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Their Lessons: inspiring Stories of Ten Retired African American Volunteers Serving the Augusta, Georgia, Community

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ABSTRACT

THEIR LESSONS: INSPIRING STORIES OF TEN RETIRED AFRICAN AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS SERVING THE AUGUSTA, GEORGIA, COMMUNITY

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Northern Illinois University, 2021
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African Americans found ways to respond to the needs of their communities as volunteers when they were denied many services available to White citizens. Opportunities to volunteer were provided both formally and informally through churches, sororities, fraternities and other organizations. Many families would not have been able to afford care for their children and/or elderly family members had it not been for other members of their family and friends volunteering to provide the needed services. Growing up in the early fifties, before starting to school, my first caregiver was Mr. Allen, an elderly man. His wife, who worked from home as a seamstress, was available to assist him when needed. Another neighbor and stay-at-home mother cared for both my brother and me because my family members all had jobs and were not available to help my mother with the younger children who were not yet school age.

Ten retired African Americans – five women and five men – were asked to share their experiences as volunteers in the Augusta, Georgia, community. They discussed what motivated or inspired them to choose to engage in volunteer service as retirees. They shared experiences regarding the challenges they faced in their service and offered words of encouragement to future volunteers. Implications for future research are explored because of the lack of published recognition of African American volunteers in the Augusta, Georgia, community and other communities around the country.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
DEKALB, ILLINOIS

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THEIR LESSONS: INSPIRING STORIES OF TEN RETIRED AFRICAN AMERICAN
VOLUNTEERS SERVING THE AUGUSTA, GEORGIA, COMMUNITY

BY

GWENDOLYN BENTLEY CLAYBORNE
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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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Dissertation Director:
LaVerne Gyant

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To those it was my pleasure to meet while at Northern Illinois University, particularly the staff in the Adult Education Department program, I would like to express my deepest appreciation. Dr. John Niemi was the first member of the faculty from the university I met. He had traveled from DeKalb, Illinois, to the Great Lakes Naval Base in Waukegan, Illinois, a 3- to 4-hour round trip, to recruit potential students for the university's graduate program. For years, I have often wondered why I chose to make the long trip after work and sometimes on the weekend when there were a number of graduate programs much closer to my home and place of employment. The answer that constantly came to mind was the humble man who had gone to so much trouble to invite me and many others to consider applying to Northern Illinois University's graduate program.

To the faculty from whom I received much assistance and encouragement, I say a sincere, "Thank you." To my committee, I will always be deeply grateful for the time and advice given me that enabled me to complete this work. I feel especially grateful to Dr. LaVerne Gyant and Ms. Gail Jacky, who provided guidance and encouragement during the final stage of my journey. Finally, to the 10 exemplary volunteers I have had the good fortune of getting to know, I say, "Take your bow. You are truly a blessing to the citizens of Augusta."

DEDICATION

With a grateful heart, I want to dedicate this work to my deceased parents, Ruby Key Bentley and John C. Bentley, and to thank my wonderful family, my husband David and my children: Kenneth, Scott, and Jocelyn, who have seemed so very proud of me from the day I began this journey and insisted that I keep going. I sincerely hope I have been a good example to them in whatever worthy endeavors they choose to take on in life. To my sisters: Bess, Ruth, Pat, Esther; my brother Clarence; and other relatives and friends, you will never know how much I appreciate being able to call you my biological or spiritual family. Your words of encouragement have meant the world to me. There are those who are no longer with us, but they are often remembered in my thoughts and prayers for their kindness and support during the early days of my research.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Growing up in a Christian and Bahá'í family, I learned the importance of service to others. Bahá'ís are asked to “be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in” (Baha'u'llah, 2005, p. 213). By observing my mother, who always looked for opportunities to help those in need, I learned that work and service on behalf of others is a form of worship. My first formal volunteer service was for the YWCA in New Haven, Connecticut, and from there I continued to seek opportunities to volunteer in both formal and informal settings while in college. I learned that what seemed to be a small act of kindness to some made a big difference to the recipient. This was demonstrated in a speech that Dr. King gave at the Stanford University Education Institute. Dr. King's statement that everyone can be great because everyone can be of service to others helped me to understand why volunteering is important.

Although I had volunteered for years, it was not until I had the opportunity to meet a homeless man who assisted me with the care of my 86-year-old uncle that I understood Dr. King's statement. When I thanked Theodore for helping me with my uncle, he responded that he might someday need somebody's help himself. Several years later, I spoke to an elderly woman who lived on the street where Theodore continues to occupy an abandoned house; she told me that he makes sure she has cold water every morning and with a walker he goes to a nearby gas station to purchase food and other items for her whenever she needs him. When I passed

Theodore on the street, he confirmed that he does what he can do to be of assistance to her. I could see in his face and eyes how delighted he was to help Mrs. Hobbs in whatever way she might need his help. Whenever I run into Theodore and ask how he is doing, he always responds, “I am blessed.” Recently, he assured me that my husband and I would be remembered in prayer when I informed him that we both were recovering from surgery.

More than a decade ago, my husband and I began thinking about where we wanted to live once we reached retirement age. We knew we wanted to live in a warm climate where the cost of living was less than where we had lived for 36 years on the North Shore of Chicago. After considering several southern cities, we decided on Augusta, Georgia. We felt it was important to settle in a place where we had family and friends already living there. I knew a retired couple who had moved to the Southwest and before long returned to the Chicago area because they found it difficult to meet others socially and avoid a feeling of isolation. For decades, Augusta had a very rich history of volunteerism and a number of volunteers who have made exemplary contribution to the greater Augusta community.

Volunteerism

Many individuals appeared to enjoy serving as volunteers, and some were passionate about their chosen field of service. A volunteer is defined as a person who provides a service of his own free will without payment. In a commencement address given by Denzel Washington at the University of Pennsylvania (2011), he appealed to the graduating class to put service to others at the top of their future plans and endeavors. He explained that by doing so it would bring the kind of satisfaction that no other service or achievements would bring. He went on to state that ownership of a home, a car or any material possessions will not be as rewarding to them as

service to their fellow man. He stated that one's possessions are things no one will be able to carry with us when we pass on and he had never seen a hearse pulling a U-Haul. These simple words can inform one's thinking about issues regarding their purpose in life.

Volunteerism is not new in the African American community. Many have found that it is a way of giving back to their communities and helps those they serve live healthier and more productive lives. For example, African Americans often provide services, such as child care or caring for elderly parents, that result in significant savings for those who might otherwise have to pay for these services. Many mothers would not be able to return to work if it were not for family members or friends who make it possible for them to do so. Stack (1983) stated that these services have been done in the African American community for many years as a way to help each other survive.

Retired Volunteers

Retirees volunteer for various reasons. For some seniors it is an opportunity for part-time employment (Chambre, 1984; Herzog & Morgan in 1993). For others, it is seen as a source of unpaid labor and because seniors are often reported to suffer from a feeling of isolation, volunteering provides opportunities to meet others who appreciate and value their contributions.

Gottlieb and Gillespie (2008) studied the importance of older adults continuing to offer volunteer service. They noted that the well-being of senior citizens is enhanced when they associate with other volunteers; they feel valued and needed and their health and morale improve. Kerschner and Rousseau (2008) found that older volunteers who provide transportation for their peers experienced a great deal of satisfaction and provided valuable knowledge related to the transportation needs of the elderly. Research by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013)

found that there are definite health benefits as a result of increased physical, social and mental activities. These activities lead to the reduction of blood pressure and a feeling of isolation. These health benefits are especially important to those who reside in rural areas and do not drive or drive on a limited basis.

Chambre (1993) noted a dramatic increase in those over 70 participating in government-sponsored initiatives, such as Foster Grandparents and Senior Companion programs. McGuckin's (1998) research confirmed that senior citizens are becoming a force in the volunteer community and pointed out that older workers who volunteer tend to be more reliable and disciplined in their work. This is important because retirees serve as good role models for young people. It also has implications for recruitment initiatives for volunteer positions that serve the elderly population. Volunteers may have a great deal to offer those who come after them and who may have an interest in volunteering.

Problem Statement

Minimal research has been done on the experiences and involvement of African Americans in community service or volunteerism. Yet there is evidence that for more than 100 years African Americans have volunteered through their churches, sororities, fraternities and organizations such as the NAACP and United Way. This study examined what motivates African Americans volunteers to dedicate their time and resources to volunteerism, particularly when they retire. The telling of their stories is a way of understanding why they volunteer and how they were transformed. Studying the lives of these individuals will tell us how they were able to lead purposeful lives, make significant contributions to their community, and add to the history of the Black experience in the arena of volunteerism.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What motivated these retirees to engage in volunteer service opportunities?
2. What challenges have these retirees faced by volunteering?
3. How have their lives been transformed by their service?
4. What words of encouragement do they give others about volunteering

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore why African Americans volunteer after they retire and what they perceive as their contribution to the community and their own lives. I believe it is of great value to understand how volunteering benefits retired African Americans. Through this study, I hoped to learn whether they believed they were able to make a difference in the lives of those they have or are currently serving. I expected to gain a greater understanding of why these participants chose to dedicate their time and resources to volunteering. This study explored the experiences, motivation, and impact of African Americans volunteers in the Augusta, Georgia, community.

Methodology

Oral history is very much a part of the African American experience; therefore, it was felt that the best method for this research would be the narrative inquiry method, which according to Merriam (1998) makes clear what the researcher wants to achieve and how it will be done. In addition, it allows the participants to share their lived experiences as phenomenologists would

suggest, revealing essential themes in the participants' own words as recalled by them. They are able to tell the story of what motivated them to choose volunteer service over other endeavors and how they themselves were transformed by serving their community. Volunteerism in the United States provides a rich source of history regarding how Americans for decades valued voluntarily serving others as a part of a proud heritage and culture.

Summary

Volunteering has been a part of the American cultures for decades. Many volunteers were inspired by their beliefs that it was the Christian thing to do for their fellow man. It continues to be a source of inspiration to those who engage in this type of service. There has been little research done on volunteering by African Americans. The purpose of the research was to understand what motivated African Americans to choose this path of service as opposed to other types of activities after retiring. Narrative inquiry was the method chosen because it allowed the volunteers to tell their stories in their own words.

