SPANNING THE GENERATIONS: A MODEL FOR USING RETIREES AS VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS

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DECLARATION:

I declare that all material contained in this thesis submitted to Avondale College is my own work, or fully and specifically acknowledged wherever adapted from other sources. I understand that if at anytime it is shown that I have significantly misrepresented material presented to the College, any degree or credits awarded to me on the basis of that material may be revoked.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

STUDENT DECLARATION	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF CHARTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
ABSTRACT	viii
Chapter 1: OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the problem	2
Aim of the study	3
Objectives to be investigated	3
Importance of the study	4
Outline of the study	4
Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Introduction	6
A profile of retirees	6
Population characteristics	7
Retirees have time	8
Retirees are active	9
Not all older people want to retire	9
Retirees have education, experience and wisdom	10
Retirees want to help	11
Motivation for volunteering	12
Characteristics of volunteers	13
Retirees are considered to be burdensome	14
Economic benefits	14
Voluntarism does not increase unemployment	17
Changing negative perceptions about the elderly through volunteering	18
Volunteer programs benefit retirees	21
Advantages to schools	24
Advantages to teachers	25
Advantages to students	25
Motivating students	25
Individual attention	27
Changing behavior through relationships	27
At-risk students	30
Widespread use of volunteers	31
Setting up a volunteer program in your school	31
Start with careful planning	32
Recruiting volunteers	34

Screening volunteers 37
Orientation 39
Program evaluation 40
Maintaining motivation 41
A volunteer program needs a volunteer co-ordinator 43
Inservice training 44
Utilising the full potential of retirees 45
Conclusion 47

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY 48

Introduction 48
Participants 48
Population 48
Sample 48
ARV retirees 49
Avondale high school teachers and administrators 50
Instruments 50
Retirees' questionnaire 51
Questionnaire structure 51
Teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire 53
Questionnaire structure 53
Interview of retirees 54
Interview structure 54
Procedure 56
Development of research instruments 56
Ethics committee approval 56
Distribution of research instruments 57
Phase 1 – retirees' questionnaire 57
Phase 2 – teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire 59
Phase 3 – retirees' interview 59
Data analysis 59

Chapter 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 61

Introduction 62
Response rates 62
Retirees' questionnaire 62
Teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire 64
Retirees' questionnaires: analysis of data and discussion of results 65
Teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire: analysis of data and discussion of results 85
Interview of retirees: analysis of data and discussion of results 92

Chapter 5: CONCLUSIONS 95

Further studies 103
A short story 104

LIST OF REFERENCES 108

APPENDICES

Appendix #1.1 – Retirees' questionnaire 115
Appendix #1.2 – Teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire 121
Appendix #1.3 - Interview of retirees 123
Appendix #2 Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee form 124
Appendix #3 Short reminder note 128

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Response rate to retirees' questionnaire	62
Table 2	Response rate to teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire	65
Table 3	Education awards held by retirees	66
Table 4	Types of occupations performed by retirees during their working life	68
Table 5	Volunteer positions held by retirees	70
Table 6	Hobbies and interests of retirees	71
Table 7	Retirees' other experiences/skills	73
Table 8	Retirees' opinions about the usefulness of a short preparatory course	74
Table 9	Short courses that interest retirees	76
Table 10	Retirees' motivation for volunteering	77
Table 11	Retirees' willingness to volunteer	78
Table 12	Correlation between generally being willing to volunteer (question 9) and specifically being willing to do volunteer work at a Seventh-day Adventist high school (question 10)	79

LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 1	Education awards held by retirees	66
Chart 2	Retirees with experience in education-related and non-education related occupations	69
Chart 3	Potential problems with volunteering	81
Chart 4	SHORT RESPONSES: Retirees' reasons given for not volunteering	82

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	The eight-element model for utilizing retirees in schools	98

ABSTRACT

The present study addressed the potential for using retirees as volunteers in schools. The main advantages for using retirees in the classroom are to bring the generations together and to improve student learning.

The fastest growing segment of our population is retirees. Retired people represent a great resource because they have knowledge, experience, and time availability. Regrettably, older people generally have had little involvement in the education of young people, although volunteer retirees have much to offer schools. The use of retirees in the classroom benefits students, teachers, and the volunteer retirees.

The residents of Avondale Retirement Village were surveyed, and five of these were interviewed. The teachers of Avondale High School were surveyed, to determine their perceptions of a volunteer program for retirees. By synthesising the survey results with the literature review, a model with eight interrelated elements for utilising retirees in the school was proposed. The eight elements were: start with careful planning, which includes a needs assessment; recruit volunteers through a variety of means such as partnerships with senior citizens organizations, school outreach programs, advertisements, and asking friends; include a screening process to inform retirees of the school's expectations and match retirees to suitable tasks by giving them a choice of responsibilities; run an orientation program to introduce all of the participants in the volunteer program; conduct ongoing program evaluation to measure the success of the program and offer suggestions for future improvements; keep volunteer motivation high by providing recognition to the volunteer and by giving the volunteer appropriate tasks; have a volunteer co-ordinator who is

responsible for the volunteers and the volunteer program; and offer inservice training to teachers and retirees.

It was concluded that running a volunteer program was an excellent idea, and that retirees were suitable and willing to be involved. Recommendations were made that future studies be conducted to trial this study's proposed eight-element model, to evaluate the effectiveness of a school outreach program, and to compare the quality of life of volunteering retirees and non-volunteering retirees.

Chapter 1: OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

A number of researchers have written about the positive dynamics observed when young people and older people are brought into close association (e.g., Dallman & Power, 1997a; Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997; MacBain, 1996; NEA Today, 1993). Of primary concern to schools is the evidence that retired volunteers directly improve student learning (Cooledge & Wurster, 1985; Courson & Heward, 1989; Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). For students, there are many other positive outcomes that have been derived from volunteer programs, many of which can be attributed to the relationship that develops between the student and the retiree (see Dallman & Power, 1997a), such as increased communication skills, a sense of security, a desire to achieve, self-acceptance and better social relationships (Bowles, 1976).

However, students are not the only ones benefited by the work of retired volunteers in the classroom. Some researchers (e.g., Amundson, 1991; Bowles, 1976; NEA Today, 1993) argue that when retirees volunteer, the biggest winners are the volunteers themselves. This is backed up by a study that found that participants in a volunteer experience felt "increased self-esteem, renewed feelings of health and vigour, and new and satisfying social relationships with peers" (Freedman, 1997, p. 55).

The advantages of a volunteer program don't end with students and retirees. Teachers will achieve significant benefits from a school volunteer program (Cook, 1999a), for example: the teacher will have more time to try new and different activities; the

volunteer brings new experiences, interests and skills into the classroom; general supervision is available to designated groups; and individuals or groups can receive extra help and support (Cook, 1999b).

Furthermore, involving retirees in schools is an effective way to increase support for a school in the wider community (Amundson, 1991; Van Horn, 1997). Moreover, research has shown that schools enjoying strong community support and involvement have fewer discipline and attendance problems and display higher achievement levels (Lensch, 1997).

Statement of the problem

Throughout Australia and the rest of the Western World, many people are spending their days trapped within a same-age cohort (see Halford, 1998). Ageism is becoming rampant (see Dallman & Power, 1997a). Often society groups people by age: three year-olds spend their waking hours with other three-year-olds in day-care centres; 13-year-olds with other teens in schools; and grandparents with other older people in retirement villages (Pipher, 2000). Many parents relegate the relationship with their children to the waning hours of the day. Numerous grandparents are cut off from their primary joy – spending time with their expanding family, and are expected to spend their days with other older people in retirement homes. Many children don't understand what it is like to be an older person, and older people forget what it is like to be young or how to interact with the young. Much knowledge that traditionally has been passed on from generation to generation, from grandparent to parent or child, becomes lost when the older generation dies. "For our own mental and social health,

we need to reconnect the age groups" (Pipher, 2000, p. 13).

Aim of the study

The main aim of this study was to enhance the lives of retirees, students and teachers, by developing a model describing how to bring them together in the classroom through a volunteer program. This model presented instructions designed to enable the reader to plan his or her own volunteer program to bring the older and the younger generations together. In this way they may access the many possible benefits that flow from establishing relationships between retired people and school students.

Objectives to be investigated

In order to satisfy the main aim, the objectives of this study were:

1. To conduct an extensive literature review;
2. To locate a group of retirees willing to be involved in the study, and to survey the sample of retirees;
3. To determine the available skills in the sample of retirees;
4. To find out what short courses an educational institution could run in order to attract retirees;
5. To examine the willingness of retirees in the sample to volunteer in a high school;
6. To identify the reasons for not volunteering;
7. To investigate the perceptions of teachers and school administration regarding the idea of a volunteer program involving retired people;
8. To follow up on the themes and questions raised by the survey of retirees by

selecting a small number of retirees and conducting a personal interview.

9. To analyse results of the survey of teachers and school administrators by using a process of triangulation.
10. To analyse data using a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques.
11. To utilise the information gained from the above objectives by developing a model for matching retirees to different volunteer roles within the school.

Importance of the study

On one hand schools are in crisis mode due to a lack of resources and staff (Bamburg, 2000), while on the other hand we have retired adults, which are a "tremendously under-utilised resource" (Freedman, 1997, p. 54). This study is important because it looks at connecting a great, untapped resource (retirees) to schools with pressing needs.

Outline of the thesis

The main aim of this study was to produce a model to describe how to build a bridge to span the gap between the generations, thereby accessing all of the advantages that this process entails. The study does this firstly by assessing available literature on the topic (Chapter 2) to analyse the current state of affairs regarding efforts to bring the generations together. Chapter 3 of this report discusses the methodology used for data collection and data analysis. The literature review and findings of the questionnaires and interviews provide an academic context for the discussion of results that takes place in Chapter 4. A conclusion is provided in Chapter 5, which summarises the

major findings of the study and outlines recommendations for future studies. A full list of references follows Chapter 5. The final section of the thesis consists of appendices.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A review of the literature on the subject of the potential for using retirees as volunteers in schools yielded a wealth of material. This material dates from the nineteen seventies, when some important research into using older adults as volunteers was first conducted in the United States, through to the present day.

The literature examined was placed into the following categories: a profile of retirees; volunteer programs benefit retirees; advantages to schools; advantages to teachers; advantages to students; widespread use of volunteers; setting up volunteer programs in schools; and utilising the full potential of retirees.

A profile of retirees

Nineteen ninety-nine was the United Nations International Year of the Older Person. The theme was "Towards a Society for all Ages" (United Nations, 2000). As a result, the NSW Government published the "Healthy Ageing Framework" (NSW Ageing & Disability Department, 2000c). The goal of this framework was for "a society in which all older people lead satisfying and productive lives with maximum independence and well-being" (p. 8). The department acknowledged the role of volunteering in increasing the welfare of ageing people, one of its objective statements being "Increased participation of older people in the workforce, education, leisure and volunteering" (p. 9).

Population characteristics

The United Nations and various governments are concerned about older people because they are becoming such a significant part of the population. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (1999), the proportion of the Australian population aged 65 years and over is increasing. According to latest figures (ABS, 1999), there are 2,283,400 people aged over 65 years in Australia, which includes 227,600 people that are over 85 years of age. The NSW Ageing & Disability Department (2000a) reports that the life expectancy for men is 75.2 years and 81.0 years for women.

The same demographic statistics are indicating big changes over the next 50 years. By 2051 it is projected that the older population will comprise 24-26 per cent of the total population (up from 12.2 per cent in 1998), which includes people 85 years and over who will comprise 5 per cent of the total population (up from 1.2 per cent) (ABS, 1999).

The population of Australia as well as other developed countries is ageing. According to Botsman (1999), the ratio of people aged over 65 compared with the labour force in Australia will increase from 24 per cent today to 40 per cent in 2026, and 50 per cent in 2051. The Commonwealth Government will find itself responsible for an increasing number of dependent elderly people (Botsman, 1999). "Few other changes are likely to exert as great an influence on society in the coming decades" (Freedman, 1997, p. 54).

In the United States (US) there are over 34 million retirees. People are living longer than ever, with the average life expectancy in the US increasing from 47 years in 1900 to 75 years today (Dick, 2000). By the middle of the 21st century, seniors will outnumber children and youth (Freedman, 1997). "There will be no lack of older people" (Armengol, 1992, p. 468). Furthermore, the fastest growing population segment is retirees aged 85 years and older (Kincade, Rabiner, Bernard, Woomert, Konrad, DeFriese, & Ory, 1996).

Retirees have time

Increased longevity combined with early retirement means that many people today will spend up to a third of their lives in retirement (Freedman, 1997). Between 1971 and 1991 the labour force participation rates for men aged 60-64 in NSW declined from 76 per cent to just 50 per cent (NSW Ageing & Disability Department, 2000c). Today's retirees have more time than preceding generations (Strom & Strom, 1995). Retirement frees substantial amounts of time - an average 25 hours a week for men and 18 hours a week for women, most of which is spent either watching television or doing housework (Freedman, 1997).

Generally, "senior citizens have the time, the resources, the experience, and the energy to help in schools" (Armengol, 1992, p. 468). Most retirees no longer have child rearing or work responsibilities (Van Horn, 1998). Seniors are not always interested in an unending round of entertainment and recreation, but rather often look forward to challenges. One senior said that without involvement, "retirement can be a terrific letdown" (Bone, 1980, p. 26).

Retirees are active

In addition to the fact that older people have time, the overwhelming majority of older people are well (Clark, 1976). The NSW Ageing & Disability Department (1998a) reports that more than 56% of older people will never require assistance to live independently. Amongst those aged 60 years and over living in NSW, 19.1 per cent reported needing help with home maintenance, 13.1 per cent with home help, and 10.6 per cent with transport (NSW Ageing & Disability Department, 2000a). The improvements in education, income, and insurance will steadily increase the proportion of retirees in good health (Clark, 1976). Those with a high income or education tend to report better health (NSW Ageing & Disability Department, 2000a). The western world boasts its fastest growing, largest, best-educated, and most vigorous collection of older adults in its history (Freedman, 1997, p. 54; McCarthy, 1995, p. 8).

It is a myth that most older people need looking after, according to the NSW Ageing & Disability Department, (2000a). They report that the majority of seniors live independently and require no assistance with daily tasks, and that 95.7 per cent aged 60+ years are living in the community. The same Department report also debunks another myth, that all older people eventually become senile. The majority of older people do not experience significant memory loss, and Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect less than one per cent of people aged 60-64 and less than three per cent of people aged 70-74.

Not all older people want to retire

Active older people do not always warm to the idea of retiring, and many find

retirement “a disagreeable idea” (Scott, 1976, p. 90). A retired security guard said he “felt like a vegetable” (p. 90), and a former employment interviewer said she could only “clean the venetian blinds so many times” (p. 90). There are older adults that disagree with the idea of mandatory retirement and a limited expectation of older workers (Scott, 1976). After initiating a volunteer program, Scott (1976) questioned the view that workers are eager to leave the labour force. Applicants to the volunteer program showed “enthusiasm, energy, and often, desperation” (p. 92) which eloquently spoke of the basic human need “for function” (p. 92).

Butler (1997) argues that the nature of retirement may need to change in response to a population that is living longer and healthier. “First, work life needs to be extended, and second, voluntary roles for older people need to be enhanced” (p. 1372). It would be a “waste to society not to capitalise on the accumulated experience and talents of such a massive portion of our population” (p. 1372).

Retirees have education, experience and wisdom

Nearly 25 years ago Clark (1976) reported that there was no significant gap between the levels of education amongst the old and the young. Sullivan & Florio (1976) added that retired people are better educated than ever before. More recently, it was reported that as baby boomers age, there will be more educated and productive elderly people (Soo & Gong-Soog, 1998).

Moreover, older adults have the advantage of possessing more than just a good education. During their lifetime of learning, retirees have accumulated vast stores of knowledge, wisdom, skills and experience (Sellars, 1998). Botsman (1999)

comments that to tap the collective wisdom, strength and know-how of our senior citizens and transfer it to our younger generations would make Australia a very rich country.

Retirees want to help

Most retirees are not willing to give up working, but upon retirement feel that now "the pressures of work are gone, we have time to focus on what is important" (NEA Today, 1993, p. 25). The literature indicates that retirees consider the education and welfare of children as very important (NEA Today, 1993).

A study in the United States showed that four out of five older people would volunteer when asked, to meet perceived community needs (Butler, 1997). Another study found that volunteering is increasing with the general population, and that when asked to volunteer, 90 per cent of those asked volunteered (American Society of Association Executives, 2000). It was found that older persons would volunteer on a regular basis if they could see that the needs of the benefiting organisation are real (Sainer, 1976). The percentage of older adults that are volunteering is on the increase (Chambré, 1993, p. 227). In NSW one in five people aged 65 years and over already did volunteer work in the previous year, and in all other states this figure is higher (NSW Ageing & Disability Department, 2000b).

In fact, according to Sainer (1976), there is an ever-expanding pool of retired people ready to volunteer, and there are not as many assignment opportunities available for all those who might wish to serve as is generally assumed. On the other hand, Brachtl (1999) says all programs involving adults have trouble finding enough volunteers to

fill needs. One reason for this contradiction may be that retirees who want to volunteer may not be aware of suitable volunteer opportunities.

