

# Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Early Care and Education Pilot Project Evaluation



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November 20, 2009

# **Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Early Care and Education**

## **Pilot Project Evaluation**

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This study was commissioned by The Oregon Community Foundation. The recommendations expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Foundation.

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## Engaging Baby Boomers in Early Childhood Pilot Project Follow-Up Evaluation

### Executive Summary

In October, 2008, The Oregon Community Foundation, in partnership with The Atlantic Philanthropies, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, Knowledge Learning Corporation, and Juan Young Trust, funded three pilot projects aimed at integrating boomer-age volunteers into early childhood programs. The organizations that received funding are located in three distinct geographic areas of the state. A brief description of each funded organization follows:

*Adelante Mujeres* – A child development program serving bilingual and monolingual immigrant children and their families in Forest Grove.

*Family Nurturing Center* – Jackson County’s Children’s Relief Nursery collaborated with other agencies serving young children and families to create a county-wide “Circle of Caring” project which included supporting home-based child care programs, services for high-risk parents and children, and programs for young children with special needs.

*Peninsula Children’s Center* – An inner city child care center providing early childhood education and services to one of the most ethnically diverse and economically disadvantaged communities in Portland.

According to the year-end reports prepared by the pilot projects, the initiative yielded a total of 67 new boomer volunteers who contributed over 1100 hours of service directly impacting 414 children. In the Fall of 2009, The Oregon Community Foundation contracted with Oregon State University to evaluate the major successes and challenges experienced by the pilot projects during the first year of funding through focus groups, surveys and interviews. This report supplements the reports that grantees submitted to the foundation at six months and one year after receiving the grant funds.

The pilot projects utilized findings from a 2008 Oregon State University study commissioned by The Oregon Community Foundation, *Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Oregon’s System of Early Care and Education*. According to the study, boomer-age adults wanted volunteer work that was meaningful and matched to their personal circumstances. Success of programs wanting to engage boomer volunteers would depend on several factors including the creation of a volunteer coordinator position, an organized approach to recruitment and integration, and the provision of flexible schedules for the volunteers.

The pilot projects were successful in recruiting and engaging boomer-age volunteers into their early childhood organizations. Organizations increased their capacity to successfully utilize volunteers by building more systematic approaches to recruiting, assigning, tracking, and coordinating volunteers. Personal relationships and networking proved to be the most successful strategy for recruiting this generation of volunteers. Pilot projects also succeeded in improving staff members’ attitudes toward having volunteers in their classroom. Executive directors clearly conveyed that success could be attributed to creating the volunteer coordinator position, as this initiative would not have achieved the same results without this key staff role. All staff involved valued the contributions of the boomer volunteers and perceived that they were making direct, positive impacts, not only for the children, but also for the organization they served. Staff provided the following as support for their feelings of success with the initiative:

- One effect of utilizing volunteers was increasing the adult-to-child ratios for the classrooms. This was especially pertinent for one center that is hoping to achieve accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). For another center, the infusion of highly qualified volunteers meant they could expand the number of classrooms and serve more children.
- From the very basics of having an extra person in the room to assist with clean-ups and mealtime to examples of impact on individual children, teachers believe that the volunteers make a difference. Teachers viewed volunteers as improving their organization's ability to serve children commenting, *"Whether it's story time, art time or meal time, they are a true asset to our program."* The utilization of volunteers has also made enrichment opportunities such as field trips and music education possible.
- Providing one-on-one time with individual children is a major contribution of the volunteers. Many teachers commented on the volunteers filling a "grandparent" role for the children and giving them an additional caring, positive adult with whom they could share conversations. Staff see this increased personal attention as enhancing children's acquisition of skills.
- An unexpected outcome was the increased visibility of the organizations in the broader community. This awareness is attributed not only to the volunteers sharing information with others, but also to the publicity associated with volunteer recruitment. All staff noted that volunteers not only contributed their time and ideas, but were also valuable in securing tangible resources and promoting the centers in the communities. Tangible contributions to the centers included books, classroom supplies, and physical improvements for the center. An executive director said donations of both time and materials improve their *"bottom line at a time when non-profits are really struggling."*
- Staff indicated that in the future they were very likely to utilize boomer-age volunteers as well as volunteers of other ages. Staff said they would like to further integrate volunteers *into the core roles of the organization. An executive director stated, "building and maintaining a strong volunteer program significantly contributes to a successful non-profit."*
- Sustaining the volunteer coordinator position was a high priority of the administrative staff. The position was highly valued by all of the executive directors, but the reality is that without external funding there are not financial resources within the organizations to sustain the position. As several staff members remarked, *"losing the coordinator would seriously impact our ability to recruit and sustain good volunteers."*

Most boomers were already motivated and were seeking volunteer opportunities when recruited by this organization. Many of the volunteers brought years of early childhood experience with them and thought working with the target audience of their organization was meaningful. Overall, the volunteers felt valued by the organizations and had positive relationships with staff members. Flexibility in scheduling made volunteering more feasible for many of the volunteers.

Boomer volunteers were asked about their likelihood of continuing or deepening their involvement with early childhood programs. Volunteers said they were "very likely" to continue in their volunteer role with the organization. Boomer volunteers indicated they were "somewhat" more likely to recruit others to volunteer for this organization and advocate for early childhood

programs and policies on a written survey. However, during the focus groups boomer volunteers seemed less inclined to be advocates on a broad scale. While volunteers were quick to say they would be willing to tell friends and neighbors about the needs of their particular center, they were less enthusiastic about advocating beyond their community. One volunteer said,

*"I would be willing to write a letter and would always support bond measures. But I am not going to Salem to lobby or testify."*

The organizations' administrative staff and boomer volunteers were asked to reflect on the past year in order to share lessons they have learned as a result of the pilot project and offer advice for other programs.

Overall, boomer volunteers said they were having positive experiences in their roles with the organizations they served. Based on their volunteer experiences in the early childhood programs, boomer volunteers were invited to share advice that could be used to not only improve their own experience but could also be used as a guide by other organizations that might be seeking to integrate their peers. Following is a summary of advice from the boomer volunteers:

*Make it meaningful* – Volunteers want to know that their time is not only well spent but that it directly impacts outcomes.

*Have clear expectations and provide directions* – Volunteers are more than willing to take directions from the staff. One suggested that teachers make a list of what they want volunteers to do and share that with the volunteers. Lack of clear expectations, directions and assigned tasks lead volunteers to feel underutilized by the organization.

*Provide training* – Providing more opportunities for training and orientation was also identified as an area in need of improvement. Just as volunteers are willing to take direction they are also willing to be trained. Since the volunteers often are recruited and begin at different times throughout the year this has been a challenge. They are especially interested in trainings that focus on the population of children they serve such as working with children with special needs or communicating with children whose first language is not English.

*More teacher involvement time* – Because most volunteers spend the majority of their time in the classroom, they would like the opportunity to have more one-on-one time with their teachers.

*Give volunteers feedback* – Volunteers need, and want, feedback from teachers and the organization. They want to know they are appreciated and, most importantly, whether they are helping or not helping.

*Communication* – Boomers commented on the busyness of the organizations' staff. In many cases, volunteers felt that the teachers did not even know their name. Volunteers also want a more consistent, effective stream of communication between themselves and the organization. While many had internet and email accounts, they did not access the resources on a daily basis.

Following is a summary of the most frequently mentioned lessons learned by administrative staff:

*Importance of the volunteer coordinator position* – All executive directors indicated their organizations would not have been able to grow their volunteer programs without a

volunteer coordinator. This position is critical for recruitment, training, and support for volunteers. The position also provides a link between volunteers and teachers.

Takes time to initiate a volunteer program – The volunteer coordinator needs time to learn about the organization and understand the needs of the children and staff. Time is also needed to build trusting relationships with the teachers.

Need support – Organizations felt as though they were in uncharted waters and were at times uncertain in how to proceed with the initiative. Organizations indicated the need for more support in undertaking a volunteer initiative.

Staff training – This is a critical step in getting teachers to understand the benefits of having volunteers in their classrooms as well as practical tips for utilizing and engaging volunteers. Staff training should initially occur prior to assigning volunteers to classrooms, but should be on-going. Teachers were more responsive to including volunteers after they had participated in staff training.

Volunteer training – As with staff, volunteers can perform to a higher level when they receive training that leads not only to a better understanding of the children being served but also about the expectations of the organization.

Relationships between the staff and volunteers – All organizations indicated that staff attitudes had improved over the course of the pilot project. Volunteers expressed greater satisfaction with their experience if they felt connected with the teacher and other organization staff.

Provide opportunities for different levels of volunteer commitment – Recognize that some volunteers will want episodic involvement that may not involve working directly with children. Other volunteers will want long term, direct involvement in classrooms. By providing opportunities for different levels of volunteer commitment, a variety of the organization's needs can be met.

Encourage long term commitments from those volunteers seeking to work directly with young children – Longer term commitments allow time for a trusting relationship to be built between individual children and volunteers. This can lead to greater individual child outcomes such as increased language and literacy skills. All pilot projects realized that further improvements were needed if they were to meet their ultimate goal of volunteer integration. Areas for improvement identified by the organizations were similar to those identified by the volunteers and included: increased opportunities for training both volunteers and staff, more frequent and efficient communication, assigning volunteers to meaningful roles, and conveying expectations.

The continued development of early childhood organizations' capacity to support volunteers has been shown to positively impact not only the organization itself but, more importantly, the children it serves. Pilot projects reported that during the initiative their organizations experienced increased visibility and community support. Volunteers contributed not only their time, but also provided tangible materials when needed. In addition, through direct work with the children, boomer volunteers gave children an additional positive adult in their lives. Their inclusion led to more enrichment opportunities for the children and improved adult-to-child ratios were in classrooms. Most significantly, volunteers increased the amount of one-on-one time that children received, making it more likely that the children are acquiring skills needed for success in school.

# Engaging Baby Boomers in Early Childhood Pilot Project Follow-Up Evaluation

November, 2009

## Introduction

In the Spring of 2008, The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) contracted with Oregon State University (OSU) to conduct a study identifying the opportunities and barriers to engaging baby boomer volunteers in early childhood settings. This study, *Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Oregon's System of Early Care and Education* (<http://www.oregoncf.org/resources/news-pubs/reports/current-reports/boomers-babies>), was released in July, 2008. The study offered findings from early childhood professionals, boomer-age volunteers, and volunteer placement agencies from across Oregon. In October, 2008, The Oregon Community Foundation, in partnership with The Atlantic Philanthropies, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, Knowledge Learning Corporation, and Juan Young Trust funded three pilot projects aimed at integrating boomer-age volunteers into early childhood programs. The organizations that received funding are located in three distinct geographic areas of the state. A brief description of each funded organization follows:

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According to the year-end reports prepared by the pilot projects, the initiative yielded a total of 67 new boomer volunteers who contributed over 1100 hours of service directly impacting 414 children. In the Fall of 2009, The Oregon Community Foundation contracted with Oregon State University to evaluate the major successes and challenges experienced by the pilot projects during the first year of funding.

## Methodology

At each site, OSU conducted a focus group with boomer-age volunteers, an in-person interview with the program director, and an in-person interview with the volunteer coordinator.

### **Focus Groups**

Three focus groups were conducted with boomer volunteers who were recruited as part of the Boomers and Babies initiative. Each of the three organizations arranged for their boomer-age volunteers to participate in the focus group. The group was held at the organization site, with a snack or light meal being provided for participants.