In the following chapters, the methodology will be discussed, the demographics of the participants will be provided, the data will be analyzed, and trustworthiness of the data will be explained. The literature is rich with history of roles of churches and particularly the Black church in providing opportunities for African Americans to engage in volunteerism. Senior citizens have become powerful contributors to the field of volunteerism. It has been determined that there are health benefits to be realized from engaging in volunteer service. It is also important to consider the training of volunteers and what inspires them to continue to choose this as a pathway of service.

The stories of 10 African American retirees will be shared and the lessons learned from their service and advice they would give to future volunteers will be discussed. The implications for future volunteers will be provided for further research.

For more than a century, volunteering in the United States has been a part of the culture and continues to be a valued tradition. I was always curious about what motivated individuals who find time to volunteer, especially retirees who had been employed for many years. In the remaining chapters I explore available research on volunteerism and its history in the United States. I will also share my findings of what motivated the 10 retired African Americans to choose volunteering as a form of service. I would like to know what challenges they may have encountered and what words of advice and/or encouragement they would give to future volunteers.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The terms *volunteering* and *community service* are used interchangeably in some circles. A volunteer is a person who performs or gives his services of his own free will. Volunteering is done without compensation in both formal and informal settings where the service is usually done on behalf of an individual. Community service may provide some type of payment, college credit or may be required of an offender to avoid prison time.

Ilsley (1990) expressed the need to expand the definition of volunteerism and include more individuals in research on volunteerism. Ilsley contended that by embracing a broader view of volunteerism, both formal and informal, one may recognize the spirit that inspires someone to make huge sacrifices in service to others. Ilsley and Niemi (1981) suggested that volunteering is broad and appears to be part of the human experience, to serve one's fellow men. Volunteerism attracts millions of people who dedicate their time and resources to not-for-profit organizations on a regular basis. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016), the work of volunteers was valued at \$24.14 per hour. According to Fishmann (2021), if volunteers were monetarily compensated, their pay would add up to billions of dollars.

Omoto and Schlehofer (2007) found that racial stereotyping has led to misinterpretation of the contributions of African Americans regarding civic responsibility. Unfortunately, research on volunteerism is seriously underdeveloped or ignored for the African American population

because the interchange between community service and volunteering is often not identified properly.

Weckerle and Shultz (1999) contend it is important that we as a society understand more about this generation of potential volunteer candidates for reasons such as societal benefits and life expectancy. Those who volunteer suffer less from depression, isolation and generally lead healthier lifestyles.

History

The history of volunteerism in the United States has its beginning centuries ago. Organizations such as the Salvation Army and Catholic Charities found inspiration from Bible scriptures calling on their believers to follow the example of Jesus Christ. These and other volunteer initiatives began when the Pilgrims first set foot on New England soil as part of the American Revolution (Popple & Leighninger, 2011).

Churches

The history of volunteerism in the United States demonstrates the impact churches have had in providing opportunities and inspiration for the development of organizations run by volunteers. According to Omoto and Scheehofer (2007), churches continue to be the leading sponsor of older adult volunteers. Harris (1999) states that church attendance impacts how many members view the value of volunteer service.

Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) also point out that African American churches place a strong emphasis on the link between religious commitment, charity and civic participation. Blacks who attend church are more likely to be involved in their communities at the local level; this type of

involvement contributes to their feeling of connectedness. The Harris (1999) points out that Black churches that are politically involved use a high number of volunteers for fundraising and planning of events that usually involves some food preparation by volunteers.

According to Ammerman (2001), religious congregations are places where individuals serve as volunteers more than in any other association in the United States. Chaves and Higgins (1992) suggest that in past years the church has played a more central role in the lives of its members, but other organizations with greater resources have stepped into the arena to meet many of today's needs. However, African American churches continue to provide a significant opportunity for volunteer service in their communities.

Black Churches

African American churches seemed to have understood the call to serve their community from their early beginnings when thousands of freed slaves volunteered to fight in the Civil War. According to Patillo-McCoy (1998), the Black church often serves as an anchor for community involvement. This still seems prevalent in the Black church. Carson (1990) suggests that the link between church and the African American community is so strong that some see this as the principal responsibility of the church.

Harris (1999) stated that church attendance has impacted how many members view the value of volunteer service. Many church goers have opportunities on the premises to volunteer through daycare and food pantries. This is supported by Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), who noted that the African American churches place a strong emphasis on the link among religious commitment, charity and civic participation. The push for voter registration is one example of how strong volunteerism continues to influence Black church members because they are

encouraged to see voting as their moral responsibility and their civic duty. Likewise, Johnson (2013) found a correlation between church attendance and volunteerism, particularly among Black Protestants. Blacks who attend church are more likely to be involved in their communities at the local level; this type of involvement contributes to their feeling of connectedness.

Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) found that Black churches are more socially active in their communities than White churches are. Their members are more likely to develop the skills required to meet the needs of their local communities. Billingsley and Caldwell (1991) reported that two thirds of the Black churches provided outreach programs to low-income families as well as those in other countries.

African Americans and Volunteering

Research on African Americans volunteering is minimal. In exploring the literature, there is also minimal literature that explores how volunteering is embedded in the church and organizations like the NAACP, Urban League, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), or Black Greek Letter Organizations. Volunteering for African Americans is about giving back to the community. Thus, they not only volunteer with various African American organizations but with many mainstream organizations. For example, Nelson (2016) found that one of five Vista volunteers were from Black communities.

In a study on race and formal volunteering, Musick, Wilson, Wilson, and Byrum (2000) found that Blacks possess more social capital than personal resources and are more likely than Whites to state that nobody asked them to volunteer as a reason for not volunteering. This seems to suggest that if asked, volunteering among Blacks would increase. Studies by Gilligan (1982) and Kohlberg (1984) found that altruistic behavior among Blacks stems from strong feelings of

attachment to others. Many believe they stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before them and have a duty to give back to their communities.

Williams and Booker-Williams (1984) found that because Blacks came to this country not by choice, they were forced to develop their own institutions to provide social and economic services. As a result, African Americans began providing volunteer services to their communities. These volunteer services began on the plantations and expanded to those who volunteered with organizations that supported the Underground Railroad and their establishment of schools and churches. From then until today, African Americans have continued to volunteer in both formal and informal arenas.

African Americans worked through their churches, sororities, fraternities and other groups to uplift members of their communities. For example, many African Americans volunteered to support those who were ill, especially when Blacks could not go to White hospitals. Jackson, Hanson and Hayes (2014) noted that these volunteers provided personal, emotional and spiritual support to African Americans facing serious health challenges.

Community Organizations

For more than a century, Historically Black Colleges and Universities have encouraged their students to give back to their communities during and after leaving college. By all accounts, many students have answered the call to volunteer or participate in community service. This may be attached to class assignments of various organizations students join or a requirement set by the institution. For example, the Black Male Alliance may require each of its members to complete 20 hours of community service/volunteering each semester. Volunteering on many

colleges is either formal or informal, including tutoring, helping students move into campus housing, and speaking to visiting students from community organizations.

Despite the images society often portrays of Black males (Mattis et al., 2000), organizations both on college campuses and within the community have provided various opportunities for Black males to volunteer. These opportunities vary from serving as mentors to collecting food, building homes and schools (local and international), collecting funds, working with organizations such as St Jude or Ronald McDonald House, or providing workshops on prostate cancer and other health issues. For example, the 100 Black Men of America members mentor young men and assist young people in developing good citizenship skills and becoming good models for other youth in the community.

Historically, African American women have been volunteering in their communities as members of anti-slavery organizations, the National Association of Colored Women, Black sororities and the National Congress of Black Women. All four of the Black Greek sororities – Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. – provide a wide range of volunteer opportunities that offer workshops for young women and are facilitated by their members. All four organizations raise funds to assist international communities. They also contribute on a daily basis to their local communities by volunteering at local food banks, providing school supplies and supporting pregnant mothers and their families.

Volunteering in the Augusta Community

Corey Rogers, curator of the Lucy Craft Laney Museum, stated that African Americans have been volunteering in Augusta, Georgia as early as the 1900s through churches, the NAACP,

and Black Greek Letter Organizations. There are several organizations that have a history of offering volunteer opportunities to African Americans. The Bethlehem Project serves more than 1,000 persons in a single year and 200 are young people. This ministry provides housing, emergency assistance, and medical assistance at no cost to those who use their services. The Beulah Grove Community Resource Center houses a food pantry, a clothing bank, weekly Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, and Golden Ageds gatherings. Tabernacle Baptist Church is known for its long history of civic involvement and social activism. This congregation has welcomed such visitors as Dr. Martin Luther King and John D. Rockefeller. Tabernacle lists more than 40 programs served by volunteers in their congregation.

During the Jim Crow Era there were many examples of volunteers who organized rallies at the Tabernacle Baptist Church to challenge laws of segregation in the city. Students at Paine College, a local historically Black college, organized training sessions for those taking part in sit-ins at lunch counters along Broad Street, the main business district of the city.

According to Corey Rogers, a local historian, volunteers have always been involved in voter registration and have worked with young people who were interested in being a part of the Boy and Girl Scouts of America. Dr. T. W. Josey, for whom a local high school is named, led a robust effort to establish Boy Scout troops around the city. African American women volunteered and established Girl Scout troops and parades in the city. Mrs. Rosa T. Bead is remembered for establishing a debutante club for young ladies of African descent.

The Senior Citizens Council, a national network of volunteers, is well established in Augusta. According to an administrator for the Council, Mr. William Sherrod, it is very proud of its nearly 100 volunteers, half of whom are African American. These volunteers serve in both the Foster Grandparents Program and their Senior Companion Program. Some have become such

outstanding volunteers that they have been recruited for paid employment for both part-time and full-time positions. United Way depends on hundreds of volunteers for its many programs, and Fort Gordon, the local military base, established an office that recruits large numbers of volunteers who serve retired military personnel in the area. Boys and Girls Clubs of America continue to have a presence in Augusta as they have for decades. Today, there are numerous locations in the city. An addendum has been provided by Dr. Mallory Millender, a local historian which highlights the rich history of volunteers engaging in service to the community.