Motivation for volunteering

The main reason older people volunteer is to fulfil their need for social contacts and to find a useful and satisfying role (Sainer, 1976). Another author narrowed the equation further and wrote that altruism is widely recognised as the underlying motivation associated with volunteering (Soo & Gong-Soog, 1998). Portnoy (1998) suggests some of the other common motivations for volunteering might include guilt, to repay a debt (see also Dunkley, 2000), to make a difference, for stimulation, recognition, or as a result of their values.

Furthermore, volunteering is one way to compensate for damaging role-loss, and may be a further reason retirees are motivated to volunteer (Kincade, *et al.,* 1996). Throughout their working lives, people define themselves largely upon what work they do – a person is a teacher, or a carpenter, or a scientist - who they are is defined according to what they do (Kincade, *et al.,* 1996). However, upon retirement, many older people suffer from what is termed "role-loss" (p. 474), that is, they no longer see themselves in any valuable role. Volunteering can provide older people with a valuable role. Therefore, volunteering is an effective way to counteract role-loss.

While volunteering may not be for everyone, it would be foolish not to offer it as an option for those older people who want to be involved. Volunteer work is "a critical option for many old people for whom being useful to others, and contributing to their communities, is their link to purpose and meaning in their lives" (Sainer, 1976).

Some individuals have expressed concern about exploiting older people, but older people can and will say no if they are uninterested. On the other hand, most retirees are grateful and proud to contribute back to society (Clark, 1976). One volunteer said "there are many single-parent families or fractured families without any grandparents. We are filling a gap with more than reading, which creates great satisfaction for all of us" (p. 49).

Characteristics of volunteers

Older volunteers are becoming more important, because younger women, who traditionally comprised the bulk of volunteers, are increasingly returning to the work force (Bowles, 1976; Cooledge & Wurster, 1985; Mergenhagen, 1991). Retired persons are now the main source of school volunteers – because 75 per cent of mothers with school age children are already employed (Strom & Strom, 1995).

Older adults are the fastest growing segment of the population, are inexpensive to employ, and are receptive to opportunities for socially productive activity (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). Retirees represent a vast untapped source of energy and expertise (Dick, 2000). Studies have shown that older workers who volunteer bring "reliability, dependability, and discipline" to their assignments (Butler, 1997; Freedman, 1997). In addition, older volunteers have more time to spend in volunteer work, and are usually more enthusiastic about volunteering (Courson & Heward, 1989). In NSW, the amount of time volunteers give is highest amongst volunteers aged 65-74 (NSW Ageing & Disability Department, 2000b).

Different characteristics can predict volunteer participation. The main factors that lead to increased voluntarism are: being female; married; high income; high level of education; owning a home; and being white (Chambré, 1993; Hayghe, 1991; Kincade, *et al.,* 1996; Soo & Gong-Soog, 1998). In particular, an education above high school level is important, and voluntarism increases throughout a person's lifespan until they reach their 60s after which it starts to decline (Soo & Gong-Soog, 1998). It is often a difficult task to attract male volunteers of any age (Bowles, 1976).

Poor health is a major reason why older people stop volunteering (Chambré, 1993). Retirees who perceive that they have good health are over eight times more likely to provide volunteer services than those who see themselves as having poor health (Kincade, *et al.,* 1996).

Retirees are considered to be burdensome

The ageing of society is portrayed as a source of "impending strife", creating "new strains on families, social services, and intergenerational services" (Freedman, 1997, p. 54). Retirees have been depicted as an "advancing army of angry-faced older persons wielding garden trowels, fishing poles, and golf clubs" who are "selfish" and "drain the country of resources that might otherwise be channelled elsewhere, especially to children" (Butler, 1997, p. 1372). Furthermore, "in our last year of life many of us will spend more on medical bills than over our entire lifetime" (Botsman, 1999, p. 15).

Economic benefits

There is an alternate view to the picture of retirees becoming a great burden. One

researcher advances the idea that retirees become a benefit or a burden based on our own choices (Gotbaum & Barr, 1976). The choice as to whether retirees are a burden or a benefit lies with everyone. If seniors are properly appreciated and utilised, they will help accomplish social goals that society is committed to. This is an example of a society that has chosen to utilise retirees for mutual benefit. However, if the senior population "feels itself unproductive and shunted aside" it "could surely become a high-risk social cancer" (p. 51). This is an example of a society that has chosen to make retirees a burden.

Optimists have said that if retirees were properly utilised, their hard-won wisdom and skills have the potential to relieve many of the strains now burdening our society (NEA Today, 1993). Older adults are a "tremendously under-utilised resource" (Freedman, 1997, p. 54). Properly utilised, they can be instrumental in "alleviating the country's pressing domestic problems; enhancing the personal development of participants; and bolstering the nation's flagging sense of community" (Freedman, 1997, p. 54). Older persons are a relatively untapped resource that can be used for accomplishing social goals (Gotbaum & Barr, 1976, p. 50).

In calculating the *burden* that *dependent* older people exert on our society, experts take the number of persons aged 65 years and over and divide this by the number of persons of working age. This ratio has increased dramatically over the last few decades. Such information is used to indicate that elderly people are becoming an increasing social and economic burden on society. All of these dependent older people must be taken care of by those who are younger and working. However, this line of reasoning fails completely to take into account the large number of older

people that are active and employed well into their eighth decade in life, or self-supporting retirees. Many retirees can and do make substantial contributions to society (Kincade*, et al., 1996*).

Just because there are more retirees than there has ever been before does not mean that the current standard of living will plummet. To argue on the basis of numbers alone "seems perverse" (Clark, 1976, p. 48). As Clark comments (p .48), India and the Soviet Union are much larger nations than the United States, and yet the US has more citizens who have lived to an old age than either of those countries.

Not all economists think that retirees will be a burden on society. "There is an old economic homily that our ageing population will have no overall impact on the national economy" (Botsman, 1999, p. 15). In fact, the senior population may be our sole increasing natural resource (Freedman, 1997). These retirees are more influential than ever, with great political and economic clout (Dick, 2000).

In the United States, less money is spent on older people than on young people. It was calculated that in 1993 $412.6 billion was spent on the aged and $441.9 billion on the young (Butler, 1997).

Also, older people give a lot, in time and money, to their families, communities and nation. A study found that older people gave to their children or grandchildren more than five-fold, in terms of time and money, than what they would ever receive in return (Butler, 1997). The NSW Ageing & Disability Department (2000b) reports that older people are more likely to provide financial and practical assistance to

families than to receive it. In fact, retirees and people more than seventy-five years old are the only groups of adults increasing their volunteer service (McCarthy, 1995), a notion that counters the idea that the aged are selfish, grabbing, and a burden on society.

It is unknown just how much volunteer work benefits the economy. Due to its nature it is impossible to determine, but the NSW government estimates that volunteering is worth $18 billion to the state economy (Dyer, 1996).

Volunteerism does not increase unemployment

"The fear that volunteers will replace staff is unfounded. Instead, volunteers supplement and enrich staff services" (Sainer, 1976, p. 75). Volunteerism is a supplement and not a substitute for a gainfully employed work force (Gotbaum & Barr, 1976).

Volunteer stations report that the main benefit received from volunteers was the release of paid staff that were able to devote more time to problems requiring their expertise (Bowles, 1976). A volunteer is never a substitute for a paid worker, and will never be able to fill this same role. Some of the more unpleasant jobs that a teacher must do, such as supervise the students during a rainy lunchtime or to hose out the toilets, are not suitable jobs to pass onto a volunteer. However, a volunteer will give the teacher more time to deal with problems that require his or her special skills. The volunteer does not replace a person that is paid to deliver a service, but they do improve the way in which the service is delivered.

Changing negative perceptions about the elderly through volunteering

Western society has many negative perceptions about the elderly, which are readily passed on to the young. Young people hold a variety of negative or distorted views of the elderly. A child as young as three said, "That's awful – being old is being sick, helpless and ugly. I just don't want to get old" (Seefeldt, 1977, p. 21). Most children stereotypically labelled older people as *ugly, tired, sick,* (Dallman & Power, 1997a, p. 64), *dying, slow, wrinkly, worn out, tired, in nursing homes, with canes* and *grouchy* (Dallman & Power, 1997b, p. 40). They preferred the company of young people above that of older people (Dallman & Power, 1997a, p. 64). People of all ages see older people as unproductive, always in need, and narrow and rigid in thinking (Armengol, 1992, p. 468). Children think old people are those who "are wrinkled and sad; they chew funny, walk with canes and sit in wheelchairs all day" (Seefeldt, 1977, p. 21).

These negative views have been partly attributed to the decrease in the number of extended-family households and the resulting rise in the number of nuclear and single-parent families (Armengol, 1992; Dallman & Power, 1997a). Young people have less contact with their elders, and society is largely age segregated. Indeed, it has been estimated that 40 per cent of the US adult population has no daily or even weekly contact with school-age children (Halford, 1998). Likewise, older adults have even less contact with the young than the average adult population – so it would be a valid assumption that the majority of older adults have no weekly contact with school age children! It was found that most children had such limited contact with older people that they did not really know any older persons outside of their family unit

(Seefeldt, 1977).

Because the young have limited contact with the elderly they are largely ignorant of the old. The physical and social separation of the generations leads to limited understanding between the two parties (Halford, 1998). The young lose a sense of history and continuity, and the old miss out on a certain vibrancy and a sense of social contribution (Halford, 1998). "Grandparents' experiences" give young people "a perspective on life that no amount of formal education can replace" (Armengol, 1992, p. 468). Without a swift change, this "absence of cross-generational contact and engagement" might "worsen" tensions as the "demographic composition of society continues to shift" (Freedman, 1997, p. 55).

The ignorant stereotypic views that young people have about old people are not only damaging to the dignity and respect of the older person, but are also potentially harmful to the younger person (Seefeldt, 1977). Unless they can come to terms with what it is like to be an older person, they may remain fearful of ageing and fail to realise their full potential (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997).

The Old People's Council in Great Britain believes that the social and personal problems of the aged, within 40 years, will be diminished in proportion to the amount of involvement between the elderly and today's youth (Seefeldt, 1977). It is only as the young and old mix together that the young learn to treat the old with dignity and respect.

In schools the promotion of social adjustment is limited because schools are age-

segregated. Not only are adolescents segregated from adults, but also from slightly older and slightly younger youth. Few adult role models are available, and students rarely select teachers as significant adults in their life (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). Hence students have no way to develop a broader experience.

The purpose of many intergenerational programs is to bridge the gap between the generations and to dispel the negative myths held by the young regarding the elderly (Armengol, 1992; Dallman & Power, 1997b), and to provide "holistic" (Dallman & Power, 1997b, p. 39) education. "By fostering ongoing relationships, intergenerational programs can reshape the perceptions older adults and youth have of one another" (Halford, 1998, p. 50). It is very easy for an older person to become judgmental when they have limited involvement with the school. But once older adults go out into the schools, they begin to understand the challenges that schools face (Halford, 1998). "Involving senior citizens in schools is a wonderful way to reconnect with families" (p. 51). It is by engaging seniors that we can "restore a sense of community, a knowledge of the past, and a sense of the future" (Freedman, 1997, p. 55).

After one intergenerational effort, students discovered "senior citizens are really not that different from us" (Halford, 1998, p. 51). The students uncovered limitless opportunities for learning from the older generation, and discovered that the generation gap does not need to be a barrier (Halford, 1998). Other students noted that they had learned that older people should be respected (MacBain, 1996).

Perhaps it is the young and old that have the most in common with each other

(Conyers, 1996), and with the most to lose from an age-segregated society. Both age-groups are looked upon as receivers of service, as problems, and as objects (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1996). "The elders interviewed felt a special empathy that appears to derive from the marginal status they share with youth in our society" (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993, p. 24). This may be why the young and old have the potential to form such mutually beneficial relationships.

Before a classroom was linked with a nearby independent-living retirement, children viewed retirees negatively: e.g., "sick, dying" (Dallman & Power, 1997a, pp. 64-65). But after the children met with their elderly friends about once a month during the school year, their attitudes had undergone dramatic change. The children described their elder friend saying: "She loves kids", "they're both very, very nice", "she has a huge smile", and "we have lots and lots of fun together" (pp. 67-68). The retirees were equally enthusiastic: "It has given me charming young friends", "Forever Friends has given me such joy", and it "makes me feel young" (p. 68). Contact between the generations provided a more positive view and understanding of each other (Raimon-Wilson, 1998).

Volunteer programs benefit retirees

Some researchers (e.g., Amundson, 1991; Bowles, 1976; NEA Today, 1993) argue that when retirees volunteer, the biggest winners are the volunteers themselves. The real returns in a volunteer program come from giving needed help to others (Oriol & Affeldt, 1976). One volunteer stated, "It's very rewarding… the fun part of teaching – without the lesson plans and endless staff meetings" (NEA Today, 1993, p. 25).

Another volunteer added "Volunteering improves your feelings of self-worth and self-esteem… being around young people keeps you feeling young" (p. 25). "More than one participant has told us that the opportunity to contribute has 'saved my life'" (Conyers, 1996, p. 15).

When students visited a nursing care centre, the staff noticed that residents who did not usually participate in extra activities *did* participate in the student visits (MacBain, 1996). The residents would schedule their medical or other appointments around the visits to be sure that they did not miss seeing their student, and were much happier because they had something to look forward to (MacBain, 1996). In another program, after senior citizen volunteers began to read to children, they left the classroom with "tears in their eyes" (Smith, 1998, p. 53). The positive dynamics between individuals of two different generations have been "incredibly powerful" (p. 53).

One volunteer said that her involvement gave her a reason to get out of bed in the morning, and was a gratifying way to spend her retirement time (MacBain, 1996). Another volunteer declared, "senior citizens who get interested in volunteering would be amazed by how much their quality of life improves" (Dallao, 1997). Other volunteers say that while they gave a lot of time and effort, the students gave them much more than they could ever imagine (Armengol, 1992).

Retirees who volunteer have advantages over those who do not spend time helping others. It was reported that 55 per cent of respondents to a poll "lamented the loss of usefulness" once they had retired (Freedman, 1997, p. 54). This is of concern, because "isolation and lack of purpose" has been directly linked to an increase in

"seniors' risk of deterioration, illness, and death" (p. 54). However, the opposite is also true. "Productive engagement and strong social networks contribute to prolonged mental and physical health," while the strongest predictor of longevity and vitality, other than not smoking, is "highly organised activity" (p. 54). Therefore volunteering in a school will be directly contributing to the quality and length of life of a retiree.

An evaluation of the benefits to volunteers discovered that the top two self-perceived advantages from volunteering are the "feelings of usefulness and importance" and "increased satisfaction with life" (Bowles, 1976, p. 87). It was discovered that in helping another person overcome problems, the helper is able to resolve his or her own problems more successfully, because the helper acquires an increased sense of power over his or her own life, and obtains a strong sense of social usefulness and worth by fulfilling the helper role (Bowles, 1976). The retiree learns to look to the present and the future, rather than the past. Moreover, a retiree achieves confidence in their ability to learn and grow, increased status, and greater feelings of self-worth (Streitfeld, 1976; Volunteer Center, 1998). The NSW Committee on Ageing claims that there is a link between lifelong learning and healthy ageing (NSW Ageing & Disability Department, 1998b). The helpers were "the major beneficiaries" of the volunteer program (Bowles, 1976, p. 87).

A volunteer declared, "Too many older people sit at home and don't want to get out… community involvement is one of the best things that can happen to seniors" (Bone, 1980, p. 26). This is backed up by a study that found that participants in a service experience felt "increased self-esteem, renewed feelings of health and vigour, and new and satisfying social relationships with peers" (Freedman, 1997, p. 55). Much of

the success of a volunteer program lay in the fact that it reduced the loneliness, isolation, and rejection that is so often synonymous with growing old (Oriol & Affeldt, 1976). "You have something else besides your little aches and pains to think about, and to talk over with your neighbours" (Freedman, 1997, p. 55). Voluntarism increases mental, emotional and physical health amongst retirees (Seniornet, 1998).

Advantages to schools

Research has shown that schools enjoying strong community support and involvement have fewer discipline and attendance problems and display higher achievement levels (Lensch, 1997). This adds weight to the argument that retirees have so much to offer schools (Armengol, 1992). A major concern for educators is that there is little support for schools amongst the large ageing segment of the community (Lensch, 1997). However, gradually more schools are discovering that there is a wealth of experience and expertise available in their retirees, which may be tapped to give a very high return for negligible costs (Armengol, 1992). The low cost of a volunteer program in comparison with its significant returns makes a retiree volunteer program very attractive to schools.

In the US voters in many school districts consistently vote against tax increases to support schools (Amundson, 1991; Lensch, 1997). Most of those who vote against raising more money for schools are voters without school-age children, the majority of which are elderly voters who have had little to do with schools (Amundson, 1991; Schreter, 1991). In a country where voting is not mandatory, the elderly make up one of the most conscientious voting groups, and thus there is a need to "reconnect" senior

citizens, most of whom see little reason to support tax increases for education, with the local schools (Amundson, 1991).

Retirees can be ignorant about what happens in schools. In California retirees were convinced that teachers had lost control of students, and that they would be met with derision and even physical abuse from the students (de Pillis, 1982). After seeing that "the children were working so hard and learning so well" they became enthusiastic advocates for the school (p. 29). A successful way to increase support for the school in the wider community and particularly with older voters is to develop volunteer programs that aim to involve the elderly (Amundson, 1991; Van Horn, 1997).

