
FOREWORD

After retiring from a 20-year career as a credit union manager, Jeanne House began to explore her options. She became a docent at the Star Spangled Banner Museum, then began working on a research project with the United Methodist Women to understand why children fail in school.

“One day a letter came to my home, announcing the need for tutors in local schools,” Jeanne explains. “I thought, ‘Why is this coming to me?’ And then I knew—the right place for me was in the classroom, helping children to succeed.”

Jeanne joined Experience Corps, a national program that engages people over 55 in solving society’s greatest challenges, beginning with literacy. Jeanne joined to try her hand at helping struggling students learn to read, but, like many other Experience Corps members, she got hooked. She’s been working in Baltimore schools with 300 other Experience Corps members for four years now, accepting more responsibility—for the success of the students and the program—each year.

“I listen to the children, really listen. I know that if you let a child feel that someone really cares, they will learn,” Jeanne says. “And I know that if I am helping one child, it makes all the difference.”

Jeanne’s story says so much about Baby Boomers and twenty-first-century volunteering. She was searching for greater fulfillment and purpose in her life. She wanted to continue to grow and learn. She wanted to make a real, measurable difference. And she wanted to use her talents to solve big problems, to leave a mark on her world and on the next generation.

Nonprofit leaders, concerned by a slide in the number of dedicated volunteers, can learn so much from Jeanne—and from this terrific book.

Boomer Volunteer Engagement: Collaborate Today, Thrive Tomorrow makes a vital connection between the desire of Boomers for social purpose and the need of nonprofits to survive and thrive. This guidebook provides a map for nonprofits that want to move beyond the limits of staff-driven organizations. It explains exactly how to transform volunteer roles to engage Boomers and how to keep them interested.

Those who adopt the principles in this book will help create a new model for the second half of life, but more important, they will reap the benefits of Boomer energy, experience, and talent to meet their missions. They will reach more children, build more affordable homes, treat more sick people, and engage more allies to support their work. They will be better positioned to succeed.

I salute the authors of this book. With nearly 10,000 Boomers turning 60 every day, *Boomer Volunteer Engagement* comes not a moment too soon. There's a new workforce for social change out there, just waiting to be engaged.

Jeanne House knew when she was in the right place. If you're reading this book now, you've found the right place, too.

—Marc Freedman
Founder and CEO of Civic Ventures,
and Co-founder of The Purpose Prize and
Experience Corps