



# Getting in the Game: An Investigation of Volunteering in Sport among Older Adults

Shannon Hamm-Kerwin  
*University of Western Ontario*

Katie Misener  
*University of Western Ontario*

Alison Doherty  
*University of Western Ontario*

---

**Abstract.** Volunteering is a positive leisure activity for older adults, yet this group has one of the lowest rates of volunteering across many nations, particularly in sport. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore factors associated with volunteering in sport among older adults. Using Peters-Davis, Burant, and Braunschweig's (2001) multidimensional framework, semi-structured interviews with older adult sport volunteers (n=20, 65 years and older) uncovered themes within structural, cultural, cognitive, and situational dimensions of volunteering behaviour. The findings revealed that the older adult volunteers had large social networks, past involvement in sport, and a history of volunteering. They reported becoming involved in sport volunteering as an opportunity to use their skills, for social connections, and to stay active. They also identified quality of health, awareness of volunteer opportunities, and spousal employment status as factors that influenced their volunteering. Preliminary implications for recruiting older adults to volunteering in sport, and directions for future research, are drawn from the findings.

**Keywords.** older adults, community sport, volunteer behaviour

**Résumé.** Le bénévolat est une activité de loisirs positifs pour les aînés, mais ce groupe a l'un des niveaux de bénévolat sportif les plus bas à travers de nombreux pays. Le but de cette étude qualitative était d'explorer les facteurs associés au bénévolat dans le sport chez les adultes plus âgés. Utilisant un cadre de recherche multidimensionnel développé par Peters-Davis, Burant, et Braunschweig (2001), des entrevues semi-structurées menées

---

Address all correspondence to: Shannon Hamm-Kerwin, School of Kinesiology, The University of Western Ontario, 3M Centre Rm. 2225, London, ON N6A 3K7. Telephone: (519) 661-2111, ext.88386; Email: shamm@uwo.ca.

*Leisure/Loisir*, 33(2): 659-685  
© 2009 Ontario Research Council on Leisure



avec des bénévoles de sport âgés ( $n = 20$ , 65 ans et plus) ont démontré plusieurs thèmes dans le cadre structurel, culturel, et du bénévolat. Les résultats relèvent que les bénévoles âgés ont des grands réseaux sociaux, et que l'engagement historique dans le sport en question est important. Ils ont aussi rapporté que le bénévolat sportif est une occasion d'utiliser leurs compétences, amélioré leurs liens sociaux, et de rester actif. Ils ont également identifié la qualité de vie, la connaissance des possibilités de bénévolat, et la situation professionnelle du conjoint comme des facteurs principaux du bénévolat sportif. Certaines implications préliminaires comme le recrutement des bénévoles âgées dans le sport, et les directions de recherches futures sont tirées de ces résultats.

**Mots-clés.** personnes âgées, le sport communautaire, le comportement des bénévoles

Contributions of volunteers are at the core of the sport systems in many countries. Extensive involvement of volunteers in the operation of sport organizations highlights their growing importance in a number of sporting nations (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006). However, a declining rate of volunteering means there are too few volunteers to do the work required (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Doherty, 2005; Gratton, Nichols, Shibli, & Taylor, 1997). As a result, the recruitment of volunteers continues to be one of the greatest challenges facing community sport organizations (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Doherty, 2005; Leisure Industries Research Centre [LIRC], 2003).

A profile of sport volunteers (Doherty, 2005) suggests that older adults (65 years and older) are not part of the current "recruitment niche" (Nichols & King, 1999) in community sport. The typical sport volunteer is younger (35 to 44 years), male, employed full-time, with young dependents at home, and became involved through his or her child's participation in the sport (Doherty, 2005). In light of this narrow sport volunteer profile, older adults may be "a new source of experience" to enhance the community sport volunteer workforce (Misener & Doherty, 2006, p. 190).

Volunteerism is but one possible leisure activity for older adults. Organizational volunteering, which is the focus of this study, is a form of "serious leisure" (Stebbins, 2005) where individuals' systematic involvement constitutes "continuous and substantial helping" to the organization rather than a one-time donation of time or services (p. 185). There has been notable interest in various forms of leisure behaviour among older adults. Broad studies (e.g., Gibson, 2006; Janke, Davey, & Kleiber, 2006) have examined the determinants and benefits of (continued) leisure among older adults. Some studies have focused particularly on retirees, examining issues associated with leaving the workforce (e.g., Gibson, Ashton, & Autry, 2003/2004; Nimrod, 2007a, 2007b). Research



with older adults has also focused on particular areas of leisure engagement, such as physical activity (e.g., Sasidharan, Payne, Orsega-Smith, & Godbey, 2006), dance (e.g., Cooper & Thomas, 2002), and volunteerism (e.g., Li & Ferraro, 2005; Lum & Lightfoot, 2005; Nagchoudhuri, McBride, Thirupathy, Morrow-Howell, & Tang, 2005; Okun & Schultz, 2003; Peters-Davis, Burant, & Braunschweig, 2001; Smith, 2004; Warburton, Terry, Rosenman, & Shapiro, 2001).

Peters-Davis et al. (2001) examined the factors associated with volunteer behaviour among older adults and concluded that a multidimensional approach to understanding the predictors of older adult volunteerism was appropriate. In their study of 356 older adult volunteers ( $n=135$ ) and non-volunteers ( $n=221$ ) they found that aspects of structural, cultural, cognitive, and situational dimensions significantly distinguished the volunteers and non-volunteers. Their findings suggest that older adult volunteering is not a function of, for example, one motivating factor or certain demographic variables alone. Rather, there are likely multiple factors that are meaningful determinants of older adult volunteering.

### **Purpose**

Doherty (2005) found notable differences in the profile of sport volunteers as compared to volunteers in general, suggesting that sport may be a unique context for older adult volunteering. The opportunity to expand the recruitment niche in sport to include a greater proportion of older adults, who may experience the positive benefits of volunteering in that particular context, can be enhanced by an understanding of older adult volunteering in sport. Thus, the purpose of this study was to explore common factors associated with the involvement of older adults as volunteers in sport, according to the Peters-Davis et al. (2001) multidimensional model of older adult volunteer behaviour.

### **Review of Literature**

#### ***Older Adult Contributions to Volunteering***

According to the 2004 *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating* (CSGVP; Hall, Lasby, Gumulka, & Tryon, 2006), and the 2005 *Current Population Survey in the United States* (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005), older adults contribute on average the most volunteer hours of any age group. However, they have the lowest rate of volunteering of any age group in Canada, and the second lowest rate of volunteering in the United States next to those under 25 years of age. Thus, relatively fewer older adults are involved in volunteering in comparison to



their younger counterparts; however, those who do give their time contribute more hours on average to voluntary organizations.

