



VCU

Virginia Commonwealth University
VCU Scholars Compass

L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and
Public Affairs Publications

L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and
Public Affairs

2009

VCU Volunteers


Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute, Virginia Commonwealth University

James Mays
Virginia Commonwealth University

Jeanne McNeil
Virginia Commonwealth University

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/wilder_pubs

 Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Downloaded from

https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/wilder_pubs/31

This Research Report is brought to you for free and open access by the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs Publications by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact libcompass@vcu.edu.

Authors

Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute, Virginia Commonwealth University; James Mays; Jeanne McNeil; Lynn Pelco; Lisa Price-Stevens; Jamie Stillman; and Lydia Zirkle

VCU Volunteers

2009 Team Collaboration, Grace Harris Leadership Institute

Team Members:

- Dr. James Mays, College of Humanities and Sciences, Office of Student Services
- Ms. Jeanne McNeil, VCU Life Sciences
- Dr. Lynn Pelco, Division of Community Engagement
- Dr. Lisa Price-Stevens, Department of Internal Medicine
- Ms. Jamie Stillman, Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Ms. Lydia Zirkle, School of the Arts

Team Sponsor: Dr. Francis L. Macrina, Vice President for Research

Project Description:

VCU Volunteers follows VCU's history of developing mutually beneficial partnerships with the community and is supported by VCU 2020 Theme 5 – A model for community-university partnerships. *VCU Volunteers* will make VCU a better place to work by fostering a sense of belonging and pride in employees at all levels. The mission of *VCU Volunteers* is to build a collaborative employee community through the shared experience of volunteering. An employee-driven steering committee will guide the activities of the program. This committee will be chaired by an employee and will include representative membership from Human Resources – Work/Life Resources, Community Engagement, the VCU Caring to Act Calendar Committee, and departments throughout the University. The steering committee will develop guidelines and a volunteer handbook. Volunteer activity opportunities will be presented to the steering committee, vetted according to the guidelines, and publicized to employees.

Project Goals:

- ◆ Promote volunteerism and relationship building with the community and among University employees.
- ◆ Bring together employees from both campuses and varying disciplines to promote a culture of “community.”
- ◆ Actively promote program participation.
- ◆ Integrate with current VCU volunteerism programs campus-wide and improve communication of volunteer opportunities and guidelines.
- ◆ Develop a central location through which VCU volunteerism can be accessed and managed by steering committee members, employees and department administrators.

Strategies:

Based on empirical research, the U.S. federal government (through its Corporation for National & Community Service) provides the following ten Critical Success Factors for an Employee Volunteer Program (EVP). Team Collaboration focused on addressing each of these factors in order to set the foundation for a successful project.

1. Develop a value or mission statement
2. Set goals and objectives
3. Generate management buy-in and support
4. Establish formal policies and guidelines
5. Establish a formal program structure
6. Dedicate resources
7. Develop a communications plan
8. Plan, organize and conduct activities
9. Reward and recognize participants
10. Measure and evaluate your success

10. Measure and evaluate your success

Action Steps:

Team Collaboration

- ◆ met as a group to identify, develop, and plan our project during GEHLI activities, the GEHLI retreat, and in monthly team meetings
- ◆ conducted a Web search for exemplary employee volunteer programs (EVPs), identified published research articles related to quality standards in EVPs, and posted the results on Blackboard for group review and reference
- ◆ conducted more in-depth research on the following organizations' EVP programs:
 - CarMax (visit)
 - Genworth (visit)
 - McGuireWoods (phone interview)
- ◆ conducted research on the Virginia Community Service Leave (CSL) policies and practices of the Commonwealth of Virginia and state universities, including:
 - VCU
 - University of Virginia
 - Virginia Tech
 - James Madison
- ◆ met with our team sponsor, Dr. Francis L. Macrina.
- ◆ met with Dr. Catherine W. Howard, Vice Provost for Community Engagement
- ◆ organized accumulated data according to the 10 Critical Success Factors from the Corporation for National and Community Service
- ◆ developed an overview of VCU Volunteers and a plan for implementation

Outcomes:

A high quality employee volunteer program at VCU would

- ◆ provide a consistent source of knowledge about ongoing service initiatives and opportunities;
- ◆ establish an employee-driven steering committee/advisory board for developing new ideas/programs;
- ◆ create a pool of employee volunteers for community & university service activities; and
- ◆ foster a culture of "community" among employees from varying employee classes, disciplines, and campuses.