Benefits to Retirees

It appears the field of volunteerism is changing and, therefore, requires a fresh look at how to address the transition from a more traditional to a modern-day approach when addressing social issues such as homelessness, HIV/AIDS, animal rights, and the needs of refugees. In addition to understanding what motivates individuals to volunteer, it is believed that it is important to examine what benefits are derived from volunteering. Doing so will allow organizations to develop programs and strategies to address some of the recruitment and retention challenges. Deci and Ryan (2000) suggest that those who are able to put forth more effort in their service realize more satisfaction from positive outcomes. Titmuss (1971) contended that there is a built-in urge to give to one another as an altruistic creature. Knowing this can be very encouraging to those who recruit volunteers for their organizations.

Numerous studies have concluded that volunteering is related to better health outcomes for senior citizens. Musick and Wilson (2008) found volunteering and engaging with others is beneficial, provides a social network, and keeps seniors from feeling isolated. By maintaining a

healthy lifestyle, the financial cost to families who are often caregivers is reduced and is an added benefit. Those who say they have repurposed their lives seem happier and healthier. Finding one's purpose gives individuals a reason to avoid boredom and a feeling of uselessness.

Herzog et al. (1999) found a correlation between volunteering and mortality. They suggested that volunteering has a protective effect on mortality and a sense of well-being. Monk (1995) stated that things such as helping a neighbor, playing in an adult sport league or singing in a choral group can be an active form of volunteering. It is interesting to note that just identifying oneself as a volunteer appears to have a beneficial effect on a person and can be more beneficial than actually doing the work. The desire to do the work is important and appears to make the case that moderation in volunteer service seems to be the way to approach volunteering for the best health benefits and mortality. According to Berkowitz and Conner (1966), people with more altruistic or selfless traits have proven to be happier and are better able to manage their anger and stress more appropriately. The improved health benefits from being more engaged with others and physically active are worth noting.

Older Adults and Volunteering

Hustinix and Lammetz (2003) identified the need to look at different styles of volunteering. This may be important when working with older populations. Retired individuals who volunteer at local junior high schools found that it was too much of a challenge working with groups of younger people in a school setting. When recruiting older adults, it is important to be mindful of the age groups they will be serving.

Wilson (2000) and Wuthnow (1998) found that volunteering differs among race and ethnic groups. These factors must be taken into account when planning strategies to attract

newcomers to volunteering. Gottlieb and Gillespie (2008) stated that a severe shortage of volunteers is the forecast for the future. Given this new reality, it seems imperative that understanding what motivates individuals to volunteer is the key to addressing this challenge. Burns and Gonyea (2005) found that employers who continue to engage their retirees in volunteer activities are more likely to have success than those who do not. Involving couples or families in serving together appears to be a good strategy for recruiting volunteers. However, past volunteering is the strongest predictor of future volunteering among the elderly (Mutchler, Burr, & Caro 2003). If a person has grown up volunteering with family members or has had experience before retiring, it seems they are more likely to continue along that path of service.

Thoits and Hewitts (2001) found that because retirees have more time on their hands, there has been a cultural shift in the way seniors see retirement. Many intend to stay actively involved and see retirement as a time of activity and adventure rather than a time of relaxation. It appears there is a great deal to learn from senior volunteers more than willing to share their experiences and wisdom with future volunteers.

Education and Training

Lindeman (1926) addresses the need to understand the significance of experiences—the satisfaction gained from bringing knowledge to bear upon experience. Houle (1961) asserts that it is important to create a climate of learning so volunteers will feel they have the tools to do their jobs; to not provide such training is to do the volunteer a disservice. Mezirow (1981) also stressed the importance of education and training and found that volunteers being made to feel competent may result in a greater degree of longevity and commitment to volunteerism.

Ilsley (1990) believed that organizations need to be flexible when managing the services of volunteers and to be careful not to measure their commitment by the hours spent in the field. He suggested that orientation is an opportunity to include more experienced volunteers in training programs, a chance to let volunteers know you care and to create a climate of sharing. Organizations should provide job descriptions which can be used to match the skills and interests of the volunteer. To have paid employees and volunteer staff work together and keep all apprised of the progress and problems an organization may be experiencing can be valuable to all participants (Ilsley & Niemi, 1981). He suggested that volunteering should be rewarding and purposeful leading to positive outcomes. Ilsley (1990) addressed the importance of orientation for volunteers. He contended that orientation is an opportunity to include more experienced volunteers in training programs and a chance to let them know you care. He noted that volunteers might also be encouraged to share stories of their personal experiences.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

African Americans have been volunteering for decades in Augusta, Georgia, yet there has been little research done on what motivated them to devote their time and resources as volunteers. I was interested in what challenges they may have encountered in their service, how they were transformed by volunteering, and what advice and/or words of encouragement they would pass on to future volunteers.

Qualitative Methods

“Qualitative researchers are intrigued with complexity of social interactions as expressed in daily life and with meanings the participants themselves attribute to these interactions... Qualitative research is pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in lived experiences of people” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 2). According to Rossman and Rallis (1998), traditional research has silenced members of marginalized groups, resulting in little knowledge and understanding of the lives and contributions of these groups to the common good. When considering the different qualitative research methods, there were a number of methods that seem to fit the purpose of my research, but the narrative inquiry method seemed best suited for the research I chose to pursue in this study.

Participants

For this study, 10 retired African Americans involved in various volunteering opportunities were recruited for the study (Table 1). The participants in this study had been retired for a period of six months to a year, have past or current volunteer experience, and were 50 years of age or older. The participants were recruited by contacting local organizations, agencies, churches, sororities, fraternities, and individuals who were themselves well-known volunteers in the community. Once I received referrals from the various sources, potential participants were contacted by phone, email, or in person to explain the research project and ask if they would be willing to participate in the study.

After identifying the participants, arrangements were made to meet and discuss the study and to set up an appointment to conduct the interview. I was able to recruit several individuals I had come to know and with whom a degree of trust had already been established. The participants were able to provide an overview of the history of Augusta and why they believed volunteering in this community was important to them. There appeared to be no shortage of persons serving as volunteers in the Augusta community.

Table 1

Participants' Demographic Information

Name	Age	Retirement Year	# of Volunteer Years
Ruth B. Crawford	106	1980	40+
Christine Betts	85	1990, 2021	30
Dr. Lula Williams	70	2002	10
Ellis Johnson	83	2003	50+
James Gaines	54	2013	3
Leon Mebane	68	semi-retired	9
Lura Maryland	77	2008	12
William Sherrod	68	2011	7
Mary Smart	74	2009	12
Russell J Brown	57	2015	All his life

Narrative Inquiry

The narrative inquiry method allowed the participants to tell their stories in their own words. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), using narrative inquiry allows the participants to talk about their own lived experiences, what they learned, and the benefits of volunteering. Researchers using narrative inquiry must be good listeners, must ask follow-up questions and collaborate with the participant so they both have the same understanding of what is being shared. Clandinin and Connelly (1994) suggest that every response is valid and important to the research even though the distinction between fact and fiction may not be as clear as it once was. The seniors, however, appeared to remember the essence of their lived experiences. The researcher is asked to be mindful of their audience, the participants. It is important that by sharing their personal stories, the researcher is open, understanding, and listens to what they are saying.

Data Collection

Once the participants agreed, they were asked to complete a brief profile of themselves that provided some background information. Field notes were taken, and all interviews were done in the location of the participant's choosing. A number were done in their homes, others where they volunteered, and because of the coronavirus, two were done via telephone. Field notes were taken, and audio recordings of the interviews were made; most seemed more comfortable not having to be recorded. The interviews were approximately an hour and a half. To ensure the research questions were answered and if there was any additional information they wished to share with me, time was set aside for follow-up questions.

Data Analysis

Memory reconstruction was certainly an issue I wanted to pay close attention to; however, what I hoped to identify was the true essence of what the participants believed to be the lessons learned that may be of value to other volunteers, the lessons they themselves learned by volunteering that helped to define who they are today. As a researcher, I remained aware that I was the interpreter of what I was hearing and recording rather than a storyteller. By doing so, I believed the findings would inform the reader and be of value to the research.

The following are the re-occurring themes in my interviews with the participants. The participants believed there are plenty of opportunities to volunteer in Augusta. They believed that there is a need to give back to the community because of the sacrifices of those who have gone before them. Many of the participants were self-motivated, but others were encouraged by family or friends to get involved in community work. In their retirement, they felt

there had time to volunteer, something they did not have while employed. They also enjoyed being able to set their own schedule and seemed certain they were able to make a difference in the lives of those served. The participants appreciated the gratitude shown by those they served. Their hope was that by their example, others would be motivated to seek volunteer opportunities and lend a helping hand to those in need.

Trustworthiness

It was important that I honored their stories, as they themselves wished to have them conveyed to others. I was not as concerned about the details of their experiences, but more about their life's journey as they saw it. I was interested in the inspiration that led them to choose to serve in a manner that others took notice of and recommended them as potential participants in this research.

I was able to review what I had written by telephone with the participants. With the exception of a few items, such as the correct spelling of a parent's name and the time frame of their volunteering service, I was told that I had captured the essence of what they wished to convey about themselves and their experience as a volunteer.

This study was undertaken to understand the personal and social significance of the contributions of 10 retired African Americans who have provided an important and noteworthy example of volunteer service in the city of Augusta, Georgia. Questions were asked regarding what motivated them, the challenges they faced and the successes they experienced as volunteers. I explored with each of the participants what lessons they have learned that they believe will be of value to volunteers who come after them. I wanted to know if the participants believed that their service has made a difference in the lives of those they served as well as the

degree to which their own lives have been enriched and transformed. I believe these volunteers hold in their experiences valuable lessons, which may be instructive to future generations of volunteers and community service workers. The need to alleviate the challenges facing many of our fellow citizens is great, and the stakes are high. The hope of adding to the body of knowledge that will make a difference in the lives of those served was the purpose of this research.