### ***Benefits of Older Adult Volunteering***

Volunteerism provides older adults with the opportunity for personal growth and social interaction, as well as a sense of purpose and productivity (e.g., Gill, 2006; Nagchoudhuri et al., 2005). Warburton et al. (2001) found that older adult volunteers were more likely than non-volunteers to report meeting people as a benefit of being involved. The volunteers in their study were also more likely than non-volunteers to see helping those in need and feeling useful as a benefit of volunteering (Warburton et al., 2001). Positive physical and mental health benefits have also been attributed to the role enhancement that is associated with volunteering among older adults (e.g., Lum & Lightfoot, 2005; Van Willigen, 2000). Longitudinal research with national samples in the U.S. indicate that, over time, formal volunteering among older adults is positively associated with self-reported health as well as functional mobility (e.g., self-care activities) (Lum & Lightfoot, 2005; Morrow-Howell, Hinterlong, Rozario, & Tang, 2003), and negatively associated with depression (Li & Ferraro, 2005; Lum & Lightfoot, 2005; Musick & Wilson, 2003). Research also indicates that these benefits can be derived from as few as three hours of volunteering per month (Morrow-Howell et al., 2003; Musick & Wilson, 2003; Van Villigen, 2000). Longitudinal studies further reveal that, over time, older adult volunteers have a substantially lower mortality rate, or greater longevity, than older adults who do not volunteer (Musick, Herzog, & House, 1999; Oman, Thoresen, & McMahon, 1999).

Older adult volunteering is also of interest from an organizational perspective. While older adults view volunteering as an opportunity to keep busy, use their skills, and generate a feeling of responsibility and contribution (Gill, 2006), the organization gains access to individuals with maturity, skills based on experience, availability, and greater loyalty, commitment, and confidence (Gill, 2006; Graham, 2003; Rochester & Hutchison, 2002). Thus, older adult volunteering is characterized by "generally large beneficial effects among both older volunteers and those they serve" (Wheeler, Gorey, & Greenblatt, 1998, p. 76).

### ***Factors Affecting Volunteer Participation among Older Adults***

Given the individual and collective benefits associated with older adult volunteering in formal organizations, and the relatively low rate of volunteering among this demographic, research has investigated factors



associated with older adult volunteering. This research has focused generally on demographic variables and motives, as well as barriers that explain this behaviour. The literature indicates that older adult volunteers are more likely than non-volunteers to be married, and to have a higher socio-economic status, larger social networks, and a past history of volunteering (Chambre, 1993; Fischer & Shaffer, 1993; see also Graham, 2003 for a review). Smith (2004) found that midlife workers were more likely to see volunteering as an important part of their retirement plan if they had an "adequate income" (also Kim & Feldman, 2000), and valued the role of volunteer.

With regard to volunteer motives, data from the Canadian 2000 *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (NSGVP) revealed that, like all other age groups, virtually all older adult volunteers are involved to support a cause in which they believe, while a large majority are also involved to use their skills and experiences (Lasby, 2004). Interestingly, in comparison to other age groups, a relatively smaller proportion of older adult volunteers are involved because someone they know is affected by the cause, and to explore their own strengths, while a relatively larger proportion are involved because their friends volunteer (Lasby, 2004). Similarly, Okun, and Schultz (2003) found that age was indirectly associated with career experiences, personal growth, and learning as motives for volunteering, while age was directly associated with social interaction as a reason to be involved; making friends, in particular, peaked among volunteers aged 60 to 69 years. Furthermore, Callow (2004) reported that both socialization and a desire for intellectual stimulation that comes from structured activity were key motivators for older adult volunteers. Intellectual stimulation through volunteering is at least part of what older adults want to keep them active and busy, especially in the transition from retirement (Onyx & Warburton, 2003; Rochester & Hutchison, 2002; Smith & Gay, 2005).

In terms of factors that deter or prevent older adults from volunteering, Cohen-Mansfield (1989) and Caro and Bass (1997) found that health was a significant predictor of this behaviour. Lasby (2004) also reported that health problems in general were the most common barrier among this age group, and a substantially more meaningful factor than for other age groups. Li and Ferraro (2005) found that functional health or mobility in particular was a barrier to involvement, while mental health and specifically depression were not notable deterrents. From a slightly different perspective, Warburton et al. (2001) reported that the older adult non-volunteers in their study were more likely than volunteers



to anticipate being "tied down" because of volunteering. At the same time, these non-volunteers were also more likely to feel that they were too old to be involved, and preferred other activities (Warburton et al., 2001). Another possible barrier to volunteering is a lack of awareness. Attwood, Singh, Prime, and Creasey (2003) found that over one-third of older adults were not aware of the need for help in the community, nor the opportunities to get involved. Further, according to Peters-Davis et al. (2001), older adult volunteers perceived there to be significantly more opportunities to be involved than did non-volunteers.

### **Conceptual Framework**

To examine older adult volunteering from a broader perspective that incorporated many of these different perspectives, Peters-Davis et al. (2001) proposed a four-factor framework for predicting older adult volunteer behaviour. Based on the premise that volunteerism is a productive role for older adults, their framework derives from role theory (Parsons, 1951), and specifically structural, cultural, cognitive, and situational determinants of role behaviour. This multidimensional perspective was deemed to be appropriate for what research to date had identified as multiple and complex factors associated with older adult volunteer behaviour (Peters-Davis et al., 2001). According to Parsons, role expectations and ultimately behaviour are a function of cultural norms and values, as well as structural factors that define an individual's social status. The motivation to engage in certain role behaviours is a function of an individual's personality and learned needs. Further, role behaviours are both facilitated and restricted by situational factors in the individual's environment (Peters-Davis et al., 2001).

The structural dimension describes the social statuses a person occupies; for example, age, education, and marital and socioeconomic statuses. As noted earlier, research indicates that several of these variables have been identified as distinguishing factors in older adult volunteering. Other structural factors could include the size and nature of one's social network. Onyx and Warburton (2003) found that older adults with large social networks tend to engage in increased volunteer activity. These social networks include groups of individuals whose relationships are defined by specific interdependencies and commonalties (e.g., values, interests, friendship) (Scott, 2001).

The cultural dimension refers to the set of norms and values that one adheres to, that determine the selection of certain social roles (Peters-Davis et al., 2001). The cultural norms and expectations that affect one's



role choices are built on earlier life experiences (Peters-Davis et al., 2001), and are thus consistent with continuity theory that has been fundamental to understanding older adults' leisure behaviour (e.g., Iso-Ahola, Jackson, & Dunn, 1994; Kim & Feldman, 2000; Nimrod, 2007b). In the context of volunteering these norms may include one's past history of volunteering, and the perceived value of volunteering in general. Perceived support from family and friends, including the involvement of these significant others in volunteering themselves may also be important cultural factors.

