

Volunteers at the Core: Driving Organizational Change



2026 US Aging Conference
Heather Fortune, Carol Ayars, & Shana Beverly

We are ... Heather. Carol. Shana.

Heather Fortune, BS ... Vice President of Advocacy and Engagement ... 8 years at The Span Center and working with volunteers

Carol Ayars, CVA ... AmeriCorps Seniors Programs Manager ... 5 years at The Span Center ... Over 25 years in the Volunteer Engagement Profession

Shana Beverly, CVA ... Volunteer Services and TeleBridges Manager Over 22 years at The Span Center and in the Volunteer Engagement Profession



Our Agency

The Span Center, the Capital Area Agency on Aging, offers a comprehensive range of Home and Community-Based Services for older adults, caregivers and persons with disabilities in the **City of Richmond and the counties of Charles City, Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, New Kent, and Powhatan.**





Laying the Foundation



Creating a Stable Foundation through a Shared Love of Volunteerism

1 Agency – Multiple Programs

We were separate entities, like multiple islands in the ocean.

Although it had been tried through the years, nothing worked to connect the AmeriCorps Seniors Programs and Volunteer Programs. Other programs, although under the Volunteer Programs, still acted independently. Ideas were thought out, but it never “clicked”.

*No man is an island, Entire of itself;
Every man is a piece of a continent, a part of the main.
John Donne*





2 CVAs – 1 Friendship

July 2021, everything changed!

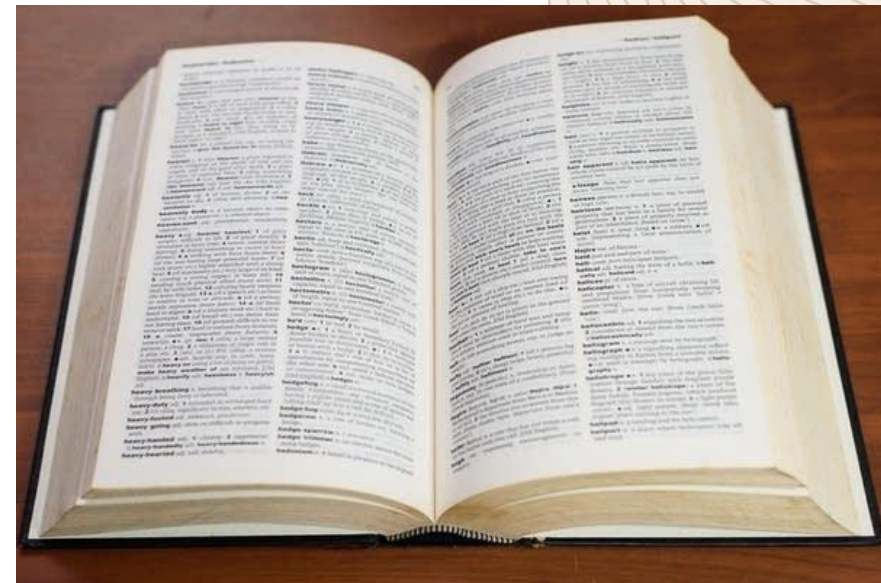
Shana and Carol , both CVAs, had a connection that was the catalyst that started the change needed to give volunteerism at The Span Center a bigger voice. They became a united front.



Words have Meaning

Often changing words changes perceptions which can change everything.

- ♥ Volunteer Coordinator ➡ Manager
- ♥ Volunteer Programs ➡ Volunteer Services
- ♥ Seniors ➡ Older Adults



An Updated Brand

We rebranded as **The Span Center** to more closely align with our expanded vision and evolving goals. For **over 50 years**, we've spanned the gaps in aging services, spanned generations, and spanned across The Capital Area.

Whether someone is seeking support, guidance, services, or simply wants to stay connected to our community, we are here to support older adults, caregivers, people living with disabilities, and their families every step of the way.





