ABSTRACT

This paper explores the use of stewardship as a strategy for maintaining the relationship between nonprofit organizations and their volunteers. Nonprofit organizations rely heavily on volunteers to provide the organizations services and in some cases, volunteers are used in administration functions of the organization; thus, making it imperative for nonprofit organizations to nurture and maintain relationships with their volunteers.

Stewardship as defined by Kelly (1991) is a collection of relationship maintenance strategies including: participating in reciprocity, responsibility, reporting, and relationship nurturing. To date, stewardship practices have only been applied to nonprofit organizations and its charitable donors.

This study surveyed 19 paid staff and 27 volunteers of nonprofit organizations in the Indianapolis, Indiana area. Results indicated that stewardship practices are being used by nonprofit organizations but there is still much room for improvement. Some inconsistencies were found in the areas of reporting and responsibility. Overall, volunteers are satisfied with their relationship with their affiliated nonprofit organization.