The cognitive dimension, or what Peters-Davis et al. (2001) labelled more narrowly as "personality factors," includes motivations and learned needs. As noted earlier, several motives for volunteering among older adults have been identified in the literature, including feeling useful, keeping busy, and making friends. Finally, the situational dimension includes the components of one's everyday life that either prevent or increase the likelihood of volunteering; for example, an individual's self-perceived quality of health, particularly functional mobility, the participation of family or friends in the activities of the organization, or even awareness of opportunities to get involved.

Peters-Davis et al.'s (2001) model provides a foundation for the deductive analysis of the determinants of older adult volunteering; however the framework identifies a limited number of factors within each dimension and thus could be expanded further. Moreover, the specific nature of these multiple dimensions of older adult volunteering may vary by context (Rook & Sorkin, 2003). Further inductive investigation of emergent themes within the dimensions of the framework could strengthen the model and provide greater insight into the factors affecting participation of older adults as volunteers. The current study builds on the Peters-Davis et al. model through the deductive and inductive examination of older adult volunteering in sport.

## Method

### *Sample*

Semi-structured, audio-recorded interviews were conducted with older adults (65 years of age and older) who were regular (i.e., on-going) volunteers with at least one community sport organization located in Southwestern Ontario, Canada. This region has a population of approximately 875,000, and is home to one major urban core (population 100,000+) and five urban cores (population 10,000+) (Statistics Canada, 2008a). To generate the sample, a comprehensive list of 43 community sport organ-



izations from the local sports council website in the major urban core was produced. From this list, each organization's president was contacted by either paper mail or email and asked to identify any older adult volunteers within their club who would be eligible and willing to participate. Through this process, four organizations identified individuals who met the search criteria (i.e., 65 years of age and older, and actively involved in regular volunteering with a sport organization) and were willing to be contacted. Seven individuals were subsequently contacted via telephone by the investigators, and their status as older adults and regular sport volunteers was confirmed. All of these individuals agreed to participate and interview times were arranged. It is important to note that a number of organizations responded and acknowledged that they could not confirm the older adult status of their volunteers.

A snowball sampling technique was also used (Patton, 2002) where participants were asked to identify any sport volunteers they knew who met the age and volunteering conditions of this study, and would be willing to be contacted about participating. Throughout the course of the data collection, 13 additional participants from across the region were identified through this sampling technique. The investigators contacted these individuals directly by telephone and invited them to be interviewed. All of these individuals agreed to participate and interviews were scheduled. Participants were recruited by this method until it was determined that the interview data were saturated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Bowen (2008) noted that saturation is reached "when the researcher gathers data to the point of diminishing returns, when nothing new is being added" (p. 140). Following a total of 20 interviews, the researchers determined that no new information was being added, thus saturation was achieved.

### ***Interview Guide and Procedure***

A semi-structured interview guide was developed to explore the four dimensions of the Peters-Davis et al. (2001) framework. A review of literature on older adult volunteering resulted in the identification of several factors that had not specifically been noted nor measured by Peters-Davis et al. To build on existing knowledge, these factors were aligned with the appropriate framework dimension and included in the interview guide. For example, participants were asked about certain demographic variables (e.g., age, gender, marital status) and to describe their social circle (structural), they were asked about any past involvement in sport and their beliefs about the value of volunteering in general (cultural), they were asked to reflect on why they started volunteering with



their current sport organization (cognitive), and to describe their health as well as their awareness of older adult volunteer opportunities in the community (situational). Two pilot interviews were conducted with older adult sport volunteers and minor clarifications were made to the interview guide as a result. Semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately one hour, were used to facilitate a consistent line of questioning among the participants, while encouraging participants to elaborate on their responses (Patton, 2002). This method of qualitative research can yield an in-depth understanding of individuals' perceptions by giving the interviewer the freedom to explore and ask questions which clarify and expand on each dimension within the interview guide (Patton, 2002).

### **Analysis**

The audio-recorded interview data were transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using both deductive and inductive methods. A priori coding, where a given set of standards guides the analysis process (Patton, 2002), was used to deductively analyze the data with respect to the a priori framework of older adult volunteering. Further, inductive analysis was undertaken through open coding and the exploration of emergent factors within each dimension of the framework (Patton, 2002). This approach allowed the researchers to investigate the possibility of additional factors not covered by Peters-Davis et al.'s (2001) model. Two of the investigators coded the data collectively and then all codes and coded data were reviewed independently by the third investigator. Round-table discussions were held where the investigators shared independent insights on the content of each dimension and discussed any divergent perspectives until consensus was reached.

### **Findings**

The following sections provide a description of the participants and the common themes within each of the structural, cultural, cognitive, and situational dimensions of older adult volunteering in sport. Selected quotations have been included that represent the findings within each dimension. Pseudonyms are used to protect the anonymity of the participants however actual ages are provided to add richness to their voices.

#### **Profile of Participants**

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample. The mean age of the participants was 72 years ( $SD = 5.6$ ). The large majority of participants were men (75%), and 75% of all participants were married. Half of the participants (50%) had completed university or col-



**Table 1**  
**Profile of Participants**

Characteristic Attribute	n	%	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
<b>Age (years)</b>			72.3	5.6	65	86
<b>Gender</b>						
Men	15	75				
Women	5	25				
<b>Education (highest level completed)</b>						
Elementary	4	20				
High school	6	30				
University/College	7	35				
Graduate school	3	15				
<b>Former employment</b>						
Teaching	7	35				
Own business	3	15				
Trade/industry	5	25				
Other	5	25				
<b>Marital status</b>						
Married	15	75				
Widowed	3	15				
Divorced/Single	2	10				
<b>Volunteering</b>						
Hours/week in primary sport organization			9.5	8.4	2.5	30
Years in primary sport volunteer role			12.4	9.4	3	30
Years with primary sport organization			17.5	13.1	2	58

lege, and approximately one-third (35%) had been school teachers. The participants contributed a mean of 9.5 hours per week ( $SD = 8.4$ ) volunteering for what they identified as their primary sport organization. One unique individual was involved 30 hours per week in his role as president of a very large and active sport organization, likely skewing the data. Thus, it is more appropriate to consider the median value of 6.5 hours per week volunteering. The older adult volunteers had been with their primary organization a mean of 17.5 years ( $SD = 13.1$ ), and served in their current position for approximately 12 years ( $SD = 9.4$ ). Another participant had been with her organization 58 years, serving in her current role as convenor for 30 years; again, likely skewing the data. Thus,



it is appropriate to consider the median values of 10 years in one's current role, and 14.5 years in the organization. Most of the older adults ( $n=14$ , 70%) volunteered in leadership roles (e.g., president, chair, board member, convenor), three were coaches, two were members of subcommittees of their organization, and one was an official.