Building a Framework

Building Bridges that increased Resources and Supports to Volunteers and Staff



What is Service Enterprise Accreditation?

Individual Achievements



Volunteer
Engagement
Professionals



Accounting
Professionals

Organizational Achievement



Organizations that
strategically engage
volunteers to meet
their mission.

Is Service Enterprise Right for You?

Does this sound like your organization?



Capacity Challenges

Demand is growing faster than staff resources.

"We need additional capacity."



Siloed Programs

Programs work independently rather than as one organization.

"This was The Span Center in 2021."



Sustainable Results

Need measurable outcomes and long-term effectiveness.

"We want systems, not quick fixes."



Untapped Volunteer Talent

Volunteers have skills and expertise that are not fully utilized.

"We know volunteers can do more."



Growth Without More Budget

Need to expand impact while maintaining financial responsibility.

"How do we serve more people?"



Culture Change

Ready to rethink how volunteers support the mission.

"Volunteerism becomes everyone's responsibility."

An Agency Changing Journey



A Service Enterprise is an organization that **strategically leverages volunteers** to achieve operational efficiency and greater social impact.

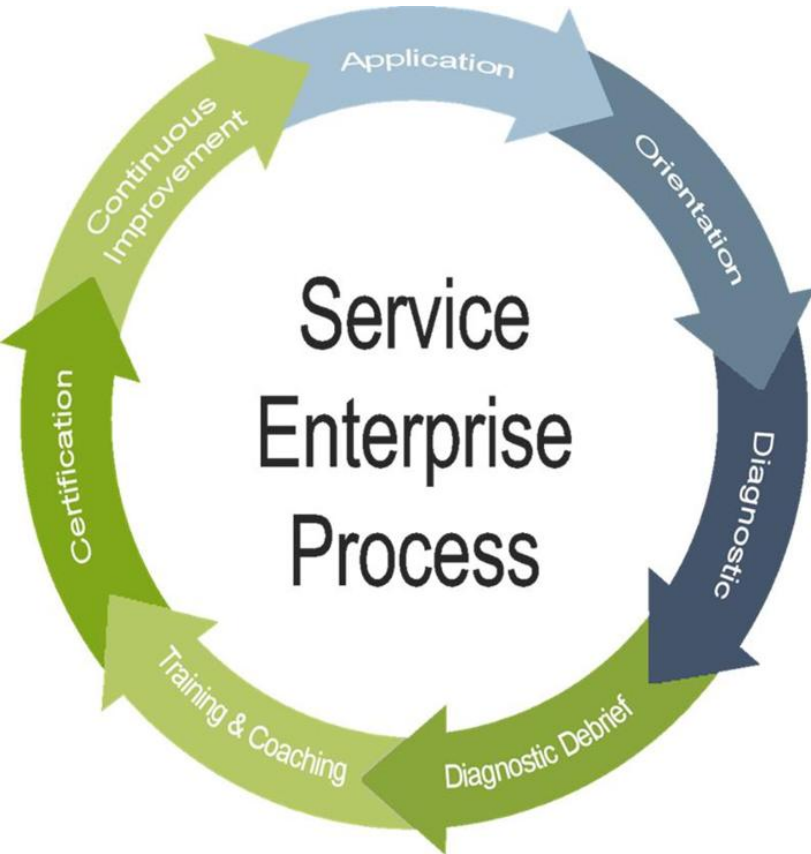
Over 80% of Service Enterprises report they had an **increase in total volunteers** and **skills-based volunteers** and **over 60%** increase in volunteer hours.

Backed by Research

Research shows that organizations operating as Service Enterprises are as effective as peers but at almost half the median budget and are significantly more adaptable, sustainable, and scalable.

For every \$1 an organization invests in strategic volunteer engagement, they can expect \$3-6 return on investment.