Advantages to teachers

Teachers will achieve significant benefits from a school volunteer program (Cook, 1999a). These benefits will include: more time for the teacher to try new and different activities; new experiences, interests and skills brought into the classroom by the volunteer; general supervision which is available to designated groups; and individuals or groups which can receive extra help and support (Cook, 1999b).

Advantages to students

Motivating students

Involving retirees in the learning experience is very motivating for students (Cook, 1999a; Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997). One teacher described the effect of older adults on a bored class, which complained about preparing speeches. The students' attitudes quickly changed when they interviewed seniors and prepared

presentations based on those interviews. The students became "enthusiastic and animated", and they "obviously enjoyed what they were doing and wanted to talk about it" (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997, p. 24).

Inviting a senior to share knowledge or experiences is a way to make learning become much more real (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997). The most obvious application for seniors is in the teaching of history. Students saw history become personal experience at one school when veterans showed them photos, clothes, awards, medals, and weapons from World War II (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997). Passing out rutabaga, kohlrabi and pumpernickel bread, one veteran explained how soldiers would make water soup with the vegetables and share the bread among 10 men. Another veteran described his 14 months as a prisoner of war in Yugoslavia. He held students "spellbound" (p. 24) with his stories about the prison camp and combat overseas.

Courson & Heward (1989) argue for using the senior volunteers as a kind of reward. "Tell your students that working with the volunteer is a privilege and that students who follow classroom rules will be assigned for short periods of work with the volunteer" (p. 527).

The above examples illustrate the fact that there are opportunities for all kinds of new and motivating learning experiences with the extra pair of hands that the older volunteer provides (Seefeldt, 1977).

Individual attention

Few educators would question the importance of individual attention (Armengol, 1992). This is perhaps why intergenerational programs are so successful. When at-risk youth were paired with elder mentors, tangible benefits were clearly seen (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). One student learned how to approach mathematics more effectively, another learned how to dress and respond appropriately in a job interview, and a third improved their grade from a 'D' to an 'A' in History (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993, p. 25). Such dramatic improvements were only made possible because of the large amount of one-to-one time that was available as a result of an older adult volunteer (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). Courson & Heward (1989) suggest that individual attention increases "active student response" (p. 525). Anything that increases students' opportunities to respond and be active rather than passive participants, such as tutoring by an older volunteer, is going to have a strong positive effect on student learning (Courson & Heward, 1989).

A study by Cooledge & Wurster (1985) compared 147 students who had volunteer partners, with a control group of 147 students without older partners. The study found that those students tutored by retirees made "significantly greater gains" (p. 345) than those students who did not have the extra benefit of retirees.

Changing behaviour through relationships

Teachers who are currently using older adults in their classrooms report that their students' grades are improving, students attend class more regularly, and students' self-esteem and social behaviour improve (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1996;

MacBain, 1996). The teachers felt that students worked hard to please the volunteers, and in the process gained more self-confidence (MacBain, 1996).

Not all of the benefits gained by the students have been derived from the retirees' knowledge skills (e.g., Halford, 1998; Smith, 1998). Many of the positive outcomes from a volunteer program can be attributed to the relationship that develops between the student and the retiree (see Dallman & Power, 1997a).

Freedman & Jaffe (1993) (see also Freedman, 1997) have done significant work on the formation of relationships between older adults and young people. They found that if students and retirees were given opportunities to spend time together over a long period, a relationship developed. In this relationship students became trusting, engaged and interested – an emotional state conducive to learning. Skill acquisition was furthered by "the elders' concern with accountability" (p. 25). The older adult mentors (Freedman & Jaffe (1993) term them elders), were predictable - they noticed unfinished assignments and unfulfilled promises, and they applauded success. The young people knew that the elders were cheering for them. As a result, they did not resist being held accountable, but instead appreciated being held accountable.

It was also discovered (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993) that elder mentors helped at-risk youth in many ways due to the nature of the relationship between them. Freedman & Jaffe (1993) noticed two major kinds of relationships. The first kind of relationship is where mentors developed relationships characterised by attachments approximating kinship, with intimacy and a willingness to take on the youth's full range of problems and emotions. In the second kind of relationship, other mentors were like helpful and

friendly neighbours – focusing on positive reinforcement while maintaining some emotional distance.

Through the stability of the relationships formed (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993), elders promoted coping on the part of the youth. Freedman & Jaffe (1993) found that this stability was due to a number of factors. The elder was there for the student, cared about what happened to the student and was willing to stand up for them, helping the student cognitively through interpreting events. Furthermore, the elders instilled a sense of competence into the youth through helping the student appreciate their own abilities. Also they promoted the maturity of the teens by treating them as an adult, for the elder required the students to make their own decisions. Moreover, they gave the students a practical knowledge of how to navigate 'the system', including teaching students how to find jobs, manage financially, and promote themselves.

It must be acknowledged that such results can only be attributed to the fact that these relationships were characterised by bonding and affection. Most people will do almost anything to receive attention and to feel loved, wanted and valued. The Foster Grandparent Program (see Bowles, 1976) was set up specifically to use older people to provide love, guidance, support, concern, and companionship for children with special needs. It proved especially effective for children who were suffering from a lack of nurturing. The children showed increased communication skills, a sense of security, a desire to achieve, self-acceptance and better social relationships. A former juvenile described the effect: "The love and trust gave me the strength to quit drugs and find purpose and direction in my life. I am a really lucky person…" (Bowles, 1976, p. 83).

Freedman & Jaffe (1993) outline certain guidelines a program co-ordinator should follow if they wish to encourage the development of significant relationships. First, there need to be regular opportunities for the elder and the youth to meet 'privately'. It does not matter if the elder is working at other times with different young people, so long as the youth gets exclusive one-on-one time and attention. These meetings usually need to be scheduled at least weekly, because most youth will take two or three months to open up, although some can establish closeness in three to four weeks. Second, each contact should be purposeful and structured around something important, such as addressing a specific task. Two strangers will need something to talk about at first, helping them to work towards a deeper level of understanding. Third, the most effective programs entail older people making commitments to stay with the youth "as long as they are wanted" (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993, p. 27).

At-risk students

Elders can play a particularly powerful role as mentors for high school students who are in danger of dropping out from school – at-risk students (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). Research suggests that adult relationships are a common factor amongst at-risk youth who achieve success despite growing up in disadvantaged or stressful circumstances (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). In searching for ways to provide the constructive adult relationships that might give a boost to youth, elders appear to have the most potential (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993).

Interestingly, Freedman & Jaffe's study (1993) of elder mentors and at-risk youth discovered that the most effective elders were not people who had lived "successful

lives" (p. 24), but rather elders who had endured strained family relationships, struggled at low-paying jobs, and battled personal problems, such as alcohol abuse. As a result of surviving and surmounting such difficulties, they were able to understand the youth, and were able to share with them from their own experience. Of importance was that the youth highly valued the opportunity to talk with someone who was non-judgemental and who paid close attention to them.

Widespread use of volunteers

While the number of educational institutions that have used the services of older volunteers is high, the actual number of retirees used is very small (Sullivan & Florio, 1976). In fact, the majority of institutions have used retirees at some stage, but the retirees are very thinly spread through a large number of institutions.

Of the 950 institutions that responded to a survey from the Academy of Educational Development in New York City, approximately 75% of the institutions had used the services of older adults during the previous school year (Sullivan & Florio, 1976). Nevertheless, the number of older individuals serving in these institutions was small. Thus, Sullivan & Florio recommend that there is a need to increase both the number of institutions using volunteers and expand the size of existing volunteer programs.

Setting up volunteer programs in schools

The following information on setting up volunteer programs in schools is a synthesis of significant ideas found in a cross-section of the literature.

Start with careful planning

Organisation is the key to success according to Amundson, 1991; Armengol, 1992; Freedman, 1997; MacBain, 1996; and Sullivan & Florio, 1976. Thus, the first and most important step in starting a successful volunteer program is to engage in careful planning.

A vital component of careful planning will be a school-wide *needs assessment*. An assessment of the school's needs should be stated in clear and specific terms (Armengol, 1992). Involvement of all teachers in a co-operative effort to work out a list of unfulfilled needs (Amundson, 1991) is paramount. It is necessary for a school to consider the objectives and specific outcomes that are desired from a volunteer program (Armengol, 1992). What are the learning or interpersonal goals, and how can the volunteers working with students accomplish these goals? (MacBain, 1996). As part of this plan it is necessary to determine what benefits will be derived from the program for students, teachers, volunteers and the school (Armengol, 1992). Then the schools need to decide precisely what the volunteers might do, and ensure that the program is carefully co-ordinated and supervised. Volunteers require encouragement, guidance and recognition, and need to be sure of what is required of them. Similarly, teachers need to be prepared to use volunteers constructively (Sullivan & Florio, 1976). All of this information provides the basic framework for the program.

A job description should be drawn up for the volunteers. The description should detail the teacher's expectations, the intent of the program, the skills required, and the amount of time that is needed. The job description is an important part of the

planning process because volunteers "want to know what the job is, when they are needed and for how long, and what they need to know" (Armengol, 1992, p. 469). When expectations are vague and poorly defined, volunteers may experience anxiety because they are unsure of what is expected of them, and thus are more likely to withdraw from the program. Therefore, it is important that teachers should identify specific educational tasks for volunteers to accomplish (Strom & Strom, 1995).

The Illinois Intergenerational Initiative (1996) hinged upon involving students in the planning. Starting with discussions, it was the students who identified the needs the retirees could fulfil in the classroom. They looked at what resources the volunteers could provide, and came up with various program ideas. The students were involved in a "priceless learning" (p. 61) activity, allowing them the opportunity to "experience the opportunities to solve problems, work in intergenerational groups, and develop organisational skills" (p. 61).

Joint planning has been strongly advocated (e.g., Amundson, 1991). Involving everybody in the planning process, including the volunteers themselves, is a way to promote shared responsibility and ownership (Amundson, 1991).

During the planning process logistics need to be considered. A meeting area may be needed, and various supplies will be required. A community organisation may help to pay for funding, and local businesses may be asked to donate supplies. Also the volunteer co-ordinator needs to check whether the volunteers are covered by the school's insurance policy (MacBain, 1996).

The school needs to be prepared to give the program financial support. A volunteer program is cheap to run, and the financial investment is small compared to the returns. However, the school needs to be prepared to make that investment (Sullivan & Florio, 1976).

Recruiting volunteers

Concerning attracting retirees into a volunteer program, the Illinois Intergenerational Initiative (1997) maintains that "partnerships are the key" (p. 22). This refers to a partnership between a school and a senior citizens organisation, bringing the young and the old together while minimising any need for management. For example: a school's first grade class began a partnership with a chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons; while the principal of another school began a partnership with a nearby nursing home (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997). Such programs are winning propositions because management is shared. The senior centre was involved and screened the seniors, and the school prepared the students and welcomed the seniors. This distributed model of management seems to be one of the most successful methods of promoting ongoing intergenerational management (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997).

Another way to attract retirees is to use free forms of advertising to publicise the schools' needs (MacBain, 1996). For example, free bulletin boards can be found at grocery stores, or the local community radio station may give a community service announcement. Churches and retirement villages should be contacted, as these are organisations that already involve senior citizens. In addition there may be a retirees' association that can be approached to advertise the program in their newsletters.

Photographs of younger and older people working together on activities are "dynamite" for publicity (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1996).

Schools can also provide opportunities for senior citizens to get to know the school through outreach programs (Armengol, 1992; MacBain, 1996). By providing a service to retirees, the school opens lines of communication with the older population, which can create an interest in volunteer work (MacBain, 1996). At the same time the outreach program fulfils real needs of senior citizens (Armengol, 1992). The objective is to actively involve seniors in the school, promoting an understanding of school endeavours that require community support to be successful (Armengol, 1992). For example, the school could advertise computer literacy courses in the local retirement village. This could attract a lot of interest amongst older adults, many of whom may be willing to join the volunteer program. Other intergenerational outreach initiatives that have been successful include a dinner followed by a student play, an intergenerational banquet, minor auto repairs in school workshops, cooking and hair cutting for senior citizens provided by home economics students (Armengol, 1992).

A number of schools have opened their computer classrooms during the evening to members of the community. One school in the US discovered that computers acted as "a high-tech magnet for seniors" (Lensch, 1997). The seniors were very interested to learn how to use what they perceived to be "very sophisticated electronic equipment" (p. 65). They were determined to master the technology, particularly because their young grandchildren already knew how to use computers. To the organisers of this particular program the "unexpected byproduct" (p. 66) was that more seniors volunteered to tutor students and help the school through a variety of support roles.

The recruitment process does not need to be complicated. Often the best method is simply to ask for retirees. "Potential volunteers will usually accept if they are approached by people they know" (Armengol, 1992, p. 469). However, volunteers do need to be asked. It is unlikely that retirees will volunteer their time unless they are specifically asked. A study found that when specifically asked, four out of five people would volunteer. But if a person is not asked, only one in five will come forward to volunteer (Butler, 1997). A Gallup Organisation study in the US found that three-fourths of the respondents indicated that they did not refuse to volunteer when asked (Armengol, 1992). Sullivan & Florio (1976) add that the *initiative* must come from the school seeking the services of older adults because few people have the confidence or drive to actively seek volunteer work. They will not offer their services because they may fear rejection or believe they have nothing to offer. It is up to the school to invite older people into the classroom.

Sometimes, the key to obtaining a larger number of volunteers is to remove obstacles that are preventing them from volunteering. For some older volunteers, transportation is the most serious obstacle to volunteering (Amundson, 1991). Some programs reimburse volunteers for the bus fare, others encourage volunteers to arrive on the school bus. Providing transportation is sometimes the key to attracting regular volunteers (de Pillis, 1982; Sainer, 1976).

Once the volunteer program is established, word of mouth will expand the number of volunteers (MacBain, 1996). Through community networking – committed participants in the program keeping a lookout for potential volunteers – it is possible

to expand the volunteer program considerably (Armengol, 1992).

It may be easier to initially start the volunteer program on a small scale, with just one or two volunteers, and involve more volunteers later (de Pillis, 1982; Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1996). For example, one volunteer program started with five volunteers, and established a small and successfully working program before starting to add a few more volunteers each year (MacBain, 1996).

It may take more than a year to recruit the number of volunteers that are needed, especially if the volunteer program starts with only a limited number of volunteers as a trial. Fortunately, it has been found that once a senior citizen becomes a volunteer, they tend to "remain a faithful volunteer for many years" (Courson & Heward, 1989, p. 527).

Screening volunteers

After volunteers have expressed their interest in working, a screening interview is a productive next step (e.g., MacBain, 1996). This should start with a sincere welcome. Both the school's and the volunteer's expectations should be discussed to promote understanding and eliminate misconceptions that may cause future disillusionment (Armengol, 1992). Volunteers should be supplied with a written description of the program, and given an opportunity to ask any questions (MacBain, 1996).

The screening interview is the time to assess factors such as: the retiree's talents and preferred activities; how much time they are willing to volunteer; preferences for working with a particular age group; health and physical needs; communication skills;

suitability for working with disabled or special needs students; transport needs; and willingness to agree to a background check (Armengol, 1992; MacBain, 1996). All of these factors need to be taken into account when deciding on the volunteer's assignment. Consideration needs also to be given to the compatibility of the teacher and the volunteer (Armengol, 1992).

The information from the screening interview should be carefully considered when matching a volunteer to a teacher, task, or group of students. The most effective intergenerational programs, according to the outreach programs co-ordinator for the North Carolina Centre for Creative Retirement (Halford, 1998), are those that match the needs and talents of seniors and students, carefully delineating responsibilities, and offering training and ongoing support.

Strom & Strom (1995) present what may be the most effective way to match retirees to students or teachers, which is to let the volunteers choose their own assignments. By presenting the volunteer with several options, the researchers found it gives the volunteer the opportunity for an easy exit without embarrassment if an unacceptable task is offered. The volunteer should have the opportunity to try several different placements at first, so they can decide which placement is best for them. Trying various placements minimises the chance that volunteers feel obliged to assist only the teacher to whom they were first assigned.

Careful consideration should be given to the volunteer's workload. Obviously, volunteers should decide their own schedule (Strom & Strom, 1995). Whatever hours they choose to work should be accepted and appreciated by the school. However, a

potential problem looms when teachers attempt to show respect for volunteers by increasing their responsibility (Strom & Strom, 1995). This promotion may be unwanted, and cause additional stress on retirees. Therefore, it is important that the teacher and volunteer co-ordinator periodically check with each volunteer, and find out if they are comfortable with their workload. Communication is central to the successful conduct of a volunteer program.

Orientation

The volunteer program should commence with an orientation program (Armengol, 1992; MacBain, 1996). The orientation session should include each of the groups involved in the volunteer program: the students, teachers and retirees. During this time each person will begin to understand their role and the role of the other parties (Armengol, 1992).

Other vital information that retirees will need to know includes locations of various facilities around the school, who to contact if they are unable to participate in an emergency, a timetable of participation, and program rules and guidelines (MacBain, 1996). Volunteers should be given a tour of the facility in which they will be working. By meeting the staff and administration, through introductions to the people with whom they will be directly working, the volunteers will be made to feel much more comfortable (Armengol, 1992; MacBain, 1996). Students should also be given an opportunity to meet and socialise with the senior volunteers. For example, the students could plan a welcoming party and serve refreshments (Armengol, 1992).

