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Variants of Volunteerism among Mature Adults within Communities of Northeast Tennessee.

Martha Wilcox Edwards
East Tennessee State University

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Martha Wilcox Edwards

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Dr. Scott H. Beck, Chair
Dr. Wendell H. Hester
Dr. Martha Copp

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ABSTRACT

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A purposive study conducted among mature adults aged 55 and older in Northeast Tennessee examined variants of volunteerism as well as volunteer needs of agencies and organizations and what percent of volunteers in those agencies fall within the specified age group. Mature volunteers in the region match profiles of other studies – predominantly white, married, homeowners, who are protestant, females with educational levels beyond high school, and who have income levels above the regional average. Findings show that most volunteers attend religious services at least once each week but found no association between gender and informal volunteerism, between health and volunteerism, or that rural volunteers are more likely to participate in informal volunteer activities. Results were analyzed using the chi-square test of statistical significance.

For James Earl and Reagan Michelle.

Thank you for your love, your support, and your believing.

I love you.

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CHAPTER 1

VOLUNTEERISM

America has a vast array of social agencies and programs that depend on volunteer support to keep them running. Many of these programs were started as federal programs that have since been turned over to states that in turn passed some of the programs down to local governments who often do not have the means to fully fund them. The trickle down effect of budget cuts frequently means, then, that special programs either shut down or have to manage with less funding. Some are almost entirely dependent on volunteers to do much of the work.

Over the years, citizens of the United States have been encouraged by their presidents to step up to the challenge in volunteer needs. Each year a National Volunteer Week is announced and promoted through presidential proclamation by the current president as he urges all Americans to express their appreciation to the nation's volunteers, along with pleas to promote the spirit of volunteerism and inspire a commitment to service in families and communities. George H. W. Bush will long be remembered for his "Thousand Points of Light" idea, exhorting every American to make a difference in his or her neighborhood or social environment. In his 1999 recognition of National Volunteer Week, President Bill Clinton admonished that "Volunteers will become increasingly vital to our society as we enter a new millennium. We cannot rely solely on charitable contributions or government programs to address the challenges we see in our communities" (*"Proclamation 7186 – National Volunteer Week, 1999"* 1999). In 2003, the volunteerism message was brought close to home in East Tennessee, as President George W. Bush addressed a group of citizens in Knoxville, also encouraging volunteers to step forward in the "Volunteer State" to take a stand and dig in to help others in need. After all, we

are the Volunteer State and are proud to step forward and serve our friends, our communities, and our country.

We hear a great deal about the elderly age group being the fastest growing segment of our population. Often these statements are accompanied with predictions and dire warnings that the increasing size of this segment of society will affect the demands for services of various types, causing an imbalance in the demands on society. Because it is known that aging often means special needs, civic leaders may reason that increasing this segment of society will also increase the demand for more volunteers. Wherever we look, however, we see evidence that older people are active in their communities, helping with the workload in places and times of need. Ferraro (2001) cites work by Herzog and Morgan in which they concluded "many older people contribute to society by helping each other as well as members of younger generations" (Herzog and Morgan 1992:197). Indeed, our aging population has a wealth of attributes and abilities that are in part being used in ways that offset any increased demands that their increasing numbers may cause.

One may reason that retired persons are the perfect solution for meeting needs in other segments of society. Often people are encouraged to retire before they feel ready to do so and therefore need something to do. Because retirement can be a lonely time, volunteering in the community can assuage that loneliness, while also helping retirees establish new role identities to replace those lost as they move into a retirement lifestyle after years in their master status as employed people. Volunteering insures that older people are included in society rather than excluded, and society gains a vast supply of human resource (Hagestad and Dannefer 2001:13) as mature adults step forward to lend support in their communities.

Researchers have found one benefit of volunteering is that staying active provides self-worth and gives meaning to life for the retiree (Riekse and Holstege 1996). According to Atchley (1972), an increase in social activity in later years relates to a more positive and successful adjustment to aging (p. 204). Volunteering in community service provides opportunities for engagement, activity, acquaintanceship, and growth. Further, mature older adults have the time, the know-how, and most have come into adulthood with positive attitudes. They are experienced workers, family members, and citizens, and they constitute a rich repository of roles that model integrity, reliability, dependability, and discipline to responsible assignments, for younger generations (Freedman 1997). According to Erikson's eight stages of the life cycle, people who have aged successfully are generative in nature, care about younger generations, and want to pass along the wealth of knowledge and expertise they have accumulated (Hergenhahn and Olson 1999; Freedman 1997). Erikson considered social activism and generally contributing to the welfare of society to be generativity – the instinctual drive to pass on to the next generation what they have learned in life while at the same time satisfying the "need to be needed" (Boeree 1997: Freedman 1997:55). Additionally, as the "baby boomer" cohort comes into retirement, numbers of volunteers from amidst their ranks should be plentiful.

This thesis investigates the non-family volunteer involvements of people aged 55 and older, with focus on factors related to variants of volunteerism among mature adults in rural and urban communities. Secondarily, this study looks at the overall volunteer needs of agencies and organizations in Northeast Tennessee and their supply of mature adult volunteers.

Statement of the Problem

Volunteer services are needed in many areas throughout American society. In an effort to meet the needs of aging citizens alone, many federal, state, and local programs have been

established. Most programs, such as food centers and nutrition programs, transportation programs, home maintenance, housing location, legal services, long-term care, hospice programs, friendly visitation, and social activities, depend on volunteers for their staffing and getting the job done.

Projections for population growth among the elderly are well known and accepted. It must be anticipated that a proportionate demand for the various services that provide for the elderly population will accelerate accordingly. Due to cutbacks in government and private funding, civic programs that benefit the public already depend on volunteer involvement. It would be helpful to know what motivates people to volunteer among any segment of the population, but most especially among senior adults in Northeast Tennessee. Further, it would be of interest to know whether those volunteer efforts are personally fulfilling to senior adults who give time and effort to their communities in a generative way and whether volunteerism, as a social activity, is indicative of successful individual social adjustment to aging.