How the Framework Works



Guided Transformation Process

Diagnostic → Training → Coaching → Implementation

This aligned our organization around best practices in volunteer engagement



Accreditation Standard

We were required to demonstrate excellence in 9 of the 12 characteristics
Recognition reflects organization-wide commitment and performance



Leadership at the Table

Required executive-level engagement to drive true organizational change

Our Service Enterprise Journey

Before Service Enterprise vs After Service Enterprise



Before	After
Separate volunteer efforts	Unified volunteer services
Informal practices	Shared standards
Limited volunteer visibility	Volunteers on organization chart
Program-level recognition	Agency-wide recognition
Isolated communication	The Volunteer Connection newsletter
Limited volunteer influence	Volunteer Committee



Service Enterprise in Action

“Engaging in the accreditation process with Service Enterprise Diagnostic led us to consolidate the numerous volunteer programs at our agency into one. Doing so was efficient and effective, enhanced the volunteer services we offered, and greatly improved the experience of our volunteers as they now have a far greater sense of belonging. At every level of the agency there is now better communication and cooperation, increased support for volunteers and those they serve, all of which are more reflective of best practices and our values.”

Amy Strite, CEO of The Span Center

From Islands to Bridges: Our Journey

Foundation → Carol & Shana

Framework → Service Enterprise

Champions → LOVs

Vision → Volunteer Engagement Vision

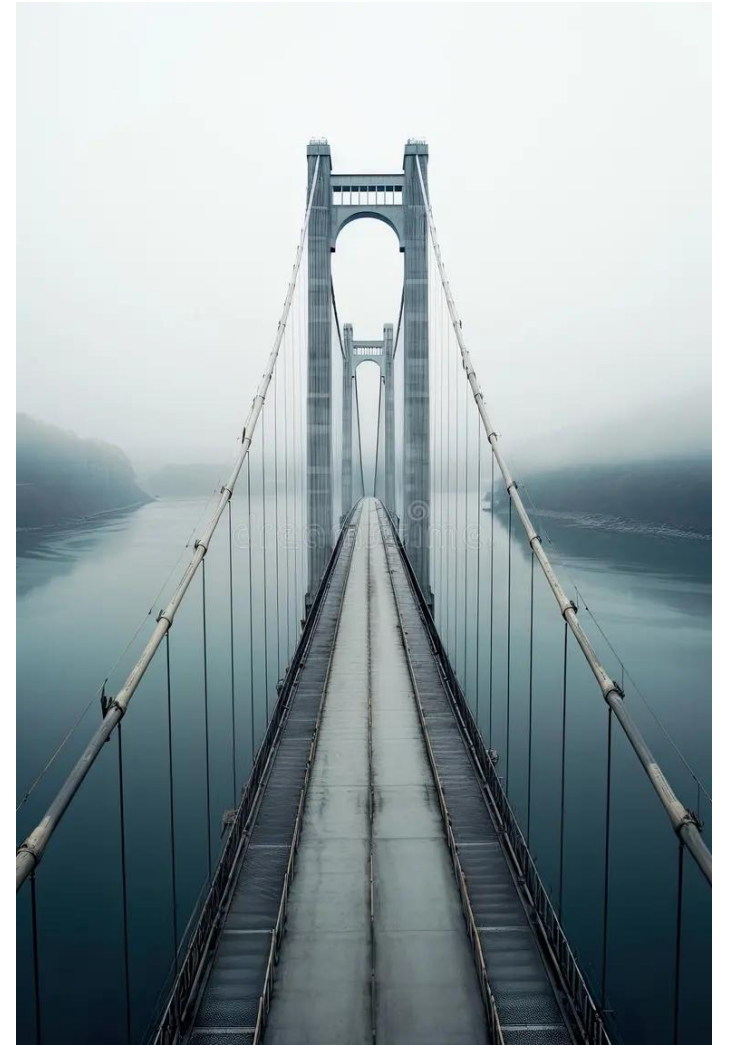
Voice → Volunteer Committee

Growth → Expanding Staffing

Recognition → Accreditation

Destination → Volunteers at the Core

Every journey begins with a single step. Laozi



Champions Make Change Possible

Anyone who engaged volunteers in their work was brought together under the Leaders of Volunteers (LOVs) title.