Sullivan & Florio (1976) maintain that the volunteer needs to feel *accepted* into the

classroom, because often the classroom is the sacred domain of the teacher. It is up to the volunteer co-ordinator, during the orientation phase, to emphasise the supportive role that volunteers can play in the classroom. The key to encouraging teachers to welcome volunteers into their classrooms is to involve teachers in planning the volunteer program from the beginning. Thereby teachers are assured that the volunteers are not going to usurp the role of the teacher, but will be able to free them to carry out their primary function – teaching, including classroom management. It is important to emphasise that volunteers "are not responsible for discipline" (de Pillis, 1982).

Program evaluation

Once a volunteer program is in operation, it is necessary to conduct ongoing assessment to ascertain the success of the program and to look for ways to make improvements (e.g., MacBain, 1996). The evaluation process should include everyone involved in the program: teachers; students; administrators; parents; and the volunteers (Armengol, 1992). Keeping in touch with all of the participants is important. A key role is to let participants know that their comments are not only welcome, but vital to the program's success. New ideas will make the intergenerational experience better for everyone. Ongoing evaluation and communication make for a successful program (MacBain, 1996).

A possible way to evaluate and guide the personal development of volunteers is to make a report card for the volunteers. One volunteer program included items such as: "encourages students to try again after a mistake; shows willingness to learn from a student; cares about students and is considered a good friend" (Strom & Strom,

1995, p. 50).

Maintaining motivation

Motivation can be kept high by giving recognition to the work of the volunteers (Armengol, 1992). It is important for the volunteers to feel appreciated. The volunteers will say that the experience itself is reward enough, and that they did not volunteer to receive gratitude (Amundson, 1991; MacBain, 1996). However, formal recognition is certainly appreciated to the point that periodic formal recognition may be "critical" in efforts to keep volunteers actively involved (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1996, p. 63). Recognition helps to keep program quality and enthusiasm high (MacBain, 1996).

There are numerous ways to show appreciation for the volunteers. In one program, (Smith, 1998), an important part of the activity involved the students in writing thank-you notes to the volunteers. These "personal tokens" have a "dramatic emotional impact" on senior adults (p. 53). Recognition can be given in newsletters and newspapers, special awards can be presented for outstanding contributions, and years of service can be publicly acknowledged (Armengol, 1992). A surprise birthday party may delight the volunteer, because older people are usually proud of their age and will tell the students when their birthday is near (Courson & Heward, 1989). Encouraged participants will help make the volunteer program more effective.

Armengol (1992) reminds us that to give volunteers "senseless busywork can be deadly" (p. 469) (see also de Pillis, 1982). It is easy for an overburdened teacher to simply assume that the older person needs to be kept busy and to assign the volunteer

the job of cutting out hundreds of shapes or photocopying and stapling booklets (Seefeldt, 1977). However, seniors are motivated by having assignments that "are significant and that keep them actively involved" (Armengol, 1992, p. 469). "The best programs enable seniors to establish personal relationships with children" (Halford, 1998, p. 51), and most senior volunteers will prefer to work directly with students (Courson & Heward, 1989). Rather than performing isolated clerical work, it is far better for volunteers to read to students, to be involved with student clubs, or to assist with after-school programs (Halford, 1998).

Even if retirees choose to work on clerical tasks, they should be given every opportunity to talk with students (Strom & Strom, 1995). It is natural for some older volunteers to choose not to be with children, argues Seefeldt (1977), stating that volunteering in a school without actually being with the children is "involvement" that is "every bit as valuable as direct contact" (p. 23). Yet in the same paragraph Seefeldt adds: "It is important, however, that the children see and meet the people who make or do things for them" (p. 23). Seefeldt observed that one older woman who had knitted mittens and hats for all the children in a class was "touched" by the children's "warmth and openness" (p. 23). The volunteer "found her reservations about working with children disappearing and she stayed to show the children how to knit" (p. 23).

A successful volunteer program will place importance on personal contact between the students and the volunteer because without this personal contact the volunteer can quickly lose motivation (Halford, 1998). At first the older person may find it difficult to keep a dialogue going with young people. This problem can be overcome when

retirees rely on a set of supplied interview questions about experiences that the generations have in common. Volunteers who use this aid, report the joy of talking with children, and they gain in confidence, and start to pursue additional topics (Strom & Strom, 1995).

A volunteer program needs a volunteer co-ordinator

For a volunteer program to operate successfully, there should be a designated volunteer co-ordinator (de Pillis, 1982). The role of the volunteer co-ordinator is to ensure that the program remains well organised. The United States National Research Council found that strong school volunteer programs have a volunteer co-ordinator (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). For the program to have a "lasting impact" it "has to be included in someone's job description" (Amundson, 1991, p. 62).

A key part of the volunteer co-ordinators' job description is to represent the retirees. Volunteers are often unsure of who should hear their occasional concerns and queries, and they do not wish to burden down the principal or other teachers (Strom & Strom, 1995, p. 49).

The volunteer co-ordinator is often a part-time or even a full-time employee. In many situations a full-time volunteer co-ordinator is responsible for management of volunteering throughout a school district. But a volunteer co-ordinator may also be a retired volunteer. Many retired people have had careers that make them well qualified to manage a volunteer program. A trusted member of the volunteers' peer group is well placed to represent all of the volunteers (Strom & Strom, 1995). The job may even be rotated amongst the volunteers (Amundson, 1991).

The presence of a volunteer co-ordinator can also influence the ease with which the school can attract new retirees. It was found that it was easier to attract retirees to volunteer on a regular basis if staff leadership was available (Sainer, 1976).

Interestingly, a study of volunteer co-ordinators employed full-time to administer mentoring programs discovered that the students often saw the co-ordinators as mentors (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). Because of the co-ordinator's proximity to the youth, they often become of more significance to the youth than their designated, volunteer mentors. The co-ordinator's office became a "caring refuge" (p. 27) because they have time to talk. Even students who are not involved in the mentor program begin "gravitating to these oases" (p. 27).

Inservice training

Some volunteer programs encourage volunteers to attend regular training meetings. These meetings may take the form of fortnightly discussions that present ways to support child development in the school and at home (Strom & Strom, 1995). During these meetings volunteers should be encouraged to share their experiences. Through listening to other volunteers' experiences, they learn ways in which to be more helpful and understanding of students (Strom & Strom, 1995).

However, some researchers who have run successful volunteer programs disagree with providing too much training or carefully prescribing the elder's role (e.g., Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). Rather they would like to emphasise that they are "getting

good people and turning them loose" (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993, p. 26). They encourage elder mentors to use their autonomy and play a broad developmental role. Their primary focus is on the growth of the young person, rather than the accomplishment of specific tasks (p. 26). This role appears to be wholly appropriate for an elder mentor. However, this does not discount the fact that elders in other roles may appreciate a carefully prescribed role.

While most successful volunteer programs provide some degree of training, the training should not be limited to volunteers alone. Teachers and students can also profit from the preparation that training provides (Seefeldt, 1977). "Teachers, often younger than the older volunteers, must receive inservice training to know how to use volunteers effectively" (Amundson, 1991, p. 63). Because of "society's pervasive prejudice against the elderly, staff members should be given some training in what they can expect from older volunteers and how they can work with them" (p. 63).

Utilising the full potential of retirees

Finally, when it comes to education and schools, there seems to be no limit to the variety of tasks that retirees can do (Armengol, 1992; Senior Scape, 1998; Sullivan & Florio, 1976). The possibilities are only limited by the resourcefulness of the institution and the older people involved (Sullivan & Florio, 1976). "When you look at the world through an intergenerational lens, endless possibilities open up" (Halford, 1998, p. 50).

A survey of over 3000 educational institutions in the US (Sullivan & Florio, 1976)

found that service opportunities for older people in public schools are primarily for volunteer tutors, teacher aides, resource persons, library aides, teachers, substitute teachers, consultants, or creators of education games. However, there is a wide range of educational services that older people may provide. Examples of the wide variety of tasks that retirees could excel or have excelled at include:

- A trained teacher is not needed to take prepared lessons to students with long-term illnesses. A retiree would be capable of monitoring lessons for homebound learners (Sullivan & Florio, 1976).
- Senior citizens can ring students that are home alone after school (MacBain, 1996).
- Volunteers could tutor non-English speaking students (Armengol, 1992).
- Retired people who are skilful at writing would be especially helpful in keeping the press informed of interesting activities in the school. They could be involved in public relations for the school (Sullivan & Florio, 1976).
- Tutors who assist with schoolwork can also use the time to create a relationship with the student including attention and encouragement (MacBain, 1996).
- Older volunteers with an understanding of culture could help with the language development, housing, financial aid and orientation of foreign students (Sullivan & Florio, 1976).
- Volunteers could present a folk art workshop for students. After explaining various types of folk art and demonstrating arts and crafts skills, the students and seniors could work together to create artworks for the school (MacBain, 1996).
- Aged volunteers are ideal for relating to students their real-life experiences about topics being studied in class, such as living in another country, having been a prisoner of war, or immigrating to this country (Armengol, 1992).

- Margaret McKay, a prominent Australian anti-drug campaigner, intends to involve the whole community, and particularly retirees, in the teaching of "new skills" to those being rehabilitated at her farm retreat in NSW (Dunstan, 2000).
- Sometimes senior citizens can perform tasks that nobody else can. Vivian Tohanczyn is described as the "Best in the Business" (Dallao, 1997, p. 85). Apart from tutoring some neighbourhood kids in English, she also rings up nearly 500 parolees each month. This charming, interesting and warm grandmother can collect information from offenders that no one else can get. Not only is she able to collect information, but "her phone calls tend to turn into conversations" (p. 85), and she can get an insight into how the parolee is really going. "Some even send me Christmas cards" (p. 85), she said.

The work a volunteer performs does not need to be related to their previous work history, but rather the volunteering career is often based on capitalising on the vast inner resources that a retiree has spent a lifetime developing (Scott, 1976).

Conclusion

This literature review has served to confirm the positive outcomes associated with using retirees as volunteers in schools. The next chapter presents the methodology for this research project that investigated the possibilities of a volunteer program using older adults for Avondale High School.

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter delineates the research design and procedures used in operationalising the study. It begins with describing the population samples and then outlines the development and use of the questionnaire instruments. Next it outlines the procedure used in gaining ethics committee approval, distribution of the research instruments, and data analysis.

Participants

Population

The population was identified as being all retirees, school teachers and school administrators in Australia. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1998), there are 9,587 schools employing 209,079 full-time equivalent teaching staff throughout Australia. The ABS (1999) also reported that in 1998 there were 2.2 million people aged 65 years and over, or 12% of the population, living in Australia.

Sample

The two samples used in this study were: (a) independent residents of the Avondale Retirement Village (ARV), and (b) teachers and school administrators from the Avondale High School.

Both the ARV and the School are institutions that are owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a worldwide Christian organisation. Cooranbong is a

town in New South Wales that has a significant proportion of Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) in the population, because of four major institutions established by the church in the town: Avondale College; the Sanitarium Health Food Company factory; ARV; and the Avondale Primary and High Schools.

ARV retirees

The retirement village provided a readily available and large sample of suitable retirees. The sample of retirees contained only the independent retirees in the village. Independent retirees are those who live in their own self-contained units. The sample did not include residents of ARV who live in the two hostels or the hospital, where residents who are no longer able to look after themselves receive higher levels of care. The residents in self-contained units more closely resembled the wider population of retirees, as according to the NSW Ageing & Disability Department (1998a), more than 56% of older people will never require assistance to live independently. .

The major difference between the residents of this retirement village and the wider population of retirees is the residents' adherence to the principles of Adventism. These principles guide one to have a distinctive lifestyle based on Biblical principles and healthy living (Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2000). As a consequence of healthy living, a major study of 22,940 Seventh-day Adventists in California over 25 years, found that Seventh-day Adventists have *significantly* lower mortality rates, than comparable non-Adventists (Adventist Health Study, 1999).

However, the retirees' increased health and longevity is counter-balanced by the fact that many retirees only move into an ARV unit when they are no longer able to keep

up with the maintenance required in their own home. In the case of the subjects of this study, it is likely that they would be chronologically older than their non-Adventist counterparts, although just as healthy and active.

The sample of retirees suited the purposes of this research project because it provided an Adventist link with the high school, finding a group of 'matching' Seventh-day Adventist retirees. To many people approached in the community it was anecdotally obvious that the two institutions (ARV and Avondale Schools) could form a mutually beneficial link.

Avondale high school teachers and administrators

The study's sample of teachers and administrators consisted of the staff from Avondale High School. The sample consisted of individuals present at staff morning worship (a time to focus on Jesus Christ and his principles) on Monday, 22 May, 2000. As this was a compulsory staff meeting, the majority of staff were able to participate in the voluntary survey.

Instruments

Three research instruments were used in this study (see Appendices). The researcher developed all of the instruments.

Two of the research instruments used were questionnaires. These were employed to gain information inexpensively from a large number of people (Kumar, 1997). The first questionnaire was directed at retirees, and the second at teachers and school administrators.

The third research instrument used was an interview of retirees. The interview questions were employed to collect in-depth information (Kumar, 1997). The questions were written after the survey of retirees was analysed, as Rubin & Rubin (1995) suggest that interviewees can provide insights on more specific themes that have already emerged (p. 70).

Retirees' questionnaire

The retirees' questionnaire instrument surveyed retirees and was designed to meet four of the study's objectives. These are listed in Chapter 1: Overview of the problem:

- To determine the available skills in the sample of retirees;
- To find out what short courses an educational institution could run in order to attract retirees;
- To examine the willingness of retirees in the sample to volunteer in a high school;
- To identify the reasons for not volunteering;

Questionnaire structure (see Appendix 1.1)

The instrument consisted of four pages: (1) a consent letter, as required by the Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee; (2) a page entitled "Seventh-day Adventist Retirees: A Valuable Resource", which included a simple half-page description of the research program; (3) open-ended questions, numbers 1-7; (4) open-ended questions, numbers 8-12. The consent letter was photocopied on official Avondale College letterhead paper, while the remainder of the survey was photocopied on coloured (blue) paper.

The purpose of the first five questions was to survey the available skills of the retirees [the first of the objectives above in bullet points]. The questions asked for details of participants' (1) education, (2) paid and (3) unpaid jobs, (4) hobbies and interests, and (5) any other experiences that might be of value for volunteer work in a high school. It was anticipated that these questions should cover most of the skills a retiree may have.

Questions 6-8 were designed to examine courses a secondary institution could offer if it wished to attract retirees [the second of the above objectives]. The questions asked (6) if a retiree would be interested in undertaking a short course to prepare themselves for a volunteer position, and (7) what skills they would be interested in obtaining through a short course.

The next four questions investigated the willingness of retirees in the sample to volunteer in a high school, and identified the reasons for not volunteering (the last two objectives). The questions examined (8) motivation behind previous volunteer experiences, (9) whether they would volunteer if a suitable position became available, (10) would they volunteer if that position was in a high school, and (11) any potential problems that are stopping them from volunteering.

The last question (12) asked for additional comments on: skills retirees have to offer; skills they may want to gain; and if retirees would be willing to offer these skills to a high school.

Teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire

The instrument surveyed teachers and school administrators. It was designed to investigate the perceptions of teachers and school administration regarding the idea of a volunteer program involving retired people.

Questionnaire structure (see Appendix 1.2)

The instrument consisted of ten open-ended questions, photocopied on two single-sided sheets of white paper.

Question 1 focused on determining how extra human resources could be used to provide the best possible education for students. The intent was to uncover unfulfilled school needs that could be met by volunteers (i.e., extra human resources).

Question 2 focused on discovering whether the high school had ever used volunteers. If they answered 'yes', the respondent was further questioned (i) as to whether the volunteers were retirees, (ii) how these volunteers were used, and (iii) if the experience was successful.

Questions 3 and 4 probed for initial responses. First (3) to the idea of using volunteer retirees in the high school, and then (4) if participants thought the use of volunteers would be beneficial to the high school. This was coupled with the subsequent task in question 5 of listing what roles volunteers could play in the educational endeavours of the school.

Question 6 and 7 required teachers and school administrators to think of the (6)

disadvantages, and also the (7) advantages, that might be gained from having volunteers in the school.

The final three questions related to the idea of setting up a volunteer program and what preparation the volunteers and teachers might initially require. Question 8 asked what training the volunteers may need, and question 9 enquired into what resources and/or training teachers needed to implement a successful volunteer program. Finally, question 10 directed respondents to reflect on why such a volunteer program is currently unavailable.

Interview of retirees

The purpose of the interview was to follow up in more detail (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) the themes and questions raised by the survey of retirees. Five retirees were invited to participate in a personal one-on-one interview. All agreed to participate.

Interview structure (see Appendix 1.3)

Each interview lasted for approximately 20 minutes. The same questions were put to all interviewees, although these questions were not necessarily limiting, enabling discussion as required. The questions dealt with issues and themes that arose from the survey responses.

Question 1 asked for the age of the retiree, because there is a link between age and willingness to volunteer (Soo & Gong-Soog, 1998).

The next two questions ascertained the available skills of the interviewee. The

questions asked for details of participants' (2) education and (3) types of paid jobs held. These questions are similar to those found in the retirees' questionnaire, although they probed more deeply.