Old age usually means retirement from paid work and loss of the master status with which an individual has been identified throughout his/her adult years. Kart and Kinney (2001) warn that retirement is seldom easy and that adequate finances, good health, and social activities positively affect adjustment to retirement (p. 347). While some elders welcome retirement and even retire early, others find it stressful and prefer working past the age of 65 or even 70. Whatever the age of retirement, volunteerism can bridge the gap between paid work and community needs while giving volunteers a sense of personal well-being, being needed, and "giving back" to their community in ways that fill their empty time and fulfill their personal needs and altruistic tendencies. Loeser (1974) expressed the belief that volunteering is socially beneficial and that "the volunteer scene itself can become an equalizing force, a platform for

social intercourse, understanding, and change" (p. 24). Both in response to role loss and as a function of increased time availability, volunteer activity may increase following exit from the paid labor force (Mutchler, Burr, and Caro 2003).

Significance of the Problem

Research on mature adult volunteerism is limited, yet Northeast Tennessee has many programs and areas that need and use older volunteers. The results of this study should be of regional interest to program administrators and/or supervisors, as well as groups that undertake civic programs, to understand the demographic profile and the motivations of volunteers so that they can better recruit and retain volunteers. Organizations in need of volunteers could adapt their recruitment efforts to solicit the wealth of untapped talents and resources that senior citizens have to contribute, while also fulfilling the older adult's need for identity, a functional role in society, and further enhancing his or her personal well-being and health benefits. By using senior adult volunteers in selected service roles, the demands made on the time and energy of other participants would be reduced (Miller 1965).

Plan of Research and Data Source

As a means of data collection and because this is a purposive study rather than an experimental investigation, this study was conducted in two phases and employed two separate survey questionnaires. The data used in this study were collected from volunteer mature adults in Northeast Tennessee via a questionnaire - the Survey of Variants of Volunteerism, and from a second, mail-out questionnaire survey – the Agency/Organization Questionnaire.

The survey of variants is intended to learn more about the demographic picture of Northeast Tennessee's mature adult volunteers and to learn more about what motivates them to volunteer. This survey also explores the link between volunteerism and religiosity, whether or

not volunteers subjectively consider themselves to be in as-good-as, or better, health than their cohorts who do not volunteer, and the differences between informal and formal volunteerism and between rural and urban volunteerism. Some limitations of this research included:

- The geographical size of the First Tennessee Development District made it difficult for the principal investigator to make personal contact with each volunteer group.
- Directors of senior centers requested specific numbers of questionnaires, but the principal investigator had no control over the number of members who actually received questionnaires.
- While this study was designed to learn more about the mature adult volunteers in Northeast Tennessee, it does not meet the probability sample criterion and the results may not be generalized to the mature adult population of Northeast Tennessee.
- Some volunteers were either reluctant to complete the questionnaire, or they chose to not complete portions of it.

The mail-out questionnaire was sent to agencies, churches, and other civic organizations to inquire about their volunteer needs and what percentage of their volunteer staff falls in the 55+ age group. Responses from the Agency/Organization Questionnaire survey should give an idea of the overall volunteer numbers needed in Northeast Tennessee and the percentage of those volunteering that are believed to come from the ranks of mature adults in Northeast Tennessee. It is felt that a mail-out survey is advantageous as the most appropriate method of survey administration because of the low cost of mail-out surveys versus in-person or telephone interviewing and because of the time, distance, and car expense involved in attempting to contact

widespread agencies. While this study focused on senior centers and volunteer agencies within the Northeast Tennessee region, as well as other known retired and/or senior groups, it was not possible to obtain a complete list of volunteer agencies for random, more representative sampling or to contact all the civic agencies, churches and interest groups that use adult volunteers. Another disadvantage of the mail-out survey includes a lower overall response rate which may be magnified in some agencies due to work overload, shortage of paid personnel at the agency or institution, and/or lack of record keeping.

The plan is to use data from the survey to test hypotheses that center around volunteerism. Statistical computation will be used to analyze the data and provide descriptive analysis via the SPSS program.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Americans tend to associate the term "senior citizen" or "senior adult" with retired people or adults who attain a certain age. There seems to be no absolute consensus for defining older, mature adults, however. The age of 65 came to be a point of demarcation in 1935 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act (Hillier and Barrows 1999) and made it possible for older people to have a small pension (Macionis 2002:121). It came to be generally expected as a "rite of passage" that people would disengage from their work careers at the age of 65, and many organizations then mandated retirement by the age of 65. This remained so until amendments to the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1986 (ADEA) made mandatory retirement for most employees at a particular age (usually 65) illegal (Kart and Kinney 2001; Thorson 2000:310). While some people do work longer, many others may retire as early as the age of 55 if they are financially able to do so. Most government agencies, for instance, offer pension benefits starting at age 55 and look for retirement from their employees at that age. During sporadic cost-cutting episodes, it is quite common for government agencies to propose earlier retirement "buy out" from employees who are getting close to retirement age. Fifty-five is also the age when many businesses and service agencies offer "senior citizen" benefits and discounts for shopping and services.

Collectivistic Roots of Volunteerism vs. Cultural Individualism

The history of elderly volunteering goes back to the Great Depression in the 1930s, through World War II, and into the present (Soo and Gong-Soog 1998), in both formal and informally organized service. Eckstein (2001) distinguishes between collectivistic roots of

volunteerism, which she shows to have group, community, and class stratifying effects, and volunteerism grounded in American cultural individualism. Although the two may be intertwined, each has distinct roots, dynamics, and impacts (p. 829). Collectivistic-rooted volunteerism is group-induced; groups (organizations, institutions) coordinate the activity and volunteerism may be the result of group embeddedness or leadership initiative over and above reasons for individual motivation. Further, collectivistic-grounded volunteerism is bounded by norms and networks and involves group resources that may symbolically bestow legitimacy, honor, or moral support to the volunteer (Eckstein 2001). Volunteer work may be delivered through local programs – churches, museums, libraries, schools, and nursing homes – or through state or large national programs.