- ☞ It recognizes staff that work with volunteers.
- ☞ It amplifies the volunteers' voice through a united presence.
- ☞ Training is offered through GRAVA and ALIVE memberships. Also, webinar trainings.

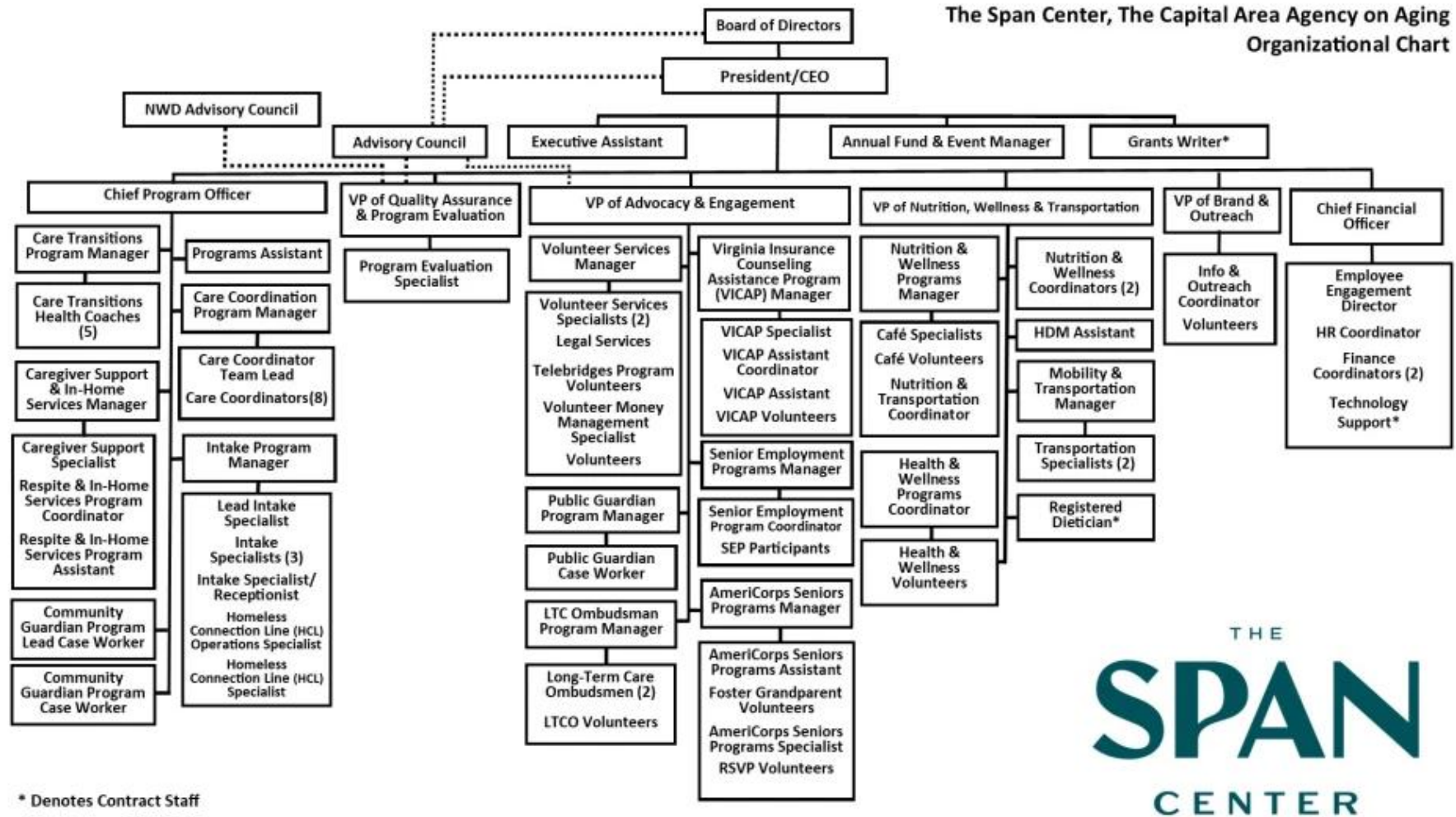


A Renewed Vision

Our vision is to provide person-centered, trauma-informed, foundational support that inspires committed individuals to engage in innovative and collaborative activities that further support our Agency's mission.