Question 4 examined what volunteer positions the retiree has held, and whether this experience makes them more or less interested in volunteering in the future. The next question (5) explored whether the retiree thinks it is necessary to undertake a short course for a potential volunteer position. Question 6 asked what motivated the retiree to volunteer in the past. Questions 7 investigated if the interviewee would volunteer if a suitable position was offered to them, and question 8 focused on if the retiree would still volunteer if that position was at Avondale High School.

Question 9 investigated if the retiree would be more willing to volunteer if the students came to the interviewee's own house. This question was an attempt to pose a possible solution to any transport dilemmas.

Question 10 required details of what the retiree would be willing to do for the high school. Three lines of suggestions were read out to aid the interviewee in their thinking. Question 11 examined if there were any problems stopping the retiree from volunteering that could be overcome.

The next question (12) was designed to provide verification to the questionnaire finding that retirees were very interested in taking a short course to teach them about computers.

The final question (13) asked for the interviewee's first consideration when deciding to volunteer or not. It was designed to probe into the questionnaire finding that health is the biggest issue when deciding on volunteering.

Procedure

Development of research instruments

The research instruments were developed from a synthesis of the literature review. The questionnaires were piloted amongst a limited sample of tertiary students and retirees. The responses to the retirees' questionnaire were analysed before finalising the other two research instruments, (i.e., the teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire, and the interview of retirees).

Ethics committee approval

Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee approval was gained before commencing any data collection. The required form was completed (see Appendix 2), stating the researcher's aims and objectives, proposed methodology, how the data were to be stored, etc., together with a letter of consent (see Appendix 1.1). The committees' approval was granted on the condition of a minor change to the letter of consent, and the inclusion of one paragraph encouraging the respondent to contact the committee if any problems arose with the researcher or the survey.

Distribution of research instruments

The research instruments were distributed in three phases, over a period of approximately one month:

Phase 1 – retirees' questionnaire

Phase 2 – teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire

Phase 3 – retirees' interview

Phase 1 – retirees' questionnaire

The retirees' questionnaire was distributed in a plain unaddressed envelope and placed into each of the resident's letterboxes. The questionnaires distributed totalled 164. Permission from the administration of the village was required before distributing the surveys throughout ARV, and this was easily obtained once the researcher had spoken to the manager and briefed him on the details of the research.

It was requested in the consent letter that the surveys be completed and returned to the head office of ARV within 10 days of the distribution date. The length of time from distribution to collection was deliberately kept short to keep the retirees from putting the paper aside for a later date. The head office was involved in collecting the questionnaires to facilitate the process for the researcher and eliminate postal costs.

Immediately after the survey completion date had passed, a short reminder note was delivered to each letterbox (see Appendix 3). However, this extra measure had very little effect - delivering a reminder note only saw two extra surveys handed in. This brought the number of returned surveys to 14, or a response rate of nearly 9 per cent.

To further increase the response rate a door-knock approach was adopted. The newer development (Alton Villas) of ARV was visited because the residents are widely considered to be younger by other residents of ARV, and research has shown that younger retirees are more likely to volunteer (Soo & Gong-Soog, 1998).

During the door knock, the researcher had an assistant to record all verbal responses. Firstly, the researcher introduced himself, and the purpose of the research. Every retiree was asked if they were interested in completing a survey about volunteering. Almost without exception each retiree gave their opinion about the idea of volunteering at Avondale High School. With the retirees' permission, their responses were recorded.

Thus responses for the retirees' questionnaire fell into two categories: full survey responses and also short responses. The collection of short responses supplied valuable information that was used in achieving the objectives of the survey.

In total, 22 full survey responses were recorded, an increase of 8 after the door-knock. This brings the full response rate to over 13 per cent. The short responses were also included in the overall response rate, because they yielded valuable information used to achieve the objectives of the survey (see Chapter 4: Analysis of data and discussion of results: Response rates). There were 41 short responses recorded, which includes one letter that gave a significant amount of information. Furthermore, 4 surveys were returned blank. The total number of responses was 63, or a response rate of over 38 per cent.

After analysing the retirees' questionnaire, the researcher had an opportunity to present the methodology and preliminary findings at a conference of Avondale College staff and students, to critically analyse the progress made on the research project. The project was received favourably, and the preliminary findings were endorsed.

Phase 2 – teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire

This questionnaire was distributed to a "captive audience", because staff were required to attend the staff meeting. The purpose of the research was briefly explained. Assurances were given regarding respondents' anonymity and the voluntary nature of participating. A total of 17 questionnaires were distributed, and 16 of them were returned, giving a response rate of 94 per cent.

Phase 3 – retirees' interview

Five retirees were interviewed. Each retiree was asked the same basic thirteen questions, and both the researcher and interviewee had the freedom to expand upon each element of the interview. The researcher wrote down responses during the interview.

Data analysis

The data were analysed according to the type of information received. Some data were analysed quantitatively to collect numerical data in order to investigate relationships (Gay, 1996) and to give an overview of the subjects. However, alongside the numbers and percentages were gleaned qualitative statements that gave greater understanding to the issues at hand (Gay, 1996). The combination of

quantitative and qualitative data analysis was "clearly more powerful" (Gay, 1996, p. 233).

The retirees' questionnaire received a combination of both quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis. The quantitative analysis gave a useful overview of the data, for example, the types of skills possessed by the retirees, or how many were willing to volunteer. In addition, the retirees' questionnaire was analysed qualitatively for greater understanding, for example, to find out retirees' opinions about a preparatory short course.

The questionnaire was not relied upon to supply authoritative statistical data. For example, it was not the purpose of this study to quote that exactly 45 per cent of retirees were willing to volunteer in a high school. Rather, in this case, the purpose of the questionnaire was to find *if* retirees were willing to volunteer in a high school – an objective that was satisfied. As pointed out by Huff (1975), with some kinds of mail questionnaires, a five or ten per cent response is considered quite high - but such a response rate leads to biased results, a factor identified in this study. More importantly, it is easy to lie with questionnaires and statistics (Huff, 1975). Therefore, this research project wasn't depending upon quantitative data alone to prove relationships, but rather used qualitative analysis of the questionnaire and interviews to support the findings of the questionnaire.

The teachers' and school administrators' responses were analysed through a process of triangulation with peers in the Faculty of Education Honours program at Avondale College. The process of triangulation refers to a combination of methods, data

collection strategies, or data sources etc. (Gay, 1996; Rossi, Wright & Anderson, 1983). In this case it refers to the six peers who analysed the data, therefore reducing any bias coming from the researcher. Each member searched for major themes arising out of participants' responses. These were compiled, and the six top themes were voted upon.

Lastly, the retirees' interview responses were analysed qualitatively to provide insight on the themes and issues raised by the responses to the retirees' questionnaire. It was used to test the findings of the questionnaire.

The next chapter presents the analysis of the data from the three research instruments, and discusses the results in light of the literature review.

Chapter 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data obtained by the three research instruments used in the study. The discussion of results is also addressed within each section of the chapter. It begins by describing the response rates to the instruments. This is followed by the analysis and discussion of the retirees' questionnaire using a question-by-question approach, the analysis and discussion of the teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire using a thematic approach, and the interview of retirees thematically.

Response rates

Retirees' questionnaire

The response rate to the survey of retirees is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response rate to retirees' questionnaire.

Questionnaires delivered to Avondale Retirement Village	164
Questionnaires returned blank	4
Questionnaires returned completed	22
Number of 'short responses'	41*
Total number of responses	63
Total response rate	38.4 %

*includes one letter which gave significant information

It was difficult to achieve the return rate obtained, even with follow-up notices and personal visits. A low response rate is a problem that has "plagued" (Rossi, *et al.,* 1983, p. 359) mail questionnaires. Although in some cases this response rate would be considered low (Berdie, Anderson & Niebuhr, 1986) or only bearable (Wadsworth, 1987), the response rate for the retirees' questionnaire is considered adequate, because, importantly, the survey met each of its four objectives (found in Chapter 1). Additionally, the study did not depend upon merely the questionnaire to fulfil these objectives, but used an interview to support the findings of the questionnaire. As mentioned in Chapter 3: Methodology (Data analysis), it is easy to lie with statistics. Therefore it was considered important to use one-on-one interviews to obtain reliable in-depth information. The objectives met by the questionnaire instrument were:

- The questionnaire set out to determine the *available* skills in the sample of retirees. It is assumed that retirees who did not return questionnaires would have been less likely to volunteer. Therefore, even with a relatively low response rate, the researcher reasonably could estimate the kinds of skills *available* to a possible volunteer program. The conclusion reached was that those who did not return surveys had skills that were *unavailable* for a volunteer program.
- The questionnaire aimed to find out what short courses an educational institution could run in order to attract retirees. This objective was met, and a course was identified that would attract most retirees. This course was included in the proposed eight-element model (see Chapter 5: Conclusions).
- The questionnaire aimed to ascertain the willingness of retirees in the sample to volunteer in a high school. The low response rate may indicate that most retirees are not willing to enter into the volunteer program. On the other hand, it was discovered that there were more than enough retirees willing to volunteer to start a

program immediately.

- The purpose of the questionnaire was also to identify the reasons retirees have for not wishing to volunteer. The 'short responses' were particularly valuable in achieving this objective.

The 'short responses' given by retirees during the door-knock almost universally consisted of three elements. First, retirees indicated that they were reluctant to fill out a questionnaire, as they were usually not interested into entering a school-based volunteer program. Second, retirees gave a range or reasons for their decision against volunteering. Third, retirees added that they believed that a volunteer program was a good idea for someone else (with the exception of one person who didn't like the idea of non-professionals entering the classroom). Clearly, the short responses fulfilled the requirements of the third and fourth objectives: they ascertained retirees' willingness to volunteer and also their reasons for not volunteering. Because short responses gave useful information for meeting one or more of the objectives, short responses were included in the total response rate.

Teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire

The response rate to the teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Response rate to teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire.

Number of surveys distributed at Avondale High School	17
Number of surveys returned	16
Response rate	94.1 %

There was only one questionnaire that was not returned. The response rate was highly acceptable.

Retirees' questionnaires: analysis of data and discussion of results

This section deals with the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected during Phase 1 of the study. Whereas quantitative data in the study is generally set out in tables and charts followed by analysis and discussions, qualitative data is examined and interpreted with emphasis on the identification and then discussion of recurrent themes. The findings are set out below in the same order as the questions appeared in the questionnaire instrument.

Question 1: Please detail what kinds of education you have undertaken (not necessarily finished).

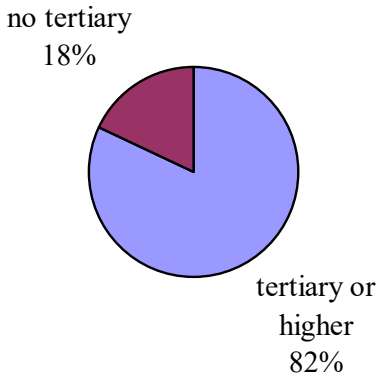
Table 3 presents a summary of the different types of education awards held by the survey respondents, and is set out according to numerical frequency.

Table 3: Education awards held by retirees.

Award	Response frequency
BA	5
Business/Accounting Degree	4
Other Tertiary	4
MA	3
Medical Degree	2
Secretarial	2
High School	2
Primary School	2
PhD	1
Total	25

Participants (N) = 22

Chart 1: Education awards held by retirees



The results clearly indicate that the level of education amongst ARV retirees is very high. Most respondents (82 per cent) had some type of tertiary qualification (as shown by Chart 1 above). The level of education amongst ARV retirees is higher than for the rest of the population, as only 42% of people in Australia have a recognised post-school qualification (ABS, 2000). This finding may be explained by three reasons. First, the highly educated retiree is more likely to return a survey than a retiree who has no tertiary education experience. Second, as reported by Chambré (1993), Kincade, *et al.* (1996), Hayghe (1991), and Soo & Gong-Soog (1998), the more educated a person is, the more likely they are to volunteer. The third related reason is that a person who is more likely to volunteer will also be more likely to return a survey about volunteering.

The questionnaire data showed that there are well-educated retirees with skills suitable to be a volunteer in an academic school program.

Question 2: Please list the general types of paid jobs you have held.

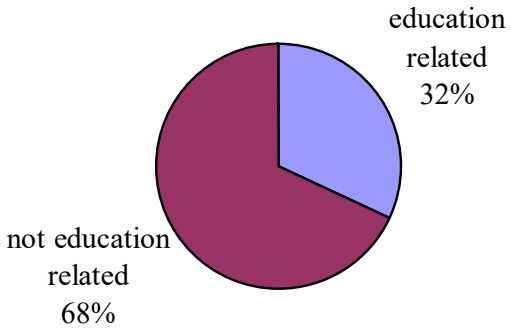
Table 4 presents the different occupations performed by retirees during their working life, and Chart 2 presents the percentage of retirees with experience in education-related and non-education related occupations.

Table 4: Types of occupations performed by retirees during their working life.

Occupation	Response frequency
Pastor, evangelist, or missionary	11
Manual, trade	8
Other	8
Retail	7
High-school or primary-school teacher	7
Principal of school	5
Administration, management	5
Accountant	5
Medical	4
Clerk	4
Tertiary teacher	3
Secretarial	3
President of university	1
Total	71

Participants (N) = 22

Chart 2: Retirees with experience in education-related and non-education related occupatoins.



Participants (N) = 22

The data indicated that retirees have a broad range of skills. Retirees listed 71 different occupations. Furthermore, this may be a conservative estimate because some respondents might not list every occupation performed in a working-lifetime.

While 28 per cent of the *occupations* in Table 4 are education-related, it was discovered that 32 per cent, roughly a third of all *respondents*, indicated they had been employed in an education-related occupation at some stage in their life (see Chart 2). It is important to draw attention to the fact that one-third of the questionnaire respondents had previous experience in education. Consequently, these retirees would be experienced in playing an educative role in the development of young people. In summary, both groups of retirees, those with educational experience and those without, bring with them varied experiences and skills in different fields, and would be suitable as volunteers in schools.

Question 3: For what unpaid jobs have you been a volunteer?

Every retiree who returned a completed questionnaire had been involved or is currently involved in volunteer work. Table 5 summarises the types of volunteer work undertaken by respondents.

Table 5: Volunteer positions held by retirees.

Volunteer Position	Response frequency
Community services	10
Seventh-day Adventist Church volunteer	10
Seventh-day Adventist education	5
Associated church ministries*	4
Carer	3
Child care	2

Participants (N) = 22

*For example: ADRA (Adventist Development & Relief Agency, a worldwide agency for reducing poverty); ACF (Avondale College Foundation, an organization supporting Avondale College); fly & builds (flying to another country and building a church or school) and chaplaincy.

It is significant that all of the retirees who were surveyed had previous experience in volunteer work, confirming Chambré's (1993) claim that a person who has or is already involved in volunteer work is more likely to volunteer in the future. The types of volunteer positions held correlate with statements by Hayghe (1991), who found that volunteers were more likely to work for churches or other religious organisations than for any other kind of organisation. This is an advantage held by

Avondale High School because it is owned and operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Question 4: What are your main hobbies and interests?

Table 6 lists the different hobbies and interests reported by the retirees.

Table 6: Hobbies and interests of retirees.

Hobby/Interest	Response frequency
Reading, writing, or related	10
Gardening	9
Other*	9
Knitting, sewing etc.	8
Manual arts	8
Volunteering	8
Photography	3

Participants (N) = 22

(*Hobbies listed in the "other" category included music, Bible study, church work, cooking, lawn bowls, family interests and using the computer.)

The different hobbies and interests that retirees have pursued throughout their lives provide valuable skills that could be suitably employed in a school-based volunteer program. It would be advantageous if a school could utilise these different hobbies and interests (e.g., Streitfeld, 1976; Sullivan & Florio, 1976).

It is interesting to note that reading and writing was found to be a very popular hobby. This suggests that there may be the potential to use these skills for literacy training in schools.

Question 5: What other experience(s) do you have that would be advantageous if you wanted to volunteer in a high school? e.g. parenthood, youth SS teacher.

The retirees were asked what other experiences they had that might be advantageous if they wanted to volunteer. This question was very poorly answered. It was designed to catch all other miscellaneous skills that retirees had gained that were not covered by the first four questions. However, most retirees did not understand the intent of the question or could not think of any other advantageous experiences. Two examples were given to aid the respondent: parenthood and youth Sabbath School (SS, ie. religious education at church) teacher. These two examples greatly influenced the response, as is shown by Table 7.

Table 7: Retirees' other experiences/skills.

Experiences/skills	Response frequency
SS teacher/church work	10
Parenthood	8
High-school teaching	1
Building ships	1
Teaching English	1
Traveling	1
Unanswered	8

Participants (N) = 22

Few responses other than the examples were given. Furthermore, eight people did not answer the question. Retirees were unaware of the numerous skills and talents they might possess that a high school could utilise. At this point it is interesting to note the argument put forward by Scott (1976), who insisted that the work a volunteer performs does not need to be related to their previous work history, but rather that the volunteering career is so often based on capitalising on the vast inner resources that a retiree has spent a life-time developing. The available data for question 5 did not really reveal what other skills and experience retirees had developed.

Question 6: Would you be interested in undertaking a short course to prepare you for a volunteer position? Why would you be interested?

Table 8 summarises the retirees' responses to question 6.

Table 8: Retirees' opinion about the usefulness of a short preparatory course.