### ***Structural Factors***

Within the structural dimension certain demographic variables as well as social networks were revealed as common themes. Specifically, as noted in Table 1, the large majority of the older adult volunteers were men, and married. As well, all the participants had been employed outside the home, most commonly in teaching. Several participants noted the connection of volunteerism to the teaching profession. According to Lawrence (74 years), "I get involved more and more with people that I used to teach with." Peggy (67 years) explained that, "When I retired from teaching, [which] was such an all inclusive type of work that you put everything you have into ... I looked for [volunteering] that I could do that was enjoyable." Roger (71 years) added, "I will get to these events and it will be like a reunion of all these ex-teachers that had had teams in school for years. [They] will be out there to help out." Level of education attained did not appear to be a distinguishing factor among the participants, as half had an elementary or high school education, while the other half had completed a university or college degree, or higher. Peter (69 years), who had a university undergraduate degree, felt it was important to mention, "I don't think education is the key to volunteering."

In addition to their personal demographics, participants were also asked to discuss their social networks. The majority (70%) of older adults described their social circles as "large," their perception being more important than the absolute number. They described a variety of activities in which they engage with these social networks, the most common (75%) being sporting activities, such as curling, golf, tennis, bowling, and skiing. Almost half of the older adults (45%) also described engaging in more sedentary activities with their social network, such as dinners, coffee, and playing cards. The next most common activities were dancing (35%) and travel (30%) with these groups of friends.

### ***Cultural Factors***

Past involvement in sport, a history of volunteering, and family and friends who volunteer were common themes for the older adult sport volunteers in this study. Notably, there was variable support from family and



friends for the older adults' involvement in volunteering. Factors that facilitated and deterred older adult volunteering in sport were uncovered.

All 20 of the participants had a personal background in sport, having been athletes over the course of their lifetime. As well, 13 of the participants had been coaches (two were still involved in coaching), and 17 had been or were still involved in sport in some additional capacity (e.g., other volunteer engagement, officiating). This link to sport was associated with a strong norm of giving back to an activity that had been a large part of the participant's life. As Leonard (79 years) noted,

We happen to know a lot of people that are inside that [sport group] that are involved in volunteerism. We want to give back to the organizations that gave to us. We know that things need to be done and so they get done.

Thus, the notion of giving back to sport was based largely on a sense of obligation. That is, participants indicated that sport services would not exist without volunteers, and volunteers help relieve financial stresses from sport organizations:

If you didn't have [volunteers] you wouldn't have the sport. It is just as simple as that. The volunteers, if they don't show up, there would be a lot of kids out of luck. (Gordon, 71 years)

They couldn't begin ... If you had to pay everyone on the stuff that people do, we couldn't do anything. (Mary, 65 years)

Lawrence (74 years) noted quite simply, "just by being able to help. That is the only reason you do it." These sentiments reflect the value the participants' placed on volunteering, and may explain why over half of the older adults in this study (60%) were volunteers with other sport organizations as well.

In addition, half of the participants (50%) indicated that they gave time to non-sport organizations and activities; volunteering in health care, service organizations, and at church. Again, it was reported that the older adults' involvement in these other volunteer roles was based on a perceived expectation to give back to the community. This involvement ranged from six years to "all my life" (Bill, 69 years). Notably, 70% of the older adults had a history of volunteering before their retirement.

The overwhelming majority of participants (85%) noted that their family and/or friends had histories of volunteering as well, both in and outside of sport. According to Kay (71 years), whose daughter was a Girl Guide leader, and whose sons coached minor sports, "I think it just



comes from the family; if they see it in the family, they do the same things themselves." Mary (65 years) noted, "I guess I came from a background where you do give back to the community. That's what my father did, so that is what, we just followed his lead." However, only half of the older adults described having family and friends that were supportive of their sport volunteering. The following quotations are a testament to this:

They are supportive of me. They laugh sometimes when I have to make an adjustment because of the volunteering. I think, "I got a damn volunteer meeting today" [laughter], but I know they are supportive. (Mary, 65 years)

My family is so used to me volunteering. I have two daughters [who live] locally and they think it is good. I am busy all the time, so they like that it keeps me busy. (Kay, 71 years)

My close friends are impressed by what I do. They realize that I do a lot. Some of your friends disappoint you and say 'there can't be that much to that,' but most people appreciate what you do. (Peter, 69 years)

Thus, many of the older adults have a tradition of volunteering, and are in an environment that supports volunteerism, and their volunteering in sport in particular. However, despite the tradition of volunteering among the families and friends, the remaining half of the participants in the study indicated that their family and/or friends did not encourage their sport volunteering. The concerns were based on the perception that their involvement was too hectic or too time consuming, although there was some allusion to concerns about their health and wellbeing. As Kay (71 years) noted, "my friends think I do too much, but it's just because they care about me." Lawrence (72 years) pointed out that, "[My wife] thinks it is okay. Every once in a while she says, 'don't you think you should slow down?'" Frank's (66 years) family and friends were more outspoken: "They get tired of it. My friends just kid me. The family members get tired of me being out and they get tired of all the phone calls." Thus, a number of participants perceived their own values and norms surrounding aging and volunteerism as being different from their family and friends.

### ***Cognitive Factors***

The focus of this dimension was the motives behind the older adults' involvement in sport volunteering. Notably, cognitive determinants are consistent with individual learned needs that guide behaviour, which



can be distinguished from cultural norms (values, expectations) that influence role choices. Many participants gave more than one reason for getting involved in sport volunteering and there was consistent support for each theme that was uncovered. The older adults most often reported becoming involved in sport volunteering: (1) as an opportunity to use their skills, (2) for social connections, and (3) to stay active. According to Mary (65 years), "you have to use your head after you retire or when you are not working ... You want to use the abilities that you have and if you don't, you lose them." Kay (71 years) became involved as a sport volunteer "because of my organizational skills ... With my organizational skills and their [tournament planner] knowledge, it ran, it worked." Similarly, Margaret (66 years) acknowledged that, "I guess I just like having a little bit of leadership responsibility. I like to be involved in the organization ... I like to see that things are done properly and I like to put my two bits in."