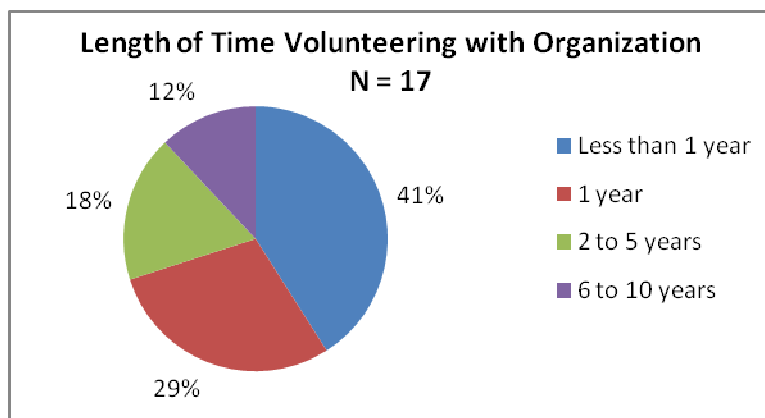
Each focus group began with an introduction to describe the purpose, assure confidentiality, and briefly review informed consent procedures approved by the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. Participants in focus groups were asked to read and sign an informed consent document prior to beginning the interview. Each participant was offered a copy of the IRB form and given information on how to contact the research team at OSU. In addition, organizations arranged for incentives in the form of gift cards or reward points that were available should a participant wish to be compensated for their time.

At the beginning of the focus group, boomers were asked to complete a volunteer survey. (See appendix 1.) The survey asked participants to rate the program's organizational infrastructure for supporting boomer volunteers and the extent to which they felt integrated into the organization or program. Participants were also asked about the likelihood that they would continue to volunteer or advocate for early childhood programs or policies in the future. Lastly, participants completed a retrospective pre-post survey indicating how their perceptions of the barriers to volunteering in an early childhood setting had changed since volunteering for this organization.

After completing the survey, participants were asked to comment on a range of questions regarding their experience as a volunteer. (See appendix 2.) The questions focused on the following topics:

- recruitment process
- motivation for volunteering
- training and communication from organization
- attitude of staff towards volunteers
- integration of volunteers into the organization/program
- barriers or challenges to volunteering
- advice for other programs looking to integrate boomer volunteers

Across the three sites, a total of 17 volunteers participated in the focus group. Five of the focus group participants were from Adelante Mujeres, eight from Family Nurturing Center, and four from Peninsula Children's Center. Ninety-seven percent of volunteers (16) were female. The length of time participants had volunteered with their organization ranged from a month to 10 years, with an average of two years. The majority of volunteers (70%) had started volunteering for this organization since the Boomers and Babies grant started in October 2008. The remainder of participants (30%) had volunteered with the organization prior to the beginning of the initiative.



The majority of focus group participants (88%) volunteered primarily in the early childhood classroom. Examples of classroom tasks included interacting with children one-on-one, assisting teacher with activities as needed, cleaning up after snack or an activity, or facilitating an activity with the children, such as music or craft project. Out of the 15 that volunteered in the classroom, two also volunteered their time for administrative or material preparation roles. Only one focus group participant fulfilled an episodic, as-needed type of role as the bus driver for field trips and other special events. An additional participant volunteered regularly in administrative and preparation roles such being a board member and creating promotional materials, such as newsletters and brochures.

In addition to their volunteer role with this organization, 82% also volunteered for other organizations serving young children. Organizations mentioned included the SMART (Start Making A Reader Today) program, CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocate), and local school districts.

### ***Administrative Staff Interviews***

In-person interviews were conducted with the executive director and volunteer coordinator at each site, for a total of six interviews. Prior to the interview each director and coordinator was emailed a short staff survey to complete. (See appendix 3.) This survey was completed prior to the interview at two of the sites, and directly after the interviews at one site due to the timing of email. Eight surveys were completed by six administrative staff. The volunteer coordinator for Family Nurturing Center completed assessments for their three sub-sites.

The survey asked the staff to rate the program's organizational infrastructure for supporting boomer volunteers and the extent to which volunteers were integrated into their organization or program at two time points – before the Boomers and Babies initiative started and now, one year later. The survey also asked directors and coordinators to rate the extent to which they experienced particular barriers to integrating boomers into their program. Lastly, the staff were asked about the likelihood that they would continue to utilize boomer volunteers and sustain the volunteer coordinator position after the initiative ends.

Interview questions were developed depending on the role of the interviewee (i.e. executive director or volunteer coordinator). (See appendices 4 and 5.) Both sets of interview questions addressed the following topics:

- steps to implementing the initiative
- recruitment strategies
- focus on boomer-age volunteers
- attitudes of staff towards volunteers
- barriers and challenges to project implementation
- lessons learned
- evaluation of project success
- impact on organization of using boomer volunteers
- plans to sustain the project

### ***Teacher Survey***

After reviewing focus group and interview comments, the OSU team concluded it was important to capture the early childhood teachers' perceptions of integrating boomer volunteers into their classrooms. An online survey was created using SurveyMonkey<sup>®</sup>. The executive director of

each organization was sent a link for the survey to forward to their teachers. A total of seven teachers responded to the survey.

The survey asked teachers to rate the overall organization's infrastructure for supporting boomer volunteers and the degree to which volunteers were integrated into their particular classroom. The survey also asked teachers to rate the extent to which they experienced particular barriers to integrating boomers into their classroom. Teachers were also asked open-ended questions about how their perception of volunteers had changed since the project began and how utilization of volunteers improved their organization's ability to serve children.

### **Limitations of Study**

Limitations of this study include the following:

- This study was limited to the three pilot projects funded for this initiative. Each of the pilot projects served targeted special populations within their communities. Therefore, this study does not explore the utilization of boomer volunteers in more universal early childhood settings.
- Boomer volunteer focus group participants were not randomly selected by the researchers. At the request of the researchers, administrative staff at the three pilot projects selected the boomer volunteers to participate in the evaluation.
- Teachers completing the on-line survey were not randomly selected by the researchers. The researchers do not know the number of teachers utilizing boomer volunteers at each of the pilot sites. At the request of the researchers, administrative staff at the three pilot projects selected the boomer volunteers to participate in the evaluation.
- There were a small number of teachers involved in the study. The original study design did not include surveying the teachers at the pilot project sites. After collecting data from the administrative staff and the boomer volunteers, the researchers decided that the evaluation would not be complete without data from the teachers regarding their perspectives and experiences with boomer volunteers. Because this was done late in the study, there were significant time constraints in having the teachers complete the on-line survey.
- Researchers do not know the connections between the boomer volunteer focus group participants and teacher survey participants. The boomer volunteers participating in the evaluation may not have been volunteers in the classrooms of the teachers responding to the on-line survey.

## **Findings**

### ***Organizational Infrastructure for Project Implementation***

In the 2008 study conducted by OSU, both early childhood professionals and boomers indicated that successful integration of boomer-age volunteers would hinge on the capacity of the early childhood agency to identify, train, place, and supervise volunteers. Therefore, this follow-up evaluation explored three overarching objectives for the pilot projects: building capacity, engaging boomer volunteers, and coordinating boomer volunteers.

During the interviews and focus groups, early childhood staff and boomer volunteers were polled on similar items related to the overall capacity of their organization to support boomer volunteers. Overall, administrative staff, teachers, and boomer volunteers agreed that their organization currently had the organizational infrastructure to support volunteers. In addition, administrative staff reported significant changes over the course of the year. Administrative staff described their organization prior to the pilot project as either not addressing or barely addressing most elements. However, after the first year of implementation, organizations were executing most elements to a “good” or “great” extent. Findings imply that organizational capacity to integrate volunteers into the early childhood programs increased to a high level during the course of the year in all three infrastructure areas.

### **Building Capacity**

Organizations showed marked improvements in building their capacity to support boomer volunteers in early childhood programs. Two aspects of building capacity include hiring a volunteer coordinator to recruit and manage boomer volunteers and implementing successful recruitment strategies. Administrative staff and boomer volunteers rated the following items on a 5-point scale with higher scores indicating greater capacity.

**Table 1: Building Capacity Elements**

	Administrative Staff		Teachers		Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Building Capacity</b>						
Organization has paid position/staff time for coordinating volunteers	<b>3.38</b>	1.69	----	----	<b>3.60</b>	1.72
Organization utilizes effective recruitment strategies	<b>4.50</b>	0.53	----	----	<b>4.07</b>	0.83
Organization works with other community partners to identify and recruit volunteers	<b>4.88</b>	0.35	----	----	<b>4.27</b>	0.70

### **Volunteer Coordinator Position**

A recommendation from the 2008 OSU study called for the funding of at least a part-time staff position dedicated to recruiting, training and coordinating volunteers. Prior to the Boomers and Babies initiative, none of the three organizations had a volunteer coordinator position. Coordination of volunteers usually fell on the executive director or other administrative staff, which meant a fragmented and disorganized integration of volunteers into the program. Two of the three pilot projects (Adelante Mujeres and Peninsula Children's Center) hired a paid volunteer coordinator as a result of this initiative. The Family Nurturing Center utilized a volunteer as their coordinator.

Program staff reported that one of the best things about the initiative was the ability for the organization to add a position devoted to working with volunteers allowing program staff to focus on their other administrative duties. Although the boomer volunteers had direct contact with the volunteer coordinator, they seemed unsure if this was a paid position or not. This lack of information led boomers to rate the survey item related to the coordinator’s pay status the lowest of the organizational capacity components with a mean of 3.60. Overall, this position,

whether paid or volunteer, was critical in all aspects of successfully supporting boomer volunteers in early childhood settings.

### **Recruitment**

Executive directors and volunteer coordinators were asked to describe both the strategies used and their effectiveness in recruiting boomer-age volunteers. According to survey responses organizations indicated that they made significant improvements in the use of *effective recruitment strategies* during their pilot project. Organizations tried a variety of recruitment approaches including personal networking; placing information in newspapers, church bulletins, and other community print and online resources; presenting to church and civic groups; hosting a community volunteer fair; partnering with community volunteer placement programs; and hosting monthly recruitment lunches.

Making use of the local media paid off for the organizations. Organizations garnered volunteers not only from want-ads placed in a variety of print and online sources, but also from articles written about their organization and their quest for recruiting volunteers. Administrative staff also indicated success in working *with community partners to identify and recruit volunteers*, with an average difference of 3.13 (average BEFORE = 1.75, NOW = 4.88). In their recruitment efforts, organizations worked with a variety of community partners including churches, community agencies, civic groups, and volunteer placement agencies. As indicated in OSU's 2008 study, there was little communication and collaboration between early childhood settings and volunteer placement agencies. This lack of involvement was somewhat improved upon by the pilot projects. However, for all three of the organizations, personal networking seemed to be a key strategy for recruiting boomer volunteers. Staff utilized their personal relationships and spheres of influence to enlist several volunteers. In turn, these volunteers recruited their friends to volunteer for the organization.

During focus groups, boomer volunteers were asked to suggest strategies they thought would be successful in recruiting their peers. The current volunteers echoed those strategies that were described as successful by staff. Spreading the word through personal relationships and networks was the most common answer. This is not surprising since most of these volunteers had initially become involved with the organizations through personal relationships. In addition, a significant number of focus group participants mentioned working with local churches for recruitment. Other suggestions included contacting existing groups with a high percentage of boomer-age members, such as the local retired teachers' association, knitting or woodworking clubs.