President John F. Kennedy urged the establishment of a National Service Corps, a domestic equivalent of the Peace Corps, which would tap the "reservoir of skill and experience of millions of older and retired people." Although it failed, this proposal was an attempt to breech the "wall of inertia" standing between older people and their communities (Freedman 1997). In 1965, however, in conjunction with the War on Poverty, President Lyndon Johnson announced Federal funding for a new set of programs engaging low-income seniors in community service (Freedman). The programs have been shuttled from one agency to another over the years, but according to Freedman, the current roster of service programs operates on a national scale, involving more than 1,000 projects and more than 100,000 participants.

Despite the many projects, the majority of incentives for older Americans are concentrated in the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP), the Senior Companion Program (SCP), and Title V initiatives of the Older Americans Act. Compensation for FGP and SCP is a tax-exempt stipend of $2.45 per hour (Freedman 1997). According to information from the U. S.

Senate, in 1996 over 490,000 persons aged 60 and older contributed 119 million hours through FGP, the SCP, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. Approximately 80,000 local nonprofit and public agencies had Senior Corps volunteers, whose contributions yielded an estimated value of $1.4 billion, almost a 12-fold return on the federal investment in the three programs (Cutler and Hendricks 2001:475).

In *Growing Older in America*, Rieske and Holstege (1996) assert that volunteering possibilities for older people are endless, and they describe national volunteer programs that fall under the auspices of the *U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging* 1993:

> ACTION. ACTION is an independent government agency set up to administer all domestic volunteer programs under a single authorizing law. It administers a number of programs aimed at persons in a variety of age groups, including older people.
>
> Retired Senior Volunteer Corps. The Retired Senior Volunteer Corps (RSVP) is a program that offers a variety of volunteer opportunities to persons 60 years of age and older. Volunteers serve in areas of interest such as youth counseling, literacy enhancement, long-term care, refugee assistance, drug abuse prevention, consumer education, crime prevention, housing rehabilitation, latchkey children in after school programs, and respite care for the elderly. RSVP volunteers get no pay, but they are reimbursed for expenses that result from their service.
>
> Foster Grandparents Program. The Foster Grandparents Program (FGP) provides part-time volunteer opportunities for low-income persons 60 years of age and older to help them provide supportive services to children with physical, mental, emotional, or social disabilities. FGP volunteers are placed with nonprofit agencies such as schools, hospitals, daycare centers, and institutions for people with mental or physical handicaps. These volunteers are paid by the hour, but to qualify, they need to be below 125 percent of the federal poverty line. In 1986, opportunities to serve in this program were expanded to non-low-income persons who are reimbursed for expenses they have because of their volunteer efforts.
>
> Senior Companion Program. The Senior Companion Program (SCP) is designed to provide volunteer opportunities to low-income persons 60 years of age and older to help provide supportive services to "vulnerable, frail older persons." SCP volunteers help homebound disabled older persons as well as those in institutions and those enrolled in community health programs. As with the FGP, volunteers are paid if they meet low-income guidelines. Non-low-

> income persons can participate without pay, receiving out-of-pocket expenses associated with their volunteer efforts. (Pp. 211-212)

Soo and Gong-Soog (1998) reference other national volunteer organizations in which older Americans might serve, including the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).

Informal volunteerism is seen by Eckstein (2001) as culturally individualistic and differing in structure and organization from formal volunteering, but it may be similar in content. A broader definition of volunteering, informal volunteer activity includes work that is done to assist friends, neighbors, and family members outside the household (Mutchler *et al.* 2003). Informal volunteering or support may include aiding someone in crisis, transporting someone to a doctor's appointment, serving food to a sick neighbor, tutoring a child or youth, baby-sitting, homemaking for a frail neighbor, and caregiving to a friend or relative outside one's own home (Mutchler *et al.* 2003; Soo and Gong-Soog 1998). As an activity directed toward individuals with whom one has personal contact, such as family, friends, or neighbors, informal volunteering may be motivated in part by affection or commitment to those individuals (Mutchler *et al.* 2003:1270). In other words, informal helping behavior may stem from the need to reciprocate assistance from those individuals in the past or to repay a social obligation.

When he visited the United States in the mid-19th century, Tocqueville ([1966] 1969) saw individualism in acts of compassion among Americans and compared them with Europeans who tend to help those within their own class or profession. Americans, he observed, are likely to feel compelled to help across classes and rarely, in the United States, would a man in misfortune feel isolated - "when an American needs the assistance of his fellows, it is very rare for that to be refused, and I have often seen it given spontaneously and eagerly" (p. 571). He further observed that Americans, though perhaps not in a hurry to volunteer their services, are also sensitive, so

they rarely refuse to volunteer. Freedom enjoyed by Americans also teaches them their weaknesses, and though they might not normally need the assistance of others, experience has taught that a situation might arise when help will be needed. American's interest, as well as their sympathy, "prompts a code of lending each other mutual assistance at need" and they tend to show this readiness of reciprocal obligation (Tocqueville [1966] 1969:571-572).