With regard to social motivations for volunteering in sport, Mary (65 years) noted that, "you meet other people and there is a social side to it ... You get a sense of community as well, when you volunteer." Bert (86 years) echoed this when he recounted that, "I was by myself, so I joined [the sport organization] and got into activities on that end." He also described the importance of continuing to be with people after retirement: "When you are retired you haven't got a steady job and it is nice to be doing something and you are in with people and meeting people and finding out what is going on." The notion of staying active was a third common motive for sport volunteering among the older adults, in terms of staying busy and having something to do. The comments of several participants suggest this may be particular to the age group:

The way I came to be involved was that my wife had died and I was looking for something to do. [Also] I was retired at that time and I was used to doing things all the time and I needed to keep busy. (Bert, 86 years)

I was very concerned, when I was coming up to retirement, that I might turn into a couch potato and I heard about [the sport organization] and I immediately went down and joined. (Lloyd, 76 years)

The thing that brought me here ... I needed something to do. I went from being very active to having nothing to do. (Peter, 69 years)

When I retired, I had all this energy. So I looked for something to do to enjoy myself. (Peggy, 67 years)

Many of the older adults also noted that keeping active was why they continued to volunteer in sport. Kay (71 years) suggested that, "you've got



to keep busy, it's so important as a person gets older." Charlie (83 years) was more specific about the reasons for continuing to volunteer: "My health, and the brains too. You've got to keep them going too. Because if they start to deteriorate, then you don't enjoy your life. I think that's the biggest part of it."

### ***Situational Factors***

The final component of the volunteer behaviour model is the situational dimension. These are factors of everyday life that either prevent or increase the likelihood of volunteering. The participants consistently identified three major factors that influenced their sport volunteering: (1) quality of health, (2) spouse's employment status, and (3) (awareness of) opportunities.

Eighteen of the 20 participants viewed themselves as healthy: "I feel alright. There are some problems. Not bad. I have some things I have to straighten out, but not bad" (Gordon, 71 years); "I am probably in perfect health" (Bill, 69 years). Nonetheless, half noted that health could be a factor in the volunteering. According to Bert (86 years), "I will volunteer until I can't anymore. Health might be the reason." Leonard agreed that "[poor health] might slow me down a bit." Gordon (71 years) noted that health had already affected the type of sport volunteering in which he engaged: "The legs have gone a bit and I can't contribute as much on the ice. Once I can't get out there with the kids anymore it will stop." One of the older participants in the study, Greg (75 years), recognized that "Older [adults] are probably limited as to what they can do physically on a volunteer basis, but there are all kinds of administration jobs they can do." Margaret also acknowledged the effect that health would likely have on her future volunteering: "It would be health that would interfere with volunteering at a later date, but I am healthy right now." Jim (67 years) agreed that, "if anything was to make me stop, it would be my health."

The involvement of family members in the organization's sports activities themselves, or as volunteers there, did not appear to be a factor in the older adults' sport volunteering, as half the participants indicated they had family directly involved in the organization, and half did not have any family involved. Notably, only one older adult identified grandchildren as a reason for getting involved in their sport volunteering role. However, family was a situational factor for the older adults in terms of whether their spouse was also retired, having both a positive and negative impact on their volunteering. Bill (69 years), who started vol-



unteering when his wife was working, indicated that his level of sport volunteering was cut back after his wife retired: "Because my wife isn't working now, I have to stay home once in a while." Jim (67 years) noted that "my wife wants me to give more time to travelling, but as far as sports go I give as much as I can." In contrast, Norman (71 years) was able to volunteer because his wife was also a volunteer:

I am pretty open. That is partly because my wife is involved too. We can go our separate ways and we don't always have to be doing the same thing. A lot of couples work their lives out where they are always doing the same thing, but I don't have to do that because we both volunteer and it keeps us busy.

The third major situational factor was the perceived availability of sport volunteer opportunities. The focus of these findings is on the perception of whether these opportunities exist rather than the actual reality. Seventeen of the 20 participants believed there were a lot of opportunities for older adults to get involved in volunteering for sport organizations in their community, making it a positive situational factor. Notably, though, half of the participants became involved in sport volunteering because they were asked, suggesting they were not aware of the opportunities before they became involved. Half of the older adults felt that other older adults were aware of the opportunities, or "should be" (Lloyd, 76 years), through media, word of mouth, or personal invitation to get involved. As Lloyd further explained: "The [local sports council] has certainly helped create awareness... We have a good network of people targeting the older adults." Thus, awareness was acknowledged to be dependent on community-wide promotion of opportunities and word of mouth. The other half of the participants thought other older adults were not aware of specific sport volunteer opportunities and would have to seek them out themselves, or wait to be asked. A few also noted that older adults may not be looking for *sport* volunteer experiences specifically; for example, "I don't think people are aware, unless they are tied to [the sport]" (Bert, 86 years), and "I think the run-of-the-mill senior, I don't think they're looking for [volunteering] in sport, to be truthful. I think they figure they're too old and nobody would want them" (Kay, 71 years). Altogether, the older adult participants were consistent in their perception that awareness of the availability of sport volunteer opportunities was dependent on deliberate promotion of those opportunities to older adults.



## Discussion

The potential benefits that may accrue to older adults through volunteering, yet their underrepresentation as volunteers (Hall et al., 2006), and as sport volunteers in particular (Doherty, 2005), warrants the continued investigation of older adult volunteer behaviour. Research to date has considered older adult volunteering in general, yet the examination of specific contexts may highlight factors that are unique to particular settings (Rook & Sorkin, 2003). The current study examined older adult volunteers in sport, and the findings can be discussed with respect to older adult volunteer literature in general, as well as the sport volunteer literature. The Peters-Davis et al. (2001) multidimensional framework of older adult volunteer behaviour proved useful for this investigation.

Several demographic characteristics examined in this study parallel structural factors, or social statuses, that may be associated with volunteer behaviour (Peters-Davis et al., 2001). In terms of structural factors, the findings revealed that the older adult sport volunteers in this study were consistently characterized by their gender (male), marital status (married), former occupational status (employed) and occupation (teaching), as well as by their social networks in terms of size (large) and activities (sports-related). These findings coincide with earlier research which indicates that older adult volunteers in general tend to be married (e.g., Chambre, 1993). In contrast, however, gender has rarely been identified as a factor among older adult volunteers in general (cf. Cohen-Mansfield, 1989). The gender of the sample was overrepresented by men (75%) in comparison to the region's population of men in the 65 years and over age group (41%) (Statistics Canada, 2008b). While it is possible that, with the snowball sampling technique, participants were more likely to identify (other) male sport volunteers, the overrepresentation of men is consistent with the profile of sport volunteers in general, where men substantially outnumber women (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Doherty, 2005). Given the small sample size here, conclusions about the gender of older adult sport volunteers cannot be made. Rather, additional research is required to determine more conclusively whether the gender imbalance in sport volunteerism extends to the older adult demographic in particular. Related research also indicates that older adult volunteers tend to be from a higher socioeconomic group (e.g., Chambre, 1993; Peters-Davis et al., 2001). Although this variable was not measured directly in the current study, all the sport volunteers had been employed, and likely enjoyed an "adequate" salary and pension benefits at retirement which has been shown to be consistent with volunteering post-retirement (Kim & Feldman, 2000).