### **Motivation of Boomers to Volunteer**

Most boomers at the focus groups were ready to volunteer. Many said they were seeking a venue for volunteering when they learned about this opportunity. Many of the boomers participating in the volunteer focus groups were retired educators. They talked about missing the direct involvement with children. Some of the volunteers were "empty nesters" who had dedicated years to helping in their children's schools. A couple of the volunteers were laid off and looked for a meaningful way to fill their days.

All of the volunteers saw serving the needs of the organization's target audience as highly motivating. Comments from participants included:

*"I had always worked with inner city, low-income families. When I stopped teaching, I knew I wanted to use my expertise and stay with the same population."*

*"[These kids] don't get as much as other populations get."*

*"How essential it is to help struggling parents, if you don't do that, then the kids aren't going to make it."*

Volunteers also talked about the importance of helping young children get a jump start for entering school:

*"It's important that children start reading early. If they are successful when they begin school, it will carry through the years."*

*"I am a firm believer in early literacy, appreciating books and what a world it can open. Knowing that having English as a second language can hold them back once they get to school."*

### **Engaging Boomers**

While a strong organizational infrastructure serves as the foundation for implementing a boomer-age volunteer initiative, successful organizations must also find a formula for engaging and retaining volunteers. Engagement of volunteers includes tasks such as screening, assigning, and tracking volunteers; training volunteers and staff; and integrating volunteers into the organization and program. As shown in Table 2, administrative staff, teachers, and boomers felt the organization was successful at engaging boomer volunteers into early childhood programs (aggregate mean = 4.52, 4.54, 4.33 respectively).

In addition, administrative staff were asked to report on the degree to which these elements of volunteer engagement described their program prior to the pilot project (BEFORE) on a 5-point scale with higher scores indicating greater implementation of the element. When compared to how the staff rated their program one year later (NOW), significant differences were found using dependent t-tests,  $p < .05$ . Prior to the pilot project, staff indicated their organization only "barely" or "somewhat" met each of the elements. Yet, after the first year of implementation, staff indicated that they were accomplishing these elements to a "good" or "great" extent. See Appendix 6 for a comparison of NOW and BEFORE ratings.

Table 2: Engaging Boomer Volunteers Elements

	Administrative Staff		Teachers		Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>						
<b>Screening, Assigning, and Tracking Volunteers</b>						
Organization has procedures in place for screening and assigning volunteers	<b>4.75</b>	0.46	<b>4.50</b>	0.50	<b>4.53</b>	0.52
Organization has a system in place for tracking volunteer information and hours	<b>4.88</b>	0.35	----	----	<b>4.71</b>	0.47
Volunteer's roles matched with their areas of interest and expertise	<b>4.75</b>	0.46	<b>4.57</b>	0.45	<b>4.29</b>	0.69
Volunteers have clearly defined roles & responsibilities	<b>4.50</b>	0.53	<b>4.29</b>	0.69	<b>4.00</b>	0.87
Volunteers have flexibility in scheduling to meet their individual needs	<b>4.63</b>	0.52	<b>4.57</b>	0.71	<b>4.88</b>	0.33
<b>Training Volunteers and Staff</b>						
Organization trains staff to integrate volunteers into program	<b>3.38</b>	0.74	<b>4.29</b>	0.44	----	----
Volunteers trained to meet needs of the program/classroom	<b>4.00</b>	0.53	<b>4.29</b>	0.87	<b>3.19</b>	1.52
<b>Integration of Volunteers into Program</b>						
Organization/Staff view volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program	<b>4.88</b>	0.35	<b>4.86</b>	0.35	----	----
Organization integrates volunteers into critical roles within the organization*	<b>4.13</b>	0.64	----	----	<b>3.93</b>	0.96
Volunteers assigned meaningful tasks and roles within the organization/classroom*	<b>4.63</b>	0.52	<b>4.43</b>	0.88	<b>4.24</b>	0.75
Staff integrates volunteers into program	----	----	----	----	<b>4.38</b>	0.72
Volunteers feel treated as team member by staff	----	----	----	----	<b>3.75</b>	0.93
Staff values volunteer's involvement and contribution to the program	<b>4.88</b>	0.35	<b>4.71</b>	0.69	<b>4.88</b>	0.33
Volunteers feel valued in their volunteer role	----	----	----	----	<b>4.71</b>	0.59
Volunteer's have positive interactions with staff	----	----	----	----	<b>4.53</b>	0.62
Volunteers treated as a professional by program staff	----	----	----	----	<b>4.00</b>	0.97
Staff has positive attitude toward volunteers	<b>4.88</b>	0.35	<b>4.86</b>	0.35	<b>5.00</b>	0.00

\* Response categories ranged from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *A Great Extent*. Wording of items varied depending on the role of the survey respondent. For administrative staff, the NOW portion of the retrospective is reported. Administrative Staff, N = 8; Teachers, N = 7; Boomer Volunteers, N = 17.

### Screening, Assigning, and Tracking Volunteers

In most organizations, policies and procedures for incorporating volunteers into their program was lacking prior to this initiative. Organizations' capacity to support volunteers was strengthened by their adoption of a more systematic approach to initially engaging volunteers. This included putting procedures in place for screening *and assigning volunteers* as well as for *tracking volunteer information and hours*. Administrative staff reported significant changes in the implementation of efficient procedures to evaluate potential volunteers (average change from BEFORE to NOW = 2.38). In addition, the vast majority (86%) of teachers said their organizations screened and assigned volunteers to a "good" or "great" extent. Boomer volunteers also felt that the organizations had a system in place for tracking, screening, and assigning volunteers based on their personal experiences.

### Volunteers Matched to Roles

Boomer volunteers said that organizations did a "good" job of matching them with their placement of choice. During interviews, volunteer coordinators described their procedures for matching boomers' interest to their volunteer assignments. Although methods varied, most volunteers were given a tour of the center, observed a classroom, were interviewed, given appropriate paperwork, and queried about their placement preferences for volunteer work.

Contrary to information gathered from boomer-age adults in the 2008 OSU study, most of the volunteers engaged with the pilot projects wanted to serve in the classrooms. At two of the centers, over 90% of the volunteers did on-going work directly with children. For the third center, only 20% of volunteers worked directly with children. Most of the volunteers at this organization had episodic roles such as building maintenance, sewing, or woodworking projects. In all cases, organizations were committed to matching volunteers to their preference and indicated on the survey that they had made considerable strides in this area. For the most part, if a placement did not work out, the volunteer self-selected out of the position. If this did not occur, the volunteer coordinator would work with the individual to find a more suitable classroom or role.

### Defined Role & Responsibilities

Administrative staff indicated that improvement was made in *defining clear volunteer roles and responsibilities*, with an average difference of 1.63 (mean BEFORE = 2.88, mean NOW = 4.50). Teachers were divided on the extent to which volunteers had clearly defined roles and responsibilities with 43% reporting this happened to a "great" extent; 43% to a "good" extent and 14% saying only "somewhat". Although boomer volunteers indicated their roles and responsibilities are defined to a "good" extent on the survey, during the focus group many expressed the desire for more defined assignments when volunteering.

### Flexibility in Scheduling

In previous research, flexibility in scheduling has been shown to be a significant factor in a boomer's willingness to volunteer. Administrative staff said that they have done a better job of *providing flexibility in scheduling to meet the individual needs of the volunteers* NOW compared to BEFORE the initiative began (average difference = 1.63). Seventy-one percent of the teachers felt that they provided volunteers flexibility in scheduling to a "great" extent on the survey scale. A few teachers said this happened to a "somewhat" or "great" extent. Boomer volunteers clearly realized that the organizations and teachers took into account their scheduling needs. *My volunteer hours are scheduled based on my availability* had one of the highest average means (4.88) on the boomer survey.



## **Training Volunteers and Staff**

In the 2008 OSU study, boomers said they would want relevant training from the organization for which they volunteered. Even though administrative staff reported the most amount of gain in the volunteer training element (BEFORE = 2.00; NOW = 4.00), overall this item ranked second lowest rating in the NOW assessment by them. Teachers varied in their response on the extent to which volunteers were trained. Fifty-seven percent of the teachers thought training of volunteers happened to a “great” extent and 14% to a “good” extent. About 29% indicated that training “somewhat” occurred.

Boomer volunteers indicated they had been only “somewhat” been trained. This item had the lowest mean (3.19) of all the items in this section of the boomer volunteer survey. During the focus groups, volunteers indicated that training opportunities had been sparse and inconsistent. Boomers volunteering within the same organization had varying training experiences. Some had not received any training and were not aware of either training opportunities or support materials such as a Volunteer Handbook. Others had one-on-one orientations with the volunteer coordinator or participated in group trainings.

Even though they had not received a great deal of training from the organizations, boomers reported feeling *confident working with children and families from diverse backgrounds and more knowledgeable about child development*. This could be explained by the fact mentioned earlier that many of the boomer volunteers had backgrounds in either elementary or early childhood education.

This discrepancy in the degree to which volunteers receive training suggests that current training systems are inadequate. Staff interviews revealed that scheduling group trainings for volunteers was extremely challenging. Some contributing factors to this challenge included volunteers coming on board at different times and limited time availability of volunteers.

In the previous study, early childhood directors said that training organizational staff would be important in persuading teachers to utilize volunteers. Administrative staff rated *organization trains staff to integrate volunteers into program* as the second lowest item BEFORE with a mean of 1.63. Their NOW mean of 3.38 was also one of the lowest averages. Contrary to the views of the administrative staff, the vast majority of teachers (71%) said their organization trained them on this topic to a “good” extent and 29% indicated it was done to a “great” extent.

## **Integration of Volunteers into Program**

Boomer volunteers interviewed in the 2008 OSU study said that it was important for them to feel they were a “member of the team,” an integral part of the organization. This includes being placed in critical roles that are meaningful to both the organization and them personally, feeling that the contribution they are making is valued and appreciated by program staff, and that staff have a positive attitude about their volunteering.

### *Critical Roles*

Boomers’ feeling of membership come from being assigned meaningful roles that are critical to the organization’s functioning and success. Teachers, executive directors, and volunteer coordinators indicated that both the *staff and organization views volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program*. Administrative staff reported this view changing over the course of project, with an average difference of 2.50 (BEFORE = 2.38, NOW = 4.88).

Volunteers also indicated they felt they were *making a difference in the lives of the children and families* with whom they worked to a “good” extent. Several of the boomer volunteers commented during the focus groups that they recognized it would take time to see the long term impact of their involvement with individual children.

The vast majority of teachers (71%) said that volunteers were assigned meaningful roles and tasks within their classroom. The remaining 29% thought this occurred “sometimes” within their classroom. Interestingly, opinions of the administrative staff differed from those of the teachers. Administrative staff reported volunteer integration as one of the areas with the least gains. They indicated that more staff training is necessary to further integrate volunteers.