Response	Response frequency
Yes	6
No	6
Other responses*	6
Left blank	4

Participants (N) = 22

(*Other responses included two responses that had nothing to do with the question, and four responses that said they were unable to volunteer, such as "I doubt whether I could function as a volunteer because of age" (subject 7), "too old to be accepted" (subject 9) or "am busily engaged" (subject 8).)

To look at this question from merely a quantitative point of view would leave the researcher with no real insight into the responses. But when the responses were analysed qualitatively, by looking in depth at individual responses, it became clear that the retirees actually believed a volunteer should take a short preparatory course.

Retirees who responded *yes* added that a short course was a "wise idea" (subject 16), "you'd need to" (subject 17), "so they know what is expected" (subject 18), and is "absolutely" (subject 21) necessary. They felt a short course was not only beneficial, but indeed necessary.

Half of the respondents who said a short course was a poor idea gave their reasons: "I'm busy now (subject 5)", "not at present (subject 2)" and "busy enough" (subject 4). It was found that many of those that indicated "no" were not really against the idea of a preparation course, but what they were really indicating was that they themselves were not in a position to volunteer at present, so it was not inconsistent

that they did not want to undertake a short preparatory course.

When only responses from retirees who were interested in volunteering were counted, it was found that at least two-thirds of retirees believed that a short course in preparation for a volunteer position is indeed a good idea. Thus, the retirees tend to agree with numerous researchers who believe that a preparation short course is a necessary step (see Amundson, 1991; Halford, 1998; Seefeldt, 1977; Strom & Strom, 1995).

Question 7: What skills would you be interested in obtaining through a short course? e.g. computing, basic science, needlecraft.

The retirees were asked what types of short courses interested them. The information gained from this question is very important for a school wishing to attract potential volunteers. As stated in the literature (MacBain, 1996), an excellent way for a school to attract volunteers is to initially operate what is called an "outreach program" (Armengol, 1992, p. 469). By providing a service to retirees, the school opens lines of communication with the older population, which can create an interest in volunteer work (MacBain, 1996). Table 9 presents the short courses that are of interest to ARV retirees.

Table 9: Short courses that interest retirees.

Types of courses	Response frequency
Computers	14
No interest in course(s)	6
Horticulture	1
Theology	1
Photography	1
Music	1
Folk art	1
Needlecraft	1

Participants (N) = 22

The majority of retirees (64 per cent) indicated that they were interested in learning how to use a computer. Therefore, the most effective outreach program that could be run by the Avondale schools is a computer literacy course for retired people. This is a very important finding, because it would provide an excellent opportunity to get to know many retired people, many of whom would make excellent volunteers. This finding supports that of Lensch (1997) who, by accident, discovered that participants in a computer course for seniors readily became volunteers for the school.

Question 8: If you have ever worked as a volunteer for anything before, why did you decide to become a volunteer?

Table 10 presents retirees' motivation for taking on previous volunteer roles.

Table 10: Retirees' motivation for volunteering.

Motivation categories	Response frequency
To meet needs	14
A challenge, adventure, attracted, enjoyment	3
Willing to assist	2
To occupy themselves	2
To use a given talent	1
Requested	1

Participants (N) = 22

The retirees overwhelmingly volunteered to meet the needs of other people. This finding supports that of Sainer (1976) who reported that older persons are willing and able to volunteer regularly if the needs are real and apparent. It also provides support for the statement by Soo & Gong-Soog (1998), which claims that altruism is widely recognised as the underlying motivation associated with volunteering

This finding has implications for the way a volunteer program should be presented to potential volunteers. The finding would suggest that it is important to present the needs of students and to demonstrate how retirees can help fulfil these needs when trying to recruit older people for a volunteer program. It should be noted that *all* respondents in the sample had previously volunteered, and 64 per cent of these reported that they had volunteered because they responded to a felt need.

Question 9: If a volunteer position that suited you became available, would you become a volunteer? Why?

Question 10: Would you consider volunteering in a Seventh-day Adventist high school to help the school and its students? Why?

The next two questions need to be analysed at the same time, because it was found that they work together. Question 9 asked the retiree whether they would volunteer if a suitable volunteer position became available. This is contrasted with question 10 which asked whether the retiree would be willing to volunteer if that position was at a Seventh-day Adventist high school. Table 11 presents the participants' responses to questions 9 and 10.

Table 11: Retirees' willingness to volunteer.

Questions	Yes (%)	No (%)
If a volunteer position that suited you became available, would you become a volunteer? Why?	59	41
Would you consider volunteering in a Seventh-day Adventist high school to help the school and its students? Why?	45	55

Participants (N) = 22

Question 10 is the key to this survey, because the crux of the matter is whether volunteers would ever volunteer at a Seventh-day Adventist high school. The above table shows that a small majority (59 per cent) would volunteer if a suitable position became available, and a minority (45 per cent) would volunteer if that position were in a Seventh-day Adventist high school. Table 12 further analyses the question of

whether retirees who are willing volunteers would ever volunteer at a Seventh-day Adventist high school. It does this by determining the correlation between a positive response to question 9 and a positive response to question 10.

Table 12: Correlation between generally being willing to volunteer (question 9) and specifically being willing to do volunteer work at a Seventh-day Adventist high school (question 10).

Question	Response frequency	
Q9: If a volunteer position that suited you became available, would you become a volunteer? Why?	Yes (%) 59	
Considering only participants who answered yes to Q9: Would you consider volunteering in a Seventh-day Adventist high school to help the school and its students? Why?	Yes (%) to Q10 77	No (%) to Q10 23

Participants (N) = 22

The data suggest that if a retiree were willing and able to volunteer, then they would generally (77%) consider volunteering at a Seventh-day Adventist high school. The high school and its image does not appear to be a deterrent for volunteers, but rather many retirees said they would love to help the school and its students. This finding is in contrast with the experience of de Pillis (1982), who found that retirees were fearful of entering a high school. However, de Pillis also found that once retirees became familiar with the school, they were pleasantly surprised.

In relation to questions 9 and 10, it is necessary to consider the results obtained from the short responses. When the results from the short responses are included here, it becomes clear that those who filled out the surveys were far more likely to volunteer. Of the 41 respondents who gave short responses, only 5 were interested in the idea of volunteering in a high school.

The short responses also indicated broad favour for the idea of a volunteer program. During the door-knock, 40 retirees said that setting up a volunteer program is an excellent idea – only one person said it was a poor idea (and that the education of children should be solely left up to the trained "experts" (subject 23)). However, almost without exception, retirees who gave short responses were convinced that a volunteer program was a good idea for someone else.

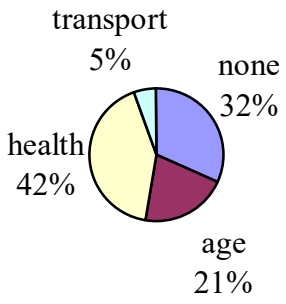
In summary, there were five retirees who gave short responses, and 10 retirees who returned questionnaires and were interested in volunteering in a Seventh-day Adventist high school. This provides more retirees than a co-ordinator would want for the first year of operation of a volunteer program (see de Pillis, 1982; Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1996; MacBain, 1996). Also it is anticipated that the number of volunteers would soon grow once advertising and recruitment strategies were used (see Armengol, 1992; de Pillis, 1982; Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1996; Lensch, 1997; MacBain, 1996).

Question 11: Do you foresee any potential problems, or is there anything we need to do, before you could volunteer in a high school? e.g. transport, mobility, health.

It was anticipated from the literature review (e.g., Chambre, 1993; Kincade, *et al.,* 1996), that health would be the largest problem stopping a retiree from volunteering, and that lack of transport would be the most common solvable barrier restricting a volunteer (e.g., Amundson, 1991; de Pillis, 1982; Sainer, 1976). Chambré (1993) reported that poor health is a major reason why older people stop volunteering, while Amundson (1991) discovered that transportation is a large obstacle that stops volunteering.

Chart 3 presents the major categories into which participants' questionnaire responses fell.

Chart 3: Potential problems with volunteering



Participants (N) = 22

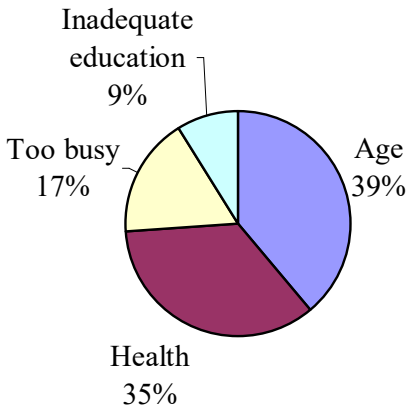
As suggested by the literature, poor health is a major problem stopping a retiree from volunteering. In addition, old age is cited as a stumbling block stopping older people

from volunteering. However, when ageing stops a person from performing a task, it is usually poor physical or mental health associated with the ageing that is the actual problem.

It is interesting to note that little support was given to the idea that providing transport would increase the number of volunteers. Perhaps retirees at Avondale Retirement Village have their transport requirements well met.

The short responses further elucidated the retirees' reasons for not volunteering. Chart 4 presents the short response data giving retirees' reasons for not volunteering.

Chart 4: SHORT RESPONSES: Retirees' reasons given for not volunteering.



Participants (N) = 41

It is interesting to note that many residents of the retirement village viewed themselves as just "too old" (subject 61) to be of any use. Some residents said "I'm too old, I'm no good to help" (subject 37), or "I'm 88, a bit long in the tooth to do that" (subject 51). Many other residents indicated that their health or that of their spouse was too inadequate to allow either of them to volunteer. "I'm not well enough" (subject 52), "I'm ill" (subject 55), or "I can't see" (subjects 26 & 34) were some of the responses received. Others just found themselves "too busy" (subject 36). This was because they were caregivers, volunteers already, or just busy around the house and garden. The remainder of the respondents said they felt inadequate and were lacking in education.

The two classes of responses (questionnaire and short response) are very much in agreement. Poor health and the related issue of age is definitely the number one reason why a person will not volunteer. This finding is consonant with the literature, for example Chambré (1993), and Kincade, *et al.* (1996).

Question 12: Do you have any further comments that may enhance our understanding as to:

What skills retirees have to offer?

What skills retirees may be wanting to gain?

If retirees would be willing to offer these skills to a high school?

The last question gave respondents an opportunity for further comments on the topic. It is not surprising that not everyone wanted that opportunity. Nonetheless, the comments received were insightful. For example:

- "You really need to involve people just recently retired. By the time one gets to 80+ there is little energy for such things." (Subject 14).
- “Many and varied [skills]. Cannot generalise.” (Subject 14).
- "Many retirees in Cooranbong have had similar volunteering experiences and possibly need a rest." (Subject 12).
- “Many with needed skills would [volunteer].” (Subject 9).
- “Some may wish to learn computing.” (Subject 5).
- “Retirees need to be made aware of these skills or positions.” (Subject 5).
- “No doubt plenty [skills] there to tap into.” (Subject 4).
- "Retirees have the time, experience, maturity, plus variety of skills. They can at least mind children at work, study or play." (Subject 1).
- "They may want to gain skills in computing, carpentry, knitting with a machine, gardening, Bible studying, counselling." (Subject 1).
- "I am sure they would [volunteer] if there was a plan worked out that could make the activities attractive to them." (Subject 1).

These comments are similar to those made by various researchers in the literature review. The first comment that suggests retirees who are over 80 have little energy for volunteering, coincides with the findings of Soo & Gong-Soog (1998), who discovered that voluntarism increases until a person reaches their 60s after which it starts to decline. The last response implies a need for a volunteer co-ordinator to conduct careful planning. This corresponds to the findings of Sainer (1976) who reported that the presence of a program co-ordinator to provide leadership and planning can also influence the ease with which the school can attract new retirees.

Teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire: analysis of data and discussion of results

The teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire was analysed by a process of triangulation (see Chapter 3: Methodology). The six major themes of the questionnaire which follow below are, in order of importance: a positive response; behaviour management problems; increased contact with students; low cost; legal and ethical aspects; and retirees used for mundane tasks.

1. A positive response

There was a clear positive response to the concept of a volunteer program. The responses could be divided into two categories. The first and larger group of responses consisted of teachers who indicated that a volunteer program was definitely a good idea. A retiree program was, for example, "excellent" (subject 74) and "wonderful" (subject 76), "capable retirees could draw on considerable experience" (subject 65), "great idea, they would be a great resource to the school" (subject 70), and "great – should be more of it" (subject 73). Teachers backed up statements by Cook (1999a) that teachers would achieve significant benefits from a school volunteer program.

The other, smaller category of responses was also positive, but included qualifying statements. For example, the idea provided "great opportunities if administered with scrutiny" (subject 69), "needs to be well coordinated" (subject 67), "yes if prepared and supervised thoroughly – could be potential problems" (subject 69), "need a

teacher to co-ordinate volunteers" (subject 80).

From the above statements it can also be seen that the teachers are in agreement with researchers (e.g., Amundson, 1991; Armengol, 1992; Freedman, 1997; MacBain, 1996; Sullivan & Florio, 1976) who contend that organisation is the key to success. Furthermore, the teachers support the claims of Amundson (1991) who says that for the program to have a "lasting impact" (p. 62), it "has to be included in someone' job description" (p. 62).

Whilst respondents remained very positive, some raised the issue of teachers who have a fear of losing the leadership of their class. Teachers wrote: "they [retirees] need to be active – 'young in heart', willing to be participators – not try to take over leadership" (subject 72). There would be a problem "if volunteers try to impose own ideas on how things should be run" (subject 67), or if they tried to "take inappropriate leadership" (subject 72), and with "territorial attitudes" (subject 76). Sullivan & Florio (1976) commented that the classroom is the sacred domain of the teacher, and thus it is important to ensure that the volunteer feels *accepted* into the classroom. Sullivan & Florio (1976) also recognised that it is up to the volunteer program co-ordinator, during the orientation phase, to emphasise the supportive role the volunteers can play in the classroom, to allay teachers' fears. Furthermore, Sullivan & Florio (1976) add that the key to encouraging teachers to welcome volunteers into their classrooms is to involve the teachers in planning the volunteer program from the beginning. Thereby the teachers are assured that the volunteers are not going to usurp the role of the teacher, but will be able to free them to carry out their primary function – teaching (Sullivan & Florio, 1976).

2. Behaviour management problems

The teachers felt that a volunteer program using retirees may lead to behaviour management problems. The following were some of the typical responses from teachers: "the retirees may have difficulty with youth culture/behaviour" (subject 65); "inappropriate discipline" (subject 66); "discipline, lack of 'authority'" (subject 75); and "respect from students to volunteers" (subject 80).

These responses highlight the need for a thorough planning process and good communication to ensure that teachers and retirees have correct expectations (see Armengol, 1992; Strom & Strom, 1995). Teachers need to be aware that the retirees are there, not to "take over" (subject 72), which includes classroom management, but to free the teachers to carry out their primary function – which is teaching, including classroom management. The volunteers "are not responsible for discipline", as de Pillis (1982) emphasises.

3. Increased contact with students

The teachers recognised that the use of retirees would enable both retirees and teachers to have increased contact with students. This can clearly be deduced from the following responses: "in the workshop – more time to spend with individual students" (subject 70); "more time" (subject 78 & 79); "at the moment I am responsible for 19 … D&T students. I can only give them 2 minutes of my time each 40 minute lesson. They need heaps more 1 on 1 time" (subject 70); "more adult

student contact time" (subject 77); "sharing burden of 'non-class activities'" (subject 72); "increased staff/student ratio in class" (subject 66); and "more time to prepare" (subject 78).

The advantages of increased contact with students were commented on in the literature. Cooledge & Wurster (1985) completed a study that found that students achieved more highly when they had the benefit of the individual attention of a retiree. In addition, Courson & Heward (1989) argue that anything that increases students' opportunities to respond and be active rather than passive participants, such as tutoring by an older volunteer, is going to have a strong positive effect on student learning.

4. Low cost

The low cost of a volunteer program was recognised by the teachers and school administrators. Teachers said there were clear "financial" (subject 75 & 71) benefits, and "expertise, experience at low cost" (subject 73) could mean that the school could "save $$" (subject 70). This is in line with Armengol (1992) who reasons that there is a wealth of experience and expertise available to schools in their retirees, which may be tapped to give a high return for negligible costs (Armengol, 1992). The low cost of a volunteer program in comparison with its significant returns makes a retiree volunteer program extremely attractive to schools.

One teacher recognised that the volunteer program would require "money" (subject 79). The literature review agrees that the school needs to be prepared to give the

program some financial support. A volunteer program is cheap to run, and the financial investment is small compared to the return, but the school needs to be prepared to make that investment (Sullivan & Florio, 1976).

5. *Legal and ethical aspects*

There was some concern over various legal and ethical aspects of a volunteer program that could affect the school. It highlighted the need for some level of inservice training of the volunteers. The volunteers needed "basic training on school rules/safety" (subject 80), training in "ethics" (subject 79), on "legal aspects" (subject 76), "safety policies, child protection policies, skills relating to the tasks they were to do" (subject 69) and "legal responsibility" (subject 66). These statements suggest that inservice training could be an important part of a volunteer program.

