of teenagers." She continues, "Instead of just doing the blank anonymous call saying, 'Hey your team registered on our site,' I went ahead made a user group out of all the kids who had already raised their hand and said they were interested in service." From there, she let them know that they had been added to the user group. They could attribute their hours to Summer of Service 2017, which made reporting a snap for Schaich.

Not only did the user group feature help Schaich to report on responses and hours for the Summer or Service teens, but it made it easier to communicate with them. "We emailed them through the site," she says. "I liked that I could just pick the user group [in the email blast] and say, 'Hey, here is your update.' It would go into their inbox on the site and to their email."

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> Lucy Schaich | Interim Director | City of Bloomington Volunteer Network

CUSTOM PAGES
EDUCATE , MOTIVATE , CELEBRATE

Adding volunteers to a user group was one thing; getting them to associate their responses with it was another. Because this step would be vital for reporting later on, Schaich's solution to the challenge was multifaceted. She created custom web pages that educated teens on how to use Get Connected, encouraged them to post hashtagged selfies of their service, and posted weekly tallies of teen volunteer hours. She shared this page directly with teen volunteers so that it was their "entry" to the Get Connected platform.

On the Summer of Service page, Schaich explains the steps for participating in the initiative, along with the general Summer of Service rules. "It's important to keep [the sign-up process] simple," says Schaich. "We made it a very easy '1-2-3' process. And we kept it visually simple. Because we knew they weren't going to stay long."

Not only did she strive to appeal to teens' need to find information quickly and move on, but she also tapped into their competitive spirits. "Teens do respond to competition, strangely enough!" she says, laughing. "So at different intervals throughout the summer, we would post who got the most hours."

The Summer of Service Leaderboard listed the top volunteers, along with their reported hours, and teens could easily see where they were in the goal ranking. "They could tell if they were just 25 hours off from getting a tumbler or a certificate." Knowing they had just a few more hours to go, many teens were motivated to volunteer a few more hours … and to log those hours when they were done.

Another factor that motivated teens was the encouragement to take selfies at their service sites and post them on social media with a Special Summer of Service hashtag. The Network then gave shout-outs for the "best #BtownSOSServiceSelfie" photos in their weekly promotions.

If you visit the Bloomington Volunteer Network's Get Connected site today, you'll see the pages linked above, along with a special resource page for teens who want to better their community through volunteerism. No matter what time of year, the City of Bloomington Volunteer Network has resources for their Get Connected site's youngest volunteers.

The Network didn't stop at custom pages to celebrate teens' accomplishments. In addition to publishing weekly features on the best #BtownSOSServiceSelfie photo, Schaich messaged the teens about the great job they'd done, included their accomplishments in the Network's eNewsletters, and later sent out a press release listing the teens who were honored, along with their volunteer hours.

SUMMER 2018
AN INSPIRATION-DRIVEN APPROACH

In early 2018, when the Volunteer Network's director retired and the office dwindled from two people to one, Schaich's role changed. She continued managing Get Connected, but she also took on many of the previous director's responsibilities. As interim director today, she jokingly describes herself as "now a party of one, with Get Connected as our support staff." She adds that she also depends on interns from Indiana University, who assist her with many of the site-maintenance duties she previously handled on her own.

Schaich's one-person office opted for a lower-key Summer of Service in 2018, but one that still appealed to younger audiences.

"We didn't get rid of Summer of Service," Schaich explains. "We just downgraded it a little bit this year and showed more inspirational stuff." The centerpiece of that effort was their popular "intern on the loose" feature—a college student who participated in various service projects throughout the summer and posted them on social media with the #summerofservice hashtag. Through this effort, the Volunteer Network was able to appeal to a wide audience, but to young people in particular. Even on a smaller scale #summerofservice continued to draw attention to area nonprofits and causes, inspire the community to look into various opportunities, and motivate volunteers by simultaneously entertaining them (with photos and videos) and promoting awareness.

BEYOND SUMMER

ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Lucy Schaich is a strong believer in the maxim, "Know Your Audience," and it's clear that she took it to heart in connecting with teen volunteers for Summer of Service in 2017, and in adjusting to a less resource-heavy approach in 2018. Here are some of the ways that Schaich ensures that the whole community feels both welcome at Get Connected and informed about area needs that fit their interests and schedules.

blog / social media

Schaich has repurposed the Get Connected blog tool as an announcement board for featured weekly volunteer opportunities. "I just grab the link [to the blog] and put it on Facebook," she explains, "and then I tag all the agencies that are in it," which both markets the nonprofits and builds goodwill between them and Bloomington Volunteer Network. Schaich also dresses the posts up with eye-catching images that highlight the featured agencies.

"see more" resources

Get Connected is more than a site for finding volunteer opportunities. At Bloomington Volunteer Network, it's also a bit of a library. "See more" resources are "like the old library resources, or one-sheets," Schaich explains. Set up as custom pages, many are geared toward nonprofits. "We'll have one about better group project planning, another about family volunteering, or one about working in nursing care facilities." A special nonprofit-resources page on the platform links to some of these resources, while others are available as individually posted needs.

custom pages as "side doors"

Schaich depends on her Get Connected custom web pages to create pages that can act as "side doors" to the site. "It can be disorienting" she says, to arrive at a site's main page and not know what to click next. So she creates "side doors"—unique custom pages that appeal to the audience, whether it's teen volunteers, high school students, agency managers, or parents looking for family-friendly opportunities —and sends those pages to their intended audiences. Many of these pages are also accessible on the main Get Connected page via spotlights and the image rotator.

traditional marketing channels

Never shy about adopting new technology, Schaich also relies on tried-and-true publicity resources as well. The Network publishes an eNewsletter, and new opportunities are posted weekly in the local paper. "We massage those opportunities into PSAs," explains Schaich, "which we then record for promotion on the radio station." PSAs are submitted to a radio hub that sends it out to a handful of other stations. She also shares opportunities on local talk radio. So whether the community is listening to the radio, reading the paper, checking social media, or visiting the Network's website, they are guaranteed to learn about ways to get involved.

IN CONCLUSION
MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

For Schaich, running a successful volunteer-management site requires a measure of tech-savviness, but it requires an even greater measure of relationship know-how. She's curious about technology and is quick to try new Get Connected features as they are introduced, but she always considers what would be best for her nonprofits and volunteers. Because she has gotten to know her audiences over the years, she is especially equipped to gear different areas of the website toward them—to meet them where they are.

"My interest is really in user accessibility," she says. "It sounds bad, but people think, 'What's in it for me'? As a user of technology, she recognizes that she is like so many other users: "I just want everything to be there for me!" So she strives to make volunteerism through Get Connected as simple as possible, whether it's through curated "side doors," targeted emails, old-style PSAs and radio spots, or guiding volunteers to different opportunities over the phone. "It's important to know what your audience wants," she says, "and figure out how to use the site to connect with the audience."

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Lucy Schaich | Interim Director | City of Bloomington Volunteer Network

A very special **thank you** to Lucy Schaich and the City of Bloomington Volunteer Center for taking the time to help us tell your story, from your friends at Galaxy Digital.

Celebrating 39 Years!

⊗ GetConnected
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