Volunteer needs exist everywhere in society just waiting to be addressed by people with the time, interest, and ability. Matching talents and interests to needs is the key (Riekse and Holstege 1996:213) because it is supposed that both volunteers and agencies are served better when the volunteer has expertise and confidence in his/her work and can provide complimentary skills to staff and other volunteers (Freedman 1997). Reference books that describe various volunteer opportunities for older volunteers, such as Andrew Carroll's (1994) *Golden Opportunities: A Volunteer Guide for Americans over 50*, and *Volunteerism and Older Adults* by Mary K. Kouri (1990) are available at most libraries. Online resources such as www.volunteermatch.org. and www.seniorcorps.org. also are available to provide suggestions on how to go about volunteering ("Volunteering: Giving, Getting and Making a Difference" 2003).

Demographic Profile of Older Volunteers

A demographic picture of characteristics that influence an individual's contribution to social and community services was put forth by Soo and Gong-Soog (1998) as a result of their research on the elderly and volunteerism among the 55 and older population. Their findings indicate that older U. S. citizens who participate in volunteer projects are typically married females who have a college education and a high income (Soo and Gong-Soog 1998). Curtis, Baer, and Grabb (2001) also found education level to be positively related to voluntary involvement. According to Caro and Bass (1998) the significant relationship between education

beyond high school and elderly volunteering has been consistently found in earlier research. Greeley (1997) reports on a study that indicates that people who continued in school after they were 20 years old were twice as likely to report some kind of volunteering as those who had left school before they were 12. As Chambré (1984) explained, "well-educated elderly may be better equipped with knowledge and skills in general, resulting in the increased likelihood and extent of participation in volunteering" (p. 293). On the other hand, there is evidence that among blacks, there are no socioeconomic differences in volunteering: high-school dropouts are just as likely to volunteer as college graduates, and the poor are just as likely to give time as the rich (Musick, Wilson, and Bynum 2000).

Home ownership also is positively correlated to volunteer activities (Soo and Gong-Soog 1998). Putnam (2000) notes that senior adults account for most of the increase in volunteering in the last quarter century. He attributes their increased volunteerism to their place in history as members of the long "civic" generation, not the fact that they have reached a certain age.

In their research, Soo and Gong-Soog (1998) cited the 1996 Bureau of Census' national statistics for 1993 which indicate that 47 percent of senior citizens aged 55 to 64 participated in volunteer work, followed by 43 percent of those aged 65 to 74, and 36.4% of those 75 and older. A survey of the leisure activities of individuals 66 and older by Fontane and Hurd (1996:61) indicated that 60 percent of their respondents perform volunteer work; 20 % serve religious associations. They found that men's most popular volunteer activities were sport-affiliated and social, while women mainly volunteered for hospitals and organizations serving older persons.

Certain types of people are more likely to adopt the volunteer role, and older people are indeed more likely to do so if they have actively volunteered in earlier life (Farraro 2001:321). Personal history with volunteering, according to Mutchler *et al.* (2003), is consistently related to

volunteer activities, and older volunteers are typically continuing a pattern of behavior established earlier in life - "volunteers who have aged" rather than individuals who are recruited into volunteerism upon aging (p. 1273). Farraro cites Ekert's argument of a "busy ethic" that leads retirees to voluntarism and that this is both a statement of value as well as an expectation of retired people, that their lives be "active and earnest" (Farraro 2001:321). Community participation may be an outlet for older people who need to keep busy and is a key form of generativity. While some researchers have found that older women are slightly more inclined to participate in volunteer work, other research has found little difference between men's and women's volunteer levels (Moen 1996:187).

Interested in the connection between personality and volunteerism, Penner (2002) studied the relationship between dispositional variables and volunteerism and found significant relationships among personality traits, religiosity and volunteer activities. Using the Prosocial Personality Battery (PSB) Penner measured "Other-oriented Empathy" and "Helpfulness" and found distinct differences between the two. Other-oriented Empathy scores strongly correlate with measures of personality attributes such as agreeableness and nurturance, but scores on the Helpfulness dimension do not. Conversely, scores on the Helpfulness dimension strongly correlate with measures of dominance and assertiveness, but scores on the Other-oriented Empathy do not (p.451). Penner reports that both dimensions of the prosocial personality do correlate with prosocial behaviors, especially volunteer behavior (Penner 2002).

Curtis *et al.* (2001) compared levels of voluntary association membership for 33 democratic countries from surveys of nationally representative samples of adults from the 1990s. They found that Americans volunteer at rates above the average for all nations. Overall, voluntarism tends to be high in nations that have: (1) multi-denominational Christian or

predominantly Protestant religious composition, (2) prolonged and continuous experience with democratic institutions, (3) social democratic or liberal democratic political systems, and (4) high levels of economic development. More particularly, Curtis *et al*. (2001) cited Lipset's work of the 1980s and 1990s that compared Americans with other nations in their likelihood to "take part in voluntary efforts to achieve particular goals" (p.784). Emphasizing American uniqueness, Lipset (1996:784) also argued that the high association activity in the United States is the result of a distinctively American value system that placed a high priority on individual participation in community affairs. This value system supposedly stems from America's revolutionary past and the separation of church and state (Curtis *et al.* 2001). According to Greeley (1997) the American advantage in volunteering is concentrated in church-related voluntary efforts (p.72).

Stability of Volunteers

Volunteering is usually a relatively long-term behavior (Penner 2002). Quoting national surveys, Penner (2002) asserts that almost 50 percent of the people who volunteer do so on a regular rather than a one-time basis. More than 90 percent of volunteers want to engage in long-term volunteer activities; and once people begin to work regularly as a volunteer, a large percentage of them continue this activity for several years (Penner 2002:448).

Braunschweig and Peters-Davis (2000) focused on the stability of volunteerism among senior citizens. They found that over a 3-year period, older volunteers were stable and contributed at least 4 hours per week in active volunteer efforts. After one year, 92 percent of the volunteers remained active; 89 percent of the initial group was active after the second interview. Thirty-eight percent of those interviewed volunteered at least 4 hours per week. Additionally, 84 percent of volunteers reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with their

volunteer experiences (Braunschweig and Peters-Davis 2000:322). Volunteer groups might speculate that good individual experiences in volunteering lead to stability in volunteer roles.