Recommendations:

In order to bring this project to fruition a designated team should

- ◆ discuss the project with potential stakeholders (i.e., Community Engagement, Work/Life Resources, etc.);
- ◆ determine where the program will be housed;
- ◆ establish an employee-driven steering committee/advisory board to determine the guidelines and structure of the program; and
- ◆ create a program budget based on directives from the steering committee.

2009 TEAM COLLABORATION

Members: Dr. James Mays, College of Humanities and Sciences

Ms. Jeanne McNeil, VCU Life Sciences

Dr. Lynn Pelco, Division of Community Engagement

Dr. Lisa Price-Stevens, Preoperative Assessment Communication Education
Center (PACE)

Ms. Jamie Stillman, Office of the Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

Ms. Lydia Zirkle, School of the Arts

Team Sponsor: Dr. Francis L. Macrina, Vice President for Research

Our Project

2

VCU Volunteers:
Engaging Employees through Service



Rationale

3

- It's a VCU Tradition
 - ▣ Serving the needs of the community
 - ▣ VCU 2020 – Theme 5 – A model for community-university partnerships (Division of Community Engagement)
- It makes VCU a better place to work
 - ▣ Sense of belonging
 - ▣ Pride
- Lexicon: EMPLOYEES – not faculty and staff
 CO-WORKERS – not hierarchical

Process

4



Critical Success Factors for an Employee Volunteer Program (EVP)

1. Develop a value or mission statement
2. Set goals and objectives
3. Generate management buy-in and support
4. Establish formal policies and guidelines
5. Establish a formal program structure
6. Dedicate Resources
7. Develop a Communications Plan
8. Plan, Organize and conduct activities
9. Reward and Recognize Participants
10. Measure and Evaluate your success

1. Mission Statement

5

To build a **collaborative employee community** through the **shared experience of volunteering.**



2. Set Goals and Objectives

6

Goal 1: promote volunteerism and relationship building with the community and among fellow University employees

Goal 2: Bring together employees from the varying disciplines and campuses -- promote a culture of “community.”

Goal 3: actively promote program participation

Goal 4: Integrate current VCU volunteerism programs campus-wide as a means to improved communication of volunteer opportunities and guidelines.

Goal 5: Develop a central location by which volunteerism at VCU can be accessed and managed by the employees, as well as, by department administrators.

3. Management buy-in and support

7

- a) VCU 2020 Theme 5
- b) Benefits of Supporting Civic Engagement/Volunteering
- c) Lasting Outcomes

a) VCU 2020 – Theme 5: A model for community-university partnerships

8

- Initiative 1: Enhance and extend a culture of community engagement within all campus units by:
 - Drawing from the strength of diversity of the faculty, staff, administrators and students to develop community engagement initiatives that are reflective of the community.
 - Restructuring and elevating an infrastructure that facilitates and supports University-community partnerships.
 - Recognizing faculty and staff for community engagement activities.
 - Creating mechanisms for soliciting community input and disseminating knowledge and opportunities.

b) Benefits of Supporting Civic Engagement / Volunteering

9

- Benefits to the University
 - Increases employee morale, loyalty, and productivity
 - Enhances/increases employee recruitment and retention
 - Improves relations between administration and faculty/staff

- Benefits to the Employees
 - Builds sense of community/belonging
 - Reduces stress and increases morale
 - Expands networking/teamwork within the university

- Benefits to the Community
 - Renewed spirit of citizenship and civic pride
 - Healthier place to work and live
 - Provides source of talents and ideas to meet community needs
 - Opens lines of communication among various segments of the community

c) Lasting Outcomes

10

- An established source of knowledge about ongoing service initiatives and opportunities

- Employee-driven advisory board for new ideas/programs

- Pool of employee volunteers for community & university service activities
 - student move-in, commencement, special initiatives

- Culture of “community” among employees without the barriers of rank, disciplines and campuses.

