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THE CARL AND WINIFRED LEE HONORS COLLEGE

CERTIFICATE OF ORAL EXAMINATION

Christopher Meyer, having been admitted to the Carl and Winifred Lee Honors College in 1994, successfully presented the Lee Honors College Thesis on June 19, 1998.

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Guidelines for Alternative Spring Break

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For
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Western Michigan University**

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Guidelines for Alternative Spring Break

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A Few Questions About Volunteering

According to the 1997 Statistical Abstract of the United States, some 93 million Americans – 48.8% of the nation's adults – volunteered an average of 4.2 hours a week in 1995, donating time and talents to benefit various worthy causes. These “causes” ranged from churches to museums to schools, from private arrangements to national (even international) organizations. And the work, from building houses to holding hands to cleaning homes to answering tax questions, covered every possible talent and ability that volunteers had to offer.

The significance of America's volunteer service was recently underscored during the Presidential Summit for America's Future, a three-day conference held in April, 1997. This event brought out a full billing of famous faces, including one current and three former U.S. Presidents, and brought community service into the national spotlight. Retired General Colin Powell, serving as general chairman of the summit, encouraged all Americans to “look into our own heart, to look into our own communities, to find someone in need,” and to fill the need for volunteers in every part of the country, particularly as mentors for at-risk youth. Reactions to the call for service varied; some agree that Powell's plans hold “much greater promise for dealing with social problems,” while others argue that Powell is effectively suggesting that “citizens should not only pay for the services of government, but also volunteer to perform them.”

However, while opinions on the question of responsibility vary, few dispute the *value* and *effectiveness* of charitable work. Nearly every life in the nation has been touched in some way by the efforts of volunteers; some lives have been deeply, permanently changed.

Sounds Great, But Why Should I Get Involved?

Unfortunately, there is no one all-encompassing answer to that question.

There are as many possible motives for action as there are people in the world, and volunteer activities are no exception. Moreover, these motives seem to have little in common from person to person, nor do they follow lines of race, sex, or age. Indeed, people who volunteer with the same organization are more likely to share motives than people with the same background. But if there is one motivation most common among volunteers, it might be a desire for what one researcher calls “psychological benefits.” In layman's terms, this is the “good feeling” that one gets after doing something nice for another person.

Yet more selfish factors can also contribute a great deal to volunteers' satisfaction. These include: the opportunity to learn about social issues, to gain new experiences, and to feel that sense of belonging which comes when one joins others in commitment to a cause or organization. That sense of belonging is closely related to another popular motivation, the desire for social interaction. Frequently this means interaction with other volunteers, though many volunteer positions – serving food at a soup kitchen, for example – involve direct interaction with the people being helped. Once an individual has made initial contact with an organization, this social connection to fellow volunteers can be a major incentive for continued involvement.

These are only a few general motivations; individuals often have more specific reasons. Traditional housewives, for example, may take on volunteer positions as an excuse to get out of the house. Others view volunteer work as a good way to “test drive” new career options. Still others act out of humanitarian or religious motives, a desire to escape boredom or to “repay” the perceived gifts of society, even the influence of one or two charismatic leaders. And for those who've already been involved in service for years, the issue of incitement becomes even more confused, with the added impetus: “volunteering is a part of who I am.”

In a nutshell, every individual who volunteers will have his or her own reasons for doing so. If any of the above motivations rings true to you at all, you can count on finding other people who feel the same way – and, most likely, an organization that will suit you well.

Okay, I'm Sold. Where Can I Volunteer?

If volunteers tend to group by motivation and interest, then it seems logical that there should be nearly as many volunteer groups, opportunities and organizations as there are motivations and interests. On the whole, this is the case. The number of volunteer and service organizations in the United States is virtually incalculable, and constantly changing. One firm, Action Without Borders, Inc., boasts a volunteer database listing over 14,000 organizations, dealing with every possible issue from at-risk youth to geriatric care. Add to this a vast number of small groups, such as local churches, which rely on unpaid help for functioning and upkeep. With such a wealth of options available, every possible interest – from altruism to social interaction to just plain fun – can certainly find an outlet.

Therefore, potential volunteers should be able to find suitable opportunities without a great deal of effort. The occupationally motivated, for example, often discover volunteer opportunities through their employers and coworkers. Churches and religious organizations advertise for volunteers in newsletters and postings; neighborhood and community organizations distribute similar advertisements in local stores and meeting places. Institutions like museums and libraries are frequently eager to get volunteer help. If none of those avenues turns up any promising opportunities, the World Wide Web provides some excellent resources to put volunteers and organizations in touch. The corporation Procter and Gamble, for example, maintains an informative website at <http://www.pg.com/docCommunity/index.html> that offers resources both for volunteers and for organizations seeking them, and can help connect individuals to a volunteer role that suits their interests. Action Without Borders also provides a vast amount of information at <http://www.idealists.org>. In fact, it is even possible to offer volunteer service *entirely* through the Internet: Virtual Volunteering (<http://www.impactonline.org/vv/>) is a site that allows volunteers to assist with computer programming, make brochures, and even contribute accounting skills from their home computers.

Indeed, with so many resources available, the biggest problem seems not to be finding a volunteer role, but *choosing* one among so many. Let's look briefly at two popular organizations: Habitat for Humanity International and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. These two groups represent a good mix of long-term versus short-term commitments, and work-oriented versus people-oriented volunteering.

Habitat for Humanity International is a 22-year-old organization dedicated to providing safe, affordable housing for low-income and needy families. Through volunteer work and donations, Habitat has built over 60,000 houses for 300,000 people around the world. Families who are interested in this low-cost housing can apply through their local Habitat affiliate (there are more than 1,300 affiliates in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.). If selected, they get a no-profit price on a home, with a no-interest mortgage. In return, these families are expected to put in a fair amount of work – called “sweat equity” – toward the construction of their home. Different affiliates have different requirements; 300-500 hours of sweat equity is common.

Volunteers with Habitat pitch in alongside the future homeowners, assisting with the construction of the new home. They might hammer, saw, or carry wood; whatever the specifics, getting dirty is certain to be part of the fun. Commitments might be as short as a day, or the volunteer might return for many different projects; again, the details will differ between individual affiliates. Those involved may be motivated by interest in homelessness as a social issue, by a desire to effect change in individual lives, even by the suggestion of friends who already volunteer with the program.

For the most part, Habitat volunteers focus more on physical work than on emotional. While working, they interact with their beneficiaries and other volunteers, but that is not the main purpose of their service, as is the case with some other forms of volunteering. The shorter time commitments also limit the amount of interaction that might take place. Therefore, that interaction tends to be less intimate than those other volunteer positions. This situation is ideal for those who may be uncomfortable with a more emotionally intense experience, or who may wish to offer service without such great personal investment. Of course, this does not detract from the value of their work, especially for those who owe their new homes to the volunteers' effort. One Kentucky grandmother, moving into her new home, exclaimed, “I didn't know whether to scream or what, but the tears just streamed.” Many volunteers enjoy seeing tangible, physical results of their work, and appreciate that they can have a powerful impact on other lives through a strong back and a willingness to help.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) takes a different tack – the entire goal of the organization revolves around long-term, one-on-one interaction. Founded in 1904, Big Brothers Big Sisters was described in the April 28, 1997 issue of U.S. News and World Report as “an organization with a universally recognized brand name and a notable absence of scandal.” BBBSA volunteers serve as “Bigs,” individual mentors for children who may have few relationships with trusted adults, including many from single-parent homes. As such, volunteers visit with their “Littles” two to four times a month, for a few hours at a time, and may spend this time helping the children with school work, taking them to recreational activities, or simply talking. A study conducted from 1992 to 1995 by the research firm Public/Private Ventures compared the Littles to a control group of unmentored children, and found that the Littles were:

- 46 percent less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- 27 percent less likely to begin using alcohol
- 53 percent less likely to skip school, and 37 percent less likely to skip class
- More confident of their performance in schoolwork
- Less likely to hit someone
- Getting along better with their own families

A volunteer position with BBBSA is a more intense and long-term experience than with Habitat; volunteers are expected to commit several hours a week for at least one year. The group social interaction element is foregone in favor of a close relationship with one person. Many Bigs share the same motivations as Habitat volunteers: desire to impact lives and concern for social issues, in this case the issue of at-risk youth. Bigs also get the opportunity to interact directly with those who benefit from their work, as Habitat volunteers do. However, BBBSA volunteers spread this interaction over a longer period; they can see the impact of their efforts as it develops over time. Their volunteer time may involve physical work – for example, they may play a game of basketball with their Littles – but the focus of their efforts is to develop a trusting relationship. In order to do this, they must always be aware of their words and actions, and be willing to serve as a role model, exemplifying good behavior whenever they spend time with their Littles. Therefore, BBBSA attracts people willing to put a lot of time and emotion into their work, and to share many aspects of their life with the less fortunate. The personal investment is much larger than with Habitat, but many Big Brothers and Big Sisters would argue that the rewards are proportionately greater. Says Cindy Wagner, 1997 National Big Sister of the Year, “There’s nothing more important you can do in your life than take a child under your wing. My life would be incomplete without [my Little Sister] Denise.”

These are just two of the many organizations available for potential volunteers, and by offering a mix of short- and long-term commitments, emotional and social environments, Habitat and BBBSA together appeal to a wide range of volunteers from all walks of life. Still, there are other opportunities suited to other volunteers, and other organizations that fill other needs.

One such opportunity is Alternative Spring Break. More of a common idea than a formal organization, this is a rapidly growing volunteer movement which has mobilized a powerful force of college volunteers across the nation during the past decade. By its nature, Alternative Spring Break offers such a wide variety of opportunities that virtually any potential volunteer could find a place, and increasingly, students are doing exactly that.

What is Alternative Spring Break?

Alternative Spring Break (ASB) is a volunteer-led grass-roots movement which sends student volunteers on trips across the United States to perform volunteer work during their spring recess. The students spend their vacation performing various tasks, from building houses to cleaning coral reefs, and address various issue areas including poverty, education, and AIDS. There is no single formal Alternative

Spring Break organization; rather, many universities across the nation have created independent programs and student organizations.