Intergenerational Volunteerism

Lewis (2002) asserts that "youth and older adults are the most valuable sources of community volunteerism in the U.S. today." As greater numbers of older adults seek ways to contribute their talents, some communities are devising intergenerational programs that tap into the rich resource of elder volunteerism while simultaneously fostering relationships between youth and older adults. Such programs can give children a sense of history and continuity through contact with older adults and provide older adults with a new zest for life (Halford 1998), and according to Loeser (1974), volunteering helps bridge the generation gap: retirees can team up with younger people. "Such teamwork has obvious additional benefits for both the older and the younger partner" (p. 154-155). School districts, for instance, might use senior volunteers as mentors for teen parents and youths at-risk for drug use, or they might also teach reading skills and tutor younger children. In those programs the students, in turn, may perform service in nursing home facilities. Unfortunately, senior adults remain a tremendously underused resource in many school communities (Halford 1998). Lewis (2002) proposes that more communities should recognize the potential benefits of service learning for older adults and thereby provide them with structured programs to satisfy their demonstrated desire to stay engaged in learning and service.

Bressler (2000) found that older volunteers commonly express a desire to help their communities. They also express satisfaction with the relationships they form with youth, improvements in their personal relationships beyond the program – particularly with young family members, a strong belief that they are having a positive impact on youth, increased

feelings of competence and self-confidence, and an appreciation for productive activity. In communities that have mentoring or intergenerational programs, both the senior adults and the young people report increased feelings of competence and self-confidence, and both groups describe decreased ageist attitudes toward the other generation (Bressler 2000).

Along those same lines, earlier research by Aspras (1997) found that a teaching and community service program in which interaction through educational and social activities between high school students and senior citizens proved successful in teaching students self-discipline, self-worth, and civic responsibility. Taylor, LoSciuto, and Bressler (2000) demonstrated the important contribution that older adults can make in alleviating community problems by mentoring at-risk students. They surveyed three 6th grade student groups to determine differences in drug use and truancy prevention programs when older adult mentors were involved. Statistically significant differences were shown in attitudes toward school, the future, and knowledge of older people, reactions to situations involving drug use, community service, and in mean number of absences from school between groups who had mentoring and a control group that received no mentoring (p. 263). Schuckman (1975) also suggested that older folks and children form a mutual association of love and respect.

Leisure Activities

It does seem that many people have extra time on their hands from their mid-50s. According to Freedman (1997), studies show that retirement frees an average of 25 hours per week for men and 18 hours for women. Robinson, Werner, and Godbey (1997) report that the reason senior citizens have more free time to spend on social activities and travel is that they are spending less time on eating, sleeping, and grooming themselves, according to The Americans' Use of Time project, begun at the University of Michigan in 1965. The project also found that

religious and other organizational volunteer activity increases with age, and for people aged 65 and older, 50 to 75 percent more time is spent on such activities than for those aged 18 to 64 (Robinson *et al*. 1997). It is this expanding discretionary time that volunteer organizations would like to utilize.

Benefits of Volunteering

It has been suggested that older people are a rich potential source of volunteers (Warburton *et al*. 2001) and even that volunteerism can be conceptualized as a form of productive aging for older persons. Cutler and Hendricks (2001) suggest that benefits volunteering accrue not only directly from contributions of volunteers but also indirectly from savings associated with better health (p. 476). Social researchers continue to investigate and document the health and well-being effects of unpaid community service in an attempt to show the longevity effects of volunteering in both men and women (Moen 2001:188). From the standpoint of the participant, even nominal levels of participation may broaden social networks, enhance self-esteem, or yield other benefits to the individual (Mutchler *et al.* 2003). According to Rieske and Holstege (1996), a primary benefit of volunteering is that staying active provides self-worth and gives meaning to life. Numerous social scientists have shown that assuming the role of volunteer correlates to higher satisfaction with life (Atchley 1972; Thoits and Hewitt 2001).

The relationship between social integration and well-being of older individuals has long been established in the field of gerontology. Role occupancy and activity are seen as important key mechanisms for older individuals' integrating into the larger society, with the notion of social integration being especially salient in women's lives because until recently, adulthood for women has been synonymous with domestic roles (Moen 2001; Rosow 1985). Moen cites

research by Lee and Shehan, who found that participation in voluntary associations was related to women's but not men's well-being (Moen 1996:179).

In a longitudinal study using two waves of panel data from *Americans' Changing Lives* (N = 2,681) Thoits and Hewitt (2001) examined the relationships between volunteer work in the community and six aspects of personal well being: happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, sense of control over life, physical health, and depression. Rather than focus only on consequences of volunteer work, however, Thoits and Hewitt (2001) posited that people with greater personality resources and better physical and mental health should be more likely to seek community service. Their results show that volunteer work enhances all six aspects of an individual's well-being and further, that people with greater well-being invest more hours in volunteer service (p.115).

Also using the *Americans' Changing Lives* data set, Musick and Wilson (2003) used three waves of data and found that volunteer work improves access to social and psychological resources, which are known to counter negative moods such as depression and anxiety. Their research revealed that volunteering does lower depression levels for those over 65.

Van Willigen (2000) investigated the relationship between volunteering and the psychological and physical well-being of elderly persons and found that older volunteers experienced greater increases in life satisfaction over time as a result of their volunteer hours than did younger adult volunteers, especially at high rates of volunteering. Her findings also indicate that older adults experienced greater positive changes in their perceived health than did younger adult volunteers (Van Willigen 2000:308). There is caution, however, that the type of volunteer work in which older adults engage may be part of the reason for these effects and that

the volunteer's commitment, not simply the volunteer role, should be considered when analyzing the effect volunteering has on well-being (Van Willigen 2000).