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANTS' STORIES

Augusta is a community that has provided ongoing opportunities for volunteers over many decades. A newspaper published on a local military base carried an impressive list of agencies that asked military personnel to volunteer their time while stationed in Augusta. An impressive number of agencies, such as the YMCA summer camp program, the Lucy Craft Laney Museum, Boy Scouts of America, the Golden Harvest Food Bank, Trinity Hospice, and scores of other local organizations have been served by military staff, and by all accounts these volunteers have made outstanding contributions to these organizations.

Recently, one of the participants, Mrs. Ruth B. Crawford, was interviewed on a local TV station while on her way to get a Covid-19 vaccination. Tom Corwin wrote in the August 24, 2021, *Augusta Chronicle* that at the age of 105, Mrs. Crawford believed that by her being vaccinated, others would be encouraged to do the same. It was another way for Mrs. Crawford to serve the community of Augusta at an advanced age.

Mrs. Ruth Burton Crawford

Because she is known and respected by so many in the city, I was grateful that she agreed, before the outbreak of the pandemic, to be a participant in this research. When asked by the TV reporter if she would be encouraging her former students to follow her example and get

vaccinated for the virus, she responded that it might be a bit of a problem, since she had outlived most of her students. She is known for her sense of humor.

Mrs. Crawford turned 106 on May 25 of this year. She is one of the most extraordinary persons I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. She has enjoyed life to the fullest, but it has not been perfect, according to her. She says she has had hills and mountains to climb, but she has learned not to let things worry her until she had no choice; otherwise, “you worry about things twice, so try to worry only once.”

While serving as a teacher for 38 years, she worked with seniors and the elderly as a volunteer. After retiring from the Richmond County School District, she founded the Shiloh Comprehensive Community Center. Mrs. Crawford wrote in her book, *The Peace and Power of Volunteering* (2006), that she saw the real needs in her community, especially among young people and wanted to do something about it. Drugs and gangs were present in the community as well as the Klan. Mrs. Crawford wanted to save as many children as she could. Stories of some of these young people are chronicled in her book. She recalls many of the children coming from dysfunctional homes. One little girl would swear at the other children. She was told that she would not be allowed to use such language at the Center and that she should not do so at home either. The little girl responded that she was allowed to swear at home and that her grandmother cussed at her all the time.

Mrs. Crawford lived across the street from a dilapidated building that had served as an orphanage for Black children but had been closed for more than 10 years. The closing of the orphanage left a void in the community. She recalls many children were left without guidance and “no one to love and care for them and keep them off the street.” The need was so great and she felt that someone had to step up and do something about it. She had retired and had enough

money to live on for herself. She believed that because she volunteered her service, both Blacks and Whites readily offered their support. She was convinced that many came to her assistance because she worked for no monetary compensation.

Being retired allowed Mrs. Crawford to set her own schedule. She was able to watch her grandchildren while their parents worked, and residing across the street from the Community Center made her service possible. She hired three staff: a janitor, secretary and cook who were all willing to work for minimum wage. College students from Paine College and Augusta State University sororities and fraternities contributed their time at no cost to the Center. A colonel from the local army base, Fort Gordon, and a local college president who knew many professional people in the community were willing to help in some way. Many fundraising events such as bake sales were held and used articles were sold on Saturdays all to help defray the costs of running the Center.

If she were rating herself, she would give herself a grade of "A." Mrs. Crawford believes that she made a great difference in the lives of those she served, and one mother called to tell her that her daughter had attended college, married and had a wonderful family.

Her advice to future volunteers is not to become a couch potato; fill some of the needs of the community around you. Never be satisfied with the past and be a friend, a mentor or a helpmate. She believes that she gave 100% to her service, and at the age of more than a hundred years and having received 112 awards and a street named in her honor, she has no regrets. She has achieved a job well done and has been a good and faithful servant.

Mrs. Christine Betts

Mrs. Betts has a long history of volunteering both in the United States and abroad. She began volunteering in Germany around the age of 30 years old and upon returning to the United States has volunteered for her church and for the Lucy Craft Laney Museum before being hired as its director for more than three decades. She retired a year ago at the age of 85 and plans on continuing to volunteer in service to children and their parents to acquire skills that will enable them to enjoy a better life than would otherwise be available to them.

The oldest of 10 children, she remembers her father as a “brilliant farmer and gardener.” Her mother canned vegetables so the family would have plenty of food to eat all year round. She also remembers her father’s beautiful flower garden. In later years, he moved the family from Georgia to North Carolina where he raised tobacco, corn and beautiful zinnias. She recalls coming from a very stable and supportive family.

Unlike her grandfather, who left the family because he could not provide for them, her grandmother took charge of the family’s affairs and made sure that her children were educated. Their son, her father, left home early and married her mother at the age of 19. He, like his mother, made sure that his children had an opportunity to receive an education. He demanded that his children do their homework when they were growing up, and of the eight children who lived to adulthood, all were able to obtain an education.

Mrs. Betts completed the Grady Hospital School of Nursing in Atlanta, Georgia, and entered the military upon graduation. She recalls that at the age of 17 she discovered that Blacks should not sit in the front of the bus on public transportation, but to her recollection, she had

never seen a sign saying Whites Only. Her parents had sheltered their children from the shame of Jim Crow laws and segregated public places that were the norm at that time in the South.

She was assigned to Walter Reed Military Hospital in Washington D.C. after graduating from nursing school; she had never been any place outside of Georgia and North Carolina. After marrying, she and her husband moved to New Jersey and then to Germany. Mrs. Betts recalls it being the most exciting experience of her life. The military wives were free to travel all over Germany. There she began volunteering for the Girl Scouts. Upon her return to the U.S. she continued her work with young people and children's programs at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Augusta where she continues to be a devoted member and volunteer.

Mrs. Betts distinguished herself as a volunteer; it became a way of life for her. She met with the children at least once a month and sometimes more often. She volunteered primarily with the Girl Scouts and youth leadership programs. She was comfortable with doctors and attorneys who were contacted as a part of her youth empowerment initiative. Because of her love of history, she began volunteering at the Lucy Craft Laney Museum, a local museum dedicated to preserving the contributions of African Americans who grew up in Augusta. Many Augustans had left a lasting legacy in their community and some to the entire world. James Brown, the rhythm and blues artist, and Jessye Norman, the world famous opera singer, are among such individuals.

Mrs. Betts explained that she was often asked to volunteer, and being a minister's wife, she was aware of the need to be of service to others. She was expecting to retire and noticed a lot of children coming to the museum with their grandmothers. The grandmothers would remain at the museum helping out with whatever was needed. After taking a training course in South Carolina and working diligently at the museum, the Board of Directors decided to hire her as the

director of the museum. Before assuming the director's position, she says she had very few challenges, but once she began working for the museum, finding volunteers was sometime a bit of a challenge and fundraising seemed always to be the biggest challenge for the volunteers who served at the museum.

Mrs. Betts believes that everyone has talents and should use those talents to make a difference in the lives of others. She suggests that one should continually evaluate oneself to improve their service. She would like to be remembered as someone who made a difference in the lives of those whom she served.

Dr. Lula Williams

Many of those who are passionate about their volunteer service to the Augusta community are not surprisingly native-born and lifelong residents of the city. An elementary school teacher by profession, Dr. Williams served as an adjunct professor and consultant, where she was able to develop an online school experience many years ago.

She states that volunteerism meant she had an open invitation to pursue her passion on her own time and schedule and be "driven by her passion." It was an opportunity to turn the page and hone in on offering a service that was not possible to do while working full time as a teacher in that retirement allowed time to follow that passion.

The greater Augusta area is growing at a rapid rate and she believes the city needs highly motivated volunteers. Dr. Williams found her purpose in serving the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, a school named for the internationally renowned opera star. The school was founded for underserved students who could not afford to pay for the kind of exposure to the arts that more affluent families were able to provide for their children. She was also happy to be considered for

a major position, president of the fundraising arm of the school, because of her very fond memories of having grown up in the same neighborhood as Miss Norman.

Having three months off from teaching during the summer, Dr. Williams was able to spend time brainstorming how she would kick off an annual fundraiser for the Jessye Norman School of the Arts. She was able to partner with a military sorority whose members were currently serving in the military or were retirees. Because of their training, they proved to be very reliable supporters of the school. By all indications, they were willing helpers and came in impressive numbers to assist with the fundraising events.

Reaching out to churches, retirees and to the public in general provided an opportunity to make others aware of the needs of the children in the city. “Once an educator, you will find other outlets to serve young people,” according to Dr. Williams. Numerous volunteer organizations knew of her leadership skills and spoke of her to their boards of directors. One member, Dr. Linda Scales, knew how to navigate what the board wanted for that a certain position: “Someone who could leave the school better than she or he found it was what the board was hoping for,” according to Dr. Williams. It was very satisfying to know that the school received international acclaim during her tenure as president of Friends, the fundraising arm of the organization. This was a dream come true, and getting positive feedback from the children and seeing them discover their strengths was all the reward she needed. An added bonus was the comradery with the families of those connected with the school. When 10 of the students were able to attend Ms. Norman’s funeral in New York’s Madison Square Garden, she was filled with joy. She says she loved the statement that “the Titanic was built by professionals, but the Ark was built by volunteers.”

Dr. Williams advises that “while working, look ahead and see yourself doing something in the future. Solve the mystery and ask oneself the question, what I will do when I retire. How will I make some child feel special” she had tried to do as an educator. She made them feel smart; she made me feel special. She believed that every child should feel at some point during their school days that they were their teacher’s favorite student.

Mr. Ellis Marvin Johnson

When I asked an Augusta city commissioner if he could recommend individuals who were outstanding and exemplary volunteers in the community, he responded without hesitation that Ann and Ellis Johnson were at the top of his list. When both Ann and Ellis recently passed away within a short time of one another, more than 1,000 persons attended each of their funerals. I understood why the commissioner spoke so highly of them. I was grateful that they both passed away before the COVID-19 pandemic emerged because many who knew them would have been extremely saddened that they would have not been able to say a fond farewell to two of the most devoted and cherished members of the Augusta community. Their contributions to Augusta as volunteers are something to be studied and emulated.

