

Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame

Archive Project

Inception to Induction

Long Island Volunteer Center, an affiliate of HandsOn Network

Year of Founding: 1992

Issue(s) Addressed: Increase volunteerism and agency capacity to utilize volunteers

Induction Category & Year: Education, 2002

Founder: Joan Imhof

Personal Quote from Founder: “I feel most grateful when people who have benefited from the help of a volunteer walk out of the building with happy faces and thank us. I feel like we have shared a moment celebrating their lives. It is all about celebrating life.”

History: The Long Island Volunteer Center was established in 1992, by Joan Imhof, who was the previous director of volunteer services for Nassau County. After the Nassau and Suffolk County Offices for Volunteers were defunded, she continued receiving phone calls at her home from agencies seeking volunteers. Realizing the vital importance of the maintenance of the volunteer center, Joan applied for and received funding from the Points of Light Foundation, Mott and Kellogg Foundations, and Chase Manhattan Foundation which enabled her to create the Long Island Volunteer Center to serve both Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

After establishing a Board of Directors, LIVC incorporated and received nonprofit 501(c)3 status in 1993, serving as a clearinghouse for matching volunteers with nonprofit agencies. With donated office space in the American Red Cross headquarters in Mineola, Anna Lyons became the first Executive Director, while Joan Imhof served as President. In 1997, after a fortuitous conversation with Joan in the parking lot of Newsday, where both had served as judges for Newsday’s Volunteer of the Year program, Diana O’Neill came on board as the vice president of Special Projects. Patricia Sands joined the LIVC as outreach coordinator and helps produce the lists of volunteer opportunities on Long Island.

In 1999, the American Red Cross notified LIVC that they were no longer able to donate office space for LIVC due to reorganization. After a frustrating and disappointing search, Diana happened to discuss the space problem with Mary Ellen Cirrito after a chance of meeting in a local store. Mary Ellen told her that her husband Mike just happened to

have a space in a lovely house converted to law offices that could be donated for the agency. Due to their generosity, LIVC became the recipient of the donated space where they still reside.

The LIVC had tremendous developments over the years after recruiting the members of many agencies. Now, LIVC maintains a web-based, searchable volunteer matching software application that allows individuals and organizations to access and promote volunteer opportunities whereas earlier methods of linking volunteers to nonprofit organizations seeking volunteers were through advertisements in the newspapers, mailing out letters, or visiting in person. Diana O'Neill moved on to become the Executive Director of LIVC in 2001 and greatly expanded the role of the center. Prior to serving the LIVC, Diana had been volunteering at the Junior League of Long Island where she helped establish the Prom Boutique. The Prom Boutique, which provides prom gowns to girls of families unable to afford the expense, has now become a beloved yearly event that it is run by LIVC.

After establishing a web-based linkage program and recruiting human resources, LIVC was able to operate many other major projects such as Summer of Service, Blood Drive at NUMC, Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame, Long Island Volunteer Enterprise, Stamp Out Hunger (Food Drive), Long Island Volunteer Fair, Make a Difference Day, and Holiday Wish Lists.

In 2001, after Diana O'Neill served on the regional steering committee of the United Nations International Year of Volunteers, inspiration came to develop the Long Island Volunteer Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame recognizes and honors volunteer founders, whose vision and humanitarian spirit provided the impetus to create non-profit agencies on Long Island. In addition, individual volunteers are also honored as "lifetime achievers" for their lifelong work in community service and outstanding youth are recognized by The Next Generation Award.

LIVC has also supported corporate community service by its affiliation with CVLI (Corporate Volunteers of Long Island) and LIVE (Long Island Volunteer Enterprise), which was co-developed by Joan Imhof. Corporations partner with nonprofit community agencies to recruit corporate volunteer teams to work on various community projects on Long Island.

The LIVC regularly has over 3,000 monthly unique visitors to the website and over 250 active nonprofit agencies and 1,900 volunteers are registered users of the on-line posting capabilities. It links to an additional 150 agencies that seek volunteers. The LIVC also publishes a seasonal list of volunteer needs and a directory of volunteer opportunities and community resources is now in reprint for placement in libraries. Annually, over 2000 individuals and groups contact the agency with volunteer inquiries via phone or email.

As of its induction to the Hall of Fame in 2002, LIVC was part of the Points of Light Foundation volunteer center national network. LIVC is considered a legacy volunteer center, as it was organized and affiliated in the early beginnings of the Points of Light

Foundation. When the Points of Light Foundation merged with the Hands On Network in 2006, the LIVC officially signed on as an affiliate.

Long Island Volunteer Center is an all-volunteer agency working to provide, support and promote and advocate for volunteer service on Long Island. The agency will continue to grow through the support of volunteers and it will continue to expand the reach and impact of volunteerism throughout Long Island.

Agency Mission: The Long Island Volunteer Center, an all-volunteer nonprofit agency, is the resource center for volunteerism and community service initiatives throughout Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The LIVC mission is to improve the quality of life across Long Island by promoting community volunteer participation through the linkage of human resources with community needs. It operates year-round and its services are provided free of charge with support from donations and fundraising efforts.

Population Served: Nonprofit organizations (especially those that serve at-risk populations), schools (all levels), businesses, service clubs/organizations, and the general public.

Affiliate Organizations: LIVC is affiliated with the HandsOn Network, Points of Light Institute, APVA (Association of professional Volunteer Administrators), LIVE (Long Island Volunteer Enterprise), LIVHOF (Long Island volunteer Hall of Fame), LIVOAD (Long Island Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), Long Island EITC Coalition.

Funding Sources: Past funding from Points of Lights Foundation, The Kellogg Foundation, The Mott Foundation, and Chase Manhattan Bank Foundation. More recent funding from OSI Pharmaceuticals Foundation, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and IBM.

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Sources: Joan Imhof through interview, Patti Polyn draft narrative from 2009.

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