Although boomer volunteers said that staff integrated them into the *program* (mean = 4.38) and they were *assigned meaningful roles* (mean = 4.24), they ranked being integrated into *critical roles* within the organization with only a mean of 3.93. Boomers felt the *staff treated them as a team member* only to a “somewhat good” extent with a mean of 3.75 on this item. Discussion during the boomer volunteer focus groups revealed that many of the volunteers were not included in classroom planning and performed necessary, basic tasks, such as sweeping floors and wiping tables in spite of having the skills to do more meaningful work directly with the children. Volunteers also talked about the lack of direction they received when entering the classrooms. Many did not have assigned tasks, so they would “jump in” to help with cleaning up, doing dishes, etc. Many said they had to find their own “niche” like reading stories or engaging children in play activities. One volunteer explained that this lack of assigned tasks made her feel underutilized, “*This has been a difficult shift for me, the feel in their classroom...I don’t feel nearly as utilized as previously.*” Another echoed this sentiment saying she sometimes “*feels like a spare wheel.*”

### Feeling Valued

In spite of feeling somewhat underutilized, boomers felt greatly *valued in their role* by the organization they serve. Boomers ranked *staff value volunteers’ involvement* very highly with an average mean of 4.88. This was an item that also made improvement on the Administrative Staff Survey with an average difference of 2.38 when comparing BEFORE to NOW. Teachers agreed that *staff values volunteer contributions to the program* to a “great” extent. As two teachers commented,

*“Volunteers are very important to our preschool program. They develop relationships with both children and staff.”*

*“I’ve grown to appreciate and look forward to their presence.”*

### Interactions with Staff

Positive relationships between volunteers and staff contributed to the success of the initiative. On the volunteer survey, boomers indicated they had *positive interactions with staff members* (mean = 5.00). They also felt that the program *staff treated them as a professional* to a good extent (mean = 4.00). Executive directors and volunteer coordinators indicated that staff had a significantly more positive attitude toward volunteers after a year of the initiative. Approximately 86% of the responding teachers agreed with this statement.

Volunteers, administrative staff, and teachers themselves said that teachers’ perceptions of volunteers had changed during the course of the pilot project. Administrative staff at all centers noted hesitation among teachers at the beginning of the project. For one organization that had gone through budget cuts, teachers were afraid that the volunteers were going to replace paid

staff members. For another, it was the idea that “outsiders” would be a burden and would interfere with the teachers’ relationships with their students. However their attitudes became much more positive as they received training and support from the administrative staff and their students began reaping the benefits of additional adults in the classroom. One teacher noted,

*“I wasn’t interested in having volunteers before, [however] they’re a positive addition to the classroom.”*

Another teacher put it this way,

*“We’ve had some volunteers who have really helped our program so I perceive volunteers as more of a help than I did before.”*

Volunteers also noted the teachers’ change of attitude. As two volunteers stated,

*“[She is] warming up. I felt a little ignored the first two times [I came]. [Volunteers may seem] threatening with some of the younger teachers.”*

*“[I] was walking on egg shells, didn’t want to be somewhere I wasn’t wanted, [but now I’ve] developed a rapport.”*

### **Coordinating Boomer Volunteers**

Prior to the pilot project, organizations lacked the capacity to effectively coordinate volunteers. Key tasks related to coordination include providing supervision of volunteers, facilitating communication between the organization and volunteers, providing feedback on volunteer performance, and recognizing volunteers’ contribution to the program. These tasks all contribute to the successful retention of volunteers. Overall, administrative staff, teachers, and boomer volunteers positively rated the volunteer coordination within their organization on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 “Not at All” to 5 “A Great Extent”.

**Table 3: Boomer Volunteer Coordination Elements**

	Administrative Staff		Teachers		Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Coordinating Boomer Volunteers</b>						
Organization provides adequate supervision for volunteers	<b>4.50</b>	0.76	<b>4.43</b>	.47	<b>4.12</b>	0.93
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies for keeping volunteers informed	<b>4.38</b>	0.52	<b>4.00</b>	1.00	<b>4.35</b>	0.86
Volunteers receive regular communication from program staff	----	----	----	----	<b>3.69</b>	1.20
Volunteers provided feedback about their performance as a volunteer	<b>3.63</b>	0.52	4.14	0.89	<b>3.82</b>	1.07
Volunteers recognized for their contributions to the program	<b>4.88</b>	0.35	<b>4.57</b>	.71	<b>4.27</b>	0.80
Organization retains volunteers	<b>4.50</b>	0.53	----	----	----	----

\* Response categories ranged from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *A Great Extent*. Wording of items varied depending on the role of the survey respondent. For administrative staff, the NOW portion of the retrospective is reported. Administrative Staff, N = 8; Teachers, N = 7; Boomer Volunteers, N = 17.

### Supervision

Providing *adequate supervision for volunteers* was among the items showing the least gains according to the administrative staff. However this was one of the highest rated items BEFORE the project began (mean = 2.57), leaving less room for increased movement. All teachers (100%) thought their *organizations provided adequate supervision for volunteers* to a “good” or “great” extent. Boomer volunteers felt that adequate supervision was provided, but not to a “great” extent (mean = 4.12).

### Communication Strategies

Administrative staff indicated significant gains in utilizing *consistent communication strategies* for keeping volunteers informed with an average difference of 2.57 (mean BEFORE = 1.71, NOW = 4.38). Teachers’ responses varied on this item with 28.6% saying the organization only did this “barely” or “somewhat.” Another 28.6% rated their organization as doing this to a “good” extent. The remaining 42.8% indicated their organization did this to a “great” extent.

Interestingly, volunteers reported that the organization had consistent communication strategies to keep volunteers informed (mean = 4.35), yet reported that they only “somewhat” receive regular communication from program staff (mean = 3.69). *Regular communication from program staff* was identified as area for improvement by the boomer volunteers. Similar to their experiences with training, boomers had varying degrees of communication from the program staff. Some reported receiving emails with pertinent information. Others felt “*out of the loop.*”

Volunteer coordinators also saw this as an area for improvement. A volunteer coordinator explained,

*“Communication for me has been a little bit of a challenge. I’m of that computer age and do email, social networking, and text messaging.”*

She went on to say that calling volunteers and making personal contact when they are at the center takes more time, but she sees the value in these methods and thinks it has helped her to build closer relationships with the volunteers.

### Feedback

Administrative staff and boomer volunteers identified providing *performance feedback to volunteers* as an area that could use improvement. For administrative staff this element was the lowest rated component both prior to the initiative and one year later as well as showed the least change (mean BEFORE = 2.13, NOW = 3.68; change = 1.50). Administrative staff implied that performance feedback was not yet an integrated part of engaging boomer volunteers. One administrative staff member commented,

*“Performance feedback to volunteers happens in informal ways, [for example] teachers seize the moment to point out an issue or make a suggestion.”*

Fifty-seven percent of the teachers thought that volunteers received performance feedback to a “great” extent while 43% said this occurred only “somewhat.” Boomer volunteers indicated that performance feedback was lacking, giving this item a mean of 3.82. In the focus groups, most boomers reported that they would welcome any feedback that would enable them to perform better in their volunteer role.

### Recognizing Volunteers

Of the elements related to coordinating boomer-age volunteers, *recognizing volunteers for their contributions to the program* was rated highest by administrative staff. In agreement with administrative staff, teachers indicated that volunteers were recognized for their contributions to the program. Boomer volunteers also said they were recognized to a “good” extent. Volunteer coordinators described recognizing volunteers in a variety of ways including giving them gift certificates, hosting appreciation luncheons, and saying “thank you” through both written and verbal communication on a regular basis.

### Retaining Volunteers

Overall, administrative staff report an improved retention rate of volunteers over the course of the Boomers and Babies initiative. *Retaining volunteers* had an average difference of 1.71 when comparing BEFORE (mean = 2.71) to NOW (mean = 4.50). This shows that retention rates have improved over the first year of implementation. Higher retention rates can likely be attributed to the organizations’ increased capacity to support volunteers.

### **Barriers and Challenges**

In the 2008 OSU study, several potential barriers were identified by both early childhood professionals and potential boomer volunteers. These potential barriers were included as items in the evaluation. Staff and boomers had varying views of the extent to which barriers affected the pilot project.

### **Barriers to Project Implementation as Indicated by Administrative Staff**

Pilot project staff were asked to what extent seventeen items were barriers to successfully integrating boomers into their program on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 “Not a Barrier” to 5 “Significant Barrier”. Administrative staff reported no “significant” barriers to integrating boomers into their organizations.

	Administrative Staff		Teachers		Boomer Volunteers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Barrier and Challenges identified by Staff</b>						
Liability issues associated with utilizing volunteers	<b>1.50</b>	0.84	----	----	<b>2.82</b>	1.38
Secure funding for costs associated with utilizing volunteers	<b>2.50</b>	1.05	----	----	----	----
Physical limitations of volunteers	<b>2.33</b>	0.82	<b>1.29</b>	0.69	<b>1.88</b>	1.22
Recruitment strategies	<b>2.17</b>	1.17	----	----	----	----
Transition of key staff (within your own or a partner organization)	<b>2.67</b>	1.51	----	----	----	----
Timing of volunteer recruitment (i.e. program is seasonal)	<b>2.33</b>	1.03	----	----	----	----
Age limited to boomer volunteers for this funding	<b>2.50</b>	1.05	----	----	----	----
Scheduling group meetings with volunteers	<b>2.50</b>	1.05	----	----	----	----
Generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children	<b>1.83</b>	0.75	<b>2.43</b>	1.28	<b>1.18</b>	0.53
Confidentiality issues	<b>1.67</b>	0.82	<b>2.00</b>	1.22	<b>1.06</b>	0.25
Staff is not supportive of integrating volunteers into the program	<b>1.50</b>	0.55	<b>1.29</b>	0.69	----	----
Language barrier for recruitment of non English speaking volunteers	<b>2.33</b>	1.51	<b>1.71</b>	0.84	----	----
Maintaining communication with volunteers	<b>1.83</b>	0.75	<b>3.14</b>	0.70	----	----
Securing volunteers for specific needs within your organization (i.e. clerical, fundraising, classroom, etc.)	<b>3.00</b>	0.89	<b>2.14</b>	0.77	----	----
Not enough time for volunteer coordinator to fulfill all of the needed duties	<b>2.67</b>	1.03	----	----	----	----
Supporting professionalism among volunteers	<b>1.33</b>	0.52	<b>1.43</b>	0.71	----	----

\* Response categories ranged from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *A Great Extent*. Wording of items varied depending on the role of the survey respondent. For administrative staff, the NOW portion of the retrospective is reported. Administrative Staff, N = 8; Teachers, N = 7; Boomer Volunteers, N = 17.

### **Filling Specific Needs Within the Organization**

Only one item, *securing volunteers for specific needs within your organization (i.e. clerical, fundraising, classroom, etc)* was rated by administrative staff as “somewhat” of a barrier (mean = 3.00). Approximately 43% of the teachers saw securing volunteers for specific needs within their classroom as “somewhat” of a barrier. The remaining teachers indicated it was either not or only “barely” a barrier. During interviews, executive directors and volunteer coordinators at two of the sites expressed their surprise that most of the boomer volunteers recruited were mostly interested in working directly with the children as opposed to volunteering in a clerical, grant writing or other role. For example, *Adelante Mujeres* created a “Raising a Reader” project for volunteers who might not be interested in classroom work; however, the project had not been completed because the majority of volunteers preferred to be with the students.