Of notable interest was the relatively high proportion of participants who were former teachers. This could, again, be due to the sampling technique used in this study. However, it raises the question as to whether employment in certain occupations (e.g., human services in general, or teaching in particular) is associated with (sport) volunteering in retirement. This should be explored, as research to date has been limited to such occupational groupings as managerial, professional, white collar, farmer, and blue collar (e.g., Reed & Selbee, 2000). Further, the older adult sport volunteers' self-described possession of a large social circle is consistent with previous literature (e.g., Chambre, 1993). As Hill (2006, p. 3) explained, "having many social contacts increases the likelihood that a person will be invited to volunteer." This is consistent with the evidence in this study and elsewhere that the majority of older adults become involved in volunteering because they are personally asked (e.g., Smith & Gay, 2005). In the current study, social networks were primarily defined by participation in sporting activities (e.g., curling, golf, tennis), shedding light on the nature of those social circles, and highlights the participants' further connection to sport. Finally, while not explored in this study, the size and nature of one's social network may be linked to his or her occupation, with further implications for volunteering. This merits further investigation.

The connection to sport was consistently emphasized throughout the study. All of the participants had been athletes earlier in life, and a high proportion (13 of the 20) had been coaches or were still coaching. Their sport background suggests a direct cultural connection to their volunteering in later life. It is also consistent with continuity theory which suggests that "older adults attempt to preserve and maintain existing structures ... applying familiar strategies in familiar arenas of life," and particularly those which they value most highly (Atchley, 1989, p. 183). According to Nimrod (2007b), upon retirement individuals are most likely to engage in familiar leisure activities that allow them to continue significant past relationships. For the older adults, a perceived obligation to give back to an activity/organization from which they have personally benefited was a key factor in their sport volunteering. The current findings provide some evidence of the "transition-extension" from player to volunteer within sport organizations (Cuskelly, 2004). Further, although clear timelines were not established, the findings suggest that a transition from player to volunteer coach to volunteer administrator or board member may be linked to age. This possible transition for older adult sport volunteers merits investigation.



Consistent with existing research (e.g., Chambre, 1993; Cohen-Mansfield, 1989; Fischer & Shaffer, 1993; Peters-Davis et al., 2001), the older adult sport volunteers in this study tended to have previous volunteer experience. The participants valued volunteering in general as a way to help out and give back to the community, or to a particular organization (cf. Lasby, 2004). This finding is consistent with both older adult volunteers in general (Lasby, 2004) and sport volunteers in general (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Doherty, 2005; LIRC, 2003). The older adult sport volunteers were also characterized by family and friends with histories of volunteering. Consistent with Warburton et al. (2001), the findings suggest that participants were surrounded by significant others whose norms and values support volunteering. Interestingly, however, half indicated that they did not receive support from family and friends for their sport volunteer involvement, claiming that it was too time consuming and expressing concern for the volunteers' well-being. Elsewhere, Nimrod (2007a) found that health concerns may be a basis for others' reduced support of older adults' active leisure participation. The older adults within this study could be struggling with their competing roles as both aging individuals and volunteers. The current findings highlight the older adult volunteers' perceptions of potentially conflicting expectations they may face from significant others; a finding that does not appear to have been uncovered in the volunteer literature to date. The notion of role conflict, or role congruity, among older adults should be examined further (Herzog, House, & Morgan, 1990), including whether mixed expectations faced by older adults are context-specific.

The cognitive factors that illustrate the older adult sport volunteers' reasons for becoming involved—namely, to use one's skills, for social connections, and to stay active—are consistent with the literature on older adult volunteering in general (e.g., Lasby, 2004; Okun & Schultz, 2003; Rochester & Hutchison, 2002; Smith & Gay, 2005). There are both parallels and contrasts to the sport volunteer literature. Similar to other sport volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Doherty, 2005), the older adults in this study cited using their skills as one of the most important reasons for being involved. The notion of volunteering to stay active, however, appears to be unique to older adult sport volunteers, while the desire for social interaction has previously been reported as mostly meaningful to younger sport volunteers (under 35 years of age) (Doherty, 2005). These findings shed new light on the profile of older adult sport volunteers, and suggest that their particular motives for being involved need to be addressed in recruitment efforts. In addition, in contrast to



most other sport volunteers (Doherty, 2005), the desire to explore one's strengths and develop new skills was not a factor for the older adults in this study. Older adults want to use their skills and abilities to help in sport organizations, and be stimulated by that involvement; however they are less concerned about growing through the experience.

In further contrast to other sport volunteers, the older adults were not necessarily involved because someone close to them is affected by the organization (e.g., a child, or partner). While this is a key distinguishing characteristic of sport volunteers (Cuskelly et al., 2006; Doherty, 2005; LIRC, 2003), it does not appear to be a situational factor for older adult sport volunteers in particular. This may not be surprising, given that the typical sport volunteer is 35 to 44 years of age, with dependents at home (Doherty, 2005), and so more likely to have a child involved in the sport. It does highlight older adult volunteers' involvement in sport based more on personal interest than a need to help because of a significant other's involvement (cf. Smith & Gay, 2005). Despite the limited connection to children or family members, the participants in the current study did note the influence that their spouse's employment status had on their volunteering. This was just one of three situational factors identified by the older adult sport volunteers. Kim and Feldman (2000) argued that if a spouse is still working, then the retired partner is more likely to volunteer. Conversely, if the spouse is also retired, the couple's activities are more likely to coincide. The current findings support this contention as the older adults' sport volunteering appeared to vary directly with their spouse working, and indirectly with their spouse also being retired. As well, if a retired spouse was volunteering (in sport or elsewhere), then the situation was more amenable to the older adult volunteering in sport. These findings highlight one's spouse as a critical situational factor in older adult (sport) volunteering.

Consistent with previous research on older adult volunteering, the sport volunteers in this study noted that health was a factor in their volunteering; namely that they were currently enjoying good health, but poor or declining health would affect their continued involvement. Notably, physical and mental health are touted as key benefits of volunteering among this age group (e.g., Li & Ferraro, 2005; Lum & Lightfoot, 2005; Musick et al., 1999); at the same time, (poor) health is a reported deterrent to being involved (e.g., Caro & Bass, 1997; Lasby, 2004). The notion that poor or declining health may affect what types of volunteer activities are possible in sport was raised in the current study; suggesting that one's volunteering may in fact be modified over time in



relation to health and physical ability (e.g., from more physical coaching activities to less physical administrative tasks), rather than it being an all or nothing involvement. This is also consistent with the possible transitioning in sport volunteerism noted earlier (Cuskelly, 2004). Further research should examine older adult sport volunteers' perceptions of their involvement in different roles, including modified roles. Warburton et al. (2001) reported that older adult non-volunteers felt they were too old to be involved, a general sentiment that, nonetheless, may have unique nuances in different contexts.