Mr. Johnson’s father passed away when Ellis was four years old. After his father’s passing, his mother moved to Augusta from Lincoln County, Georgia, with her seven children. He recalled his mother needing to have him and his siblings live with various relatives before securing a home for the family. He remembered his father being a farmer and said that he would have probably followed in his footsteps had the family remained on the farm. Instead, he stated that he had a good life and a blessed one.

Ellis, the youngest of seven children, attended public schools and Paine College in Augusta. He also attended graduate school at Fort Valley State University where he earned a master's degree in counseling. He continued his studies at Harvard and Seton Hall University and went on to earn a certification in administration from Augusta State University. He served in the military as an assistant to the chaplain. He taught math and music in public schools and after earning a master's degree in counseling, he served as director of counseling and as interim VP at the college level and as a consultant to the Board of the Augusta Technical College for two years.

Ellis credits his mother for being a great example of service to others, especially children, youth and older persons in need. When he was growing up, his mother would invite college students to their home for dinner even though they themselves had meager resources. His contribution has been multifaceted as a professional counselor and trained musician, working with both children as a mentor and with elderly indigent citizens. He made himself available to a senior citizen by assisting with their bills and banking needs. He believed that a person should make time for service and enjoy the service one is able to provide. Mr. Johnson stated, "Once you have been identified as a helping person, opportunities to serve will find you. When others find you to be trustworthy and recognize your successes, you will find pleasure in completing a request successfully."

Mr. Johnson was grateful that he was able to help some on a daily basis and others weekly as a director of the Augusta Chorale. The Chorale performed at festivals that provided public exposure for young and older members of the group. He stated that it was nothing heroic, but doing what one is supposed to do to be of service to others brought him immeasurable satisfaction.

Having some personal resources is helpful. He was able to transport children to movies and shop for and outfit a young man who needed help securing clothing for himself. Mr. Johnson shared that another one of his mentees told him how he had made a big difference in his young man's life and that he would not be the person he is today had Mr. Johnson not been there for him. Because he had a degree in counseling and adolescent behavior, Ellis was able to give workshops and lessons that enabled some of the young boys to find employment and care for their families. Another young man told Mr. Johnson that had he listened to him he would have been a lot better off, but that he was "hoping life would provide for him a second chance."

The honors and awards attributed to Ellis and Ann represent a life of selfless service, generosity and sacrifice to their community. They were driven by a belief that it was their Christian and civic obligation to serve the homeless, sick, aged and homebound. They combined their dedication to service with their love of the arts. Ellis's exceptional talent as a vocalist, pianist, and choral director earned him the title of "maestro."

When asked how he would advise others to lead "purposeful" lives," Ellis suggested that if we "were to look around us, there is always someone who needs help and the need is great for many." He recommended that we abandon our comfort zones and try to make a difference in the lives of others. He made service a priority and believed he was born to make a difference and found joy in doing so. Once, when asked to do something that he was not looking forward to doing, he decided to pray and ask God to help him find joy in providing the service. Needless to say, his prayers were answered. When asked how he wished to be remembered, he responded, "Nothing heroic, I just want to be remembered as a person who tried to make a difference in the quality of life of others."

Ann Johnson, the wife of Ellis Johnson for nearly 50 years, was known throughout the Augusta community for her service to numerous organizations in the city. As stated earlier, their names were the first given me when I inquired about individuals who might be considered outstanding volunteers in the city. No need to wonder why they were the first names that came to my attention. Their service to the Augusta community was truly exemplary. I believe future generations of volunteers will study their dedication to community service and gain a great deal of inspiration and insights into what it means to serve one's community as an example of servant leadership.

As a founding member of the Friends of the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, Mrs. Johnson initiated several fundraisers for the School, such as Purses for a Purpose, Vintage Hat Shows and numerous fashion shows. Thousands of dollars were raised to benefit the school. She was also known for other volunteer services on behalf of the Augusta Chorale, including the Morris Museum of Southern Art, Elim Baptist Church, The Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History, and her beloved Paine College, of which she and her husband were both graduates. They worked on several projects together, including purchasing, renovation, furnishing and donation of a home for the Wounded Warriors program. According to those who knew her, Ann was truly in a league of her own in her service and leadership in the Augusta community. The attendance of over a thousand at her funeral service was testimony to how so many felt about her contributions to the community.

The Johnsons were a great example of what a husband and wife can do to make a positive impact on a community. According to those who knew her, "She empowered others to discover their inner greatness." After her passing, numerous fundraisers continue to be held in her honor and a music room at Paine College has been named in honor of both the Johnsons. The Ellis and

Ann Johnson Art Gallery, commissioned by the Jessye Norman School of the Arts, is one more tribute to a well-deserving couple.

After Ann passed away, I asked Ellis what he believed inspired Ann to dedicate so much time and so many resources in service to the Augusta community. He felt it was her genuine love of people and her desire to see them enjoy a better life than she had experienced while growing up in very humble surroundings. He believed her religious upbringing and her desire to emulate the life of Christ had a great deal to do with how she approached her service. He stated that Ann did not seek praise or recognition and always wished that she had time to do more for the community she loved and for those who needed her care and support. When asked what advice he believed Ann would give to future volunteers, he was certain that she would advise them to look around and get involved and to recognize how great the need, and she would say that no one has to be bored. It appears that both Ann and Ellis shared the same passion for service to the community.

Ann knew that her days were coming to an end and Ellis was sure that it was her wish to have had more time to be of service to others while still among us. Mr. Johnson, her husband of 49 years, stated that Ann felt she had been blessed to have been able to give back to the community. He was certain that she would have wanted others to remember her and to follow her example, not only as a volunteer but in the way she dressed and carried herself as a woman. After interviewing Ellis about his wife Ann, I felt the poem, “Phenomenal Women” () by Maya Angelou best describes how Mrs. Johnson might have seen herself and would have wanted to be remembered.

Mr. Johnson’s obituary stated that he was the preeminent servant leader with unwavering respect and duty to God, family, community, country and his fellowman. His mantra was “I

would rather give a ‘hand up’ but willingly, if necessary, a ‘hand out.’” He and Ann “were driven by benevolence and charity as well as her Christian duty and civic obligation. Even when sickness and infirmity presented challenges, Ellis persevered, continuing to care for the homeless, aged, sick and homebound. These endeavors are especially evidenced by lifelong philanthropy to Paine College and giving generously of himself while inspiring others to do the same.

Mr. James Gaines

Mr. Gaines retired from the military at the age of 46 and is now 54 years old. Growing up in what James describes as the corrupt city of Paterson, New Jersey, where the mafia controlled the community’s resources and leaving very little for folk in his part of town was the order of the day and everyone knew it. He was the eighth of 10 children; his mother died when he was five years old. His grandmother raised her 10 grandchildren after raising 11 of her own. Despite the corrupt environment in Paterson, James was blessed to have had a very supportive community and family, one that kept an eye on its young people.

According to James, the African American community was left to fend for itself and the residents were just able to keep their heads above water. Education was on the decline and powdered cocaine provided easy money and the only requirement was that you have some street smarts. James stated that he got his first feel for authority and the possibility of having a voice and being heard when his grandmother joined a tenants’ association group in the housing project where he grew up. He came to the realization that if he were going to escape a corrupt place, he would have to have the financial means to do so.

One day an Army recruiter came to his high school. James said that he “wasn’t too keen on the idea of dying in a war zone of a foreign country,” but his situation had become a dire one. He believed that he was not born to live and die in Paterson, New Jersey, and would never experience what life was all about. A day after graduating from high school, he was on his way to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, to enter the Army’s delayed entry program. James served for 27 years as a chemical, biological and nuclear analyst. He was responsible for determining whether the environment was one in which soldiers could execute their mission.

James felt that volunteering to work with young people and giving a part of himself was a way of giving to those who could not give back in kind and that he should do so with no hidden agenda and without expecting compensation of any kind. He saw young folk who seemed detached from the real world and did not know how to intellectually fight for themselves. He felt that he could give them the tools to do so – to fight for a better life. Having retired from the military, he stated that he had plenty of time, “nothing but time,” to be of service to young people in the community. James worked with them on a daily basis and has gained a great deal of insight into raising children in the digital age. He believes it is very important to monitor their digital footprint.

After approaching a school about wanting to start a mentoring program, the assistant principal assigned a number students James would serve as a mentor. Along with mentoring, James was encouraged by some of his church members and other associates to establish a non-profit program, City of Refuge Enterprise, that currently has nine individuals serving in a voluntary capacity.

Many of James’s church members, associates and folks in the city encouraged him to pursue this line of service. He was able to find funding through grants and earmarked

contributions. Through trial and error and research he was able to develop his own training program which was tailored to meet the needs of the Augusta community. When asked if he felt he was making a difference in the lives of those he served, he responded that he “definitely feels that the young folk do appreciate him because he serves them and does not expect anything in return.” He seemed most pleased with the “connection” with them, which he believes will last for a lifetime.

When asked what he would do differently if he had to start over, he quickly suggested that he “would not go it alone and would advise others to be passionate, to give it everything they have.” James believed that he is making an invaluable contribution to the community through those he mentors and “no price can be put on his service.” He also feels that his absence would truly be felt by the young people he is serving. He wants to ensure that the methods he uses with young people---prayer, experience, and wisdom—is combined with prudence and reason.

Mr. Gaines would like to be remembered as someone who cared enough to get involved and to create and develop other volunteers who will follow in his footsteps and be a good example to future volunteers and young people.

Mr. Leon Mebane

Leon Mebane is 68 years old and has been volunteering for more than nine years. As a volunteer he began learning more about the African American story in Augusta. His interest in the history of Blacks in the city led him to establish a grassroots organization dedicated to the preservation of properties of historic value in the community in September of 2020.