### **Transition of Key Staff**

*Transition of key staff* had the next highest average mean of 2.67. Transitions in personnel can lead to setbacks with program implementation. This included transition of staff within the organization as well as transition of staff with partner organizations. In March, 2009, *Adelante Mujeres* experienced a transition in staffing with the volunteer coordinator position. Likewise, the Family Nurturing Center dealt with staffing changes within their own organization as well as with one of their partner agencies. Both programs indicated that while these changes delayed their overall progress but were positive in the long run.

### **Not Enough Time for Volunteer Coordinator to Fulfill all of the Needed Duties**

All executive directors conveyed the importance of the volunteer coordinator position in successfully implementing the project. All executive directors described how their past efforts in recruiting and utilizing volunteers had fallen short due to a lack of staff time dedicated to the endeavor. As one executive director commented,

*“A clear and significant lesson from [this] project is the importance of recruitment and coordination and the amount of time it takes to do it right.”*

Volunteer coordinators also expressed that one of their biggest challenges was the amount of time it took to build relationships with the teaching staff, recruit and support volunteers, and provide training for both center staff and volunteers. They indicated this was time well-spent in building a foundation for a volunteer initiative. All sites believed they would see significant progress with the initiative in the next six months.

### **Limited Target Audience for Recruitment**

Administrative staff notes that limiting the age to boomer volunteers was a challenge for recruitment. *Age limited to boomer volunteers for this funding* had an average mean of 2.50 on the 5-point scale. During the interviews, staff were asked if it was difficult to focus only on the “boomer-age” parameters when recruiting. While all projects targeted boomer age adults in their recruitment efforts, most netted volunteers both younger and older than this age group. Staff clearly recognized the wealth of experience that boomers brought to the organization. However, they all commented that they have not and would not exclude someone who was of a different age. As one staff member commented,

*“[We] feel strongly about this community...the richness of people of all ages. [We want] to have a broader spectrum that bring different perspectives...not to the exclusion of other people.”*

### **Secure Funding for Costs Associated with Utilizing Volunteers**

*Secure funding for costs associated with utilizing volunteers* had an average mean of 2.50 on the 5-point scale. While this was not a significant barrier because of the grant money associated with the pilot project, it is noteworthy when considering sustainability. One staff member commented, *“The major barrier to implementation (and continuation) is a lack of resources.”*

### **Scheduling Group Meetings with Volunteers**

*Scheduling group meetings with volunteers* had an average mean of 2.50 on the 5-point scale. As indicated earlier the scheduling issue impacted the organization’s ability to train volunteers and provide ongoing support.

### **Communication**

*Maintaining communication with volunteers* had an average mean of 1.83 as rated by administrative staff indicating this item was not a major barrier. However, 71% of the teachers viewed their *lack of time to communicate with volunteers about their role, tasks, etc.* as a “somewhat” to “significant” barrier.

### **Generational Differences**

Administrative staff said that *generational differences in approaches to working with young children* were not a barrier to using boomer volunteers. Teachers’ responses were more varied on the topics of generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children and confidentiality issues. Twenty-nine percent of the teachers thought that generational differences were not a barrier. Fifty-seven percent said it was “barely” or “somewhat” a barrier. An executive director noted,

*“There have been some frustrations, primarily in the area of volunteers having strong beliefs in how to do something, even though staff make suggestions, [volunteers] haven’t always followed.”*

### **Confidentiality**

In general, confidentiality issues were not viewed as a barrier by administrative staff. Although one executive director said it can be a concern,

*“We have some volunteers that are curious and want to know more about the children, problems they may have. We walk a fine line between the need for confidentiality and the need to provide information. The more volunteers understand, the deeper their level of caring.”*

Teachers were evenly split on the topic of confidentiality. Fifty percent indicated it was not a barrier and 50% indicated it was “somewhat” a barrier. One teacher commented,

*“Now and then confidentiality has been a small issue. We just explain the policy to them and this fixes the issue.”*

### **Other Barriers**

*Physical limitations of volunteers, timing of volunteer recruitment (i.e. program is seasonal), and language barrier for recruitment of non-English-speaking volunteers* were rated as “barely” barriers, with each item averaging 2.33. The majority of teachers did not view physical limitations (86%) or language (57%) as barriers at all.

Although *liability issues, supporting professionalism among volunteers, and non-supportive teaching staff* were identified as potential barriers in the 2008 OSU study, administrative staff



indicated that none of these were even “Somewhat a barrier” on the survey. The average means for these items ranged from 1.33 to 1.83 on the 5 point scale. Although administrative staff, boomer volunteers and teachers themselves indicated that teachers needed time to adjust and warm up to volunteers, the vast majority of the teachers reported on the survey that non-supportive staff (86%) and lack of professionalism among volunteers were not barriers a year after the pilot project implementation.

### **Barriers Identified by Teachers**

Teachers were also asked about barriers to successfully integrating boomers into their program on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 “Not a Barrier” to 5 “Significant Barrier”.

**Table 4: Barriers and Challenges identified by Teachers**

	Administrative Staff		Teachers	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Barriers and Challenges identified by Teachers</b>				
Accommodating volunteer scheduling preferences	<b>2.17</b>	0.75	<b>1.43</b>	0.71
Including volunteers disrupts the schedule and flow of the classroom	----	----	<b>2.00</b>	1.00
Not enough tasks to keep volunteers busy in my classroom	----	----	<b>2.14</b>	1.03
Volunteers do not have a rapport with the children	----	----	<b>1.86</b>	0.78
Consistency in volunteer scheduling	----	----	<b>1.71</b>	1.36
Too many volunteers scheduled at the same time	----	----	<b>1.00</b>	0.00
Volunteers do not have skills necessary to fulfill the role they have been assigned	----	----	<b>1.57</b>	0.70

\* Response categories ranged from 1 = *Not at all* to 5 = *A Great Extent*. Wording of items varied depending on the role of the survey respondent. For administrative staff, the NOW portion of the retrospective is reported. Administrative Staff, N = 8; Teachers, N = 7.

Teachers were asked to rate other potential barriers that were specific to utilizing volunteers in their classrooms. Among these were three items related to scheduling of volunteers. Overall, teachers indicated that none of these potential scheduling issues were key barriers. None of the teachers reported that having *too many volunteers scheduled at the same time* was a barrier. Only one teacher thought that *consistency in volunteer scheduling* was a “significant” barrier and one thought it was “barely” a barrier. The remaining 71% of teachers said it was not a barrier. Likewise, 71% of the teachers did not view *accommodating volunteer scheduling preferences* as a barrier. The remaining 29% said it was only “barely” or “somewhat” of a barrier. Although scheduling issues were not prevalent, 57% of the teachers did note that *including volunteers disrupts the schedule and flow of the classroom* to some extent. In addition, some teachers (29%) felt that there were *not enough tasks to keep volunteers busy in my classroom*. Another 29% indicated this was “barely” a barrier. Forty-three percent did not view this as a barrier at all.

Other items on the Teacher Survey had to do with volunteers' direct services in the classroom. The majority of teachers (57%) indicated that *volunteers have a rapport with the children and have the skills necessary to fulfill the role they were assigned*. However, several teachers (53%) responded that volunteers' lack of rapport with the children was a barrier to some extent. While 53% of the teachers viewed lack of skills as a barrier it was to a lesser extent with 29% saying it was "barely" a barrier and 14% saying it was only "somewhat" of a barrier.

### **Unique Challenges of One Pilot Project**

It is important to note that the Family Nurturing Center took the lead in recruiting boomer volunteers for two other community agencies. This led to unique barriers for their project implementation. One of the community agencies underwent major changes as the initiative was beginning. As a result, a new partnership was formed with another agency. In managing the effort, the volunteer coordinator faced some obstacles. Each of the partnering organizations had their own bureaucracy and rules for working with volunteers. Recruiting for all of the agencies meant having to learn each of their individual systems. The volunteer coordinator felt she was limited in her ability to get efforts going in the other agencies as she was not an employee within their systems. Once recruitment efforts became more successful, her role became almost overwhelming in keeping up with the influx, screening, orientation, and placement of the volunteers. The volunteer coordinator is a volunteer herself, yet is contributing approximately 20 hours a week to this role. Her efforts at the Family Nurturing Center have been less challenging due to her prior relationship with both the organization and the executive director.

### **Barriers to Project Implementation as Indicated by Boomer Volunteers**

During the focus groups, volunteers were asked to name the biggest barriers they had to overcome in order to volunteer. Personal health issues, family care-giving responsibilities, scheduling, and language barriers were the primary issues. Boomers appreciated the organizations' flexibility in accommodating their schedules, whether it was to allow for health issues or vacations.

Boomer volunteers were also asked to report their perceptions of volunteering with the organization on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 "Not at all" to 5 "A Great Extent". Overall, boomers' perceptions did not significantly change when comparing their perceptions of barriers before their volunteer experience to after they had been involved for a period of time. See Appendix 7 for a complete comparison of NOW and BEFORE ratings.

Boomer volunteers perceived that working with young children was fun to a "great" extent both BEFORE and NOW. They did not perceive *confidentiality issues, generational approaches to working with young children, personal physical limitations, or working with children and families who have overwhelming needs* as barriers to their volunteering at either time point.

There was a very slight non-significant increase in their perception of it being difficult to *set limits on their personal involvement when working with children and families*. This is understandable as many of them had developed strong bonds with individual children with whom they worked. The flexibility of organizations to accommodate the scheduling needs of boomer volunteers paid off as the volunteers indicated a decrease in their perception of the extent to which *volunteering will limit the flexibility of my private time*. Liability issues also appeared to be slightly more of a potential barrier after volunteering as compared to before volunteering.

Boomers also indicated that the volunteer experience had changed their preconceived notions of the children at the center. One volunteer said, “[I was] pleasantly surprised...they are very caring, very disciplined and listen well.”

### ***Boomers Make an Impact***

Through individual interviews, the executive directors expressed their certainty that the boomer volunteers were making a positive impact on their organization. One effect of utilizing volunteers was increasing the adult-to-child ratios for the classrooms. This was especially pertinent for one center that is hoping to achieve accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). For another center, the infusion of highly qualified volunteers meant they could expand the number of classrooms and serve more children.