These independent programs span many variations on the central theme of the spring break volunteer trip. Some programs involve trips to only one or two sites each year, others to more than thirty; some operate during holiday or summer breaks instead of, or in addition to, the traditional spring break; some emphasize local volunteering before and/or after the trip. Some programs only ask for the time of spring break itself, while some involve a longer commitment, with meetings for months before the trip.

Though individual groups differ in many ways, Alternative Spring Break as a whole includes many of the positive characteristics of a number of other organizations, and some that are all its own. One of the things that makes ASB so popular among students is the sense of belonging and friendship that develops; whether or not team members have met before, a week of close, constant togetherness often forges a bond among them. This meets, quite well, the need for social interaction that is often a motivating factor in volunteering. The need for personal growth and learning is also addressed. Because many programs offer different trips that focus on specific issues like the environment or urban poverty, they allow students an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in an issue that interests them. Other students, who might not have an interest in a particular social problem, find that their ASB experience gives them a new perspective on that issue, and encourages them to look more deeply. Some sites focus on physical work, as with Habitat for Humanity (some trips are actually arranged directly with Habitat); others, such as tutoring at schools or with migrant workers, are directed toward personal interaction. ASB also offers a great mix between short- and long-term volunteering commitments: those who are inspired can return to ASB in a leadership role in future years, or even return to their host site independently. However, those who are not interested in further volunteering have no obligation after the week of spring break. This is a major advantage of the Alternative Spring Break concept: since it leans toward the fun, vacation-like atmosphere, it attracts students who might not otherwise be interested in volunteer work. Many of those students continue with their service after the trip.

ASB also enjoys a particular advantage in that it deals largely with college students. As a group, students tend to have the inclination and ability to become involved in social action more than other demographic groups. Statistically, 56.3% of those whose education included "Some College" were involved in volunteer work – fully 15% higher than the national average, according to the 1997 Statistical Abstract of the United States. Finally, there is a collateral benefit to be gained by mobilizing these students: if they are volunteering, they will not be involved in the traditional spring break of drinking, drugs, and causing trouble on the beach. All other benefits aside, this fact alone would make the program worth notice.

How Can This Information Help?

The following information is arranged as a guidebook, geared toward one specific form of volunteer opportunity: the Alternative Break (ASB) volunteer trip. The information is based on the student run ASB program at Western Michigan University (WMU). However, since ASB volunteers are motivated by many of the same factors as other volunteers, and face many similar problems, some of the suggestions in this guide can help people in other volunteer positions. Volunteers currently involved in or interested in joining an established Alternative Break program should find the timelines and administrative suggestions in this guide easy to convert for their own programs. And those interested in forming a new ASB organization can use the WMU program as a general model to help them get started.

Though many references in this guide are to the specific departments or offices of Western Michigan University, they can be generalized to apply to other university settings, and even to non-university. For example, the guide mentions the Student Volunteer Services (SVS) office, which is a department at WMU that coordinates many volunteer programs, including ASB. Other schools may have similar offices or departments, which should be able to provide similar resources. Likewise, the references to the Lee Honors College or "LHC" can as easily apply to any office which houses an ASB program, and other universities have forms and procedures similar to the "Travel Expense Vouchers" and other forms mentioned here.

If the goal is to set up an ASB program outside the traditional university setting, the details will be somewhat different. In that case, information on the structure of WMU ASB, and general tips, will be more helpful than specific policies.

Finally, there is an organization called Break Away which serves as a resource for ASB programs across the country. They maintain a website at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/Breakaway> which includes suggestions and resources for both new and established programs. The site also includes an on-line Sitebank, a list of available sites which ASB coordinators can use to make new contacts. Information from Break Away, combined with this guidebook, should provide fledgling ASB programs with enough resources to get off the ground, and offer new ideas and suggestions for current programs.

With that in mind, welcome to the guidebook.

Western Michigan University ASB Basics

The Alternative Spring Break (ASB) program at Western Michigan University (WMU) is a volunteer-led grass-roots organization which sends student volunteers to locations across the United States to perform volunteer work during their Spring Break recess. The students spend a week performing various tasks, from building houses to cleaning coral reefs, and address various issue areas including poverty, education, and AIDS. The program is based on several groups of twelve students each; each group travels to a different “site” to address a different issue. Several meetings are held prior to the trip, for education and team building, and there is at least one volunteer activity after the students return, in order to stress the service component of the program. Western’s Spring Break usually falls during the last week of February and/or the first week of March.

Administrative Information

Alternative Spring Break is a division of Western’s Student Volunteer Services office (SVS), a department which puts students in touch with volunteer opportunities in the Southwest Michigan area. The ASB program itself is student-run, administered by a volunteer executive board comprised of past participants. The Director of SVS offers support, resources, and connections to other organizations. ASB also enjoys the support of the Lee Honors College (LHC), the building in which the SVS and ASB offices are housed, and official paperwork is handled with the invaluable assistance of the LHC Executive Secretary.

History of ASB at Western

On February 26, 1992, twelve students left WMU to attend a weekend conference on community service in Orlando, Florida. After the conference, they drove to Berea, Kentucky to work on volunteer projects from planting gardens to repairing a Head Start facility. The students remained in Berea until March 7, which marked the end of their spring break recess. Thus, Western Michigan University’s Alternative Spring Break program was born.

Spring Break 1993 found eleven students working with the homeless in Detroit, Michigan; eleven dealing with rural poverty in Pearisburg, Virginia; and twelve cleaning up after Hurricane Andrew at the Chitimacha Reservation in Louisiana. Those thirty-four students would become forty-five the following year, as ASB expanded to four sites. The 1994 projects addressed urban poverty in Atlanta, Georgia; environmental concerns on Big Talbot Island, Florida; rural poverty in Ivanhoe, Virginia; and Native American issues in Dupree, South Dakota. In only two years, the fledgling program had quadrupled in size, and grown notably in reputation.

That expansion has continued. ASB encompassed six sites in 1995, eight in 1996. In an attempt to ease their administrative burden, the two Co-Chairs split the 1996 sites into two autonomous groups of four. By the end of that year, however, it had become apparent that continued growth would be difficult with only two coordinators. In 1997, the ten-site program was handed over to a seven-person Executive Board.

In the most recent year, 1998, Western’s ASB was comprised of twelve sites, including its first international site. These sites addressed urban and rural poverty, Native American issues, the environment, AIDS, multiculturalism, and the needs of underprivileged children. With nearly 150 students involved, 1998 brought the largest ASB program yet, and the growth seems likely to continue.

Roles and Positions

There are three primary roles in the ASB program: Participant, Site Leader, and Executive Board member. Students who participate in ASB for more than one year generally progress from the Participant role to Site Leader, and perhaps eventually to Executive Board, which is the most complicated and intensive role in the program.

The composition of the ASB **Executive Board** (hereafter referred to as the “E-Board”) is somewhat flexible, in order to capitalize on the individual talents of the people involved each year.

However, it always includes the following positions: two Co-Chairs, two Site Leader Trainers, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. All of these positions are described in more detail below, as is another common position: Site Coordinator. The Board may also include a Publicity Officer or Fund Raiser, which are fairly self-explanatory positions which may be combined with Site Coordinator. The group is made up of former Participants who apply in early March, after the ASB trip, to fill the position for the following year. The Co-Chairs and Site Leader Trainers should also have been involved as Site Leaders in the past; ideally, this will be true for the entire E-Board. In general, the E-Board is responsible for the infrastructure of the program as a whole. Board members schedule meetings, arrange funding and transportation, establish sites, and select people to be involved in the program.

While the E-Board administers the program as a whole, each individual site in the program is coordinated and led by two **Site Leaders**. Once the E-Board has established a site, it is up to the Site Leaders who are assigned to that site to confirm it, find lodgings, and firm up other details. They also meet with their group for education and team building, prior to Spring Break, and go along on the trips. The role of the Site Leader is described in more detail on Page 26. Site Leaders are former Participants who apply during the fall to fill the position for the coming spring. Members of the E-Board may also serve as Site Leaders.

In addition to the two Site Leaders, each team will include ten **Participants** (here used with the capital, to denote the title of the position). These are the volunteers who participate in the program. They do not have an administrative or planning role, per se, except in that most decisions made during the trip – such as where to eat or what to do on the weekend – are made by general consensus. Participants apply during late fall for the coming spring.

Recruitment

ASB relies in large part on word-of-mouth publicity: participants tell their friends about the program, and those friends become interested in participating themselves. Fortunately, ASB tends to be a valuable and enjoyable experience for those involved. This makes the word-of-mouth method quite effective. Thus, recruitment is not generally a problem. In fact, other volunteer programs sometimes look at ASB as a “gateway” organization which gets students interested in different forms of service. The program supplements this person-to-person publicity with some campus postings and sidewalk chalking, especially during the weeks before application due dates.

In addition, there are traditionally two regular publicity activities. The first occurs during Bronco Bash, an on-campus fair held by WMU on the day before Fall classes begin. Many campus organizations and Kalamazoo area businesses sponsor booths and tables to advertise during this fair. ASB distributes Site Leader and Participant applications at this fair. The second publicity program is an Informational Meeting which usually takes place in mid-October. For this meeting, ASB reserves a room on campus where several Site Leaders and E-Board members meet to answer the questions of potential Participant applicants.

Selection Process

As indicated, **E-Board** applications are accepted each year during the first week after Spring Break, and selections are made by the current E-Board. Board members may choose to conduct interviews to supplement the applications. Newly selected board members are expected to meet with the current E-Board several times before the end of the Winter Semester, in order to learn procedures and ask for suggestions. The new board will then serve through the following year’s Spring Break. Current board members who wish to remain for the following year apply as anyone else would. They may make suggestions during the selection process, but are not allowed to vote.

Applications for the position of **Site Leader** are accepted in the early Fall, usually late September. Applicants schedule personal interviews when submitting their applications; these interviews are conducted during the weekend after the applications are due. Selection is made by the Co-Chairs and Site Leader Trainers, who may invite another board member to assist. The number of Site Leaders selected is determined by the number of planned sites. Note that Site Leader applicants do not apply for specific sites, although they can indicate a preference. They apply for the Site Leader position, and the E-Board determines who is assigned to each site, based on each person’s preferences, areas of interest,

and/or academic major. In the event that there are not enough qualified applicants to fill all planned sites, the E-Board may elect to invite previous year's Site Leaders to return. Because the Site Leaders spend so much time getting to know the site and group, a Site Leader who drops out during the year will generally not be replaced by an alternate. In this event the remaining Site Leader will usually handle the trip alone, with some help from her Participants when necessary.