Mr. Mebane was born and raised in the Augusta community and is the son of Mr. Noy and Mrs. Jennie Mebane. He attended elementary, junior high and high school in Augusta and went on to earn a business administration degree from Fort Valley State University in 1976. Education was valued in his family; at home and at church, teachers were respected. Most young folk like him never wanted their teacher or principal to call their parents or stop by their home.

From a very young age, Mr. Mebane grew up working for pay. He learned to shine shoes and brush hair off the clothing of customers at his father's barber shop, and eventually he became a part owner of a barber shop on 9th Street, the hub of Black businesses in Augusta in the 1960s and 1970s. Numerous visiting celebrities to the city would frequent the barber shop, and soldiers stationed at Camp Gordon (now Fort Gordon), the local military base, were regular clients. He stated that it was the soldiers who taught him how to shine shoes as a young person. He also delivered groceries for a neighborhood Chinese store owner. From the time he was a child, he was no stranger to hard work. He recalled with pride the building of a newspaper delivery business, which grew to become the largest in Augusta. Eventually, he had to give half of his route to his neighbor and playmate because he could no longer handle so many clients. He remembers many Black-owned businesses being pushed out of the market. After the 1970s race riots, the Black-owned businesses were unable to recover. Integration of stores and shops on the main street downtown, where Blacks were able to shop, contributed to many of the Black stores and shops having to close.

Mr. Mebane moved to Atlanta to pursue a career in marketing and sales. There he used his skills to work with local churches and homeless populations. While living in Atlanta, Mrs. Betts, the director of the Lucy Laney Museum in Augusta, recruited him to serve as a volunteer if and when he returned to his hometown. He promised her that he would do so should he ever

return and eventually kept his promise to her. Mr. Mebane stated that he comes from a family of doers, of activists who set an example for other members of their family. His sister served in the capacity of director of volunteers for the Black UFO in the area for a number of years.

When asked if there was a person or thing that moved him to choose the path of volunteerism, he recalled a story of an elderly man he encountered when he owned and operated a lawn care business. The elderly man approached him and asked him if he would give him a ride home. He felt obliged to return the man to his retirement home, leaving his equipment on the worksite. Before returning to work, the old man said to him, "It doesn't hurt to be nice." He was encouraged by friends and strangers who often expressed their gratitude for his service and acts of kindness on their behalf. Mr. Mebane believes that "if we Black folks don't tell our story, who will?"

While assisting with marketing strategies and learning about Miss Lucy C. Laney, the educator and community activist for whom the museum is named, he became more passionate about his work at the museum. He and others members on the staff became dedicated to preserving the history of African Americans in Augusta and the contributions they and churches such as Tabernacle Baptist Church have made to the betterment of their community. Mr. Mebane is deeply involved in fundraising events, such as an annual golf outing, a monthly luncheon for senior citizens, and any other events he is asked to assist with on behalf of the museum. He knows and is known to many supportive contacts in the city. He feels compelled to give back to his hometown and not forget where he came from.

Mr. Mebane said he learned by doing. He is grateful for the sacrifices our forefathers made and the legacy they left behind. "They worked hard to get us to where we are today; we owe them a debt of gratitude for their sacrifices." His biggest challenge has been his fundraising

efforts for the museum and educating contributors about how important he believes it is to keep the museum open to the public.

He would advise young people to choose something they are passionate about, something they feel is important, and just do it. He wants to be known by all “as a man of his word.” This is how he wants to be remembered, a man of his word.

Mrs. Lura Maryland

Mrs. Maryland was born in 1944 in the small town of Mitchell, Georgia. She moved to Augusta in the early fifties when her father, Mr. Charley Kendrick, a former sawmill worker, found work in construction. She attended the Charles T. Walker Elementary School, a racially segregated school. She completed high school, Lucy Craft Laney, in 1962. Mrs. Maryland married and became the mother of five children, one who is deceased.

Mrs. Maryland began her career as a domestic worker, but because of early desire to be a nurse, she secured a position in a nursing home. After receiving training as a nursing assistant, she was promoted to a treatment aide. Later she was promoted to a supply technician, a physical therapist assistant and finally an exercise activities assistant assigned to patients suffering from Alzheimer’s and dementia. She recalls taking her blind grandmother to the clinic and sitting all day before the doctor saw her. This experience caused her to want to be a nurse, to help others who could not help themselves.

“Volunteering means a great deal to me,” she said. It is very rewarding. While sitting at home, she felt the walls were closing in on her. While at home and receiving Social Security, she received the biggest book she had ever gotten with all kinds of opportunities for those with disabilities. She contacted an organization, Walton Options, to learn more about individuals with

disabilities. Mrs. Maryland was tired of needing a walker, so she and two other ladies took several classes sponsored by AmeriCorps.

Mrs. Maryland is on her 12th year at Waltons Options, where she volunteers two days a week; before she volunteered four days a week. She serves clients by making sure they are satisfied with the services provided, such as home modifications of all types. Often clients need ramps and railings installed in their homes and she has to determine if they meet the client's needs and satisfaction. Mrs. Maryland received a number of resources and materials which helped her to help her clients. Also if her clients were not satisfied with the work they received, she would let her supervisor know and made sure the work was done correctly. Clients were appreciative of her assistance and she has received numerous awards for her work, including Volunteer of the Year.

When asked what inspired her to choose volunteering instead of some other avenue, she said she enjoys "meeting and helping people who slipped through the cracks." After 30 years as a staff member in the nursing home and private-duty work, she felt that she was prepared for volunteer service. She also enjoyed meeting people of different nationalities as well as attending the catered luncheon and activities that recognize volunteers and the staff.

When asked how she would want to be remembered, she said she wanted to be remembered as "a friend and someone who tried to help those who could not help themselves." Mrs. Maryland expressed appreciation that someone was interested in her story and said that no one had ever wanted her to tell her story and for this she seemed deeply grateful.

Mr. William Sherrod

After serving 31 years as a firefighter in Augusta and volunteering for the same number of years, Mr. Sherrod was promoted to assistant director of administration for the Senior Citizens Council of the Greater Augusta CSRA, Inc. He began volunteering while working full time as a fireman, explaining that his work schedule allowed him to offer transportation service to the elderly, a service for which he was very proud. When asked why he chose to volunteer as opposed to choosing something else during his retirement years, he simply stated that it provided an opportunity for him to help others.

Mr. Sherrod explained that many firefighters have part-time jobs and acquire skills that are useful to an organization such as the Senior Citizens Council. When the Council needed to have a ceiling fan replaced, he was able to save the cost of hiring a licensed electrician. Because of these types of skills, he became the maintenance man for the organization, serving for decades in that position. He stated that he furnished his own tools but was reimbursed for the materials he purchased.

When asked about training provided by the Council, he stated that the Council did indeed provide training, “customer service type of training.” They were advised to “always be courteous, especially when handling difficult clients.” One lady always insisted that the driver drive slowly. She said that if the driver drove fast, she would urinate on the bus. He reported that she managed to keep her promise. These are the types of challenges they insisted that everyone serving the seniors should handle in a respectful and courteous way. He went on to say that most of us will be senior citizens one day and his advice would be to always be kind to the elderly, especially one’s parents.

His advice to future volunteers would be to look around and see the needs of your community. He thinks everyone will be able to find a way of making a difference for someone or some organization. When asked how he would rate his service, he thought for a moment and said that the question was a hard one. He finally stated that he would give himself a grade of “A,” and I think those who serve with Mr. Sherrod would agree with that assessment.

My last question to him was how he would wish to be remembered. He had once heard someone say, “I am a nobody that can tell everybody about somebody [The Christ] who came to save everybody.” I learned that no one had recruited Mr. Sherrod to offer this service. He was self-motivated and seems to derive great satisfaction from doing a good job and being appreciated for a job well done. He began as a part-time worker 30 years earlier, and it soon developed into a volunteer position when the transportation program for seniors was no longer funded. He started out working for additional income but ended up enjoying the opportunity it afforded him to be of service to others. He served for more than 10 years and was hired three years ago as its assistant director.

Mr. Sherrod had been very generous with his time, but he was not going to spend any more time than needed talking to me about himself. He was busy doing the things that he needed to do in service to the Council and to the Augusta community.

Mrs. Mary Smart

At 74 years old and retiring at the age of 62, Mrs. Smart continues to be a dedicated volunteer. She was encouraged to continue volunteering by several friends and members of her church. She was born in North Carolina and was raised by a single father in Tampa, Florida. She

is the mother of two and a grandmother of five grandchildren and is currently a member of the Big Bethel Baptist Church in Augusta where she serves on the Usher Board.

Mrs. Smart was employed with CSX transportation for more than 33 years before being relocated by the company to Augusta in 1992. After retiring, she served as the caretaker for her mother who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. While caring for her mother, she began taking her to the Golden Age Ministry activities at their church, where she helped in the kitchen and with other activities as needed. She now serves on a weekly basis as a volunteer for the Golden Age Ministry.

When asked what volunteerism means to her, Mrs. Smart responded that it is a way of "expressing love through serving and helping others, giving of her free time to serve those in need." She says she finds love and joy in helping others and so much gratification through service to God's people. She explained that her inspiration came from her love of Christ and her belief "that we were put here to be of service to others." She derived so much joy seeing the smiles on the faces of those she serves.

Mrs. Smart's inspiration came from a fellow parishioner who introduced her to the Baptist Young Women's Ministry when she first joined the church in 1993. She also became acquainted with the group as a result of taking her mother to the Golden Age activities at the church. It was at first a bit difficult while still working, but once she retired, there was plenty of free time. She began volunteering weekly at the church's clothes bank and when elections were taking place in the city. Mrs. Smart also served the Women's Ministry by visiting members of the church in hospitals and at their homes. She became an advisor to young girls, ages 6 to 13, in a junior mission group.

Mrs. Smart explained that the church provides a number of resources---a location, food, donations for gifts and money---to support these various programs. She also noted that training was provided when she helped with the elections and when working with youth groups.