From the very basics of having an extra person in the room to assist with clean-ups and mealtime to examples of impact on individual children, teachers believe that the volunteers make a difference. Teachers viewed volunteers as improving their organization's ability to serve children commenting, “*Whether it's story time, art time or meal time, they are a true asset to our program.*” They indicated that volunteers made it easier for the organization to meet the needs of individual children:

*“They help with children who need the ‘extra’ TLC, one-on-one.”*

*“Children look forward to volunteers coming and notice when they are absent. There are countless things the volunteers do for our children from holding and comforting them on the saddest days, to helping a child put on a pair of mittens. The volunteers in my class make our children feel valued, loved and cared for every day. Our program would absolutely not be the same without them.”*

The utilization of volunteers has also made enrichment opportunities possible. At one center, a volunteer who drives the bus has allowed the staff to take children on field trips. One teacher commented that her entire class has benefited from volunteers, who bring “music” to her class,

*“The children will all gather around our volunteers and play instruments and dance around laughing and singing with them.”*

Providing one-on-one time with individual children is a major contribution of the volunteers. Staff see this increased personal attention as enhancing children's acquisition of skills. One teacher explained, “*This has helped with language and social behavior development.*” At Adelante Mujeres this included student improvement of English literacy. Another teacher shared,

*“One volunteer has given the gift of literacy. She makes time each day to read to the children and many of the non-verbal children especially begin to search for their favorite books when she arrives.”*

Many teachers commented on the volunteers filling a “grandparent” role for the children and giving them an additional caring, positive adult with whom they could share conversations. Another teacher added, “*The children pay attention when the volunteers read to them in circle time.*”

An unexpected outcome was the increased visibility of the organization in the broader community. This awareness is attributed not only to the volunteers sharing information with

others, but also to the publicity associated with volunteer recruitment. All staff noted that volunteers not only contributed their time and ideas, but were also valuable in securing tangible resources and promoting the centers in the communities. Tangible contributions to the centers included books, classroom supplies, and physical improvements for the center. An executive director said donations of both time and materials reduce their *“bottom line at a time when non-profits are really struggling.”*

### **Organizations Look to the Future**

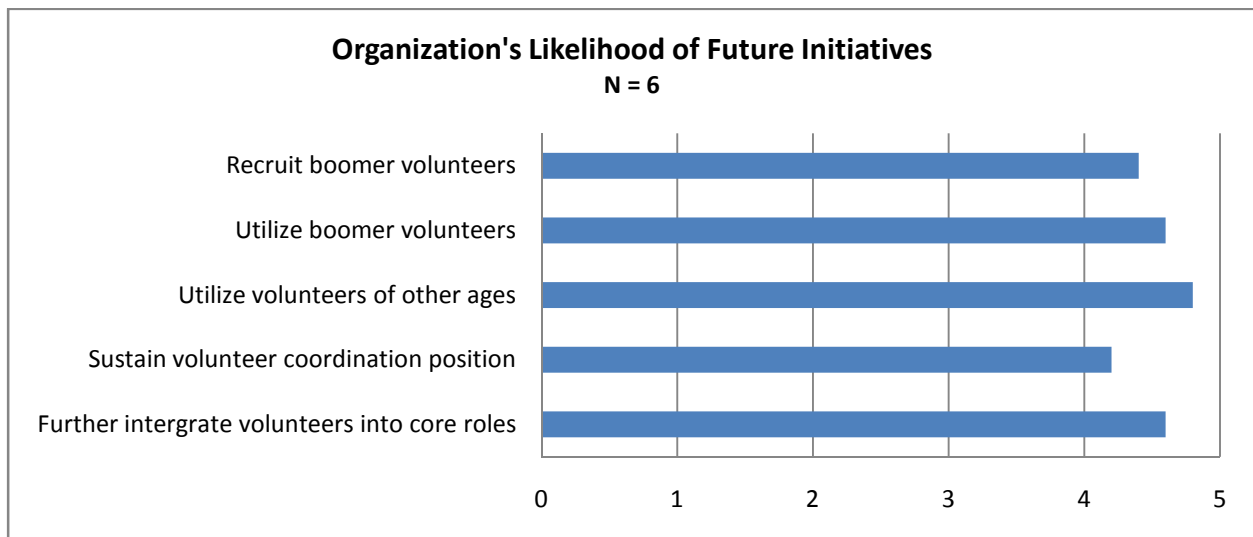
Administrative staff were unanimous in saying that the initiative was both successful and worth the effort. An executive director stated, *“building and maintaining a strong volunteer program significantly contributes to a successful non-profit.”* Another said it was successful,

*“not only for the organizational capacity building but also for the raising awareness about early childhood education. [It has also been successful] for individual children and families to have another significant person in their lives that cares about them and their education.”*

Staff expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to build a foundation for their volunteer integration efforts. One site commented,

*“[This] project has made a significant contribution to the children and families....every effort will be made to continue as many elements as possible.”*

Staff were asked how likely they were to continue several components of the pilot project on a 5-point (scale 1 “Not at all likely” to 5 “Very Likely”). Staff indicated they were “very likely” to *utilize volunteers of other ages* (average mean = 4.80). *Utilizing boomer volunteers* and *further integrating volunteers into core roles of the organization* were also rated as “very likely” with average means of 4.60. Organizations were also “likely” to *recruit boomer volunteers*. This item had a slightly lower average mean of 4.40.



*Sustaining the volunteer coordinator position* had an average mean of 4.20 as rated by administrative staff. The position was highly valued by all of the executive directors, but the reality is that without external funding there are not financial resources within the organizations to sustain the position. As several staff members remarked:

*“losing the coordinator would seriously impact our ability to recruit and sustain good volunteers”*

*“Like many other pilot projects or short-term grant funded projects, the real heart-breaking part [is that] you get everybody on board and it’s really working well, then the funding goes away. [The] boom and bust cycle gets disheartening.”*

Another said that without funding for the volunteer coordinator position,

*“[We] would have continued like we were. Training of the staff would have never happened. Training of the volunteers is really of value.”*

### **Boomers Look to the Future**

Boomer volunteers were also asked about their likelihood of continuing or deepening their involvement with early childhood programs on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 “Not at All Likely” to 5 “Very Likely”. Volunteers said they were “very likely” to *continue in their volunteer role with the organization*.



On the survey, boomer volunteers indicated they were “somewhat” more likely to *recruit others to volunteer for this organization* and *advocate for early childhood programs and policies*. However, during the focus groups boomer volunteers seemed less inclined to be advocates on a broad scale. While volunteers were quick to say they would be willing to tell friends and neighbors about the needs of their particular center, they were less enthusiastic about advocating beyond their community. One volunteer said,

*“I would be willing to write a letter and would always support bond measures. But I am not going to Salem to lobby or testify.”*

This confirmed findings from the 2008 OSU study. During the initial study, few boomers or early childhood staff mention advocacy for early childhood as a priority area for volunteer involvement.

Volunteers indicated they were only “somewhat” likely to *increase their volunteer hours within the organization, take on additional roles or responsibilities within the organization, or seek additional volunteer roles with other early childhood organizations*. Volunteers explained this in their written comments, several saying they were already volunteering with other organizations or were maxed out on the amount of time they had to volunteer.

### **Lessons Learned**

The organizations’ administrative staff and boomer volunteers were asked to reflect on the past year in order to share lessons they have learned as a result of the pilot project and offer advice for other programs.

### **Advice from Boomer Volunteers**

Overall, boomer volunteers said they were having positive experiences in their roles with the organizations they served. Based on their volunteer experiences in the early childhood programs, boomer volunteers were invited to share advice that could be used to not only improve their own experience but could also be used as a guide by other organizations that might be seeking to integrate their peers. Following is a summary of their advice:

*Make it meaningful* – Volunteers want to know that their time is not only well spent but that it directly impacts outcomes. As one volunteers stated, *“As a volunteer, I want to feel like I am doing something worthwhile.”* Another added, *“I want to help a kid with their reading skills and make their life easier.”*

*Have clear expectations and provide directions* – Volunteers are more than willing to take directions from the staff. One suggested that teachers make a list of what they want volunteers to do and share that with the volunteers. One volunteer commented, *“We are like the kids, I need a little direction.”* Another said, *“They tell the kids so they know what to expect, it’s important to tell volunteer too. A lot of us want to have something specific [to do].”* Conveying expectations and giving clear directions to the volunteers would help them to use their time more efficiently. As one volunteer put it, *“I don’t want to waste time. I want to get in and get the job done.”* Lack of clear expectations, directions and assigned tasks lead volunteers to feel underutilized by the organization. One volunteer said, *“I thought I was going to be reading to kids, so far that hasn’t happened.”*

*Provide training* – Providing more opportunities for training and orientation was also identified as an area in need of improvement. Just as volunteers are willing to take direction they are also willing to be trained. Since the volunteers often are recruited and begin at different times throughout the year this has been a challenge. One volunteer commented, *“I haven’t had the opportunity to take advantage of the staff training. I feel the most successful when I learn something new that helps me understand the child or gain a new skill.”* They are especially interested in trainings that focus on the population of children they serve such as working with children with special needs or communicating with children whose first language is not English. One volunteer lamented, *“[I] wish I had known more before approaching children who had experienced a lot of trauma.”*

More teacher involvement time – Because most volunteers spend the majority of their time in the classroom, they would like the opportunity to have more one-on-one time with their teachers. One volunteer expressed her thoughts, *“It would be a gift to sit down with teachers for 20 minutes and be able to ask, ‘Ideally, what do you want from me? How can I do something for you?’ ”*

Give volunteers feedback – Volunteers need, and want, feedback from teachers and the organization. They want to know they are appreciated and, most importantly, whether they are helping or not helping. One volunteer suggested, *“Have a mid-year check-in to how things are going ‘Are we comfortable? Are they comfortable? Do they want us to do something different?’ ”* Volunteers mentioned a need for more follow through by center staff. Volunteers were either contacted to do a particular task or the volunteer shared an idea that seemed to be of interest to staff but then the staff did not follow through. One volunteer explained, *“When I was approached, I immediately dove into it...thinking of all the possibilities. But, it never went anywhere, they have not talked about [the idea] since.”*

Communication – Boomers commented on the busyness of the organizations’ staff. Usually there was no one to greet them. In many cases, volunteers felt that the teachers did not even know their name. Some suggested that having nametags for volunteers to wear would be helpful. Volunteers also want a more consistent, effective stream of communication between themselves and the organization. Several volunteers said, *“I didn’t know about that [opportunity]!”* While many had internet and email accounts, they did not access the resources on a daily basis.

### **Lessons Learned from Administrative Staff**

Following is a summary of the most frequently mentioned lessons:

Importance of the volunteer coordinator position – All executive directors indicated their organizations would not have been able to grow their volunteer programs without a volunteer coordinator. This position is critical for recruitment, training, and support for volunteers. The position also provides a link between volunteers and teachers.

Takes time to initiate a volunteer program – The volunteer coordinator needs time to learn about the organization and understand the needs of the children and staff. Time is also needed to build trusting relationships with the teachers. As one volunteer coordinator put it, *“coming in as a completely new person [to the organization], I needed time to understand the organization and the program to determine what kind of volunteer would enhance the program.”*

Need support – Organizations felt as though they were in uncharted waters and were at times uncertain in how to proceed with the initiative. Organizations indicated the need for more support in undertaking a volunteer initiative. One volunteer coordinator suggested, *“it would be helpful to have access to on-line training materials that volunteers could access or set up mentor programs for organizations that are implementing such a program.”*

Staff training – This is a critical step in getting teachers to understand the benefits of having volunteers in their classrooms as well as practical tips for utilizing and engaging volunteers. Staff training should initially occur prior to assigning volunteers to classrooms, but should be on-going. Teachers were more responsive to including volunteers after they had participated in staff training.

Volunteer training – As with staff, volunteers can perform to a higher level when they receive training that leads not only to a better understanding of the children being served but also about the expectations of the organization.

Relationships between the staff and volunteers – All organizations indicated that staff attitudes had improved over the course of the pilot project. Volunteers expressed greater satisfaction with their experience if they felt connected with the teacher and other organization staff.

Provide opportunities for different levels of volunteer commitment – Recognize that some volunteers will want episodic involvement that may not involve working directly with children. Other volunteers will want long term, direct involvement in classrooms. By providing opportunities for different levels of volunteer commitment, a variety of the organization's needs can be met.

Encourage long term commitments from those volunteers seeking to work directly with young children – As one executive director explained, *“To have a volunteer who comes sporadically is really hard on kids. It teaches them to distrust adults. Our particular population has home lives that are erratic. We want to have help from people who understand that this is about joining our family and that those relationships matter.”* Longer term commitments allow time for a trusting relationship to be built between individual children and volunteers. This can lead to greater individual child incomes such as increased language and literacy skills.