Participant applications are accepted in November, with interviews scheduled when the application is submitted, and conducted during the two weekends following the due date. Like the Site Leaders, prospective Participants apply to the program as a whole, and are assigned to individual sites in the same fashion as the Site Leaders. Selection is based on a point system: the Board assigns a certain "point" total to both the application and the interview, and awards points based on pre-established criteria like flexibility, originality, and so on. The specific categories and point totals are determined by the E-Board, and the Board and Site Leaders all participate in rating applications and interviews. (It is a good idea to have more than one person rating each applicant, in order to get a variety of opinions.) Once the points have been tallied, the Co-Chairs and Site Leader Trainers make the final selection. Frequently, the highest scorers will be accepted immediately, while the low and mid-range scorers are reviewed subjectively, based on application responses and the comments of interviewers.

To ease the Participant selection process, a manila folder is made up for each application. When the applicant comes in for his interview, he carries this folder with him (and is instructed not to look inside); different interviewers can then record comments and points on separate sheets in the folder. When the time comes for selection, all the information and comments about an individual are easily accessible, and the folders can quickly be shuffled around when determining who is selected and assigning individual sites.

A few notes on selection:

Applications: These are primarily used to give the selectors an insight into the applicant's personality and motives. Applications for all three levels include basic information like address and phone number, medical concerns and dietary needs. They also include such questions as "Why are you interested in ASB?" as well as questions designed to reveal the applicants' views on cultural diversity, teamwork, and other topics which relate to ASB. The applications are a helpful tool in selection, though they are given slightly less weight than impressions from personal interviews.

Interviews: These accomplish essentially the same task as the application, but in a face-to-face manner. Site Leaders are interviewed individually by two or three board members. Since the number of applicants and selectors is small, the selectors can usually discuss the applicants as individuals. The Participant interview process, which involves a much larger number of people, is necessarily more complicated. Applicants are interviewed in groups of eight to ten, with roughly as many interviewers. The first part of the interview is conducted in a "round robin" fashion, with each applicant sitting down with one interviewer, and rotating to another after a few minutes. This provides the opportunity for several different interviewers to form individual opinions, so that the applicant is not a victim of one negative personal impression. This portion of the Participant interview is much like the Site Leader interview. The applicants are then brought together and given a problem to solve – often a Values Inventory or other discussion-based item. Interviewers observe this process, noting each applicant's communication skills, flexibility, ability to express herself, and so on.

Selection Criteria: As mentioned above, the application and interview process attempts to determine each applicant's motive in applying, and to get an impression of his personality. Obviously, students who are sincerely interested in service and learning about issues, rather than simply in getting a cheap trip during Spring Break, are most likely to be selected. Beyond that, ASB prefers students who are flexible and able to accept people of various cultures, creeds, and abilities. Good communication skills are helpful, as is the ability to resolve conflict without losing one's temper. Ultimately, the interviewers will rely on the general impression they receive after talking to each applicant – which is why it's important to record comments in the interview folders, and also important to get a variety of opinions.

Alternates: When Participants drop out because of illness or other considerations, some applicants who were not initially selected as Participants will be invited to fill positions. One way of handling this is to establish a list of Alternates at the same time as the regular Participants are chosen. Alternates can then be pulled from this list and assigned to new groups as necessary. After the list is

exhausted, drop-outs will not be replaced. Alternatively, the Board can rank *all* the applicants who are not initially selected, and refer to that list as positions open. In this case, it is important to set a deadline after which drop-outs will not be replaced, nor their money refunded. The best time for this deadline is the Incredible Journey meeting (described below).

Finally, ASB gets several people each year who apply for the Participant position a second time. This has traditionally been discouraged, for two reasons: first, because returning students should ideally go on to Site Leader or E-Board positions; second, because there are always more applicants than positions, and we like to give new students an opportunity to participate rather than tie up positions for people who've already gone on an ASB trip. This policy is really a matter of personal opinion, however, and different E-Boards may choose to handle this issue differently.

Obligations

ASB at Western Michigan University covers a great deal more time than simply the week of Spring Break. The E-Board works year-round, and the Site Leaders from October through March, in order to make all the arrangements necessary for the trips to run smoothly. The E-Board members have frequent – often weekly – meetings, and the Site Leaders meet several times for training and planning. The Participants, too, attend four to six meetings during the months before Spring Break, in order to learn about their site and get to know their group. Of course, the E-Board and Site Leaders attend these meetings as well. These meetings are described in more detail below.

In addition to these meetings, all are expected to participate in two volunteer projects in the local area, one before and one after Spring Break. The pre-break project usually involves all the sites, and has traditionally taken place on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The post-break “Ripple Effect” project may be program-wide or may be planned by individual sites, in order to focus on their specific issue areas. In both cases the Site Leaders have some leeway in planning what their volunteer project will be, and can use the SVS office as a resource. Alternately, groups may choose to participate in one of several projects which SVS has planned for those times, rather than planning their own.

Should Participants fail to meet these obligations, the response will largely be open to the discretion of the E-Board and Site Leaders. Usually, Participants and Site Leaders will agree on an attendance policy for their group during the first meeting. Often, this agreement states that no one will miss more than one or two meetings; the details may change from group to group, so long as all members of each group are clear on their own group's policy. If a Participant misses extra meetings without explanation, he may be asked to leave the program, should the Site Leaders decide that he might be a detriment to the trip.

This policy may seem a bit harsh, but with only five or six meetings before the trip, a Participant who misses two or more is losing almost half of his group building time. Thus, chronic absences may alter the dynamics of a group whose other members have spent more time together. Allowing one Participant to skip meetings or volunteer work might also seem unfair or disrespectful to others who have put forth the effort to meet those obligations; they then might begin to question their own commitment to the program.

The issue is somewhat more complicated in the case of inactive Site Leaders or E-Board members. Other Site Leaders or Board members will often step in to pick up the slack as needed. The absent individual might be asked to leave the program, if they are unable to fulfill their commitment.

This may seem like a large number of expectations for a volunteer organization, but the meetings and activities are designed to facilitate close work as a team, and to underscore ASB's focus on service, both across the country and in the local area.

Meetings

Virtually every organization, volunteer-run or otherwise, is plagued by a preponderance of meetings. ASB is certainly no exception. Fortunately, the coordinators try to make these meetings as enjoyable as possible.

The **E-Board** will meet extremely frequently – one or more times per week during the busy part of the year, at least twice a month at other times. These meetings are primarily for communication, so that everyone can keep abreast of what everyone else is doing. This allows people to offer help or delegate

extra work. Early in the year, these meetings will also focus largely on planning timelines and establishing policies, and later meetings will include some of this as well.

Site Leader meetings are conducted differently. There will be at least two or three of these before December, and another one or two in January or February. For the most part, they focus on training, so the Site Leader Trainers are usually responsible for planning these meetings. (See the Site Leader Trainer position description on Page 15 for a list of possible training topics.) Site Leader meetings also include a certain amount of team building, and there is one meeting in November which is solely for the purpose of reviewing Participant applications.

Participant meetings also include a training component, usually based on information that the Site Leaders can offer about their specific site and issue area. However, they tend to focus more on meeting group members and team building. There are four to five of these meetings before Spring Break, in addition to the Kick-Off and Send-Off meetings (see below). Participant meetings usually start with all the groups together in a central room for announcements or other program-wide activities. After this, the individual groups split off to meet separately. One exception to this is the group social meeting, the time and location of which is entirely up to the group. The site leaders prepare agendas for the individual portions of their group's meetings, though suggested agendas are available from the Site Leader Trainers.

Special Meetings:

- *The Kick-Off.* This is the very first meeting, in December. The acceptance letters sent to Participants will include little more than the time and place of this meeting. Therefore, the Kick-Off is the time when Participants find out which site they've been assigned to, what they'll be doing, with whom they'll be traveling, and other important information. Because everyone is anxious to learn about their site, the Co-Chairs (who will chair this meeting) should try to keep general chat to a minimum, announce sites quickly, and move the groups into their individual meetings as soon as possible. Site Leaders will then lead a few ice-breaker activities and deliver any details they might have about the site. The excitement level is high at this meeting: the Participants are excited to be joining the program, and the E-Board and Site Leaders are excited that the real fun is finally starting.
- *The Incredible Journey.* Usually held during the first weekend in February, this meeting uses physical activities to urge participants out of their usual comfort levels, and thereby establish a degree of trust within the group. These initiatives include the "Trust Fall," in which participants stand on a high table and fall backwards into the arms of the group. Also popular is the "Wall," which forces participants to move the entire group over a four- or five-foot high wall, one at a time, without touching the wall at any point. Since this meeting focuses on building trust and comfort within the groups, it marks the cut-off point after which drop-outs will not be replaced by an alternate.
- *The Send-Off.* This meeting is held on the Friday evening at the beginning of Spring Break, and the name is fairly self-explanatory. The groups come together for a brief mass meeting and group pictures are taken. ASB T-shirts are also given out. The site leaders pick up their vans early in the afternoon, so many groups leave directly from this meeting. Those who have a short trip may wait and leave the next morning; those with a very long travel time might skip this meeting to leave early. Regardless, the atmosphere of this meeting is even more excited than the Kick-Off.
- *The Final Reflection.* Held on Sunday evening of the last weekend of Spring Break, this meeting gives each group a few minutes to share funny and touching stories from their trip. It starts out with excitement, but can quickly become boring unless presentations are limited to a few minutes.

Funding

ASB is funded by a number of sources. WMU has an account established to fund student organizations. Organizations wishing to use this money apply to the Student Budget Allocations Committee (SBAC), the committee which disburses these funds. In the past, ASB has received several thousand dollars from this fund each year toward the cost of transportation. The program also receives some funding from other campus offices, and hosts a "Band Soup" fund raiser in which local bands agree to play a benefit concert. Future E-Boards may seek other fund raising methods, corporate sponsors, etc.

Once these funding sources have been established, the Treasurer uses this information to establish a Participant Fee which will be as low as possible, while allowing ASB to cover all expenses. This fee has traditionally been between \$100-150. All Participants pay the same fee, regardless of site; all funds go into a central ASB account, from which various site, transportation, and administrative expenses are paid. Site Leaders pay a fee which is equal to one-half the Participant fee, and an E-Board member who elects to go on an ASB trip pays nothing.

