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TRI-VAC offers jobs and experience

By Joseph Hart

"You can't get a job without experience, and you can't get experience without a job."

One of the best ways to break this "chase your tail" cycle is by getting job experience through volunteer work in the local community. Volunteering can help you acquire a marketable job skill, give you a work history, and possibly save you from wasting 4-6 years chasing a degree you know nothing about.

Finding a way to break into the volunteer job market is often difficult unless you are friends with or related to the boss at the place where you want to work. The Tri-County Volunteer Action Center (TRI-VAC) in Harrisburg can help. TRI-VAC is a local non-profit organization that matches prospective volunteers with agencies in need of volunteer help.

Marianne Faust, director of TRI-VAC, calls her organization an "employment agency for volunteers."

It's much like an employment agency. You enter TRI-VAC's headquarters at 26 South Second Street, Harrisburg (phone 238-6678), and fill out a volunteer information form.

The agency's interviewer goes over your job preference and work history sheet with you. From your job preference, agency preference and area preference, a job interview is set up.

The final acceptance, placement and training of volunteers is in the hands of the agency. (The agency doesn't have to hire you, so act as if this interview was for a paying job instead of a volunteer position).

One of the many benefits in doing volunteer work, according to Faust, is that it helps you fill out your resume. A lot of holes aren't left in the job experience portion of the form.

TRI-VAC offers an almost endless array of jobs. Literally hundreds of different jobs are available for the volunteer to choose from. There are 83 basic types of jobs to choose from. You can get a job in: accounting, audio-visual, crime prevention, environment, hospital work, research and analysis, sales, science and technology.

"We can get you a job in almost any field you want," says Faust.

A sample of the over 140 agencies/organizations that work with TRI-VAC include the: Animal Foundation, Commonwealth Stage Company, Cumberland County Bureau of Consumer Affairs, Museum of Scientific Discovery, Pa. Association For The Blind, River Rescue Inc., U.S. Soil Conservation Service, and WMSP-FM.

Of the many Capitol students placed in volunteer jobs by TRI-VAC, Barbara Myers is representative in her enthusiasm for the good job done by TRI-VAC's staff.

"I couldn't believe the variety of jobs," said Myers, a Capitol



Marianne Faust interviews prospective volunteer Shirley Roth (right) for a job with TRI-VAC.

Campus Senior.

Myers was placed by TRI-VAC with the Pennsylvania Dept. of Transportation's Program Services department. This winter she will be doing a two credit independent study, working at PENNDOT helping them in the planning and implementation of an anti-drunk driving newsletter.

The biggest use of TRI-VAC on campus is in the social science program by Professor Rie Gentzler. Gentzler encourages her "Introduction to Human Services" students to use the resources of TRI-VAC in helping them find volunteer jobs.

Volunteerism is used in Gentzler's class as "reality testing," which means you can find out the differences between books and the real world.

Students in past and present "Human Services" classes have found volunteerism to be both exciting and personally rewarding. The class volunteer project is flexible, allowing students to follow up any job that interests them for their volunteer project.

Volunteerism serves a real function at Capitol. Through independent studies, student teaching and internships the student sees the whole picture. An old Chinese proverb that expresses the true nature of being a volunteer is

"Tell me-I forget,
Show me-I remember,
Involve me-I understand."

500-Library Services
650-Public Speaking/Public Education
470-Juvenile Offenders/Predelinquents
890-Secretarial/Clerical
690-Science and Technology
670-Sales
660-Research and Analysis
650-Recreation (Games, Sports, etc.)

490-Legal
520-Mental Health
Editing
840-Other Categories of Interest
780-Trade Skills (Electrical, Mechanical, Carpentry, etc.)
790-Transportation
790-Veterans
800-Visiting Service
810-Vocational Rehabilitation
820-Volunteerism

English As Second Language 750-Theater and Performing Arts (Music, Dance, etc.) 760-Tours/Tourist Information 780-Sewing/Needlework 710-Sexual Assault Counseling 720-Special Education 730-Teaching/Tutoring 640-Receptionist Serv

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