## Summary

The pilot projects utilized findings from a 2008 Oregon State University study commissioned by The Oregon Community Foundation, *Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Oregon's System of Early Care and Education*. The report recommended that early childhood programs reframe the way they viewed boomer volunteers. According to the study, boomer-age adults wanted volunteer work that was meaningful and matched to their personal circumstances. Success of programs wanting to engage boomer volunteers would depend on several factors including the creation of a volunteer coordinator position, an organized approach to recruitment and integration, and the provision of flexible schedules for the volunteers.

The pilot projects were successful in recruiting and engaging boomer-age volunteers into their early childhood organizations. Organizations increased their capacity to successfully utilize volunteers by building more systematic approaches to recruiting, assigning, tracking, and coordinating volunteers. Personal relationships and networking proved to be the most successful strategy for recruiting this generation of volunteers. Pilot projects also succeeded in improving staff members' attitudes toward having volunteers in their classroom. Executive directors clearly conveyed that their success could be attributed to creating the volunteer coordinator position, as this initiative would not have achieved the same results without this key staff role. All staff involved valued the contributions of the boomer volunteers and perceived that they were making direct, positive impacts, on not only the children, but also the organization they served.

Most boomers were already motivated and were seeking volunteer opportunities when recruited by this organization. Many of the volunteers brought years of early childhood experience with them and thought working with the target audience of their organization was meaningful.



Overall, the volunteers felt valued by the organizations and had positive relationships with staff members. Flexibility in scheduling made volunteering more feasible for many of the volunteers.

While boomers were very positive about their volunteer experiences they did have suggestions for improvement. Boomers encouraged organizations to give them feedback and maximize the skills volunteers bring with them by assigning meaningful work with clear expectations and directions. They also wanted more training to be provided and increased communication with teachers and others within the organization.

All pilot projects realized that further improvements were needed if they were to meet their ultimate goal of volunteer integration. Areas for improvement identified by the organizations were similar to those identified by the volunteers and included: increased opportunities for training both volunteers and staff, more frequent and efficient communication, assigning volunteers to meaningful roles, and conveying expectations. Organizations can further integrate volunteers into the fabric of their program by addressing the deficiencies.

The continued development of early childhood organizations' capacity to support volunteers has been shown to positively impact not only the organization itself but, more importantly, the children it serves. Pilot projects reported that during the initiative their organizations experienced increased visibility and community support. Volunteers contributed not only their time, but also provided tangible materials when needed. In addition, through direct work with the children, boomer volunteers gave children an additional positive adult in their lives. Their inclusion led to more enrichment opportunities for the children including field trips and music education. Adult-to-child ratios were improved in classrooms, allowing one center to be able to expand the number of child care slots they offered. Most significantly, volunteers increased the amount of one-on-one time that children received, making it more likely that the children are acquiring skills needed for success in school.

## **Appendices**

# **Appendix 1: Volunteer Survey**

**Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers  
in Oregon's System of Early Care and Education**

**Volunteer Survey**

**1. Think about your experience with this pilot project, rate the extent to which you believe the following statements to be true.**

<b>Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers</b>	<b>Not True at All</b>		<b>Somewhat True</b>		<b>Very True</b>
Organization has paid staff position/time for coordinating volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Organization utilizes effective recruitment strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Organization is connected with community partners to identify and recruit volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Organization has procedures in place for screening and assigning volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Organization provides adequate supervision for volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Organization has system in place for tracking volunteer information and hours	1	2	3	4	5
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies to keep volunteers informed	1	2	3	4	5
Organization integrates volunteers into critical roles within the organization	1	2	3	4	5
Staff integrates volunteers into program	1	2	3	4	5
Staff has positive attitude toward volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Staff value volunteers involvement	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Comments:</b>					

**2. To what extent do these statements describe your volunteer experience?**

<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>	<b>Not at All</b>		<b>Somewhat</b>		<b>A Great Extent</b>
My interactions with the staff have been positive	1	2	3	4	5
I feel valued in my volunteer role	1	2	3	4	5
I feel confident in working with children and families from diverse backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5
I am more knowledgeable about child development	1	2	3	4	5
I have clearly defined volunteer roles & responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
I am assigned meaningful tasks and roles within the organization	1	2	3	4	5
I have been trained by the organization to meet the needs of their program	1	2	3	4	5
My volunteer role is matched with my areas of interest and expertise	1	2	3	4	5
I am making a difference in the lives of the children and families with whom I work	1	2	3	4	5
I have received feedback about my performance as a volunteer	1	2	3	4	5
I am treated as a team member by staff	1	2	3	4	5
My volunteer hours are scheduled based on my availability	1	2	3	4	5
I receive recognition for my contributions to the program	1	2	3	4	5
I receive regular communication from program staff	1	2	3	4	5
I am treated as a professional by the program staff	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Comments:</b>					

**3. How likely are you to do the following?**

	<b>Not at all likely</b>		<b>Somewhat Likely</b>		<b>Very Likely</b>
Continue in your volunteer role with this organization	1	2	3	4	5
Increase your volunteer hours with this organization	1	2	3	4	5
Take on additional roles or responsibilities with this organization	1	2	3	4	5
Seek additional volunteer roles with other early childhood organizations	1	2	3	4	5
Advocate for early childhood programs and policies	1	2	3	4	5
Recruit others to volunteer for this organization	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Comments:</b>					

**4. To what degree have your perceptions of volunteering in an early childhood setting changed?**

Please rate the extent to which each of the following statements describe your perception of volunteering **now**. Then, rate how each statement described your perception **before** volunteering with this organization.

Not at All	Somewhat			A Great Extent
1	2	3	4	5

Perceptions of Volunteering in an Early Childhood Setting	NOW					BEFORE				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Liability issues of working with young children concern me	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Physical limitations affect my ability to work with young children	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Generational differences in approaches to working with young children will make my work with this organization difficult	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
It is difficult not to share information about the children that may be confidential	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
It is difficult to set limits on my personal involvement when working with children and families	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
The challenges of working with children and families who have overwhelming needs keeps me from wanting to be a volunteer	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Working with young children is fun	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteering will limit the flexibility of my private time	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Comments:</b>										

# **Appendix 2: Volunteer Interview Questions**

## **Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Oregon's System of Early Care and Education**

### **Boomer Focus Group Questions**

Introductions

Name

How long you have been volunteering with this organization?

What has been your primary role as a volunteer?

How many of you have volunteered for other organizations serving young children?

How did you learn about the opportunity to volunteer with this organization?

What motivated you to volunteer for this organization?

Have you received training while here that enhanced your ability to serve as a volunteer? Do you receive timely and consistent information from the organization that helps you in your role?

What has been the attitude of the staff toward you as a volunteer? Give examples. (Does staff integrate the volunteers into their classrooms?)

Do you feel that you (and the role you fill) are important parts of this organization?

Have you learned anything about early childhood development or programs? Because of this experience, are you more likely to support early childhood initiatives (i.e. advocating for public policy, etc.)

What have been the biggest barriers or challenges for you to overcome in order to volunteer for this organization? How did you overcome them?

How could your experience as a volunteer be improved? What could the organization or staff do to help make this an easier, more enjoyable or more fulfilling experience?

If other early childhood education programs were considering integrating boomer volunteers into their programs, what advice would you give to them? How might the organization recruit other volunteers from the community?

# **Appendix 3: Staff Survey**



## Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Oregon's System of Early Care and Education

### Staff Survey

**1. To what degree have the following elements changed in regards to integrating volunteers into your program?**

Please rate the *extent* to which each element describes your program **now**. Then, rate how each element describes your program **before** this project. If an element does not apply to your organization, select NA.

Not at All		Somewhat			A Great Extent	
1	2	3	4	5		

Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers	NOW						BEFORE					
Organization has paid position/staff time for coordinating volunteers	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Organization trains staff to integrate volunteers into program	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Organization view volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Organizations works with other community partners to identify and recruit volunteers	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Organization has procedures in place for screening and assigning volunteers	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Organization has a system in place for tracking volunteer information and hours	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies for keeping volunteers informed	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Organization provide adequate supervision for volunteers	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Organization integrates volunteers into critical roles within the organization	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Staff has positive attitude toward volunteers	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
Staff values volunteer contributions to the program	NA	1	2	3	4	5	NA	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Comments:</b>												

**2. To what degree have the following elements changed in regards to integrating volunteers into your program?**

Please rate the extent to which each element describes your program **now**. Then, rate how each element describes your program **before** this project. If an element does not apply to your organization, select NA.

Not at All		Somewhat			A Great Extent	
1	2	3	4	5		

Engaging Boomer Volunteers	NOW							BEFORE					
	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
Utilize effective recruitment strategies	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
Retain volunteers	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
Clearly defined volunteer roles & responsibilities	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
Assign volunteers to meaningful tasks and roles within the organization	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
Train volunteers to meet needs of program	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
Match volunteers with their areas of interest and expertise	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
Provide performance feedback to volunteers	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
Provide flexibility in scheduling to meet the individual needs of the volunteers	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
Recognize volunteers for their contributions to the program	NA	1	2	3	4	5		NA	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Comments:</b>													

**3. To what extent have the following been barriers to the success of integrating boomers into your program?**

<b>Barriers to Project Implementation</b>	<b>Not a Barrier</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>			<b>Significant Barrier</b>
	1	2	3	4	5
Liability issues associated with utilizing volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Secure funding for costs associated with utilizing volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Physical limitations of volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Recruitment strategies	1	2	3	4	5
Transition of key staff (within your own or a partner organization)	1	2	3	4	5
Timing of volunteer recruitment (i.e. program is seasonal)	1	2	3	4	5
Age limited to boomer volunteers for this funding	1	2	3	4	5
Scheduling group meetings with volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children	1	2	3	4	5
Confidentiality issues	1	2	3	4	5
Staff is not supportive of integrating volunteers into the program	1	2	3	4	5
Accommodating volunteer scheduling preferences	1	2	3	4	5
Language barrier for recruitment of non English speaking volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Maintaining communication with volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Securing volunteers for specific needs within your organization (i.e. clerical, fundraising, classroom, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Not enough time for volunteer coordinator to fulfill all of the needed duties	1	2	3	4	5
Supporting professionalism among volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Comments:</b>					

**4. How likely are you to do the following after funding for this project has ended?**

	<b>Not at all likely</b>	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>			<b>Very Likely</b>
	1	2	3	4	5
Recruit boomer volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Utilize boomer volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
Utilize volunteers of other ages	1	2	3	4	5
Sustain volunteer coordinator position	1	2	3	4	5
Further integrate volunteers into core roles of the organization	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Comments:</b>					

# **Appendix 4: Director Interview Questions**

## **Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Oregon's System of Early Care and Education**

### **Director Interview Questions**

Briefly tell us about how your organization implemented this initiative. (Had you utilized any volunteers in the past? Describe the roles of the volunteers (episodic vs. integrated).

What type of recruitment strategies did you use? Which were most successful? Which did not work? Did you utilize partners (other organizations, agencies) in your recruitment efforts? If not, why? If yes, who were they and what was their role?

Was it difficult to focus only on the "boomer" age parameters when recruiting? Did this age restriction limit your ability to recruit volunteers? Explain. In the future would you focus only on the boomer age group or would you broaden the age range for volunteers?