Transportation

Transportation is naturally the backbone of an organization whose participants travel across the country to volunteer. WMU ASB sends each of its groups out in a 15-passenger van rented through the WMU Transportation Department. For some of the longer trips, this can mean 20-30 hours packed into a somewhat uncomfortable spot with a dozen other people, but the long ride can be an excellent way for the group to form bonds and establish comfort levels. It is also the most cost-effective transportation method we've found, and the most equitable: since all Participants pay the same fee, it would be unfair to send those with the longest trips by plane, while others took a van.

One-on-Ones

This is more of a group-building idea than an official policy. ASB has found that people tend to open up more with individuals than in a group setting. ASB encourages this relationship-building by suggesting that Participants and Site Leaders meet one-on-one with fellow group members before the trip. This is not a requirement, per se, but it is encouraged.

Policy Regarding Alcohol and Other Drugs

One of the most hotly debated issues in ASB administration is our policy on alcohol and other drugs. Obviously, ASB does not condone illegal activities, including the use of illegal substances.

Alcohol is a trickier issue, however. Many ASB participants can legally drink, and it's likely that many will want to at one point or another. However, others feel that alcohol lends itself more to the "party" spring break, and runs counter to ASB's volunteer ethic. Some past E-Board members have suggested a total ban on alcohol during the trip, but others have found that idea unfair and unrealistic. Indeed, past experience suggests that those who want to drink will do so regardless of policy.

Therefore, ASB does not prohibit drinking, but it does ask for responsibility. The E-Board reminds Participants and Site Leaders that ASB is the only student organization at WMU which uses university vehicles and funds without a staff advisor present, and that any alcohol-related incident could jeopardize the program's future. Group members are also asked not to let drinking interfere with their volunteer work or offend their hosts.

Essentially, Participants and Site Leaders are given *reasons* to be responsible, instead of *rules*. Thus far, this policy has worked well, and there have not been any serious incidents.

General ASB Timeline

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| March: | The groups return from their Spring Break, and all of them attend the Final Reflection meeting, where they share the stories of their trips. Ideally, the Site Leaders have left their sites with some basic arrangements for returning the next year. Participants who might be interested in a Site Leader position for the next year leave their names and addresses. The new E-Board applies and is selected. They begin to meet with the current board, in order to learn their jobs. |
| April: | This is the last month of WMU's Winter Semester. The E-Board reviews the Site Leader and Participant application process and forms, and establishes a specific timeline for meetings for the next year. They also make reservations for rooms in which to hold these meetings. The Site Coordinator contacts sites for the coming year. |

During the Summer:	The Site Coordinator continues the process of confirming sites. Site Leader applications and timelines are mailed out to Participants who indicated an interest in March.
September:	Site Leaders may be selected. Ideally, most of the planned sites are officially confirmed by now. The Publicity Coordinator arranges postings and announcements to promote interest in the program, and distributes applications to residence halls and campus offices. The Treasurer is preparing SBAC and other funding applications, and the Co-Chairs are making arrangements for photography at the Send-Off meeting, T-shirts to be given to all participants, transportation, and many other details.
October:	Site Leaders are selected, if they haven't been already. Their first or second meeting, in early or mid-October, is a weekend retreat involving some team-building and training exercises. At the end of this retreat, the Site Leaders learn which sites they've been assigned to and with whom they've been paired. At this point, they take over the job of the Site Coordinator, who may work on fund raising or publicity, or help other E-Board members. Site Leaders start planning agendas for their meetings.
November:	The Site Leader Trainers hold meetings to educate Site Leaders. Site Leaders are hard at work making arrangements for housing and other details at their sites. Participant selection is during the latter part of this month. Acceptance and rejection letters should be mailed within a few days after the last interview.
December:	The Participants come together for the first meeting, the Kick-Off, at which they learn which site they've been assigned to, and meet the rest of their team. Timelines are distributed. If the fees have been announced earlier, they are collected. If not, they are announced at the Kick-Off and collected at the next meeting. Very little else is done in December, since this is the end of WMU's Fall Semester, and finals are usually early in the month.
January:	There is at least one Site Leader education meeting during the month. There are also several meetings with Participants. Group building is the primary focus of these meetings. The MLK Day volunteer experience begins to shift the program's focus to volunteering. The E-Board is busy with last minute details and making sure that everything will run smoothly.
February:	There is one very special meeting at the beginning of February: the Incredible Journey. This meeting involves physical initiatives, including a "Trust Fall," which are designed to move participants out of their usual comfort zone, so that they begin to establish a new comfort level with their teammates. There are two other Participant meetings during the month, one of which is a social gathering. The E-Board and Site Leaders are handling last-minute problems and details, and fielding the many questions that Participants will inevitably have. At the end of February, the Send-Off meeting marks the beginning of the ASB volunteer week.

Today You Are a Co-Chair: Guides for Specific Positions

This section is designed primarily for ASB E-Board members and Site Leaders who are new to their positions and have questions about what they need to do. For each listed position, this guide includes Primary Responsibilities, General Tips (helpful hints from those who've been in the position before), and a Timeline to aid planning. There is also a section of General Tips for E-Board, which includes hints and suggestions which apply to the Executive Board as a whole.

Co-Chairs (2)

Primary Responsibilities for the Co-Chairs

- **Establish**, with the help of other Site Leaders and past timelines, a **workable schedule** for the year's events. These include: Bronco Bash, Site Leader and Participant application due dates, Site Leader and Participant interviews, Site Leader retreat, Site Leader training meetings (consult with Site Leader trainers on this), Participant meetings, the Incredible Journey, the Send-Off, the Final Reflection. If the board elects to schedule pre-break or Ripple Effect volunteering for the entire program, these should also be included.
- **Make all building reservations** necessary for the above events. When an event requires "props," such as the supplies for the physical initiatives of the Incredible Journey, make certain that these are available.
- Work with Site Coordinator to **establish a reasonable number of sites**, and determine which sites are selected.
- Work with Site Leader Trainers and possibly one other E-Board member to **interview, select and place** Site Leaders, and to select and place Participants.
- Maintain a list of **alternates** from among the Participant applicants, and invite these people to join the program as spots become available. Do not add any new people after the Incredible Journey.
- Set times for E-Board meetings, and **keep abreast of what other board members are doing** at any given time. The Co-Chairs coordinate the activity of the E-Board. In the event that one person is swamped, you should know who is not busy, so that work can be spread.
- Contact WMU Transportation and **reserve vans** for the trip. The Executive Secretary of the LHC will have request forms for you; I highly recommend that you record the name, destination, and form number. These will come in handy. Keep file copies of everything.
- **Prepare agendas** for each E-Board meeting, and for the large-group portion of each ASB meeting. **Act as chair** at these meetings in order to ensure that things run smoothly.
- Prepare **acceptance and rejection letters** to mail out to Site Leader and Participant applicants.
- **Represent ASB** in the University and Community. This includes preparing external paperwork, such as Travel Authorization Forms, and providing the Office of Student Life with a complete list of participants and their Social Security Numbers. Again, keep file copies of everything.
- **Serve on the Student Volunteer Services Board**, attending meetings and reporting to the SVS director appropriately.
- Arrange for **T-shirts, Site Leader plaques or picture frames**, and any other "goodies." Much of this work can be delegated to other board members, but the Co-Chairs should coordinate.
- Pick up **first aid kits** and other needed supplies.

General Tips for the Co-Chairs

- Remember that there are **two** Co-Chairs. This helps a great deal in spreading the work, but it also makes close communication vital. **Stay in touch constantly.** Similarly, stay in touch with the other E-Board members, since you will be expected to coordinate everyone's efforts.

- The Co-Chairs should **take turns** with regular tasks like preparing agendas, chairing large meetings, and so on. For one-time tasks like reserving vans, try to make sure that they are evenly distributed, and that neither Co-Chair is working harder than the other.
- **Delegate.** Some tasks, like picking up first aid kits or designing T-shirts, can easily be done by other board members, as long as you supervise to make sure that things are done in a proper and timely fashion.
- Make every conceivable effort to **stick to the timeline, and commit to decisions.** The importance of this cannot be stressed enough. Inconsistent Co-Chairs make for an inefficient, unprofessional organization.
- **Make yourself accessible.** Participants, Site Leaders, and outside people will come to you with every conceivable question, and expect answers. If you don't know the answer to a question, direct the person to someone who might be able to help, or ask the person to get back to you. Always find the answer for yourself later, for your own information.
- Get in touch with the SVS office or other organizations about **Martin Luther King Jr. Day.** Many schools, including WMU, have programs to celebrate this day. These provide an excellent opportunity for pre-break volunteering.
- Remember to **back up E-Board and Site Leaders.** Once the year is underway, they will be making a number of decisions regarding their Participants and sites, and they'll need your support. Conversely, arguing or disagreeing with other Board members or Site Leaders during a meeting could damage the credibility of everyone involved, in the eyes of the Participants, and may cause personal conflict as well.

Timeline for the Co-Chairs

Late Spring:

Meet with the new E-Board to plan essential policies and establish a summer address list. **Make the schedule** for the year. Establish the number of sites, and determine how Site Leaders will be selected. If any changes need to be made to application forms, make them.

During the Summer:

Work with Site Coordinator to **establish and confirm sites.** Look into arrangements for **Site Leader Retreat.**

By the Start of Classes:

The **sites should be contacted**, and at least some should be confirmed. Applications should be available by Bronco Bash.

Early Fall:

Reserve vans. Remember to save copies of the Transportation Request Forms. Interview and **select Site Leaders.** Meet several times with the E-Board, and stay in close contact with everyone. By now, the sites should definitely be confirmed.

By December:

Site Leaders have been selected and have taken over contact with sites; Participants have also been selected. Most things are running well enough on their own, and it's time for you to concern yourself with odd jobs: **placing alternates, filling out forms, getting first-aid kits and T-shirts,** and dealing with unexpected problems. **Stay accessible** to Participants, and even more accessible to Site Leaders. T-shirt design should be just about ready by now.

By Mid-January:

Get back in touch with Transportation, in order to **update your van requests** in case of any changes. (Aren't you glad you saved copies of those forms?) Keep up with **alternates.** By now, the order for **T-shirts** should have been placed, and you should know how many new

first aid kits are needed. Buy them. Stay accessible. Complete **Travel Authorization Forms**.