Litwin (2001) also found indications that being actively involved is beneficial for older people. He examined the relationship between network type - consideration of interpersonal environments - and morale in old age, using secondary analysis from the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (N = 2,079). Controlling for background and health variables, Litwin's goal was to derive network types and to determine which type had the highest morale. According to his findings, diversity contributed to highest morale while networks within exclusively family or restricted networks had the lowest morale (Litwin 2001). Similarly, Farraro (2001) notes that the benefits of voluntarism appear to be stronger for those focusing their efforts on one organization or reporting low levels of informal social interaction (p. 321).

Oman, Thoresen, and McMahon (1999) investigated the association of volunteering service to others and all-cause mortality with a community dwelling elderly population. They report that just providing older adults with information about opportunities for volunteering increased both volunteerism and their well-being. Results of their study showed that 31 percent of respondents volunteered, and about half volunteered for more than one organization. Those who participated in two or more organizations had 63 percent lower mortality than non-volunteers, after adjusting for age and sex (Oman *et al*. 1999:301).

Earlier research by Luks (1988) contributed to the conclusion by a group of behavioral scientists that doing good may indeed be good for you. The research, in which 1,500 women responded to a survey, linked "helping" with relief from stress-related disorders such as headaches, voice loss, depression, pain accompanying lupus, and high blood pressure. Approximately 88% of the respondents reported feeling an identifiable physical sensation –

highs, warmth, and increased energy when working for a good cause. Some volunteers reported increased energy, greater calmness, and an enhanced sense of self-worth. Self-reports in that study indicate that nine out of ten committed volunteers consider themselves as healthy or healthier than others their age, and 13% of those surveyed noted a decrease in aches and pains. Luks (1988) cited work by psychologist Jaak Panksepp, who has been studying social and emotional processes with special emphasis on altruism. His work gives clear indication that "it is our own natural opiates, the endorphins, that produce the good feelings that arise during social contact with others" (p.39). Interestingly, respondents noted that altruism's pleasure does not appear to arise from donating money, no matter how important the cause, nor from volunteering without close personal contact (Luks 1988:40).

Pihlblad and McNamara (1965) examined characteristics found in well-adjusted people. They found well-adjusted people were more frequently married than widowed or single, had a higher degree of social participation, both in informal contacts with friends and neighbors as well as in formal associations such as religious organizations, social and civic groups. Their study showed that those persons having the greatest degree of participation and holding more favorable attitudes toward the community tend to have higher adjustment scores (p. 72).

Religion and Volunteering

Religiosity is thought to shape volunteering because most religious faiths promote assistance to others as a valued activity and because religious organizations provide convenient vehicles for engaging in such voluntary activity (Mutchler *et al*. 2003:1273). Sometimes referred to as "selfless service," volunteerism has long been associated with religious involvement (Oman *et al.* 1999). About half of church members volunteer for their churches (Hoge *et al.* 1998), and numerous studies show that older adults generally have higher levels of

participation in religious activities (Robinson *et al.* 1997) than do younger adults (Farraro 2001; Musick and Wilson 2003). Researchers Hodgkinson and Weitzman (Mutchler *et al*. 2003:1273) report that a substantially higher level of volunteering is found among those who attend religious services weekly than among those who do not attend any religious services. Greeley (1997) stated that people who attend services once a week or more are approximately twice as likely to volunteer as those who attend rarely if ever.

According to Musick and Wilson (2003), religious volunteers appear to be more committed to volunteering as part of their life, but according to Wilson and Janoski (1995) the impact of church activism is not felt until they reach middle age. They go further to say that liberal Protestants are the most likely to have been taught by their parents that religion should inspire social action and that they in turn are more likely to replace religious activism with secular activism in middle age (Wilson and Janoski 1995) and presumably beyond middle age into old age.

It appears that many people, older people in particular, are more willing to accept help from volunteers affiliated with religious organizations. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest health-care foundation, has spent 20 years testing volunteer programs that provide a vehicle for people who want to volunteer to help their neighbors while also providing older adults with basic help in activities such as shopping and housework. Using grant monies, the foundation helps local communities start "Faith in Action" programs that let religious volunteers help the elderly in need ("Faith in Action" 2003).

A 1993 study of Assemblies of God, Baptists, Catholics, Lutherans, and Presbyterians, that investigated levels of volunteering by parishioners to support church programs, found that conservative and evangelical churches have higher levels of volunteering to support church

programs. Wilson and Janoski (1995) site research by Wuthnow that found not all religious bodies emphasize volunteering to the same degree. Protestants are 11 percent more likely than Catholics to be involved in charitable or other social service activities, and there are marked differences within the Jewish religion regarding service to community. In other words, liberal Reform Jews have a strong tradition of service to the community, while ethnic Jews who lack denomination identification are much less active in general community voluntary associations (Wilson and Janoski 1995).

Curtis *et al.* (2001) point out that religious tradition has an effect on voluntarism because participation in churches and religious associations is largely a function of competition among churches for members. The value of volunteers to most churches is about two-fifths the value of their monetary contributions; Lutherans and Baptists, however, were found to have the highest value, at almost half the current amount of monetary contributions (Hoge *et al*. 1998). Religious organizations typically have many positions that may be adopted by the older volunteer: routine assistance with religious education or benevolent care, lay roles (elder), or perhaps integrating religious and helping organizational interests (Farraro 2001).

Researchers have found that some religious groups, especially Black churches, are more oriented toward networking religious and voluntary activity roles (Farraro 2001:321). Musick *et al.* (2000:1539) found that for all kinds of volunteering except for the entirely secular, black volunteering is more influenced by church attendance than is white volunteering, reflecting the more prominent role of the black church in its community.