Amundson (1991) argues strongly for inservice training, stating that "both volunteers and staff members will require some training if the program is to be successful" (p. 63). In addition, Strom & Strom (1995) maintain that inservice training to support child development in the school is important. MacBain (1996) includes program rules, guidelines, and insurance, as basic pieces of information that the volunteers will need. Furthermore, "topics for inservice training should include issues identified by faculty, volunteers, and periodic evaluations" (Strom & Strom, 1995, p. 49), which obviously includes issues surrounding the legal responsibilities of the volunteer.

6. *Retirees used for mundane tasks*

With retirees, "relief teachers could no longer be needed. They could be used as slave labour" (subject 70). This statement summarises the attitude that many of the teachers had towards the idea of retirees. They wanted a "personal secretary for each staff" (subject 78), "covering books, filing… fixing broken equipment" (subject 77), "lunchtime supervision" (subject 78), and "clerical" (subject 73). "Gardening" (e.g., subject 76) was the most common response on what retirees could do. Retirees already had been used in the school for maintenance, plumbing and building, in the library and the office, for practical classes, English language support, and as contributors to committees. Other volunteers (not retirees) had been used for covering books, office work, and excursion supervision.

Contrary to the comments given by teachers, Armengol (1992) reminds us that to give volunteers "senseless busywork can be deadly" (p. 469) (see also de Pillis, 1982). It is easy for an overburdened teacher to simply assume that the older person needs to be kept busy and to assign to the volunteer the job of cutting out hundreds of shapes or photocopying and stapling booklets (Seefeldt, 1977) – or gardening. The literature clearly argues that seniors are motivated by having assignments that "are significant and that keep them actively involved" (Armengol, 1992, p. 469).

One questionnaire respondent thought that retirees having "too much exposure to working with students could be a problem" (subject 74) and that it is "okay on activities that do not involve too much contact with students" (subject 74). This flies in the face of Halford (1998), who says "the best programs enable seniors to establish

personal relationships with children" (p. 51), and Courson & Heward (1989) who say that most senior volunteers will prefer to work directly with students. Rather than performing isolated clerical work, it is far better for volunteers to read to kids, to be involved with student clubs, or to assist with after-school programs (Halford, 1998).

On the other hand, the teachers came up with an excellent, long list of different activities that retirees might enjoy. Retirees could mentor gifted children, remediate children with reading and numeracy problems, give lectures on careers, be a special education teacher or a teacher's aide, help with teaching aids, be guest lecturers, help with office reception or tuck shop, be involved in manual areas (art, applied arts, science, cooking/sewing), conduct community outreach activities, be grandparent figures, counsellors, class assistants, help with sport and coaching, camps and excursion, offer technical expertise, and talk to students.

7. Minor themes

A number of teachers commented that if retirees were involved in the school, the school would receive a lot more community support. Research has shown that schools enjoying strong community support and involvement have fewer discipline and attendance problems and display higher achievement levels (Lensch, 1997). This is an excellent reason to include retirees in the education process.

One teacher recalled that at another school, "a retired dentist was librarian, … running the complete program" with "exceptional skills, professionally and personally, available to the school" (subject 69). Teachers recognised that because "retirees

could draw on considerable experience" (subject 65) they would be a valuable addition to the school.

Finally, it was amusing to read the following potential problem: once we have volunteers "we might not be able to do without them" (subject 78).

Interview of retirees: analysis of data and discussion of results

The interviews with five retirees were analysed qualitatively. The interviews were designed to *further* explore the same issues that were raised by the retirees' questionnaire. The analysis of the data served to confirm rather than alter the results of the initial questionnaire. Below is a summary of information obtained from the interview of individual retirees.

Interviewee 'A' had previous experience in a school, as a dean of women. She thought a short course to prepare a retiree for a volunteer position was a good idea. Additionally, 'A' preferred to go to the school rather than have the students come to her house. However, this interviewee was unable to volunteer because of a health issue. Interviewee 'A' would be "more willing [to volunteer] if I had health".

Interviewee 'B' had extensive education experience, from teacher to principal, president of a university and director of a national education system. This interviewee thought it would be good idea to undertake a short course in preparation for a volunteer position, because in today's society we are dealing with different cultures and age groups. Interviewee 'B' had already completed a short course on how to use

computers. Once again, health was the number one issue for this subject when deciding whether or not to volunteer.

Interviewee 'C' had completed up to the second year of high school. She had volunteered in the past, especially to overcome loneliness after a spouse had died. Interviewee 'C' felt that she wouldn't be educated enough to volunteer in a high school, but if she knew enough about an area she would be willing to help. This interviewee wanted to own a computer and learn how to use email. Once more, health was the first consideration.

Interviewee 'D' also had extensive experience in education, and was always ready to help if it was within her power. This interviewee was willing to serve the students' breakfast at school. She was interested in learning more about computers. Before volunteering interviewee 'D' would ask the question "am I capable at my age", and would have to consider the biggest issue: health.

The last interviewee (interviewee 'E') would attempt volunteering if she wanted to, but felt too incompetent to help in a classroom, because she had only completed up to the third year of high school. Interviewee 'E' really liked the idea of volunteering, because "it would be a real plus, and I would feel necessary and useful". She especially liked the idea of talking to a student over the telephone, because of previous experience with Lifeline. The first consideration when deciding to volunteer was whether or not she wanted to, followed by health and time availability. By the end of the interview, the retiree was expressing her happiness that someone would consider her "necessary and useful".

The average age of the interviewees was 80 years. This provides some evidence to show that the average age of the retirees of ARV is probably higher than for retirees across Australia, and higher than in studies surveyed in the literature.

In summary, health and education appear to be the biggest factors in deciding to volunteer. This is confirmed by Chambré (1993), Hayghe (1991), Kincade, *et al.* (1996), Soo & Gong-Soog (1998). Health was the first consideration, followed by education. Those retirees who had limited education were much less confident about entering into a classroom, as it brought up feelings of inadequacy. Furthermore, providing transport would increase the number of volunteers, but it does not appear to be as big an issue for ARV residents when compared with findings by Amundson (1991), de Pillis (1982) and Sainer (1976). Additionally, a course on using computers was found to be the most attractive outreach course a school could run. Finally, all of the retirees surveyed and interviewed already had extensive experience in volunteering.

Chapter 5: CONCLUSIONS

This study is significant because it provides a model for developing a volunteer program that utilises retirees in schools. This model is expected to function well in primary schools, high schools, and possibly other educational venues. The initial questionnaires were centred on utilising volunteers in a high school, which, because of its more specialised nature and the age of its students, was considered a more difficult venue. However, this model has wider applications than for only high schools, and is expected to be suitable for most schools.

The concept of a volunteer program involving retirees in schools was widely considered, both by the subjects of this study and in the literature review, to be *an excellent idea.* Only one participant believed that education should be left up to the "trained experts". Every other retiree and teacher surveyed thought that a volunteer program was an "excellent" or "wonderful" idea. Furthermore, every article on the topic proclaimed the benefits of volunteer programs, and urged the readers to begin their own intergenerational programs (e.g., Dallman & Power, 1997a).

This research project served to identify the *suitability of using retirees* in schools. Retirees are suitable because they are well educated and have a variety of skills. In fact, 82% of questionnaire participants had tertiary qualifications, and 32% had previous experience as professionals in schools. Retired people are generally healthy – the majority of people never require assistance to live independently, and 96 per cent of retirees in NSW are living independently in the community (NSW Ageing & Disability Department, 1998a). People are living longer and retiring earlier, which

gives them more time to work on tasks they believe important (Armengol, 1992). Supporting this claim is the fact that every retiree who participated in this research project had volunteered for something, usually to meet the needs of other people, at some stage in their life. Furthermore, 59 per cent of retirees surveyed were willing to become volunteers, and 45 per cent of retirees were willing to become a volunteer in a Seventh-day Adventist high school. Ultimately, retirees are such a suitable group in which to find volunteers, because they belong to the fastest growing population segment in our society. In Australia, there are more than 2.2 million retirees – 12.2 per cent of the population, with this figure expected to increase to 24-26 per cent of the population by 2051 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999).

It was discovered that there are numerous benefits for all involved in a volunteer program. There is evidence to suggest that *retirees receive the most benefits* from volunteer programs (see Amundson, 1991; Bowles, 1976; NEA Today, 1993). First, by volunteering, retirees are kept active, which promotes a longer and healthier life, and makes them feel better (Freedman, 1997). Working with young people is rewarding for older people, and they gain satisfaction from helping others (Armengol, 1992). Volunteers typically feel "increased self-esteem, renewed feelings of health and vigour, and new and satisfying social relationships with peers" (Freedman, 1997, p. 55). Another outcome is that harmful stereotypes based on ignorance (Seefeldt, 1977), are broken down when older adults form relationships with younger people (Armengol, 1992; Dallman & Power, 1997b; Halford, 1998). Contact between the generations provides a more positive view and understanding of each other (Raimon-Wilson, 1998).

A volunteer program *benefits the whole school*. Teachers who participated in the research questionnaire regularly commented that a volunteer program involving retirees would engender community support. This is important because research has shown that schools enjoying strong community support and involvement have fewer discipline and attendance problems and display higher achievement levels (Lensch, 1997). Furthermore, retirees can bring to the education program a wealth of experience and skills (Sellars, 1998). This rich resource comes at a negligible cost, which makes the high returns of a volunteer program attractive to the school (Armengol, 1992), an advantage that was noted by a number of teachers in the questionnaire.

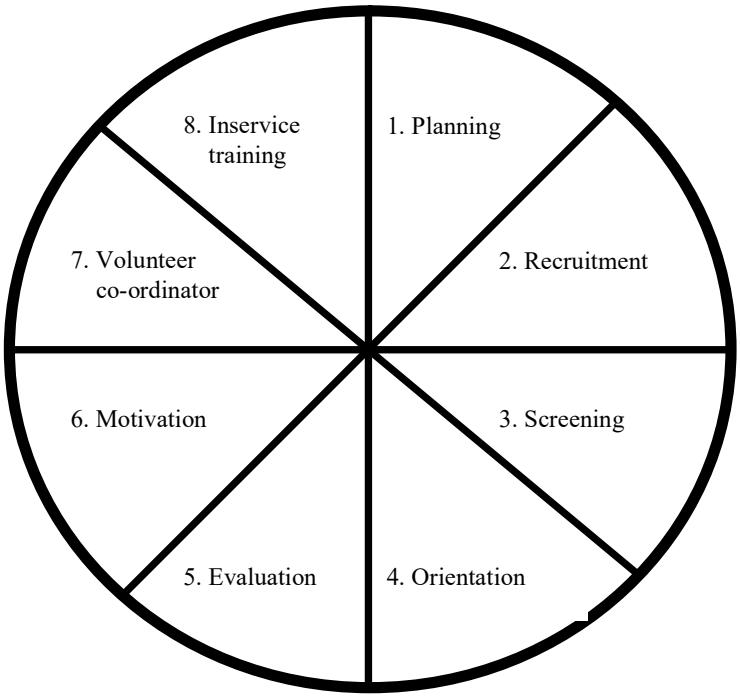
Teachers can expect significant benefits from a school volunteer program (Cook, 1999a). It was found that for teachers the greatest advantage of having volunteers in the classroom is the possibility of increased one-on-one contact time with students. The volunteer brings new experiences, interests and skills into the classroom, which makes classes more interesting.

The volunteer program is designed to *help the students*. Using retirees in the classroom can make learning much more real and motivating for students (Cook, 1999a; Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997). The extra pair of hands also gives the students more individual attention, which strongly promotes learning (Cooledge & Wurster, 1985). Teachers were quick to recognise that the use of retirees would enable both retirees and teachers to have increased contact with students. Moreover, as the literature demonstrated, many of the benefits of a volunteer program were derived from the strong relationship that develops between an older and a younger

person (e.g., Dallman & Power, 1997a; Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). Retirees were found to be extremely effective when it came to students who were at-risk of dropping out of school (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). The use of retirees in the classroom had a big impact on students' learning (Cooledge & Wurster, 1985).

It is clear that an *ad hoc* approach to programs utilising retiree volunteers is unlikely to be helpful to participating parties. An alternative is a proposed model derived from a synthesis of relevant literature and the findings from this study. The model below shows the interrelated elements for operationalising a volunteer program. This is followed by an outline of how it functions. The eight steps are not a sequence to be followed one after the other. Rather they are seen as eight ingredients for a successful volunteer program - as 'pieces of the pie'.

Figure 1: The eight-element model for utilising retirees in schools



1. The key to setting up a successful volunteer program is to start with careful *planning* (Amundson, 1991; Armengol, 1992; Freedman, 1997; MacBain, 1996; Sullivan & Florio, 1976). This planning includes the goals of the volunteer program, what volunteers might do, a job description for all participants, various resources that will be needed including financial support, and how the program will achieve its stated objectives. A way to promote shared responsibility and ownership is by involving everybody in the planning process, including the volunteers themselves (Amundson, 1991). The survey found that the teachers are concerned with the organisation of the volunteers, and that they believe the program needs to be well co-ordinated.

2. Volunteers can be *recruited* through a partnership with a senior citizens organisation (Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1997). By forming a partnership with a senior citizens organisation, the management of the program can be shared. The senior citizens organisation would be responsible for recruiting and screening volunteers, while the teachers prepare the students for the arrival of the volunteers. There are other ways of recruiting retirees, for example, retirees can be attracted to the school by running school outreach programs (Armengol, 1992; MacBain, 1996). The present study found that many retirees in Cooranbong would be interested in undertaking a course to learn more about computers. Through offering a computer literacy course, high schools could attract numerous retirees, many of whom may be interested in further contact with the school through volunteering. Volunteers can also be found through advertising in local newspapers, senior citizens newsletters, in churches, and on the radio or television (MacBain, 1996). Perhaps the most effective method of attracting more volunteers to the school is for participants in the program to

keep a lookout for potential volunteers and to ask their friends to be involved (Armengol, 1992).

3. A volunteer program needs to include a *screening process* to inform the retirees of the school's expectations, and to match retirees to suitable tasks (e.g., MacBain, 1996). This study discovered that both retirees and teachers had unrealistic expectations. It is necessary to communicate to all participants exactly what the volunteer program is offering. The simplest and most effective way to match retirees to different tasks is to give each retiree a choice of a number of different responsibilities (Strom & Strom, 1995). By presenting a choice of tasks to retirees, it offers a potentially better match, and an easy way out for the retiree if a particular task is not suitable.

4. Schools would need to run an *orientation* program (Armengol, 1992; MacBain, 1996). During the orientation all of the participants of the volunteer program should be introduced. The retirees need to meet the different teachers and school administrators, and be given a tour of the facility in which they will be working. During this time each person will begin to understand their role and the role of the other parties (Armengol, 1992). For example, the present study found that teachers misunderstood the role of the volunteers. It was found that some teachers had unrealistic expectations, and wanted a "personal secretary for each staff" and "slave labour". In addition, teachers felt threatened by retirees and feared that they may try to take over. Likewise, the teachers thought that the retirees would have problems with classroom management. Therefore, during the orientation process, teachers will

need to learn to accept retirees into their domain (Sullivan & Florio, 1976), as well as accepting that the volunteers are not responsible for discipline (de Pillis, 1982).

5. A successful volunteer program will conduct *ongoing evaluation* to measure the success of the program and to offer suggestions for future improvements (e.g., Armengol, 1992; MacBain, 1996). The retirees need to be informed that their input is desired and is necessary for improving the program. All participants in the program should be involved in the evaluation process. New ideas will make the intergenerational experience better for everyone. Ongoing evaluation and communication make for a successful program (MacBain, 1996).

6. It is important to keep volunteer *motivation* high by providing recognition to the volunteer, and by giving the volunteer appropriate tasks (Armengol, 1992; Illinois Intergenerational Initiative, 1996). While retirees do not expect to receive accolades from students and staff, they certainly appreciate having their efforts recognised (Amundson, 1991). There are many ways to demonstrate recognition to the volunteer, for example, a thank-you card, a birthday celebration, or a volunteer luncheon. However, nothing 'kills' motivation more than giving the volunteer busy-work (Armengol, 1992). To keep the volunteer busy with mundane and repetitive tasks is not appropriate. Many of the teachers surveyed thought that a retiree could be the teacher's own personal secretary, or do gardening and maintenance. The few retirees that had volunteered at Avondale High School had been involved in office and library work, or maintenance. However, the volunteers will be more motivated if they can be directly involved with the students (Courson & Heward, 1989).

7. The school should appoint a *volunteer co-ordinator* (de Pillis, 1982). The volunteer co-ordinator is responsible for the volunteers and to ensure that the volunteer program remains well organised. Retirees are much more likely to volunteer and to contribute to the school successfully if there is someone to represent them (Sainer, 1976). A volunteer co-ordinator may be a full-time employee that is responsible for volunteer programs in a number of schools. Then again, the volunteer program co-ordinator may also be a retiree who is a volunteer. A trusted member of the volunteers' peer group is well placed to represent all of the volunteers (Strom & Strom, 1995). Amundson (1991) found that for a volunteer program to have a lasting impact, responsibility for the program should be included in someone's job description. In the present study, the teachers stated that a co-ordinator was essential.

8. Teachers *and* retirees can benefit from *inservice training* (Amundson, 1991; Strom & Strom, 1995). Through listening to other volunteers' experiences, retirees can learn ways in which to be more helpful and understanding of students (Strom & Strom, 1995). Teachers wrote in their questionnaires that retirees would need training in legal and ethical issues. Furthermore, teachers need inservice training to know how to use volunteers effectively, and to overcome prejudice against the elderly (Amundson, 1991).