February:

Make a determined effort to **know what everyone is doing**: things happen fast in February, and more people will have more questions than at any other time of year. Most of your regular tasks are done by this time, so you'll spend February dealing with new and unexpected issues. If you haven't already done so, arrange for group photos to be taken at the Send-Off meeting, and buy plaques or picture frames for the site leaders. Try to prepare an agenda which will keep the Send-Off meeting fun and fast-moving. Prepare applications for next year's E-Board. Plan an agenda for the Final Reflection Meeting. If you're doing a program-wide Ripple Effect, get the arrangements in order for that.

During the Trip:

You're free! Enjoy yourself.

After the Trip:

Chair the Final Reflection meeting. **Distribute applications and select next year's E-Board**. Meet with them at least once, to get them started. Make sure that your own records are up to date, so next year's E-Board can follow in your footsteps. Congratulate yourself on a job well done.

Site Leader Trainers (2)

Primary Responsibilities for the Site Leader Trainers

- **Train Site Leaders.**
- **Prepare Site Leader Handbooks:** three-ring-binders which include valuable information and copies of forms, and into which Site Leaders can place any paperwork they accumulate along the way. Refer to one of last year's handbooks for help in deciding how to prepare these.
- **Prepare timeline for Site Leader meetings.** This will be closely coordinated with the overall timelines prepared by the Co-Chairs.
- **Prepare agendas for Site Leader meetings.** This will usually involve a training component, as well as some time set aside for team building. Assist Site Leaders in preparing agendas for their individual group meetings. It is a good idea to include copies of agendas for previous years in the Site Leader Handbooks.
- **Chair Site Leader meetings.** Typically, there will be one or two training topics which you will address at each of the meetings, as though you were teaching a class. For ideas on those topics, see below.
- **Arrange Site Leader retreat.** In 1998, the retreat was at an adventure-style camp where some activities were planned by camp staff. In other years, Site Leader Trainers have been responsible for planning all activities. Either way, you'll need to make the arrangements, inform Site Leaders, and work with the Treasurer on payment.
- **Work with Co-Chairs and possibly one other E-Board member to interview, select and place Site Leaders and Participants.** You will also assist Co-Chairs in determining how the interviews will take place.

Suggestions for Training Topics

- **"The Role of the Site Leader."** Traditionally, Site Leaders have served as liaisons between their site and ASB, and also represent ASB to their Participants. They should remember that their attitude toward the program will be picked up by Participants. Before the trip, they plan agendas for their group meetings and make all necessary arrangements with their sites, with the E-Board as resources. During the trip, they act as facilitators and communicate with site contacts. When possible, large decisions should be made by the group as a whole. However, the Site Leaders can be responsible for quick judgment calls, and should facilitate decision making in any case.
- **Handling emergencies** -- such as what to do if the van gets in an accident, if the site contacts are nowhere to be found after arrival, if we actually need to *use* the waivers and insurance information that we've always carried.
- **Conflict resolution.** This is a chimera that we've been fighting for years. Conflict resolution is addressed every year, and every year people wish we'd addressed it more. Good luck.
- **Facilitation.** Site Leaders will be intimately involved with the group dynamic which will develop during their trip. Therefore, they should learn to facilitate this development. This is also an opportunity to teach Site Leaders how to direct Incredible Journey physical initiatives.
- **Education** -- a review of what is involved in educating Participants, and why it is important to focus on education before the trip.
- **CPR/First Aid training.** If one of the Site Leaders or E-Board members is a certified CPR and First Aid trainer, this should be easy to arrange. Otherwise, consider scheduling a CPR/First Aid class through a local hospital or clinic, or reimbursing Site Leaders who attend certification classes individually.
- **Respect.** This is a tricky one, but it's an important quality, and has been an issue in past years. If possible, urge Site Leaders to demonstrate -- and to encourage Participants to demonstrate -- respect for each other, as well as for those they meet during the trip.
- Consider also any topics which are included in previous years' Site Leader handbooks, or suggested by previous Site Leaders or Site Leader Trainers.

General Tips for the Site Leader Trainers

- The Site Leader retreat can be a good time to **inform Site Leaders of pairings and sites**. If you save the revelation to the end of the retreat, you can use retreat time to observe how people work together, and make any last minute changes that might seem necessary.
- Site Leaders will come to you with dozens of questions about policy. Be prepared, and be sure you **know where your fellow E-Board members and the Co-Chairs stand** on various issues.

Timeline for the Site Leader Trainers

March/April:	Work with other Board members in revising Site Leader and Participant applications; focus on the Site Leader apps. Meet with co-Site Leader Trainer to begin planning Site Leader meeting agendas, training topics, and training methods. Look at possible sites and formats for Site Leader retreat.
September:	By now, Site Leader retreat should be confirmed . If it is not possible to schedule the retreat on the weekend which was indicated in the timeline, make sure that Site Leader applicants are informed of the new dates. Have tentative agendas prepared for the retreat and the first few training meetings. The deadline for Site Leader applications may be at the end of the month, or the beginning of October. Meet with Co-Chairs and possibly one other Board Member to review applications, and meet again after interviews to make selection.
October:	Select Site Leaders , if you haven't already. Determine pairings and sites for each site leader, but don't reveal these until the end of the retreat. This is because the retreat provides your first opportunity to see those pairings in action, and you may decide to make last minute changes based on that information. Plan at least one training meeting in addition to the retreat, and be available for questions.
November:	Hold Site Leader training meetings . One meeting will be specifically for reviewing Participant applications . Make sure that you schedule Site Leaders to act as interviewers for the Participant interviews late in the month; this schedule should be prepared at least a week early. Assist with interviews. Meet with Co-Chairs and possibly one other Board member to select and place Participants .
December:	You may elect to schedule a training meeting in December, but it's likely to be a busy month even without this. Enjoy the Kick-Off meeting.
January/February:	Hold at least one or two training meetings. Be available to the Site Leaders, should they have any questions. Assist Co-Chairs and other Board members with general last-minute preparations, and make sure that Site Leaders are kept up-to-date with all E-Board decisions.
After Spring Break:	Remain accessible for the following year's E-Board, particularly the new Site Leader Trainers. They will look for your suggestions. Save your handbooks and training materials as resources for future E-Boards.

Secretary

Primary Responsibilities for the Secretary

- **Prepare and distribute all important documents:** Site Leader and Participant applications, waivers, timelines, etc.
- Keep all paperwork, including incoming applications, site information, and waivers, organized in the ASB files. This may require establishing new files or a new organization system. Record details on your organization techniques for the following year's secretary.
- **Establish and maintain the database** for Participant and Site Leader information. You may have other E-Board members or Site Leaders assist with the data entry, but you should be ultimately responsible for keeping the database up to date.
- **Prepare and distribute phone lists** for Site Leaders and for each site.
- **Keep detailed minutes** of E-Board meetings, and distribute them to board members promptly.

General Tips for the Secretary

- Have **Site Leader log and mailboxes** ready in time for the Site Leader orientation in the office, which will come shortly after their selection.
- A working knowledge of the PageMaker desktop publishing program is helpful. Most WMU ASB documents are already saved as PageMaker files on the LHC Macintosh, and it is an excellent program for new documents. The LHC staff can help you learn the basics, and you'll pick up the rest as you go.
- **Master copies** of most of the forms used during the previous year are kept in a file marked "ASB Masters" in the ASB cubicle. You should use these as examples in preparing this year's forms. For example, waivers are sent out as a package which includes the application and timeline.
- During the summer or early fall, **explore the ASB cubicle in the LHC**. There are a lot of resources hidden away in three-ring binders or unmarked files, including such items as interview questions. ASB has collected a variety of these "goodies" over the past few years, and you're likely to find some valuable things in those files, tucked away and forgotten.
- In order to **make copies** on the LHC copier, you'll need to ask an LHC or SVS employee to make the copies or at least punch in the code. Large jobs, like the Participant applications, will probably need to be sent out to a printer; ask the staff for help with this.
- **Keep detailed minutes** of E-Board meetings, and get these typed and out to board members promptly. The minutes are an important record, because people often forget previous decisions, especially if there has been a long time between meetings. You may even discuss with the Co-Chairs the possibility of starting each meeting with a reading of the previous meeting's minutes.
- Keep careful track of **room reservations**: dates, times, room numbers. Everyone will ask you about this, since people often forget to check their timelines. If possible, send out reminders over e-mail a few days before each meeting.
- Keep **extra copies** of all important forms. For the first few Participant meetings, you'll need timelines and waivers, since Participants tend to lose these. As the trip gets closer, keep copies of waivers handy at all times.
- Organizing the **waivers** is an important part of your job, but it can be a nightmare trying to collect them as the trip gets closer. Use the database to make sure who has turned them in, and who hasn't. Establish a deadline for these to be turned in (perhaps by the Incredible Journey), and vigorously chase any slackers. You may want to make a copy of each waiver for *each* Site Leader during the trip, in case the group is separated.

Timeline for the Secretary

August 1:

Mail Site Leader applications to people who signed up the previous year. Include cover letter from Co-Chairs, position description, and timeline. Notify LHC receptionist that people will be handing in

applications, and set up a folder at the LHC front desk for this purpose. Include in this folder an **interview sign-up form**, and ask the receptionist to instruct applicants to sign up for an interview when they turn in an application. Also give receptionist a folder full of blank Site Leader applications for anyone interested. By this time, the cubicle should be organized and ready for the new year.