Finally, there was a strong opinion among the older adult sport volunteers that plenty of opportunities for sport volunteering existed, and half of the participants thought that other older adults would be aware of these as well. The other half did not think others would be aware of specific sport volunteer opportunities, unless they were personally asked to be involved. It is likely that those currently in sport would have a heightened sense of the opportunities for volunteering (cf. Peters-Davis et al., 2001). Thus, overall it appears the findings parallel previous literature which noted that a substantial proportion of older adults were not aware of the need or opportunities for volunteers in the community (Attwood et al., 2003), and older adult volunteers were more aware of these opportunities than non-volunteers (Peters-Davis et al., 2001). The current study highlights, then, the potential situational limitations of older adult awareness of volunteer opportunities, and in the sport context in particular, where the study participants did note the importance of deliberate promotion of those opportunities to their peers.

### **Conclusions, Implications, and Future Research**

Structural, cultural, cognitive, and situational factors associated with older adult volunteering in sport were illustrated in the current investigation. Rich, in-depth data were uncovered through the qualitative method used in this study. In particular, inductive analysis revealed themes that provided a basis for comparison with older adult volunteers in general and sport volunteers and produced "a wealth of detailed information ... and depth of understanding of the [sample participants]" (Patton, 2002, p. 14). The findings also provide further insight into older adult volunteering and highlight several avenues for continued research in sport in particular.

The use of the Peters-Davis et al. (2001) framework offered a multidimensional basis for examining the factors associated with older adult volunteering in sport. Structural, cultural, cognitive, and situational



dimensions of volunteering were present within this sample; however the current findings suggest that there are many additional factors within each dimension that were not identified by Peters-Davis et al. and could be examined further in different volunteer contexts. Further, there may be interactions among the dimensions that could be explored. For example, an individual's value for volunteering (cultural) may be associated with their occupational background (structural), or perceived opportunities for volunteering (situational) may be associated with social networks (structural).

Preliminary implications for expanding the volunteer recruitment niche in sport can be drawn from the findings. The results suggest that older adult volunteers in this context are likely to have a background in sport and are asked to be involved, perhaps through an existing large social network. Older adult sport volunteers also may be likely to come from the realm of teaching in particular. Consequently, prospective volunteers could be sought among former sport participants or coaches, and possibly among former teachers. Connecting to the social networks of older adults is a recommended strategy for potential volunteer recruitment (Gill, 2006; Warburton et al., 2001). Older adult sport volunteers also appear likely to have had many positive influences in their life with regard to volunteering, although some may experience lack of support from significant others with regard to being involved at this later stage in their life. Nonetheless, they are likely to be motivated to volunteer in sport by the opportunities to use their skills, for social interaction, and to stay active and busy. Volunteer roles for older adults in sport, thus, need to ensure that such opportunities can be offered and met, in order to encourage and sustain their involvement. The findings also suggest that opportunities for older adult volunteers in sport need to be effectively promoted, particularly through personal contact, as it appears that awareness of opportunities may be a major limiting factor in older adults' involvement. Personal health is another potentially limiting factor, similar to older adult volunteering in any context. Sport organizations may consider alternate or adapted roles for older adults who may be limited from participating in traditional sport volunteer activities and tasks. Promoting opportunities for spousal involvement as well may help to eliminate any situational conflict a prospective older adult volunteer may experience in their desire to get involved.

More definitive implications for practice are dependent on continued research to verify, and perhaps add to, the multidimensional factors



in older adult sport volunteering identified here. The current qualitative study may be replicated in other communities, and field survey research may be undertaken with a broader sample. Future research may also address a number of issues that were highlighted by the results in the current study. For example, occupational background should be examined further to determine whether there is a link between specific occupations (such as the teaching profession) and volunteer behaviour. It may be that the nature of the occupation is associated with volunteering, or perhaps older adults' social networks are linked to former occupations and these provide a key mechanism for volunteering. Again, this may or may not be particular to sport. As well, the existence of, or potential for, transition-extension within sport over time should be examined as former participants move to the role of volunteer, with a possible transition within volunteer roles (i.e., coach to administrator), with increasing age. Further, examining the relationships between older adult couples, where one or both engage in volunteerism would be useful in order to gain a greater understanding of each individual's values and norms surrounding aging and volunteering. This could help explain some of the tensions regarding volunteering found between spouses in this sample. As noted earlier, exploring interactions between the structural, cultural, cognitive and situational dimensions could also be a direction for future research.

Additional research should also consider older adults' perceptions of their experiences with sport volunteering. For example, to what extent are they actually able to use their skills, do they feel they make a difference to the organization, and are they satisfied with the degree of social interaction. Such a line of inquiry would also benefit from an examination of sport organizations' attitudes towards older adult volunteers. The organization's perspective is important for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of older adult sport volunteering.

Community sport constantly relies on volunteers to deliver programs and services to participants. The older adults in the current study gave evidence of their desire, passion, and commitment to their sport volunteer roles. The findings of this study revealed a number of unique factors associated with older adult volunteering in sport, providing a foundation for further research to better understand how sport organizations can be positioned to expand their recruitment niche and finally tap into a potentially valuable group of volunteers.



## References

- Atchley, R. (1989). The continuity theory of normal aging. *The Gerontologist*, 29, 183–190.
- Attwood, C., Singh, G., Prime, D., & Creasey, R. (2003). *2001 home office citizenship survey: People, families and communities*. London: Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate.
- Bowen, G.A. (2008). Naturalistic inquiry and the saturation concept: A researcher note. *Qualitative Research*, 8(1), 137–152.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2005). *Demographic characteristics of the labor force*. Retrieved on May 12, 2007, from <http://www.bls.gov/cps/home.htm>.
- Callow, M. (2004). Identifying promotional appeals for targeting potential volunteers: An exploratory study on volunteering motives among retirees. *International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 9, 261–274.
- Caro, F.G., & Bass, S.A. (1997). Receptivity to volunteering in the immediate postretirement period. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 16, 427–442.
- Chambre, S.M. (1993). Volunteerism by elders: Past trends and future prospects. *The Gerontologist*, 33, 221–228.
- Cohen-Mansfield, J. (1989). Employment and volunteering roles for the elderly: Characteristics, attributions, and strategies. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 21, 214–227.
- Cooper, L., & Thomas, H. (2002). Growing old gracefully: Social dance in the third age. *Aging and Society*, 22, 689–708.
- Cuskelly, G. (2004). Volunteer retention in community sport organizations. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 4, 59–76.
- Cuskelly, G., Hoye, R., & Auld, C. (2006). *Working with volunteers in sport: Theory and practice*. London: Routledge.
- Doherty, A. (2005). *A profile of community sport volunteers*. Toronto: Parks & Recreation Ontario and Sport Alliance of Ontario. Retrieved January 18, 2008 from <http://www.prontario.org/publishedarticles.html>.
- Fischer, L.R., & Schaffer, K.B. (1993). *Older volunteers: A guide to research and practice*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gibson, H.J. (2006). Leisure and later life: Past, present and future. *Leisure Studies*, 25, 397–401.
- Gibson, H.J., Ashton, S.C., Autry, C. (2003/2004). Leisure in the lives of retirement-aged women: Conversations about leisure and life. *Leisure/Loisir*, 28, 203–230.
- Gill, Z. (2006). *Older people and volunteering*. Adelaide, AUS: Office for Volunteers, Government of South Australia.
- Graham, C. (2003). *Formal volunteering by the elderly: Trends, benefits, and implications for managers*. Retrieved January 25, 2008, from <http://www.serviceleader.org/new/managers/2004/06/000240print.php>.