This study sought to explore how retiree volunteer programs in schools might enhance the lives of participating parties. A synthesis of the findings of the study and the general literature gave rise to a proposed eight-element model for operating retiree volunteer programs in schools. A number of suggestions are now put forward on how the findings of the present study could be extended and/or modified.

Further studies

This was an interesting study, on a topic that should be further researched. The following are suggestions for further research related to the present study, which may interest and challenge future researchers:

- Trial this study's proposed eight-step model for utilising retirees in the school, and analyse its effectiveness. Make improvements to the model.
- Analyse in which subject areas retirees are most helpful.
- Ascertain differences in effectiveness for educated retirees compared to less-educated retirees.
- Study the life expectancy of retirees involved in volunteering compared to retirees not involved in volunteering.
- Examine the difference that inservice training makes to the quality of the program.
- Compare teacher satisfaction: 'with and without retirees'.
- Identify differences between retirees in retirement villages and retirees living in the wider community.
- Establish differences in participation rates between having a *school* person recruiting as opposed to someone *working with* retirees doing the recruiting of retirees.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a school outreach program, using a course involving computer education to attract retirees. Analyse the number of retirees that flow through to the volunteer program.
- Compare the quality of life of volunteering retirees and non-volunteering retirees.

A short story

As a final comment, the question has been posed to the researcher that there are limits to volunteering. However, the researcher believes that there is no limit to who can volunteer, nor are there limits to who can receive the benefits from volunteering. An email was received that proves this contention - that anyone can volunteer. The following is a story, which was used at the conference presentation of this thesis, and was remembered by many present as a powerful reminder of the value of helping others.

Uncle Charlie (Hathaway-Breed, 2000)

I remember being scared the first time I saw Uncle Charlie. I had just stepped off the school bus, and coming into the house from the brightness of day, I couldn't see. When my eyes adjusted, I was surprised to see a bed in the dining room. A strange, unshaven man, propped up by pillows, sat in the darkened room. For a second, I wondered whether I was in the wrong house.

"Patty, is that you?" my grandmother called from the other room. I bolted into the kitchen.

"Nana, who's that man?"

"Remember me telling you about Charlie, about how sick he got in the war and how they put him in the veterans' hospital? Well, that man in there is your Uncle Charlie."

The silent man in the dining room didn't look anything like the smiling photograph on the mantle.

"Last night, Patty, I had a dream," my grandmother said. "In the dream, God spoke. He said, 'Go get your son. Bring him home, and he'll get well.' That's what I did. This morning after you went to school, I took the city bus to the hospital. I walked right into that place, into Charlie's room, took him by the hand, and said, 'I'm taking you home.'" Nana chuckled. "Good heavens, how we must have looked, charging down that big ol' hospital lawn, him in that gown, open and flapping in the back. Nobody stopped us. But nobody said a word, even when we got on the bus." She paused. "It was like we was invisible."

"Nana, Charlie didn't look like he saw me. Maybe I'm invisible too."

"Charlie saw you. It's just that he's got what the doctors call catatonic. Guess that's their fancy way of saying cat's got his tongue." She stopped rocking. "Don't you worry now. Charlie will be talking. He just needs to know we love him, that he's home."

Frightened by the dark beyond the open kitchen door, I ran out the back door, leaped off the porch and raced across the field, slapping my hips, pretending I was both horse and rider.

For months, I avoided the dining room. Finally I became accustomed to Charlie's silence. After that, I played in Charlie's room. His blanket-covered knees were the "towers" of my castles.

"Charlie, you awake?" I whispered. "Today at school, I saw a picture of an enchanted prince in my teacher's book. He's got long hair, just like you."

Dust sparkled in the shaft of light streaming in under the drawn shade. I grabbed at the sparkles, making the dust whirl.

"Look Charlie, I've caught us a handful of sun. It's got millions and billions of tiny stars in it." I held out my fist. "I've caught some for you."

"Patty, I've got something for you," Nana called from outside.

Before leaving Charlie, I put my favorite doll with its red nail-polish lips and half-bald head next to him, and tucked them both in.

"She's a princess. I'm leaving her to keep you company."

"I found this little bird under the old oak," Nana said. "Its eyes are still closed. It must have just pecked out of its shell. There's a dropper in the medicine cabinet in the bathroom. Use that dropper to feed him ground-up sunflower seeds and water."

She handed me the bird. "Empty out a shoe box and be sure to put something soft in it for a lining. What are you going to name him?"

"Little Bird. I'm calling him Little Bird, just like in the song."

I went inside and dumped the shoe box with my rock collection on the rug.

"Hey, Charlie, look what I've got!" I put Little Bird in the empty box. "Watch him for a minute. I've got to get the dropper." I put the box in Charlie's lap.

When I returned with the dropper, the box was lying on the floor, empty. Charlie had dropped him!

"Charlie," I whispered, trying not to cry, "where is Little Bird?"

Cracking open his cupped hands, Charlie smiled as he stared at the tiny, hunger-stretched beak that peeked up between his thumbs and forefingers.

That evening, when I was mashing potatoes, I said, "You know what, Nana? Charlie's taking care of Little Bird."

"I know it. I saw him. And you know something else? He's making humming noises, like he's singing."

Nana was getting Charlie's tray ready when Charlie walked into the kitchen and sat down at the table. He was dressed in overalls and a plaid shirt. It was the first time I'd seen him in anything other than pajamas. Nana opened her eyes in exaggerated surprise. She looked so silly I started to laugh.

Then Charlie made the first sound, other than snoring and coughing, that I'd ever heard him make. He laughed! Slapping his knees, he laughed until tears ran down his cheeks. Then he reached into the big pocket of his overalls and took out Little Bird.

"Look," he said. "Isn't this the sweetest, most helpless thing you ever saw?"

Nana almost fell off her chair. Then she started to cry. I wasn't surprised, because I knew that even though he'd been placed under a spell, the spell couldn't last. They never do.

It is not hard to believe that a volunteer program will benefit students. It is easy to believe that a volunteer program will benefit teachers and the whole school. But what is not always understood is how the volunteer – the person who does the helping – receives the greatest reward. This story ends the thesis on a more personal note, and provides support for the notion that everyone really has the potential to volunteer, and by volunteering, all parties gain.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1 - Retirees' questionnaire

CONSENT LETTER

Dear Respondent,

Let me introduce myself and explain what this study is all about. My name is Michael Croft, and I am a fourth year student at Avondale College completing a Bachelor of Science and an Honours degree in Education.

My research study aims to find a way to effectively match the skills of volunteer retirees to the educational support needs of the secondary school. To do this I need to survey retirees (to discover what skills they may be willing to offer) as well as secondary schools (to discover what needs they have).

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary - you have the right to refuse to respond to this questionnaire. If you do respond, all responses will remain confidential and no individual will be identified. Moreover, if you do respond, you will be contributing to the research endeavours of Avondale College.

Avondale College requires all participants to be informed that if they have any complaint concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted it may be in the first instance be directed to the researcher and/or the supervisor involved (Lyn Adams, (02) 4980 2189), or if an independent person is preferred, to the College's Human Research Ethics Committee Secretary, Avondale College, PO Box 19, Cooranbong, NSW, 2265 or phone (02) 4980 2214 or fax (02) 4980 2118.

If you have any questions I can be contacted on (02) 4977 3231, or email m_croft@avondale.edu.au. This questionnaire needs to be completed by 30 March and returned to the Retirement Village Head Office.

Thank you for your participation in this study,

Michael Croft

Seventh-day Adventist Retirees: A VALUABLE RESOURCE

Throughout the world retirees help school-children by participating in mentoring programs that pair them, one-on-one, with teachers. For instance in Missouri retirees and a local television station operate a homework hotline. In Berlin retirees have been known to chaperone school trips, judge science fairs, supervise the young authors program, grade state-mandated writing programs, and more. In London, residents of a retirement facility form friendships with children to dispel myths that all elderly people are frail and in nursing homes. In Hong Kong the young and old read together, write journals, plant and harvest gardens, celebrate the Chinese New Year together, engage in pen-pal programs, investigate their family history, and veterans make history come alive. In most parts of the world retirees serve as tutors, resource persons and teaching aides.

Here in the local community, we have a large and highly skilled retired population. This survey is the first step in a possible program in which retirees could choose to volunteer at Avondale Seventh-day Adventist High School.

This survey aims to investigate three main aspects of a volunteer program: (i) what skills retirees have to offer; (ii) what skills retirees may be wanting to gain (be trained in); and (iii) if retirees would be willing to offer these skills to the Avondale Seventh-day Adventist School.

PART A SKILLS YOU HAVE TO OFFER

1. Please detail what kinds of education you have undertaken (not necessarily finished)?

2. Please list the general types of paid jobs you have held.

3. For what unpaid jobs have you been a volunteer?

4. What are your main hobbies and interests?

Please turn over

5. What other experience(s) do you have that would be advantageous if you wanted to volunteer in a high school? *eg. parenthood, youth SS teacher.*

PART B SKILLS YOU WANT TO GAIN

6. Would you be interested in undertaking a short course to prepare you for a volunteer position? Why would you be interested?

7. What skills would you be interested in obtaining through a short course?
eg. computing, basic science, needlecraft.

PART C WILLINGNESS TO VOLUNTEER THESE SKILLS

8. If you have ever worked as a volunteer for anything before, why did you decide to become a volunteer?

9. If a volunteer position that suited you became available, would you become a volunteer? Why?

10. Would you consider volunteering in a Seventh-day Adventist high school to help the school and its students? Why?

11. Do you foresee any potential problems, or is there anything we need to do, before you could volunteer in a high school? *eg. transport, mobility, health.*

Please turn over

12. Do you have any further comments that may enhance our understanding as to:
    (a) What skills retirees have to offer?

    (b) What skills retirees may be wanting to gain?

    (c) If retirees would be willing to offer these skills to a high school?

Thank-you so much!

Please return survey to the Retirement Village Head Office.

Appendix 1.2 – Teachers' and school administrators' questionnaire

1. What human resources would you ideally need (that are currently unavailable) to provide the best possible education for the students?

2. Has the high school ever used volunteers?

    a. If so, were these volunteers retirees?

    b. How were these volunteers used?

    c. Was it successful?

3. What is your initial response to the idea of using volunteer retirees in the high school?

4. Do you think you would find the use of volunteers beneficial to the high school?

5. What roles could volunteers play in the high school?

6. What problems might arise once you have volunteers in the school?

7. What benefits would the school (students and teachers) gain from having volunteers?

8. What training would the volunteers need?

9. What resources and/or training would teachers need to implement a successful volunteer program?

10. Why is such a volunteer program currently unavailable?

Appendix 1.3 – Interview of retirees

1. What is your current age?
2. What kinds of education have you undertaken?

3. What types of paid jobs have you held?

4. Have you ever held a volunteer position? If so, what types of volunteer positions have you held? Does this experience make you more or less interested in volunteering in the future?

5. Do you think it is necessary to undertake a short course preparing you for a potential volunteer position?

6. What motivated you to volunteer in the past?

7. If a volunteer position that suited you became available today, would you volunteer for it? Why?

8. If the high school had a need, which you could easily fill, and asked you to be a volunteer for them today, would you be willing to fill the position? Why?

9. Would you be more willing to volunteer if the students could come to you in your own house?

10. What kinds of things would you be willing to do for the high school?
    For example: telling stories, talking about history, talking about the Bible, listening to kids reading, helping out on a fundraiser, assist some students in answering questions on a topic with which you are familiar, talking to a student on the phone once a week, etc.

11. Is there any problem we could overcome which is stopping you from volunteering?

12. Are you interested in Avondale College offering short courses to teach you computers? If so, what is it about computers you wish to learn?

13. What is your first consideration when deciding whether to volunteer or not? Is health an issue?

Appendix 2 – Avondale College Human Research Ethics Committee form

AVONDALE COLLEGE

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS (HRE) COMMITTEE

APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH USING HUMAN SUBJECTS

HRE Committee use only

☐ Approved

☐ Disapproved

☐ Return for modification

Signed.....

Date.....

Please consult the *Application Form Guidelines*

1. TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

A model for matching volunteer retirees to the educational support needs of SDA schools

2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

NAME Michael Croft
QUALIFICATIONS fourth year BSc/BTeach(Honours) at Avondale College
DEPARTMENT Education

SUPERVISOR

NAME Professor Lyn Adams
QUALIFICATIONS PhD BA (Hons Educ./Psych), Mac.Uni.,Teach. Cert. (UNSW)
DEPARTMENT Education

3. CO-INVESTIGATOR(S)

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4. INITIAL, CONTINUING OR AMENDED APPLICATION

Please tick one of the following:

(a) New project [X]

(b) Continuing project [ ]

(c) Amended project [ ]

5. DURATION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

PROPOSED COMMENCEMENT DATE May, 1999
PROPOSED DURATION OF THE PROJECT July, 2000

6. FUNDING

Do you have funding? ☐ Yes

☒ No

If yes, identify the source:

7. COMMONWEALTH PRIVACY LEGISLATION

Does your project require access to data governed by Commonwealth Privacy Legislation?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If yes, please give details:

8. SCIENTIFIC OR EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROJECT

1. To identify skills and skill development needs of SDA retirees.
2. To identify the perceived educational support needs of SDA schools.
3. To develop a model for matching the skills of retirees with the educational support needs of SDA schools.
4. To identify training needs of retirees.

9. REPLICATION STUDIES

Has the same or similar research been conducted in Australia or overseas?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If yes, please give details:

Gives reasons why replicative studies are required:

10. DETAILS OF PROJECT

RESEARCH QUESTION OR HYPOTHESIS/SES

1. What are the skills and desired skill development needs of SDA retirees.
2. What are the perceived educational support needs of SDA schools.
3. What are possible models for matching the skills of retirees with the educational support needs of SDA schools and which is the most appropriate model.
4. What are the training needs of SDA volunteer retirees.

TARGET POPULATION
SDA retirees, SDA schools

RESEARCH DESIGN
The research design is comprised of a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Step 1: pilot surveys of SDA retirees and SDA school administrators/board. Step 2: surveys of SDA retirees and SDA school administrators/board. Step 3: interviews and subsequent construction of comprehensive case studies of matchings. Step 4: develop a model for matching skills with needs. Step 5: identify training needs of retirees.

SAMPLING
1. Method: _____ A combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis procedures will be adopted.
2. Number of Subjects: Final sample size will depend on subjects' consent. However, it is anticipated that the sample size will consist of Avondale SDA high school administration and board, and 20 - 30 local SDA retirees.
3. Informed Consent What procedures do you plan to follow to gain informed consent from your subjects? The informed consent letter will provide the subjects with full disclosure of the purpose, procedures and forms of data analysis of the study and will provide the subjects with an undertaking to give them full details of the outcomes of the study. Please attach a copy of the consent form to be used. If you do not intend to gain informed consent explain why. (see attached consent form)

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES
1. Briefly describe all data collection methods (eg. blood taking, ingestion of chemicals, interview, survey instruments, educational testing, observation, etc) to be used with human subjects.
Surveys, interviews, development of case studies using qualitative and quantitative forms of data analysis.
2. Outline the possible dangers, risks or ill effects of these procedures and the precautions to be taken to prevent or minimise them. None known.
3. In the case of interviews or surveys, how will confidentiality of data be maintained? Data will be kept in a locked file in Professor Lyn Adam's office, Education Department.
Names will be removed from the surveys, and a number will identify each subject.
The researcher will be the only one with access to the data. The supervisor must obtain permission from the

researcher before accessing the information. Permission must be obtained from subjects to tape the interviews.
4. Where will the procedures involving human subjects be undertaken?
The surveys and interviews will be conducted wherever subjects choose is most appropriate.
5. What facilities are there for dealing with emergencies? (If applicable)
The emergency procedures will be discussed with each subject.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES
This study uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, determined by their appropriateness for use in this particular study.

11. PROPOSED STORAGE OF AND ACCESS TO DATA AND RESULTS

The data will be stored in a cupboard, locked in the office of Professor Lyn Adams. The researcher will retain the key to this cupboard. The data will be retained for a period of 7 years. The researcher will be the only person with access to the data. If any group or individual seeks permission to obtain access to the data, permission will need to be gained from the subjects involved in the study. The researcher will undertake to obtain this permission. The supervisor of the researcher will be given access to the data to check its reliability and validity, however, the supervisor can only be given access to the data through written permission given by the researcher. This written consent will form part of the data that will be retained in the storage cupboard.

12. ADDITIONAL APPROVAL FROM OTHER ETHICS COMMITTEES

1. To which other ethics committee have you or do you intend to submit this proposal?
None.
2. If a decision has been made by one of these committees, what was the decision?

DECLARATION

I have read the NHMRC Ethical Considerations in Human Research (attached to guidelines) and I certify that the information supplied in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I hereby undertake to notify the HRE Committee in advance of any proposed ethically significant variations to the project.

Signature of Principal Investigator .....

Signature of Supervisor ..... Date .....

Appendix 3 – Short reminder note

Just a short reminder:

A couple of weeks ago a survey was put into your letter box. While participation is entirely voluntary, it would be *very* helpful if you could take the time to simply answer the questions and return it to the Head Office as soon as possible.

If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact:

Michael Croft
Watson Hall
Avondale College
49 802 280