- Bronco Bash:** Have both **Site Leader and Participant applications** available at the ASB booth. If the E-Board decides against this, have a sign-up sheet available for interested people, and be sure to mail applications to these people promptly.
- Third Week of September:** Site Leader applications due Friday, interviews Saturday and Sunday. **Have interview questions and scoring forms ready**, with copies for each interviewer. **Mail acceptance/rejection letters** the following Tuesday, assuming that decisions have been made by then. **Phone accepted Site Leaders** at the end of the week to confirm, if they have not yet contacted you.
- First Week of October:** If the **Participant applications** were not ready by Bronco Bash, they must be ready now and available in the LHC office, residence halls, and anywhere else the E-Board sees fit. Place a **folder and interview sign-up form** at the LHC as described above. Attach a timeline and a waiver to each application, and have some of these forms available separately. Have all forms available at the Informational Meeting.
- Third or Fourth Week of October:** **Participant applications due.** Interviews occur over the next two weekends. There will be a Site Leader meeting to train for interviewing. Have **interview scoring forms** available for this meeting, and make sure there are enough copies to place in folders. Prepare one folder for each Participant.
- Second Week of November or Two Weeks After Interviews:** **Mail acceptance/rejection letters** to Participants. Include timeline and form for accepted Participants to return, acknowledging their agreement to commit to the program.
- Kick-Off Meeting:** Have extra waivers and such available. **Prepare address and phone lists** for Site Leaders and Participants.
- Send-Off Meeting:** Make **copies of all waivers** and give one set to each Site Leader (only his or her own Participants, of course). Give the originals to the SVS Coordinator or LHC for safekeeping during the break.
- Final Reflection:** Have **E-Board applications** available. Hand out to Site Leaders. Have a turn-in folder and notify LHC receptionist as above.
- After Spring Break:** Collect E-Board applications. Be accessible for the new E-Board, particularly the Secretary, and leave your files as clean and well-organized as possible.

Treasurer

Primary Responsibilities for the Treasurer

- Prepare **budget proposal and presentation for SBAC**. Forms and directions for this are available at the Office of Student Life.
- Make requests for additional funds from the Office of the President, other departments; possibly write grants.
- Work with the LHC Executive Secretary to take care of **financial paperwork**. This will include vouchers for purchases, budget proposals, and other university .
- Use anticipated inflows and outflows to **determine the Participant fee**. This is done as follows: once you know how much money you've got from SBAC, the Office of the President, and any fund raisers, total that amount as Income. Then determine your Expenses: figure \$1,000-1,100 per site for van rental, about \$1,100 spending cash per site, at least \$1,200 for T-shirts, \$300-500 for administrative costs, at least \$200 for Site Leader gifts, and estimate any other assorted costs, such as food at meetings. Don't forget to leave a margin of error in the calculation. Determine how much more Income you need to cover Expenses, and divide it up by a few less than the following number: $(\text{number of Participants}) + 0.5(\text{number of Site Leaders})$. Don't use the full number of participants, because there are always drop outs.
- **Collect fees**. This may be the least pleasant part of the Treasurer's role. Once the fee has been set, Participants are expected to pay the full fee, Site Leaders to pay one-half the Participant fee, and E-Board to pay nothing. If anyone pays cash, be sure to issue a receipt. Keep careful track of who has paid and who hasn't; stay in close contact with the Secretary for updates on drops & adds.
- Ask the Site Leader Trainers to schedule time during a Site Leader meeting when you can **give the Site Leaders pointers** on handling ASB money and issue Expense Record Sheets.
- Distribute **Budget Request Forms** to the Site Leaders. Site Leaders will use these to request spending cash from the program. You will then review and approve these budgets. You may approve or change some items depending on appropriateness (requesting money for beer, for example, is not appropriate) and the total amount available.
- **Issue checks** to the Site Leaders according to the approved budgets. Record name and check number, and have the Site Leaders sign. Issue only one check per site; choose one Site Leader to be responsible for the money (though they may each carry some cash during the trip).
- Upon return, **review each site's Expense Record Sheet**. Make certain that expenses are justified and that all expenses have a receipt. You will have to add and subtract several times, and expect sites to be short or over by a few cents – or a few dollars, in some cases. Juggle spare change to make sure that the cash returned plus **documented** expenses equals the amount of the original check.
- Work with the Site Leaders to complete a **Travel Expense Voucher** for each site. The LHC secretary will have these forms, and will help fill you in on the details. Essentially, this is how ASB accounts to the University for the money it spends. All the receipts from each trip must be totaled and submitted to WMU Accounts Payable with this form, along with the remaining funds.

General Tips for the Treasurer

- Throughout the process, **make sure that all of your records are complete and accurate**. You don't want to harass "deadbeats" who actually have paid, or ignore people who haven't; you *certainly* don't want the WMU Accounting Department to find any mistakes.
- **Establish concrete deadlines**, and stick to them! This is *critical*. ASB participants are wonderful people, as a rule, but they can be very slow to pay. I recommend that all money be in – or special arrangements made with you – by mid-January. I also recommend that **no refunds** be issued to people who drop out after the Incredible Journey. Make certain that these deadlines are clear; put them on the timelines and mention them at every meeting. An unclear or loosely enforced deadline leaves room for frivolous drop-outs and refunds. This could jeopardize funding for the entire program.

- At the same time, people will come up to you with every imaginable story about why they can't pay on time. So long as they contact you before the deadline, and can work out some reasonable payment arrangement, this is allowable. Use your discretion.
- I strongly recommend that you make your own **separate copy of the Participant/Site Leader database**. You'll need addresses and phone numbers, and will want to use your own database to record payments and other sensitive information, which should not be on the public database.
- **Attend the University's Treasurer Workshops** (you'll receive a notice). These will help you to understand the particulars of Fund 52 Accounts, which is how the university handles student organization funds.
- The secretary in the LHC will quickly become your best friend. This person will handle virtually every financial transaction, and provide you with university forms. It is in your best interest to cultivate a good working relationship.
- Though the LHC secretary will keep an actual ledger sheet, it's a good idea that you have at least a general **knowledge of how much money is in ASB's account** at any given time. Everyone and his brother will request money for various things, and you need to know whether ASB can cover it.
- Read carefully for the **SBAC Budget Proposal and Presentation**. Follow the directions in their packets. In past years, we've only asked for funding to assist with the cost of vans (they like to see that we can pay for everything else ourselves). In preparing your presentation, try to address every point that they mention in their guidelines.
- If there are fund raisers which bring in cash, set aside a **petty cash account** of about \$125. Hang on to this money; it comes in handy in covering unexpected, small expenses. This is not an official account, per se; you can keep it as cash. Keep receipts and detailed records so you can balance the account and return remaining cash after the trip.
- More than any other position, **you must be firm**. Collect fees on time, make sure that every expense is documented, make sure that every expense is justifiable. It's not easy telling people that they can't have the money they ask for (most of them will come up with heart-wrenching reasons why they need it), but the fact is, sometimes they can't have the money they ask for.
- Remember, however, that ASB's money is, in large part, the Participants' money. We can't pay for souvenirs or donations to other organizations, but the **sites will occasionally want to go out to dinner or otherwise splurge a little**. This is allowable, as long as it is not abused. Again, your discretion, and that of the site leaders, is the key. Make certain that the Site Leaders understand your position on this issue. Also make certain that the E-Board supports your position.
- Record and **deposit fees as soon as they come in**. Some Site Leaders will want to hold on to money until all Participants have paid. Don't allow this; collect all money immediately, and issue receipts for cash at the time of collection.
- Some Participants will request **funding from their Residence Halls**. This is a frustration for you, because the Halls will simply transfer the money into ASB's account, and expect you to write a check to reimburse Participants. If Participants ask about this, **make sure that they have already paid the full fee**. Make certain that the Participants get the right Fund & Cost Center for ASB, and that they provide you with documentation of the transfer, in order for you to issue a check. The LHC secretary will help.
- Once you've verified the amount of cash that Site Leaders bring back from the trip, and you're sure it's okay, **deposit the money** in our Fund & Cost Center, and **get a receipt** with the appropriate Site Leader's name. This is done at the Cashiering Department. You'll need to attach returned funds to the Travel Expense Voucher, and it's easier to handle a slip of paper than an envelope full of change.
- Finally, be aware that, with the possible exception of the Co-Chairs, you will be the busiest member of E-Board from late January through mid-March. Unfortunately, the nature of the job is such that most tasks can only be done by you. However, don't be afraid to **ask for help** from the E-Board or available Site Leaders when you need it.

Timeline for the Treasurer

September:

Prepare budget for SBAC. Make the presentation and so on, according to their schedule (the budget is usually due in the beginning of October, the presentation a few weeks later).

October:

Assist the rest of the E-Board with interviews, Site Leader retreat. **Be aware of total funds in ASB account**, since you'll be issuing a lot of vouchers this month.

November:

Plan any additional sources of funding, such as the Office of the President, and contact those places. Ideally, fund raisers like Band Soup should have happened by now. If you have totals for all expected income, **determine the Participant fee**, so that you can tell people at the interview. Assist with Participant selection.

December:

If you didn't already know your income, you should know it by now. **Determine Participant fee.** Let all Participants and Site Leaders know as soon as possible – by putting it on acceptance letters, via e-mail, whatever. If you can get the word out, ask that fees be turned in at the Kick-Off meeting; if not, announce the fee at Kick-Off, and ask for money by the next meeting. At the same time as the fee announcement, **announce payment and drop-out deadlines.** Make it clear that people who drop out after this deadline **will not have their fee refunded.** Site Leaders should pay immediately. Give out your name, phone number and e-mail address in case anyone has questions or difficulties. **Collect, record, deposit.** I have usually recorded the check number next to each person's name in my database, when they pay.

January:

Your payment deadline will fall. This should be the second or third meeting. If you have not already done so, distribute Budget Requests and Expense Record Sheets to Site Leaders, and give them basic information on how you'd like those forms handled. Keep your head – a lot of people will begin bothering you for Residence Hall reimbursements, voucher forms, extensions on payment. You'll get through it.

February:

This should be your **drop-out deadline**, probably at the Incredible Journey. **Do not refund anyone** who drops out after this date. Early in February, establish a **deadline for Site Leader budgets**, at least three weeks before the trip. Approve or amend those budgets, and submit the check request to the LHC secretary for processing at least two weeks before the trip.

After the Trip:

Collect the Expense Record Sheets, receipts, and returned cash from the Site Leaders the weekend they return. Verify totals, and sit down with Site Leaders to finish **Travel Expense Vouchers** during the first week. Make sure that your records are in order, and handle any final reimbursements that may become necessary.

Site Coordinator

Primary Responsibilities for the Site Coordinator

- **Contact potential sites and arrange destinations for ASB trips.**
- **Turn contact information over to the Site Leaders**, once they have been selected and assigned to individual sites.
- Remain available as a resource for Site Leaders in the event of problems.