Sociological Theories and Volunteerism

Role-theory is social gerontology's earliest attempt to understand the adjustment of the aged individual as s/he goes through the aging process. Role-theory is a structural-functional

view that sees aging as determining people's social roles "independent of their capacities and preferences" (Moen 1996:171). The theory postulates that two changes are inevitable: (1) disengagement from social relationships and career roles or paid work typical of adulthood - role loss, and (2) replacement by retirement and the acceptance of social relationships typical of later years. Typical changes might include fewer family roles but more dependence on offspring and others – new roles and changes in social integration (Kart and Kinney 2001). It seems, however, that some roles individuals maintain throughout the life course are important, especially in the later years. Chambré (1984) cites volunteering as such an example, and certain research has found older adults are more likely to volunteer if they volunteered earlier in life (Farraro 2001), possibly because if they have identity status as a volunteer, society does not expect them to disengage and therefore lose that role. Musick and Wilson (2003) found support for the argument that volunteer work is elevated in significance among populations whose other roles have been diminished.

Activity theory purports that even though aging individuals face changes related to physiology, anatomy, and health status, their psychological and social needs remain essentially the same. This theory suggests that those who age successfully are individuals who stay active and manage to resist the withdrawal of the social world. According to activity theory, the individual who is able to maintain the activities of the middle years for as long as possible will be well adjusted and satisfied with life in the later years (Kart and Kinney 2001). If retiring from work, the person finds some substitute for work, such as volunteering (Thorson 2000), and also will replace old friends and loved ones who die with new ones. Allowing that physical limitations and circumstances make giving up some things a necessity, activity theory expresses the concept that age-appropriate replacements should be found, and that the happy older person

is an active older person (Thorson 2000:53). Kart and Kinney (212-213) point out one problem with the activity theory is that it assumes individuals have control over their social situations and the capacity to construct their lives by substituting new roles and activities for lost ones. Another problem with activity theory is that while often associated within the framework of psychological well-being of older adults, it also proposes that any kind of activity can substitute for the loss experienced. Activity theory fails to account for what happens to people who cannot maintain the standards of middle age or cannot adjust to substantial changes in the environment (Kart and Kinney).

Social exchange theory is built on the notion that an exchange of resources takes place in all interpersonal interactions. In other words, individuals only engage in an exchange if they perceive a favorable cost/benefit ratio or if they see no better alternatives (Thorson 2000). As individuals become older, however, the resources they are able to bring to the exchange begin to shift, and older individuals who withdraw from social activities may perceive their personal resources as diminished to the point where they have little left to bring to an exchange, thus leading to their increasing seclusion from social interactions (Kart and Kinney). Exchange theory bases its explanation of the realignment of roles, values, and contributions of older adults on this assumption. From such a standpoint, it seems that volunteerism on the part of older adults could be viewed not as an altruistic activity but as fulfilling an emotional need that provides personal gain for the individual both in the present and for future needs of social support.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data considered for this study were obtained from a purposive survey of mature adults, 55 years of age and older, and agencies/organizations/churches located in communities that are within counties that comprise the First Tennessee Development District. These counties are: Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington. The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of the variants of the non-family social involvements of people in Northeast Tennessee.

The primary goals of this research are to determine the demographic profile of mature adult citizens in Northeast Tennessee who volunteer their time in charitable civic endeavors, to determine and compare similarities and differences between volunteers in rural communities and those of more urban communities, and to investigate the extent of and reason for their volunteerism. A secondary goal is to determine the volunteer needs of agencies that utilize volunteers and what proportions of volunteers fit the age group of 55 and older.

Arrangements were made by telephone to distribute The Survey of Variants of Volunteerism to various senior centers, or to their directors at the First Tennessee Development District Area Agency on Aging and Disability (FTAAA&D), by the principal investigator. The directors then made the questionnaire available on site at their respective centers. Personal presentation was also made to one senior adult monthly study group and to a group of retirees who convene at monthly luncheons. Overall, 280 questionnaires were distributed. In the cases where directors were charged with distribution of the surveys, the principal investigator later collected the returned surveys from FTAAA&D. In two cases, completed surveys were retrieved

from senior center volunteer coordinators, and one questionnaire was received through the mail. One respondent did not meet the age requirement for this study and one respondent completed two questionnaires, from two different group contacts. Of the 280 questionnaires distributed, data from 162 respondents are included in this study.

It is well known that many agencies and organizations, including hospitals and historic sites, as well as churches are involved with, and depend heavily on, volunteer workers to meet their goals in community service. The second phase of this study was mailed to known volunteer agencies, organizations, hospitals, parks, and historical sites in the Northeastern region of Tennessee. An effort was made to include names and addresses with geographic diversity within the First Tennessee Development District. Overall, questionnaires were mailed to 42 churches or Christian affiliated groups, 14 hospitals, health departments, and adult care centers such as nursing or assisted living facilities, 5 park or historic sites, 35 civic organizations, and 11 federally funded agencies.

The Agency/Organization Questionnaire inquires about the need for volunteers and what proportion of volunteers within an agency/organization are 55 years of age and older. The questionnaire was mailed, along with stamped and return addressed envelopes, to 107 agencies, historic sites, churches, or civic organizations that were presumed to have need of volunteers to fulfill obligations for public or humanitarian services. Organizations' names and addresses for this mail-out were compiled from current telephone directories, while churches were selected from the *2001 Church Guide*, a publication that lists churches by denomination, and from on-line listings and telephone directories for communities not represented in the guide. An attempt was made to include churches from each of the various sects, denominations, or religions and with geographic diversity. Seven (6.5%) questionnaires were returned by the U.S. Postal Service due

to insufficient addresses, lack of mail receptacle, or change of address with no forwarding address. Of the 100 questionnaires that are presumed to have reached the intended addresses, 28 completed questionnaires were returned by mail, from agencies, organizations, or churches, which is a 28% response rate.