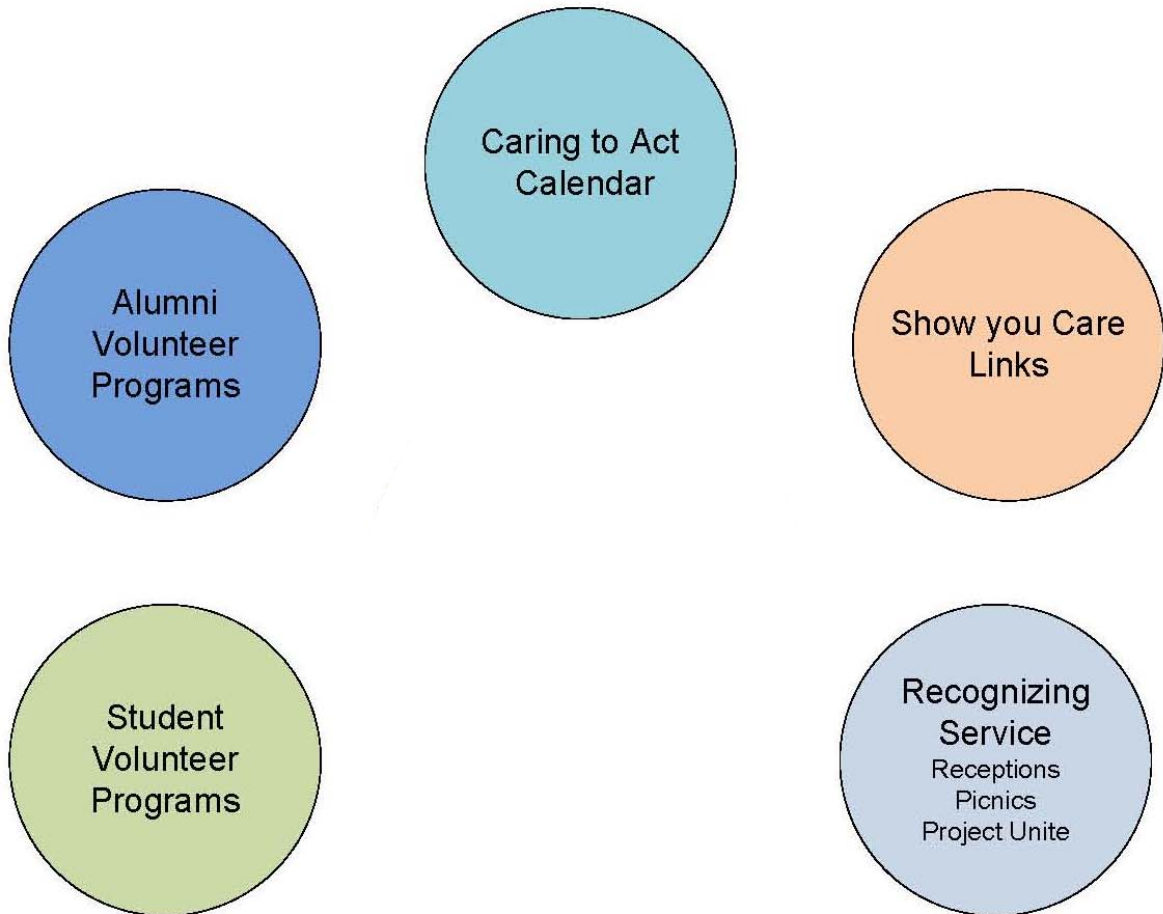
4. Policies and Guidelines

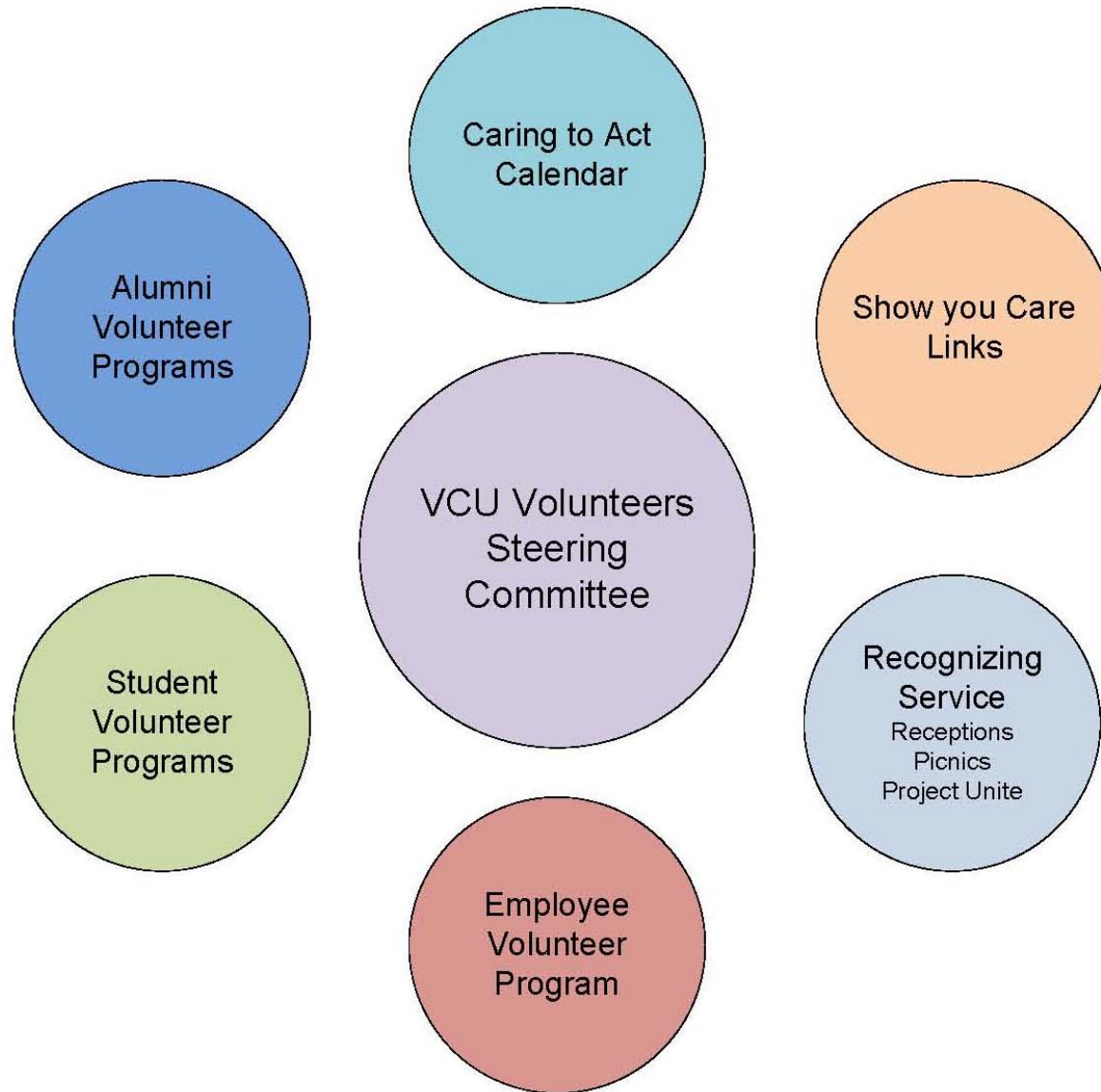
- **Commonwealth of Virginia Policy: School Assistance and Volunteer Service Leave**
 - Est. July 2001-- permits (or, in the case of volunteer fire and rescue service, requires) agencies to grant employees up to 16 hours of time off with pay per leave calendar year to provide volunteer services through eligible non-profit organizations within or outside their communities.
- **VCU Policy: Community Service Leave**
 - Provides faculty and staff (with or without children) with paid leave each calendar year to meet with school officials about their children, to attend school functions in which their children are participating, to perform school-approved volunteer work in a public school, or to participate in volunteer community service organizations. In July 1, 2009, CSL increased by 8 hours for employees serving as volunteer firefighters and/or rescue service members.
- **Different Policy for VCU Health System (PTO Leave Policy)**