General Tips for the Site Coordinator

- **Know the exact dates for Spring Break** before you start scheduling. The dates are available at the LHC. (I know it sounds obvious, but honest, we've had problems with this in the past.)
- There is a list of previous sites and contact names in the ASB files, so that you don't have to start from scratch every year. We frequently try to return to sites that have worked out in the past, and they're usually happy to hear from us.
- **Get started as soon as possible!** Some schools make arrangements *during* the trip to return for the following year; this is your goal. Suggest that Site Leaders start this process; you will want to be available to help them out.
- Even if the Site Leaders aren't making first contact with their sites, try to consult with them when scheduling. They will have input on the quality of their site, and to whom you should talk.
- In addition to return sites, you will probably need to **initiate contact with new sites**. There is a great deal of information in the office, or you can look at Break Away's On-Line Sitebank at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/Breakaway>.
- Remember, **finding housing is not your job**. The Site Leaders will handle this. However, when you're making calls, you may find that your contacts have suggestions, or that some sites provide housing. Information like this will make the Site Leaders' job easier, and they will appreciate it.
- **Stay in touch with your contacts**, at least until the Site Leaders take over. I recommend calling at least once a month, if only to remind them that we're around. If you're still working out details, call more often.

Timeline for the Site Coordinator

March:	Get in touch with all of the Site Leaders to find out what arrangements they've made with sites for next year, and to get their input on the sites. Begin calling site contact people. Firm up dates that the Site Leaders have already arranged, and set dates with sites that the Site Leaders haven't spoken to yet.
April:	By now, the new E-Board should have met at least once or twice, and you should have an idea of how many sites are planned for the coming year. If you have many repeat sites, great; if not, you'll need to make some initial contacts for new sites.
During the Summer:	Continue calling sites to confirm details. It's a simple job, really, but for some reason you'll find that the people you're calling are almost never in their offices when you call. Even after you've made some arrangements, it's good to keep in contact, in case things change.
During the Fall:	Keep in touch with your contacts. By October or November, you'll hand off most of your responsibility to the Site Leaders. Your job is just about done. Be ready to help out with fund raising and help other E-Board members who might be swamped, like the Treasurer or Secretary.

General E-Board Suggestions

- First and foremost, the members of the E-Board must remember that they're part of one of the best organizations anywhere. The Site Leaders and Participants will pick up on your enthusiasm and attitude. Make sure that your behavior represents how you want ASB to be perceived.
- Remember that the purpose of an E-Board is to help the program to happen, not to hand down decisions. Once the site leaders have established contact with their sites, they will be making decisions about that site and their Participants. At this point, the executive board is a **resource, more than a supervisor**, and should concern itself with handling the infrastructure (money, meetings, T-shirts) rather than directly working with the sites. **Do not perceive the E-Board position as the top of a hierarchy.**
- **Keep copies of the minutes** that the Secretary provides you; the best way to do this is in a three-ring binder. One of the biggest problems we've encountered is E-Board members who forget or are not informed of decisions that have been made by the E-Board. Well-organized minutes will be an invaluable resource, and will help cut down on the communication breakdown that has plagued ASB administration in the past.
- Another problem we've encountered in the past is difficulty staying on task during board meetings. We like to spend time together, of course, and meetings tend to be informal and social. **A regular procedure should be established for meetings**, perhaps using basic parliamentary procedure, and board members should try to stay focused on ASB business during the meetings. If business is handled efficiently, there will be plenty of time to socialize at the end of the meeting.
- **Keep in touch** with everyone. A good idea is to arrive early to meetings, to consult with the rest of the E-Board. Regular e-mail use is also extremely helpful.
- When meeting in buildings on campus, make sure one person is in charge of keeping the room key.
- A certain amount of **attention to detail** (i.e., making sure such things as pens or name tags are available when needed) will help the program to look more professional. Even one person with this quality can help a great deal.
- **Delegate when necessary.**
- **Establish attendance policies, and be firm.** Otherwise, people will tend not to take the program seriously.

Site Leaders (2 per site)

Primary Responsibilities for the Site Leaders

- **Coordinate details and schedules with site** prior to trip. Stay in contact with site contacts. Keep Participants informed.
- Act as a **liaison** between the ASB program and your site contact.
- Meet with Co-Site Leader to **coordinate group policies**: how to deal with alcohol, participants who miss meetings, conflict within the group, etc. Be sure that policies regarding alcohol, attendance, behavior and other issues are clearly understood by Participants.
- **Arrange housing** for group.
- **Assist in Participant selection** by reviewing applications and interviewing applicants.
- **Meet several times** with your group prior to the trip, to provide education about the group's issue area, specific site information like schedules and emergency phone numbers, and team building opportunities. Prepare agendas for the individual group portion of these meetings.
- It is recommended that you **arrange at least one pre-break volunteer experience**, perhaps at a local charity or other organization. This should relate to your site's issue; for instance, if you are going to volunteer at a Head Start facility, try to find a local Head Start or preschool at which to spend the afternoon. This may coordinate with the program-wide volunteer day on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- You may be responsible for **collecting participant fees** and conveying these to the Treasurer.
- You may also have to enforce policies, including removing participants who miss too many meetings, don't pay fees, etc. Consult with the E-Board if a problem seems imminent, and if possible try to speak to the participant in question before problems become serious.
- **Prepare site budgets** to submit to the Treasurer. This will be the amount of cash which you carry on the trip to pay for housing, food, and other expenses.
- **During the trip**: act as liaison between site contact and your group, facilitate group decisions, control and record expenses from ASB budget, be prepared to make quick decisions for the group if needed.
- During the trip, make initial arrangements with your site contacts for ASB to return to that site the following year.
- On the ride home, help participants to **prepare their presentation for the Final Reflection**.
- **Submit Expense Record, receipts, and all returned cash to the Treasurer**. Make sure that any travelers' checks are signed. Be prepared to meet with the Treasurer in the week after the trip to fill out final financial paperwork.

General Tips for the Site Leaders

- Remember that there are two Site Leaders for each site. Try to split the work equitably, and if you feel overwhelmed or have difficulty with a specific task, don't hesitate to ask your Co-Site Leader for help. **Constant communication between Site Leaders is extremely important.**
- Site Leader is arguably the most intense position in the program; you make many decisions that have a direct impact on your group, while trying to also be "one of the guys." **Remember to have fun** during the trip, and not to spend too much time wondering "how a Site Leader should behave in this situation."
- If you have difficulty working with your Co-Site Leader, try to approach that person and **deal with the issues** as soon as possible. If the two of you feel you can't work together, speak to the E-Board.
- **Make all arrangements with your site as soon as possible**, including such details as what meals might be provided, etc. Be certain you have explicit directions, a specific time and place to meet your site contact, iron-clad dates for arrival, departure, etc. Also be sure you know whether food is provided, whether a kitchen (particularly a refrigerator) is available, where your team will sleep, and other important particulars. The more information you have established early, the happier your participants will be, and the less difficulty you'll have if problems come up later.

- **Be on time!** Not only does it make the program look more professional, but it allows you time to share information with the E-Board and your Co-Site Leader.
- Even after the initial scheduling, try to **contact your site at least once or twice a month**, and more if you're still working out details. With some organizations, it's important to remind them that ASB is around.
- **Plan for driving.** The WMU Transportation Department requires a photocopy of driver's licenses for each driver. Other rental organizations will have other requirements. Make certain that you fulfill all requirements; you don't want to be stuck with only one or two legal drivers.
- When arriving at your site, **ask your site contact for a detailed itinerary** of planned activities. Most sites understand that ASB volunteers are on vacation, and mix plenty of free time with their planned events. A schedule of events and free time will greatly help you in planning.
- Remember that your Participants will pick up on your attitude, and will base their idea of how ASB is "supposed" to be on clues from you. If you make negative comments about the E-Board, people on your site, or others, your Participants will reflect that opinion.
- As mentioned above, you may need to **enforce policies**. Try to be fair, and give Participants every chance to correct potential problems. Stick to your established policies, however. If Participants have agreed not to miss more than two meetings, and one person skips three or four without good reason, chances are that person is not serious about his commitment to the group, and would not be an asset on the trip. Such a person should be removed from ASB.

Timeline for the Site Leaders

September:	Prospective Site Leaders may submit applications and interview for positions. This may also take place in early October.
October:	Site Leaders are selected , if they haven't been already. There will be one or two training meetings with the Site Leader Trainers; one of these meetings is a weekend retreat , which involves some team-building and training exercises. At the end of this retreat, Site Leaders learn which sites they've been assigned to, and with whom they've been paired. At this point, they take over site coordination, and start planning agendas for site meetings.
November:	Stay in frequent contact with site to make housing arrangements and handle other details. Attend training meetings with Site Leader Trainers. Evaluate Participant applications and interview applicants.
December:	Plan ice-breakers and introduction games for Kick-Off meeting . Distribute timelines and site information to participants at this meeting, and collect fees to give to Treasurer.
January:	You will attend at least one training meeting. Participant meetings focus on group building. Iron out any details with site . Convey site information to Participants during meetings, and prepare them for pre-break volunteer work, usually held on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day . All fees should be collected.
February:	Handle any last-minute problems with site or participants. The Incredible Journey won't require much planning on your part, but you will plan a social meeting with your group, and possibly some pre-break volunteer work . Have all site information, including emergency phone numbers, for Participants. Make sure that all preparations are finalized by the Send-Off meeting .

During the Trip:

Facilitate group decisions. **Make initial contact** with site contact person or persons. Ask this person for a detailed itinerary of activities which are planned for you. If possible, **make initial arrangements for ASB to return** the following year. Carefully **record all expenses** and save receipts. Help Participants plan their presentation for the Final Reflection meeting. Have fun.

After the Trip:

Submit receipts, Expense Record sheet, and remaining money to the Treasurer. Work with the Treasurer to complete the **Travel Authorization Forms**. Participate in the **Ripple Effect** volunteer project. Consider applying for the following year's E-Board. Try to remain accessible, since the E-Board may ask for your input if your Co-Site Leader or Participants apply for the following year.

Organizations and Resources

Once the internal structure of the program is determined, Alternative Spring Break will need to connect with outside organizations. The program relies on relationships with host organizations and sites across the nation, in order to plan its spring break trips. Local groups are also integral in bringing the volunteer experience home. Anyone wishing to begin or expand an ASB program, therefore, will need to initiate contact with a number of organizations.