An Updated View of Volunteerism



A Voice for Our Clients

Volunteers have been empowered to be the voice of those they serve. They are advocates to the staff on behalf of the clients.



Volunteers as Leaders

An existing volunteer that found a new love in Senior Medical Patrol. He and his LOV created a new initiative...developing leadership within the volunteer programs. He now is sought after by the state, even.





Applying a Facelift

Staying Flexible to Remain Current with Changing Needs



Dedicated Volunteer Engagement Staff & Space

Volunteers have a voice in where and how they want to volunteer with our agency.

With this expanded voice, more staff is needed to give the volunteers the flexibility they want, and our agency needs. Volunteer Services went from a staff of one to three.

The Volunteer Services Specialist onboards the new volunteers. The two Specialists also support office volunteers in the Volunteer Hub.



The Inside Scoop

From individual program newsletters to a unified, all-agency newsletter, The Volunteer Connection, or affectionately called TVC.

A new volunteer role was created to write articles for TVC. She shares the voices of the volunteers, the LOVs, and the programs.

Each issue of TVC offers an opportunity for volunteers to share their voice.



The
Volunteer —
Connection
— **The Inside Scoop**

A Collection of Voices



Appreciation is Fundamental

Recognition communicates that volunteers are valued contributors to our mission.



You're the Core of Our Success!



BOUNTIFUL HARVEST



From April 2023 – March 2024

350 Volunteers served
48,545.75 hours
across 29 programs &
cafés



A Year-Round Affair

Recognition is not an event. It's part of our culture.



Volunteering is About Connecting Communities



Volunteers Connect

- ✓ People to Services
- ✓ Programs to Resources
- ✓ Staff to Community
- ✓ Generations to One Another
- ✓ Mission to Impact



Volunteers are the bridge between mission and community.

Rooted in Service Powered by Purpose Our Volunteer Superheroes



Evolving Volunteer Technology

Building on volunteer-led innovation, we are ready for the next technology evolution.

PAST: PROGRESS



Volunteer Innovation

A volunteer created tools that strengthened programs.

CURRENT: REALITY



Technology in Action

Technology supports volunteers and expands capacity.

NEXT: EVOLUTION



Future Evolution

Modernize systems, improve coordination, and better demonstrate impact.

Your Voice Counts

Volunteers are encouraged to share their voice through surveys and listening sessions.

- ✧ Area Plan
- ✧ Annual Satisfaction Surveys
- ✧ Volunteer Appreciation Event Surveys
- ✧ Volunteer/Client Surveys
- ✧ Informally ... open-door policy to share with LOVs



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Lessons Learned

Culture Change Starts with Relationships

Leadership Buy-In Matters

Volunteer Engagement is Everyone's Responsibility

Small Changes Create Big Results

Volunteers Should Be Part of the Conversation

Find Us On



For more information about Service Enterprise



Empowering Leaders, Elevating Volunteerism



Final Thoughts

Do the Leader(s) of Volunteers in your organization have a voice and if so, how much?

Where do your volunteers already have influence decisions or provide valuable insight?

Who are your champions that can help volunteers have more of a voice?

Find Us On



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Connect with Us

Heather Fortune ... hfortune@spancenter.org

Carol Ayars ... cayars@spancenter.org

Shana Beverly ... sbeverly@spancenter.org

Find Us On



Thank you for spending
time with us!