5. Establish Formal Program Structure

12

- VCU Volunteers Steering Committee
 - Membership:
 - Employee Chair
 - Representatives from HR Work/Life Resources and Community Engagement
 - Representative from VCU Caring to Act Calendar Committee
 - Representatives from throughout the University*
 - Responsibilities:
 - Coordinate with Caring to Act Calendar Committee (100 Volunteers or More)
 - Vet and support volunteer activities for smaller groups (based on Committee developed criteria)
 - Communicate opportunities to employees
 - Coordinate activities (see Success Factor #8)
 - Volunteer tracking and employee recognition





6. Dedicate Resources

15

- Resources = People + Funding
 - Administration support
 - Steering Committee

7. Communications Plan

Goals:

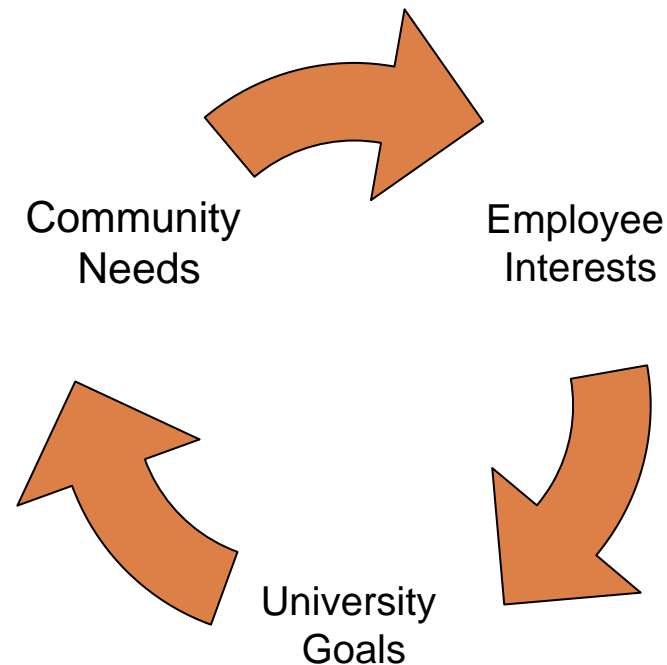
- ❑ To announce the establishment of the employee volunteer program to all VCU employees.
- ❑ To provide on-going visibility of the program.
- ❑ To encourage and recognize employee participation.

Audiences	Messages	Methods
All Employees – faculty, staff, full-time, part-time, administrative and professional, teaching and research.	Learn how to be more involved in the community, meet co-workers from across the University and have fun – come to a VCU Volunteers information session.	E-mail, social networking sites, VCU Web homepage, Work-Life Resources Web page, Vendor Fairs, etc.
Leadership – VPs, Deans, Faculty & Staff Senates, Supervisors, BOV	Your participation is key. Volunteering as a team boosts employee morale.	Face-to-face meetings and presentations.
Community Organizations	VCU Volunteers are here to help.	Traditional media and “new” media.

8. Plan, Organize and Conduct Activities

17

- Who – Steering Committee
- What, When, Where and Why – Motivation (Group, Individual, Issue)
- How -- Handbook



9. Reward and Recognize

18

- The following best practices are recommended for recognizing VCU employees who volunteer through the EVP
 - Verbal and written thank-you
 - VCU Web site space dedicated to EVP mission & accomplishments.
 - Annual “Currents of Change” awards and awards reception to honor a small number of outstanding individuals & departments.
 - Celebrations