Mrs. Smart felt that she was making a difference in the lives of those she serves. When she sees the smiles on their faces, their faithful attendance at the activities, and their expression of appreciation in the form of a simple “thank you,” she is certain that she is making a valuable contribution to the community. The part of her experience she is most pleased with is her work with senior citizens. Together, they participate in devotional gatherings, she feeds them, plays bingo with them, celebrates and shares holiday dinners and takes trips to local movie theaters together. These are all enjoyable times for her and the seniors she serves. While serving seniors, she feels she is gaining more understanding of the needs of this community and is able to see what is on the horizon for her as she ages.

Mrs. Smart stated that if she had to start over, she would begin volunteering a little earlier because it brings so much happiness to those she serves and gratification for her. When asked what advice she would give to future volunteers, Mrs. Smart’s response was that volunteer work is “an important part of our community. There is so much work to be done and so much happiness to be gained from being of service to the community.” She stated that she serves “from the heart with love, patience and joy; all of my volunteer work is done for the glory of God.” This is her story.

Mr. Russell Joel Brown

Mr. Brown retired at the age of 53 and now at 57 stated that he has been volunteering all his life. He is the youngest of seven children. His father was a well-known medical doctor in the

Augusta community, and his mother, a nurse, was a stay-at-home mother. Both parents were actively involved in community service work involving the arts and medical issues. With parents so dedicated to serving the community, one can see why Russell began volunteering at an early age.

Because he was retiring from a high-profile career, a lot of opportunities came to him. Since retiring from the theatre where he enjoyed a career as an actor, dancer and singer for several decades, he returned to Augusta, his hometown, and began working with children by teaching and sharing his knowledge and experience with them. He also felt it is a great way to meet people and spend time in a constructive way. After retiring and moving back to Augusta, Russell decided to do what he always wanted to do, so he set aside time to work with young men by helping them to develop their full potential academically and through community service projects, which led him to establish a not-for-profit organization. He founded Boys with a Future, where he serves currently as its director.

Russell attended a local private school; he and his older siblings were the first Black students to attend Episcopal Day School. He graduated from a local Catholic high school before going on to attend Morehouse College. His first job was in corporate America, where he recalled working hard for little pay. Ellis Johnson, a participant in this study, was also involved in the arts and was the only Black person Russell had ever seen perform in an opera. He felt that if Mr. Johnson could “do this, I can also perform in an opera when I grow up.” After three years he decided to try acting, believing that he could earn more money. His work in New York allowed him to tour North America, Europe, and Asia as part of the *Lion King* cast for 12 years.

When asked what inspired him to dedicate his time and resources to volunteerism, he spoke of the example of his father’s work with drug abusers and his mother’s service in the arts

and with medical issues faced by the community. She was the first African American to serve as president of the League of Women Voters in Augusta. With these outstanding examples of volunteer service by his parents and his interest in social justice issues, he decided that an outreach program for young people was a way to address some serious challenges faced by many.

He has served on the Boards of Directors for the Chorale Society and the Greater Augusta Arts Society and assists with fundraising for a number of arts organizations. He sees himself as an “idea person who is self-motivated.” He hoped that others might take his ideas and run with them, using their talents and making their own mark on a particular project.

Russell is confident he is making a difference in the lives of the young men he serves and believes his generosity shows. He hopes that those who wish to serve through volunteerism will not be afraid to look around the community and see that so much needs to be done and lend a helping hand to those in need. He leaves it up to others to evaluate how he has done; however, he wants to feel that he “has done his best to make a difference in the lives of those he served.” He wished that he had done a better job at developing relationships with individuals with financial resources to support non-profits.

Russell wants to be remembered as a person who is “honest and fair, who has done his best with his ability to assist young people at a chance at having a successful life.” He hoped that the young people he serves “will pass along what they have learned from him to others and show future generations a positive path forward.” My impression of Russell Brown is that he is a true servant leader. I found him to be a warm and articulate man who is dedicated to the common good. He appears to be interested in serving others on a global level, if possible, and is

deeply grateful for the opportunities afforded him the opportunity to travel and engage with others on three continents.

Dr. Mallory Millender

I would like to share one final story about a Black man who has served the Augusta community for many years as a volunteer. Dr. Mallory Millender, a retired professor from Paine College, has been recognized by many organizations in the city. The awards and achievements are very impressive, but the wide range of his dedication to the community is noteworthy. Dr. Millender has served on several Boards of Directors and was vice president of the Augusta African American Historical Society, co-chair of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Race Relations, and HOPE (Helping People to Excel) for more than a decade. As a testimony to his servant leadership contributions, I once witnessed a city commissioner who noticed that Dr. Millender was a guest at the same luncheon as he. It was apparent that the commissioner himself felt it an honor to be invited to the same gathering as Dr. Millender.

Dr. Millender's story is very compelling. He grew up and attended schools in New York City, where he was a good student until high school and graduated with a D average. He had no interest in going to college and dreamed instead of having a professional baseball career. He knew two prominent members of his church who were graduates of Paine College, but no college, including Paine, was interested in admitting him. Paine was only willing to give him a chance if he was able to pass their admissions test. He eventually was admitted and worked hard to stay in school. It was at Paine College where he first started volunteering.

Dr. Millender graduated from Paine College and went on to earn a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University and a doctorate from Clark University in the Humanities

(French). He served as a professor of French and Journalism at Paine College until his retirement. He studied at nine additional universities in the United States and France and was an adjunct professor at several universities in the Augusta area. Along with his academic contributions, Dr. Millender has been recognized for his work with many young people.

Like Mrs. Crawford, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Sherrod, and Mrs. Smart, Dr. Millender unselfishly gave of himself for the betterment of the community. By volunteering their services and time, these participants have all continued the work of their ancestors.

Themes and Lessons Learned

Many lessons were learned by participants in this study. Because a number of them were consistent among the participants, it appeared that many lessons may be more prevalent among African Americans than some other ethnic or racial groups. Most participants stated they felt the need to give back to the community. For some, it was their moral or Christian duty to do so.

There appeared to be a genuine love for those they served, a passionate belief that they could make a difference in their lives. The participants appeared to be able to recognize the capacity of and potential in others. They had a desire to improve their lives and enable those they serve to be happy and more fulfilled.

Most were inspired by their belief in God or their spirituality, which moved them to action, to do something concrete for their fellow citizens. Some of the participants stated they were encouraged by family or friends to volunteer, while others were self-motivated. One individual was recruited by the director of an organization for which he volunteered.

Most expressed the belief that there are plenty of opportunities and need for volunteers in the African American community and in Augusta in particular. Most were hoping that they

would serve to inspire others to engage in volunteer work when they retired. These participants seemed grateful for having been given the opportunity to serve as a volunteer. One volunteer who had served the community for many years stated that “no one had ever wanted to write about her work” and seemed deeply appreciative that her story was being told.

When asked how they had been transformed by their experiences, most seemed a bit surprised at the question. It was apparent that they were not seeking any personal gains from their volunteering service. Several of them offered the following responses. Mrs. Crawford said that working with children had made her a better parent. Mr. Sherrod said his working with senior citizens made him more aware of the needs of the elderly and helps him as he grows older. Others stated that they are being transformed as they serve; it is an evolving process. Another felt she received more than she gave to others, giving meaning to the adage that it is better to give than to receive.

Words of Encouragement and Advice for Future Volunteers

The 10 participants all believed there were many opportunities to volunteer in Augusta and that one should look around and see the needs in the community. They believed everyone has something to contribute to their community, and those who worked with young people believed that adults owe it to future generations to give back to those in our communities. Most of them said they learned by doing and were not hesitant to seek volunteer opportunities on their own.

Several participants spoke of the joy they experienced in helping others and meeting new people, especially diverse groups of people. Mrs. Crawford shared a story from her 2006 book, *Peace, Power and the Purpose of Volunteering*, of an elderly White man, Mr. Craven, who came

to the Shiloh Community Center to donate some much-needed items. He was inspired by the story he had seen on a local television station about the fact that she took no money for the many services she provided the community. He wanted to help someone who gave so much without compensation. It turned out he was not looking for a handout, which she had originally thought, but rather donated \$250 per month to the Center until his death. Ruth Crawford's advice to future volunteers is to not become a couch potato and to try and address the needs of the community in which you live. She added they should never be satisfied with past achievements but should be a friend, a mentor, or a helpmate.

Mrs. Mary Smart believed that by volunteering, she was expressing love for her fellow citizens. When she saw smiles on their faces and heard their expressions of gratitude, she felt she was making a difference in their lives. She believed that volunteering is important to her community because there is so much work to be done and so much happiness to be gained from serving others. A number of them stated that volunteering provided them an opportunity to pursue their passion and do so on their own schedule. Dr. Williams suggests future volunteers look ahead and see themselves as contributors before retiring. Mr. Johnson encouraged others to lead purposeful lives, to become involved because there are those who will always need a helping hand. Mr. Brown is hoping others will learn and be inspired by his example. His hope is that others will take some of his ideas and improve on them, making an even bigger contribution and not being afraid of making their own mark in the community.

This study showed that most participants were passionate about their service; they were confident they are making a difference and enjoyed helping others. They believed they should give back to their community and that retirement affords them the free time to do a service they

believe to be important. They all possess a “can-do attitude” and feel that everyone should believe they can make a contribution, big or small, to the common good.

Summary

There is an expression in Hindi that translates to, “I see the Divine in you.” I have tried to identify this quality in the character of each of the participants. These 10 African American volunteers seem to derive a type of gratification from their volunteer service that other endeavors may not have provided them. I believe Mrs. Crawford, the 105-year-old participant, is a perfect example of this. At the age of 102, she was fundraising for her alma mater with a “can do” attitude that I have not seen in many much younger than she. I can only surmise that it came from a life of challenges and victories and never being discouraged when she had done her best. She would be the first to tell you that it has not been an easy road to travel, but it has been one that she would not change and would do all over again.

These volunteers were motivated by a number of things: some by a friend, a family member or their church, and a desire to follow the example of Jesus Christ. All of them seem to be motivated by something of a spiritual nature, something noble in their character. I was left to believe that volunteering in service to others brings out the best in those who choose this path of service. I feel personally transformed and inspired by their examples.