What has been the overall impact of utilizing boomer volunteers on your organization? How has this enabled your organization to better serve children and families? (improved adult to child ratio; increased capacity to serve more children/families, impact directly on children/families, etc.)

Have the attitudes of the staff toward boomer volunteers changed during this program? Give examples. (Does staff integrate the volunteers into their classrooms?)

What were the biggest barriers or challenges to implementing this project? How did you overcome them?

Would you describe this initiative as being successful? If not, why? If yes, what are the indicators of your success?

How has the community responded to your efforts to integrate boomer volunteers into your program?

If other early childhood education programs were considering integrating boomer volunteers into their programs, what lessons have you learned that may be helpful to them?

Was it worth the expense and effort to bring in and support the volunteers? Does your program plan to sustain this initiative after the grant funding ends? If not, why? If yes, how? (funding; coordinator position, etc.)

Is there anything else you would like OCF to know about this project?

# **Appendix 5: Volunteer Coordinator Interview Questions**

## **Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers in Oregon's System of Early Care and Education**

### **Volunteer Coordinator Interview Questions**

What type of recruitment strategies did you use? Which were most successful? Which did not work? Did you utilize partners (other organizations, agencies) in your recruitment efforts? If not, why? If yes, who were they and what was their role?

Was it difficult to focus only on the "boomer" age parameters when recruiting? Did this age restriction limit your ability to recruit volunteers? Explain. In the future would you focus only on the boomer age group or would you broaden the age range for volunteers?

Briefly tell us about how your organization implemented this initiative. (Policy, procedures, screenings, etc. developed as a result of this initiative. Describe the roles of the volunteers (episodic vs. integrated). Describe the placement process for the volunteers.

Describe the staff attitude toward volunteers at the start of the program. Have the attitudes of the staff toward boomer volunteers changed during this program? Give examples. (Does staff integrate the volunteers into their classrooms?)

What were the biggest barriers or challenges to implementing this project? How did you overcome them?

Would you describe this initiative as being successful? If not, why? If yes, what are the indicators of your success?

If other early childhood education programs were considering integrating boomer volunteers into their programs, what lessons have you learned that may be helpful to them?

# **Appendix 6: Staff Survey Results**



**Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers  
in Oregon's System of Early Care and Education**

**Staff Survey Results**

**Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers**

Not at All		Somewhat		A Great Extent
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	NOW		BEFORE		Average Difference	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers</b>							
Organization has paid position/staff time for coordinating volunteers	8	3.38	1.69	1.38	0.74	2.00***	1.77
Organization trains staff to integrate volunteers into program	8	3.38	0.74	1.63	0.52	1.75***	0.71
Organization view volunteers as integral to the overall sustainability of the program	8	4.88	0.35	2.38	1.51	2.50***	1.69
Organizations works with other community partners to identify and recruit volunteers	8	4.88	0.35	1.75	0.89	3.13***	0.99
Organization has procedures in place for screening and assigning volunteers	8	4.75	0.46	2.38	0.74	2.38***	0.74
Organization has a system in place for tracking volunteer information and hours	8	4.88	0.35	2.50	1.20	2.38***	1.19
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies for keeping volunteers informed	7	4.38	0.52	1.71	0.76	2.57***	0.53
Organization provide adequate supervision for volunteers	7	4.50	0.76	2.57	0.98	1.86***	0.38
Organization integrates volunteers into critical roles within the organization	8	4.13	0.64	2.75	0.89	1.38***	0.92
Staff has positive attitude toward volunteers	7	4.88	0.35	2.43	0.98	2.43***	1.13
Staff values volunteer contributions to the program	8	4.88	0.35	2.50	0.93	2.38***	0.92

Note. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. \*\*\*Significant results indicate significant differences in reported capacity after one year of project implementation,  $p < 0.05$ .

## Engaging Boomer Volunteers

Not at All		Somewhat		A Great Extent
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	NOW		BEFORE		Average Difference	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>							
Utilize effective recruitment strategies	8	4.50	0.53	2.25	1.04	2.25***	0.89
Retain volunteers	7	4.50	0.53	2.71	0.76	1.71***	0.76
Clearly defined volunteer roles & responsibilities	8	4.50	0.53	2.88	1.13	1.63***	1.06
Assign volunteers to meaningful tasks and roles within the organization	8	4.63	0.52	3.00	1.31	1.63***	1.41
Train volunteers to meet needs of program	8	4.00	0.53	2.00	0.93	2.00***	1.07
Match volunteers with their areas of interest and expertise	8	4.75	0.46	2.88	1.25	1.88***	1.25
Provide performance feedback to volunteers	8	3.63	0.52	2.13	1.13	1.50***	0.93
Provide flexibility in scheduling to meet the individual needs of the volunteers	8	4.63	0.52	3.00	1.31	1.63***	1.19
Recognize volunteers for their contributions to the program	7	4.88	0.35	3.00	0.58	1.86***	0.69

Note. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. \*\*\*Significant results indicate significant differences in reported capacity after one year of project implementation,  $p < 0.05$ .

## Barriers to Project Implementation

Not a Barrier		Somewhat		Significant Barrier
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Barriers to Project Implementation</b>					
Liability issues associated with utilizing volunteers	6	1.50	0.84	1	3
Secure funding for costs associated with utilizing volunteers	6	2.50	1.05	1	4
Physical limitations of volunteers	6	2.33	0.82	1	3
Recruitment strategies	6	2.17	1.17	1	4
Transition of key staff (within your own or a partner organization)	6	2.67	1.51	1	5
Timing of volunteer recruitment (i.e. program is seasonal)	6	2.33	1.03	1	3
Age limited to boomer volunteers for this funding	6	2.50	1.05	1	4
Scheduling group meetings with volunteers	6	2.50	1.05	1	4
Generational differences in approaches to interacting with young children	6	1.83	0.75	1	3
Confidentiality issues	6	1.67	0.82	1	3
Staff is not supportive of integrating volunteers into the program	6	1.50	0.55	1	2
Accommodating volunteer scheduling preferences	6	2.17	0.75	1	3
Language barrier for recruitment of non English speaking volunteers	6	2.33	1.51	1	4
Maintaining communication with volunteers	6	1.83	0.75	1	3
Securing volunteers for specific needs within your organization (i.e. clerical, fundraising, classroom, etc.)	6	3.00	0.89	2	4
Not enough time for volunteer coordinator to fulfill all of the needed duties	6	2.67	1.03	1	4
Supporting professionalism among volunteers	6	1.33	0.52	1	2

## How likely are you to do the following?

Not Likely		Somewhat Likely		Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>How likely are you to do the following?</b>					
Recruit boomer volunteers	5	4.40	0.89	3	5
Utilize boomer volunteers	5	4.60	0.89	3	5
Utilize volunteers of other ages	5	4.80	0.45	4	5
Sustain volunteer coordinator position	5	4.20	1.30	2	5
Further integrate volunteers into core roles of the organization	5	4.60	0.89	3	5

# **Appendix 7: Volunteer Survey Results**

**Boomers and Babies: Engaging Boomer-age Volunteers  
in Oregon's System of Early Care and Education**

**Volunteer Survey Results**

**Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers**

<b>Not True at All</b>		<b>Somewhat True</b>		<b>Very True</b>
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Organizational Infrastructure for Supporting Boomer Volunteers</b>					
Organization has paid staff position/time for coordinating volunteers	15	3.60	1.72	1	5
Organization utilizes effective recruitment strategies	14	4.07	0.83	3	5
Organization is connected with community partners to identify and recruit volunteers	15	4.27	0.70	3	5
Organization has procedures in place for screening and assigning volunteers	15	4.53	0.52	4	5
Organization provides adequate supervision for volunteers	17	4.12	0.93	2	5
Organization has system in place for tracking volunteer information and hours	17	4.71	0.47	4	5
Organization utilizes consistent communication strategies to keep volunteers informed	17	4.35	0.86	2	5
Organization integrates volunteers into critical roles within the organization	15	3.93	0.96	2	5
Staff integrates volunteers into program	16	4.38	0.72	3	5
Staff has positive attitude toward volunteers	17	5.00	0.00	5	5
Staff value volunteers involvement	17	4.88	0.33	4	5

## Engaging Boomer Volunteers

Not at All		Somewhat		A Great Extent
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Engaging Boomer Volunteers</b>					
My interactions with the staff have been positive	17	4.53	0.62	3	5
I feel valued in my volunteer role	17	4.71	0.59	3	5
I feel confident in working with children and families from diverse backgrounds	17	4.35	0.86	3	5
I am more knowledgeable about child development	17	4.00	0.79	3	5
I have clearly defined volunteer roles & responsibilities	17	4.00	0.87	3	5
I am assigned meaningful tasks and roles within the organization	17	4.24	0.75	3	5
I have been trained by the organization to meet the needs of their program	16	3.19	1.52	1	5
My volunteer role is matched with my areas of interest and expertise	17	4.29	0.69	3	5
I am making a difference in the lives of the children and families with whom I work	17	4.12	0.60	3	5
I have received feedback about my performance as a volunteer	17	3.82	1.07	2	5
I am treated as a team member by staff	16	3.75	0.93	2	5
My volunteer hours are scheduled based on my availability	17	4.88	0.33	4	5
I receive recognition for my contributions to the program	15	4.27	0.80	3	5
I receive regular communication from program staff	16	3.69	1.20	2	5
I am treated as a professional by the program staff	16	4.00	0.97	2	5

How likely are you to do the following?

<b>Not at all Likely</b>	<b>Somewhat Likely</b>			<b>Very Likely</b>
1	2	3	4	5

	<b>Obs</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<b>How likely are you to do the following?</b>					
Continue in your volunteer role with this organization	16	4.56	0.73	3	5
Increase your volunteer hours with this organization	15	3.40	1.30	1	5
Take on additional roles or responsibilities with this organization	16	3.06	1.00	1	5
Seek additional volunteer roles with other early childhood organizations	16	3.00	1.41	1	5
Advocate for early childhood programs and policies	16	3.75	1.34	1	5
Recruit others to volunteer for this organization	16	3.69	1.35	1	5

## Perceptions of Volunteering in an Early Childhood Setting

Not at All		Somewhat		A Great Extent
1	2	3	4	5

	Obs	NOW		BEFORE		Average Difference	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
<b>Perceptions of Volunteering in an Early Childhood Setting</b>							
Liability issues of working with young children concern me	17	2.82	1.38	2.53	1.28	-0.12	0.70
Physical limitations affect my ability to work with young children	17	1.88	1.22	2.00	1.41	-0.06	0.43
Generational differences in approaches to working with young children will make my work with this organization difficult	17	1.18	0.53	1.24	0.56	-0.06	0.57
It is difficult not to share information about the children that may be confidential	16	1.06	0.25	1.13	0.50	0.06	0.90
It is difficult to set limits on my personal involvement when working with children and families	17	1.71	0.77	1.65	0.79	-0.41	0.80
The challenges of working with children and families who have overwhelming needs keeps me from wanting to be a volunteer	17	1.29	0.59	1.71	1.05	0.06	0.24
Working with young children is fun	17	4.35	1.32	4.29	1.36	-0.47	0.80
Volunteering will limit the flexibility of my private time	17	1.88	0.99	2.35	1.46	-0.09	0.38

Note. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. There was no significant difference in perception rating over the two time points,  $p < 0.05$ .