The following pages include a list of issues, locations and contacts for Western's 1998 ASB sites. There is also a small list of volunteer establishments in the Kalamazoo, Michigan area. These organizations can serve as liaisons for the local component of WMU ASB. Programs in other areas can find local groups through some of the Internet sites mentioned on Page 31, or through the Yellow Pages.

Finally, there is a list of books, articles and websites which can provide further information for ASB planners. Some of these sources provided the statistics and information used in this book; others are simply interesting resources.

1998 Western Michigan University ASB Sites

Issue Area	Location	Organization	Contact
Native Americans, Children	Tahlequah, Oklahoma	Cherokee Nation Head Start PO Box 948 Tahlequah, OK 74465	Sheryl MacMahan 918-458-4393
Urban poverty, Homelessness	Cleveland, Ohio	The Catholic Worker 3601 Whitman Ave. Cleveland, OH 44113	Joe Lehner 216-631-3059
AIDS, Hunger	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Manna PO Box 30181 Philadelphia, PA 19103	John Green 215-496-1349
Rural poverty	Corbin, Kentucky	Helping Hand Project 618 Rita Lane Corbin, KY 40701	Verna Wilson 606-528-6967 (Home)
Children, Multiculturalism	Nashville, Tennessee	Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program 10 South 6 th Street Nashville, TN 37206	Kathy Minogue 615-259-3567 (work) 615-377-1932 (home)
Rural poverty	Caroline County, Virginia	Volunteers for Communities PO Box 164 Ivanhoe, VA 24350	Maxine Waller or Shonna Hodge 540-699-1493
Urban poverty, Children	Washington, D.C.	Sara House 1634 5 th St. NW Washington, D.C. 20001	Jonathan Lopez Jennifer Lopez 212-588-7197
Children, Hunger, Homelessness	Portsmouth, New Hampshire	Cross Roads House, Inc. 600 Lafayette Road Portsmouth, NH 03801	Rick Mills 603-436-2218
Urban poverty	New Orleans, Louisiana	Volunteers of America 4152 Canal Blvd. New Orleans, LA 70119	Cathie Peterman 504-482-2130
Multiculturalism, Children, Poverty	Florida City, Florida	Centro Campesino Farmworkers Center 35801 SW 186 th Ave. Florida City, FL 33034	Debra 305-245-7738
Environment	Key West, Florida	Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary PO Box 500368 Marathon, FL 33050	Mary Enstrom 305-743-2347
Multiculturalism, Poverty	Tijuana, Mexico	Sara House 1634 5 th St. NW Washington, D.C. 20001	Jonathon Lopez Jennifer Lopez 212-588-7197

Kalamazoo Area Volunteer Organizations

Issue Area	Organization	Contact
Children	Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kalamazoo 605 Howard Street Kalamazoo, MI 49008-1919	Thomas Owen 616-382-6800
African-American issues, Multiculturalism	Black Arts and Cultural Center 225 Parsons Street Kalamazoo, MI 49007	Patricia Ball 616-549-1035
Poverty, Children	Catholic Family Services 1819 Gull Road Kalamazoo, MI 49001	Dolores Mack 616-381-9800
Health care	First Presbyterian Church Health Clinic 321 W. South Street Kalamazoo, MI 49007	Julie Bullard 616-344-0044
Crisis intervention	Gryphon Place Help-Line 1104 S. Westnedge Kalamazoo, MI 49008	Joanna Pratt 616-381-1510
Poverty, Homelessness	Housing Resources, Inc. 345 North Burdick Street Kalamazoo, MI 49007	Michelle Lewis 616-382-0287
Disabilities	Kalamazoo County Special Olympics 133 W. Cedar Street Kalamazoo, MI 49007	Grace Terbourg 616-383-7874
Environment	Kalamazoo Nature Center 7000 N. Westnedge Kalamazoo, MI 49004	Cindy Everett 616-381-1574
Elderly	Senior Services, Inc. 918 Jasper Kalamazoo, MI 49001	Judy Dircks 616-382-0515
Women's issues, Domestic assault	YWCA of Kalamazoo 353 E. Michigan Kalamazoo, MI 49007	Robin Jones 616-345-5595

Resources and Further Reading

Books

- Brudney, Jeffrey. *Fostering Volunteer Programs in the Public Sector: Planning, Initiating, and Managing Voluntary Activities*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 1990. ISBN 1-55542-242-X
- Cole, Kathleen and Fisher, James. *Leadership and Management of Volunteer Programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 1993. ISBN 1-55542-531-3
- Connors, Tracy Daniel. *The Volunteer Management Handbook*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. 1995. ISBN 0-471-10637-2
- Flanagan, John. *The Successful Volunteer Organization: Getting Started and Getting Results in Nonprofit, Charitable, Grass Roots, and Community Groups*. Chicago: Contemporary Books, Inc. 1981. ISBN 0-8092-5838-2
- Ilsley, Paul. *Enhancing the Volunteer Experience: New Insights on Strengthening Volunteer Participation, Learning, and Commitment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 1990. ISBN 1-55542-289-6
- United States Bureau of the Census. *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1997 (117th Edition)*. Washington, DC. 1997.

Articles

- Chartrand, Sabra. "Volunteering as a Way to Explore Career Changes." *The New York Times*. March 2, 1997.
- Editorial. "Summit Postscript." *America*. May 31, 1997. Page 3
- Lewin, Tamar. "In Search of a Cause: Volunteering Dos and Don'ts." *The New York Times*. December 9, 1997.
- McCarthy, Coleman. "Volunteer." *Baltimore Sun*. April 12, 1998

World Wide Web Pages

- Action Without Borders, Inc. <http://www.idealists.org>
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. <http://www.bbbsa.org>
- Break Away. <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/Breakaway/>
- Habitat for Humanity International. <http://www.habitat.org>
- Northwestern University ASB. <http://www.studorg.nwu.edu/asb/>
- Procter & Gamble Community Center. <http://www.pg.com/docCommunity/index.html>
- Transylvania University ASB. <http://www.transy.edu/homepages/asb/>
- University of Michigan ASB. <http://www.umich.edu/~ocsl/asb/index.html>
- University of Pennsylvania ASB. <http://dolphin.upenn.edu/~altbreak>
- Virtual Volunteering. <http://www.impactonline.org/vv/>

The Voice of Experience: Personal Tips and Wisdom From One Guy Who's Been There

Finally, I'd just like to include a few things I've learned from four years in Alternative Spring Break. These are my personal suggestions, so feel free to take them or leave them.

Enjoy ASB on Its Own Terms

If I had to choose one piece of advice I consider most valuable to anyone involved in ASB, from the freshman Participant to the fifth-year Co-Chair, it would be this: abandon all expectations. Your ASB experience will consist not only of your service work, but also of interactions with the people at your site, of the group dynamic among your fellow volunteers, and of your own emotions during the trip. These are not factors which can easily be predicted, nor are they likely to be the same from trip to trip and person to person. As a veteran of four ASB trips (two of them to the same site), I can honestly say that the experience was never the same twice, and it was never quite what I expected.

In short, enjoy your ASB trip for what it is, not what you expected it to be. You'll get much more out of it that way.

Don't Expect Your Whole Life to Change Instantly

To be sure, you may have a life-changing experience during your trip. I've seen this happen. One friend of mine has returned several times to the site where he volunteered one year. Another friend, who volunteered with the Catholic Worker in Cleveland, Ohio, spent a year with the organization in California and is now planning to start a similar program in her hometown.

But if your own experience doesn't affect you as profoundly as it did others, don't feel as though you've missed something. As I said above, every trip is different for every person. Personally, I never felt an "epiphany," never had a single experience which deeply changed my outlook. For many, the benefit of ASB is simply an opportunity to step outside the bounds of their usual lives, to get a hands-on look at social issues that they might not otherwise see outside of the evening news.

Know When to Address Conflicts, and Do It Right Away

If, as a Site Leader or E-Board Member, you feel a personality conflict with your Co-Site Leader or fellow E-Board Member, it's best to address that issue as soon as possible. Serious conflicts between people who will be working closely together rarely "go away." If your feelings may affect the way you approach your role in ASB, then by all means get the problem out into the open.

On the other hand, if you feel that the problem is minor and will not affect group dynamics (if, for instance, another person chews more loudly than you'd like), then it need not necessarily become an issue. This is particularly true for participants who have trouble with other participants. One of the wonderful things about sending out groups of 12 is that an individual can usually find at least a few people with whom to socialize; there is a large enough number of people that he or she need not be in constant contact with another participant with whom there may be conflict. Often, each person will become close with only one or two others in the group. This is fine; so long as they gain from the experience, then ASB is doing its job.

The important thing is that *real* problems be dealt with. In 1997, I was approached by one of our Site Leaders, who asked if I – as Treasurer – could prevent his Co-Site Leader from going on the trip, because he'd had difficulty working with her. I suggested that he talk directly with his Co-Site Leader if there was a problem, rather than ask me to kick her out of the program. Instead, he apparently took his request to other E-Board members and the SVS Coordinator. Weeks later his Co-Site Leader arrived at the Send-Off meeting, her bags packed, only to hear that she was no longer welcome on the trip. She left

in tears, and her Co-Site Leader told others that she had changed her mind willingly, in order to avoid drawing any criticism on himself.

It was an extremely unfortunate situation, and it could easily have been avoided if the problem had been addressed early enough.

The Single Most Important Thing I've Learned

During an argument some years ago, I came up with a metaphor that I still enjoy using. "Trying to see the truth about anything," I said, "is like standing in front of a statue: the only side you can see is the front, the side facing you. You may see a picture of the back, or a friend might describe the right or left side, but unless you put forth the effort to walk around and see those other sides for yourself, you won't really see or understand them."

Over four years, Alternative Spring Break gave me the opportunity to step out of my comfort zone, to look at life from perspectives that I might not otherwise have seen. I've played with disadvantaged children in Oklahoma, talked to mentally ill people in Louisiana, listened to the homeless in Washington D.C. I'd like to think that my volunteer work helped them in some way, but I know that I couldn't match the gift I received from them: a greater understanding that people are people everywhere, no matter how different they are. Even working with other ASB volunteers has taught me about people, how they work, and what I can do to help make the world a little bit better.

And so my final suggestion, even to people with no interest in ASB: keep your eyes open. Every interaction offers a chance to learn. Don't let those chances pass you by.