In reference to the challenges they encountered, a number stated that finding enough financial resources had been a challenge; however, none seemed dissuaded from continuing their work. Others felt that additional personnel would have made a difference. A number wished they

could have spent additional time recruiting others to join them. James Gaines stated that if he had to do it over again, he would not have tried to go it alone. Most were optimistic about the future of their service, and Mrs. Crawford was reported to have said that if necessary she would stand out on 15th Street in front of the Center she founded and beg for funds to continue serving the people in her community. These people were not easily discouraged by challenges but were determined to find a way to be of service in the Augusta community. They encouraged others to look around, see the need, and become involved. Some believed that everyone has something to contribute and would advise others to not give up, but to just keep moving forward.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This research was focused on African Americans who chose to dedicate their time and resources as volunteers in the city of Augusta, Georgia. During the Jim Crow Era when services available to White members of the community were not available to its Black citizens, churches, sororities and fraternities created their own opportunities and programs to address the needs of their communities. This type of service continues today in Augusta and other parts of the world. In this study I sought to explore what motivated individuals to volunteer their time and resources, the benefits of doing so, and any challenges they may have encountered along the way. This study also wanted to know what advice participants would share with others who might be considering volunteering at some future time or after retirement.

I was fortunate to have grown up in a community where I saw families and neighbors looking out for one another. Many had very limited material resources, yet most willingly shared what little they had with their neighbors and family members. Even though she was a single mother of seven and had less than most, I especially remember my mother was always willing to help in any way she could. I grew up admiring those who voluntarily helped others in both formal and informal settings.

The volunteers in this study were inspired to serve the less fortunate who deserved a chance at a better life than had been available to a number of them. They felt it was their moral and civic obligation to give back to their community and was an act of gratitude for the sacrifices

of those who had gone before them. The participants appeared to get a great deal of satisfaction from their experiences as volunteers. They felt they were making a difference in the lives of those they served, recognizing the capacity and potential for them to improve their own lives. They recognized there was no shortage of opportunities to be of voluntary service in Augusta, and upon being encouraged by family or friends or being self-motivated, they decided to go forward as volunteers.

The participants hoped their examples would inspire others to consider volunteering and that they would find it gratifying and fulfilling. I was moved by Mrs. Lura Maryland's expression of gratitude to me that someone was interested in writing about her contribution as a volunteer. She stated that no one before had ever wanted to tell her story. Transformative theory orients people to seek social justice and equity. The majority of the participants in this study seemed to believe that by volunteering they were able to address the social and financial inequities faced by those they serve to some degree. The rewards and challenges faced by these participants may provide lessons in the training and retention for future volunteers.

Implications of the Study

One of the implications of this study is that volunteering has been a part of the African American tradition for decades and giving back to their community has been a motivator for many individuals. It also demonstrated that many African Americans began volunteering through the church, continue to volunteer with various established organizations, and have started their own non-profit organizations.

Another implication of this study is that African Americans volunteer regardless of their age and circumstance. As this study has shown, many African Americans believe that

volunteering has no age limit, especially if you care about something that is bigger than you. The participants believe that age was just a number, thank others for encouraging them to continue volunteering, and that there was always time to give back.

This study also showed how many African Americans are servant leaders and do not recognize themselves as leaders. The participants demonstrated that they were doing God's work: "To whom much is given, much is required." The awards and recognition were great, but helping, serving, and mentoring individuals from birth to senior citizens were their greatest rewards.

Future Research

The African American community has not received much attention from researchers regarding their contributions as volunteers, yet there is much evidence that there has been a long history of volunteering in the Black community.

Future research should include:

1. Exploring volunteering experience of members within organizations such as the NAACP, Links, or the Black Greek Letter Organizations
2. Research on retiree African Americans in other communities
3. Research on the differences in community service, volunteering, and philanthropy

Conclusion

I have come to believe that one learns best through examples. When a person is able to identify a positive example of someone who looks like them and who understands their cultural

perspectives, they begin to also see themselves as role models and mentors. I found it an honor to have had the opportunity to meet and interview these African American volunteers who are continuing to serve in the Augusta community. They are passionate about their service and confident they are able to make a difference in the lives of those they serve. These participants all appeared to have a can-do attitude but noted they do not possess special gifts for this type of service. These participants appeared to derive a type of gratification from volunteering that other types of service were not able to provide. I was left to believe that volunteering brings out the best in those who choose to do so and feel certain that the City of Augusta is fortunate to have such citizens in its community.

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APPENDIX

ORGANIZATIONS IN AUGUSTA THAT UTILIZE VOLUNTEERS ON A REGULAR
BASIS

Among Augusta's many volunteer organizations are the following: the Augusta African American Historical Society, the Augusta Rescue Mission, the Augusta Women's Club, Alzheimer's Day Care (provides for mental health and transportation), 100 Black Men of Augusta, Catholic Social Service, Child Enrichment, Inc., HOPE (Helping Our People to Excel (HOPE)), the Golden Harvest Food Bank, the Junior League, the Links, Habitat for Humanity, the Lydia Project, the NAACP, the Red Cross, the Top Ladies of Distinction, the League of Women Voters, the Richmond County Association of Retired Educators, the Ronald McDonald House, the Rosemont Baptist Association as well as the Black fraternal organizations: the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Chi Eta Phi, Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority, Kappa Alpha Phi Fraternity, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority,

Of these, I would like to highlight the Augusta African American Historical Society, the Links, HOPE, the Rosemont Baptist Association and Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. The Augusta African American Historical Society was organized in 2000 by Edward M. McIntyre, Augusta's first Black mayor. Its mission is to document, preserve, and extoll the rich Black history of the Augusta-Richmond County area by naming streets and erecting monuments for deserving honorees. The Society has established the Augusta African American History Walk along Laney-Walker Boulevard. So far, 23 monuments have been erected. The goal is to erect at least 50 monuments.

The Links was founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1946. It contributes more than a million documented hours of community service annually. It is comprised of more than 16,000 women of African descent, with 288 chapters in 41 states, the District of Columbia, the Bahamas and the United Kingdom. The organization is committed to enriching, sustaining and ensuring

the culture and economic survival of African Americans and other persons of African Ancestry. It seeks to engage like-minded organizations and individuals for partnership. It donates Black dolls and school supplies for school children in South Africa, shoes for children in Liberia, and provides supplies to victims of hurricanes Katrina and Dorian. Its key emphases are national trends (i.e. HIV AIDS), international support (Haiti), health and human services, the arts, service to youths, and emerald alerts (working with single mothers and helping them to obtain a GED and meet personal goals).

The Rosemont Baptist Association was established in 1902. Located at 5463 Burke's Mountain Road in Columbia County, almost all of the Black churches in Columbia County are members. It has provided writing competitions (essays on a religious subject) and small scholarships for more than 80 years. Annually it sponsors a back-to-school program in which Central Savannah Area barbers and cosmetologists provide haircuts, hairstyles and manicures at no cost. Wellness groups come and talk to the association about heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, insurance, etc.

HOPE, led by the Rev. James Williams, was founded in 2010. It is comprised of local civic leaders and ministers, including Rev. Anthony Booker, president of the Baptist Ministers' Conference; Rev. Melvin Ivey, president of the NAACP; and Rev. K.B. Martin, pastor of Antioch Baptist Church. Civic leaders include Coliseum Authority Chairman Cedric Johnson, State Senator Harold Jones, former City Administrator Janice Jackson and former commissioners Betty Beard and William "Bill" Fennoy. HOPE's (2010) mission is to "promote the general welfare of the City of Augusta, with particular concern for its poorer citizens and underserved communities. It strives to promote high quality education that will prepare all people to share in the city's economic prosperity as well as to uphold their responsibilities as citizens. ... It seeks to

help those with minimal resources and little hope to realize the power of the ballot to enable them to chart their own course and to ensure their own freedom.” HOPE’s projects range from public forums on various issues to suing the city of Augusta for its failure to follow its Policies and Procedures Manual to issues of home discipline. Current efforts are focused on redistricting of Congressional and legislative seats as well as those for local elected officials. HOPE is the leader in the local effort against voter suppression and political gerrymandering.

Project BBuild (Boulé Brothers uplifting, influencing, leading and developing) is the social action project of the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity (the boulé). Founded in 1904, Sigma Pi Phi is the nation’s oldest Black fraternity and the only Black, graduate fraternity. Project BUILD is a partnership of Alpha Mu Boulé, the Boys and Girls Club of Augusta and the Richmond County Public School System. Conceived by local gastroenterologist Dr. Ronald Brown, Project BBUILD is a weekly tutoring and mentoring program primarily for Black, at-risk boys in Richmond County. The program is multi-faceted and focuses on the academic, cultural, and social development. Since 2007, 40 middle school boys have been meeting with members of the Boulé each Saturday morning from 9:30-12:30 at the Boys and Girls Club.

The first hour is devoted to mentoring. The boys are taught everything from tying a tie, to respect for women, to etiquette, to budgeting and banking (the Boulé starts an account for each student, and the boys are required to save throughout the program—September to June). To broaden their career options, the students meet non-traditional local Black achievers such as the first African American pilot for a major airline or the engineer who designed the lighting system at Madison Square Garden or the head of the Department of Family Medicine at the Medical College of Georgia or the Chief of Neurosurgery at University Hospital.

From 10-12 boys attend classes in math and language arts. They are taught by outstanding teachers in the Richmond County Public School System, who are paid by Sigma Phi Phi (only the teachers are paid). The Project BBUILD curriculum follows the instructional protocols mandated by the Richmond County Board of Education, so the tutoring complements what students are taught in school. A continental breakfast and lunch are provided each week. The mentoring component creates a bridge for its students as they transition from middle school to high school to college. The primary objective is to continue to encourage the students and to reinforce the high standards, values and expectations of Project BBUILD. The fraternity awards new computers to the top students and more than \$10,000 per year in scholarships. Project BBUILD was recognized at the White House by President Barack Obama.