10. Measure and Evaluate

19

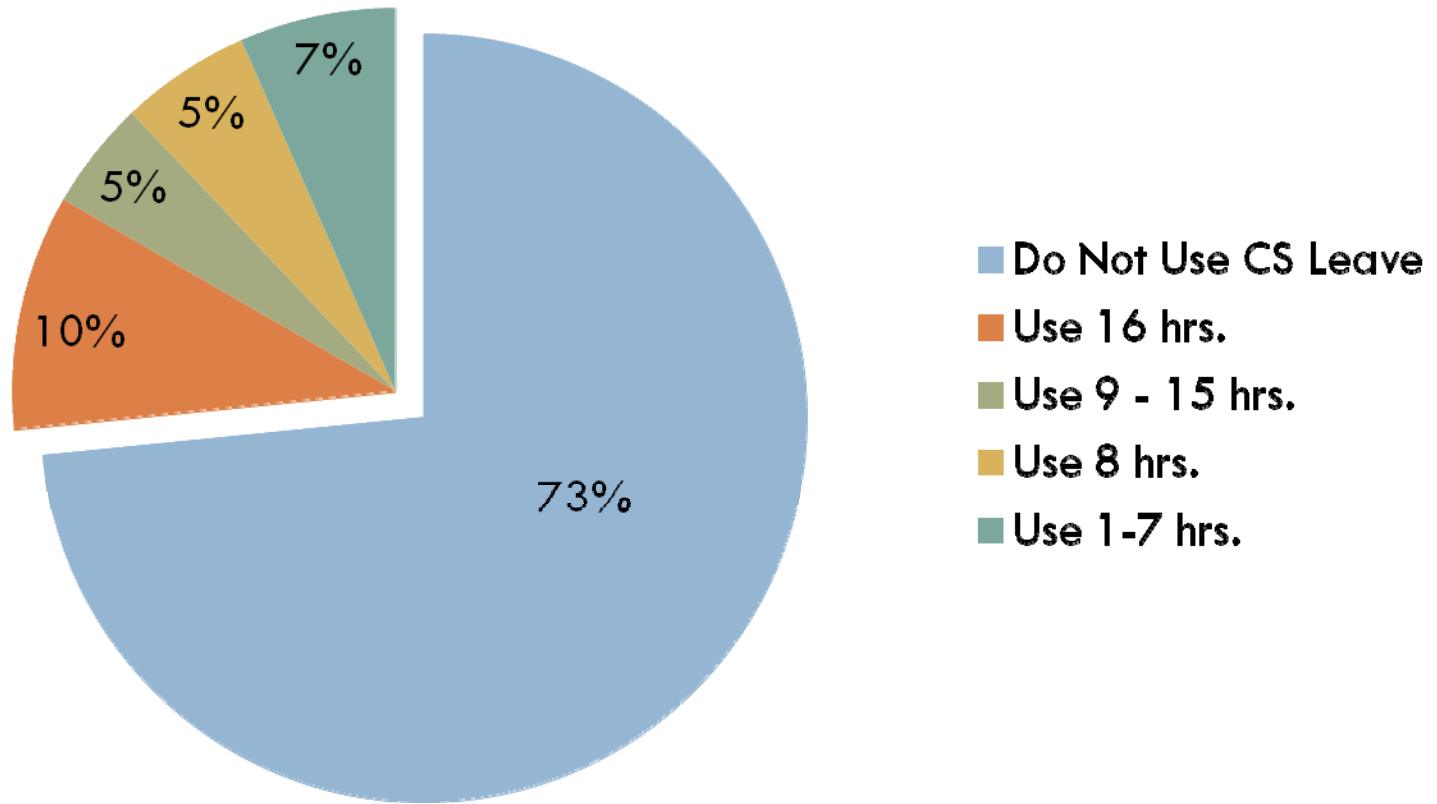
- a) Employee Participation/Satisfaction
- b) Social Return on Investment

a) Employee Participation/Satisfaction

20

- Number/hours/percentage of employees involved in community service and volunteering through EVP
 - Reporting Form
- Use of VCU Community Service Leave*
 - Number of employees
 - Number of Hours used
 - Purpose/Activity
- Employee Climate

Current Use of Community Service Leave (Both Campuses)



b) Social Return on Investment

22

- Define measurable outcomes prior to event with community partner
- Monitor progress/outcomes over a specified time period
 - ▣ keep track of hours & dollars in relation to desired outcomes (collaborative effort)
 - ▣ dollars raised, or dollar value of work provided
- *Are outcomes worth the effort?*

Vision

23

Disconnected employees

Various Internal and External Community Projects



Engaged employees making a difference in our community

Conclusion: Next Steps

24

- Discuss this idea with key stakeholders
- Determine where VCU Volunteers would be housed
- Instigate the establishment of a steering committee

- Your thoughts?

Special Thanks to

25

- ▣ CarMax (Trina Lee and Sharon Handey)
- ▣ Genworth (Amy Robinson)
- ▣ McGuireWoods

- ▣ VCU
 - Dr. Cathy Howard
 - Ms. Debra Fitzgerald, Ms. Kawana Pace-Harding and Ms. Sue Story
 - Dr. Frank Macrina
 - Each of our mentors