- Gratton, C., Nichols, G., Shibli, S., & Taylor, P. (1997). *Valuing volunteers in UK sport*. London: Sports Council.
- Hall, M., Lasby, D., Gumulka, G., & Tryon, C. (2006). *Highlights from the 2004 Canada survey of giving, volunteering, and participating*. Ottawa, ON, Canada: Statistics Canada.
- Herzog, A., House, J., & Morgan, J. (1990). *The relation of work activity to health and well-being among older Americans: Longitudinal analyses*. Research report. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Survey Research Center.
- Hill, K. (2006). *Older volunteering: Literature review*. Abingdon, UK: Volunteering in the Third Age.
- Iso-Ahola, S.E., Jackson, E., & Dunn, E. (1994). Starting, ceasing and replacing leisure activities over the life-span. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 26, 227-249.
- Janke, M., Davey, A., & Kleiber, D. (2006). Modeling change in older adults' leisure activities. *Leisure Sciences*, 28, 285-303.
- Kim, S., & Feldman, D.C. (2000). Working in retirement: Antecedents of bridge employment and its consequences for quality of life in retirement. *Academy of Management Journal*, 43, 1195-1211.
- Lasby, D. (2004). *The volunteer spirit in Canada: Motivations and barriers*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.
- Leisure Industries Research Centre [LIRC]. (2003). *Sports volunteering in England 2002*. Sheffield, UK: Leisure Industries Research Centre.
- Li, Y., & Ferraro, K.F. (2005). Volunteering and depression in later life: Social benefit or selection processes? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 46, 68-84.
- Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Lum, T.Y., & Lightfoot, E. (2005). The effects of volunteering on the physical and mental health of older people. *Research on Aging*, 27, 31-56.
- Misener, K., & Doherty, A. (2006). Older adult volunteers in sport: A new source of experience. *Proceedings of the 21st annual conference of the North American Society for Sport Management* (pp. 190-191). Kansas City, MI: NASSM.
- Morrow-Howell, N., Hinterlong, J., Rozario, P.A., & Tang, F. (2003). Effects of volunteering on the well-being of older adults. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 58B, S173-S180.
- Musick, M.A., Herzog, A.R., & House, J.S. (1999). Volunteering and mortality among older adults: Findings from a national sample. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 54B, S173-S180.
- Musick, M.A., & Wilson, J. (2003). Volunteering and depression: The role of psychological and social resources in different age groups. *Social Science and Medicine*, 56, 259-269.



- Nagchoudhuri, M., McBride, A.M., Thirupathy, P., Morrow-Howell, N., & Tang, F. (2005). Maximizing elder volunteerism and service: Access, incentives, and facilitation. *The Journal of Volunteer Administration, 23*, 11–14.
- Nichols, G., & King, L. (1999). Redefining the recruitment niche for the Guide Association in the United Kingdom. *Leisure Sciences, 21*, 307–320.
- Nimrod, G. (2007a). Retirees' leisure: Activities, benefits, and their contribution to life satisfaction. *Leisure Studies, 26*, 65–80.
- Nimrod, G. (2007b). Expanding, reducing, concentrating and diffusing: Post retirement leisure behavior and life satisfaction. *Leisure Sciences, 29*, 91–111.
- Okun, M.A., & Schultz, A. (2003). Age and motives for volunteering: Testing hypotheses derived from Socioemotional Selectivity Theory. *Psychology and Aging, 18*, 231–239.
- Oman, D., Thoresen, C., & McMahon, K. (1999). Volunteerism and mortality among the community-dwelling elderly. *Journal of Health Psychology, 4*, 301–316.
- Onyx, J., & Warburton, J. (2003). Volunteering and health among older people: A review. *Australasian Journal on Ageing, 22*, 65–69.
- Parsons, T. (1951). *The social system*. New York: Free Press.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peters-Davis, N.D., Burant, C.J., & Braunschweig, H.M. (2001). Factors associated with volunteering behavior among community dwelling individuals. *Activities, Adaptation, & Aging, 26*, 29–44.
- Reed, P.B., & Selbee, L.K. (2000). Distinguishing characteristics of active volunteers in Canada. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 29*, 571–592.
- Rochester, C., & Hutchison, R. (2002). *A review of the home office older volunteer initiative*. London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.
- Rook, K.S., & Sorkin, D.H. (2003). Fostering social ties through a volunteer role: Implications for older-adults' psychological health. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 57*, 313–337.
- Sasidharan, V., Payne, L., Orsega-Smith, E., & Godbey, G. (2006). Older adults' physical activity participation and perceptions of wellbeing: Examining the role of social support for leisure. *Managing Leisure, 11*, 164–185.
- Scott, J. (2001). *Social network analysis: A handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Smith, D. (2004). Volunteering in retirement: Perceptions of midlife workers. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 33*, 55–73.



- Smith, J.D., & Gay, P. (2005). *Active aging in active communities: Volunteering and the transition to retirement*. York, UK: Institute for Volunteering Research.
- Statistics Canada. (2008a). *Population and dwelling counts, for Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations, 2006 and 2001 censuses*. Retrieved November 28, 2008, from <http://www12.statcan.ca/English/census06/data/popdwel/tables.cfm>.
- Statistics Canada (2008b). *Age (123) and sex (3) for the population of Canada, provinces, territories and federal electoral districts (2003 Representation Order), 2006 Census*. Retrieved November 28, 2008 from <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/data/topics/index.cfm>.
- Stebbins, R.A. (2005). Inclination to participate in organized serious leisure: An exploration of the role of costs, rewards, and lifestyle. *Leisure/Loisir*, 29, 183–201.
- Van Willigen, M. (2000). Differential benefits of volunteering across the life course. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*, 55B, S308-S318.
- Warburton, J., Terry, D., Rosenman, L., & Shapiro, M. (2001). Differences between older volunteers and nonvolunteers: Attitudinal, normative, and control beliefs. *Research on Aging*, 23, 586–605.
- Wheeler, J.A., Gorey, K.M., & Greenblatt, B. (1998). The beneficial effects of volunteering for older volunteers and the people they serve: A meta-analysis. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 17, 69–79.