Questions. The study was undertaken primarily to answer the following questions:

1. What are the general characteristics of the senior citizen volunteer workforce in Northeast Tennessee?
2. Do more women than men volunteer in Northeast Tennessee?
3. What are the motivations of mature adults who volunteer their time in various community causes? Is their volunteerism an altruistic act; do they volunteer because they want to "give back?"
4. Do senior adults contribute more volunteer time to the needs of their own age group, to other age groups, to family, or to general societal needs?
5. Are senior adults who volunteer likely to believe they are in better health, in general, than their peers?
6. Are mature adults who volunteer likely to be active in religious services?
7. Are there differences in formal vs. informal volunteerism between rural mature adult volunteers and urban mature adult volunteers in Northeast Tennessee? Are rural respondents more likely to report volunteer activity toward family and friends as opposed to obligations through formal volunteer behavior?
8. Do male volunteers concern themselves more with formal or with informal volunteer activities, compared to female volunteers?

The Instrument

The Agency/Organization Questionnaire Regarding Volunteerism (see Appendix A) is designed with both open-ended and closed-ended questions to elicit information about the size of each agency's volunteer staff compared to the paid staff. This is an attempt to see if the agency judges its number of volunteers as optimum or sufficient to run its program efficiently and/or

successfully. Questions are formulated to identify the number of people 55 and older who serve as volunteers in each agency. Question 11 asks for the number of volunteers by age and gender and will be used to compare male volunteerism versus female volunteerism. Questions 13 thru 15 will yield data about the reliability of volunteers and whether there is a steady supply of volunteers in the Northeast Tennessee region. Where applicable, data collected from the survey in Appendix A is to be cross-referenced with data collected from the survey as shown in Appendix B.

A separate questionnaire, Survey of Variants of Volunteerism (see Appendix B), was distributed to a sample of older citizens in Northeast Tennessee, in order to obtain some general estimates of the characteristics of those who volunteer in this region of Tennessee. This survey requests useful demographic information and should generally describe the characteristics of those who volunteer in this region of Tennessee. The dependent variable "volunteerism," represented in item number 24, is used to determine relevance to this study.

Conceptualization and Operationalization of Variables

Definitions of terms. Definitions for terms used in this study are as follows:

"Mature Adult " refers to any person 55 years old or older.

"Volunteer" is defined as any person who willingly gives of his/her time to a charitable, civic, social, or neighborhood program, church, hospital, or school on a regular basis and without expectation of monetary compensation.

"Formal volunteerism" refers to work that is similar to paid work in that it consists of performing assigned tasks for specified time periods within the context of a formal organization.

"Informal volunteer activity" or "volunteer support" are defined as the freely given charitable care one provides in assisting a neighbor, friend, family member not of the same household, who may be sick or in crisis.

"Motivation" is defined as an inner quality or an external stimulus that is a causal factor in a person's volunteerism. Causal factors may result from the person's feelings, beliefs, values, or expectations.

"Religious" is subject to the individual's own symbolic interpretation of his/her belief of and devotion to God, church or activities connected with religion, and the teachings of his/her church.

"Northeast Tennessee" is defined as the eight counties that encompass the First Tennessee Development District – Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, and Washington.

"Rural Communities" will refer to towns/cities in Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, and Unicoi counties, including Elizabethton, Greenville, Rogersville, Church Hill, Mountain City, and Erwin.

"Urban Communities" will refer to cities in the more populated Sullivan and Washington counties- Johnson City, Bristol, Kingsport, and Jonesborough.

Definition of Variables. Optional responses for the following variables are listed:

Age: Based on a person's self-reported date of birth, the following categories are used:

55 - 60; 61 - 65; 66 - 70; 71 - 75; 76 - 84; 85 and older.

Sex: Defined as female or male respondent.

Race: African-American; Asian-American; Caucasian; Hispanic; Native American; Other.

Marital Status: Single –never married; Married; Separated; Divorced; Widowed; Co-habiting.

Political Affiliation: Republican; Democrat; Independent; Not interested in Politics.

Household income: Less than $10,000; $10,000 to $19,999; 20,000 to $29,999;

$30,000 to $49,999; $50,000 to $79,999; $80,000 or more.

Education: Less than 12 years; High school graduate; Some college; College Graduate;

Some graduate school; Master's Degree; Doctoral or Professional Degree.

Home Ownership: Yes; No, I rent; Other.

Religiosity: Yes; No; Not sure.

Church Attendance: I attend at least one or more times each week;

I attend at least once each month; I attend on special occasions and/or holidays;

I rarely attend church; I never attend church; I prefer listening to or viewing church programs on television or radio.

Health by Comparison: My health is excellent; My health is so-so, but I am better off than some of my friends; My health is not so good, but I still enjoy many activities outside the home; My health is poorer than that of most of my friends, and I don't get to have many activities outside my home.

Activities undertaken in helping others: I often take care of my parent(s); I often take care of my parent(s)-in-law; I often help a sick neighbor; I help when there is a community crisis or need; I help family, friends, and neighbors when they need a helping hand; I sometimes drive a friend or a neighbor to doctor's appointments; I volunteer time through a civic or church organization; Other.

Frequency of volunteer services: I do not volunteer; More than once per week; One day each week; Two or three times each month; Once each month; On an "as needed" basis; I am on a waiting list to serve as a volunteer.

Age of first volunteer service: Under 17; 18 to 30; 31 to 54; 55 to present.

Volunteer at more than one agency: Yes; No.

According to research by Soo and Gong-Soog (1998), household income, education, and home ownership affect the likelihood of volunteer participation significantly. This study looks at the demographics and socioeconomic factors among respondents in the Northeastern Tennessee region, as well as stated motivations of those mature adults who volunteer, how volunteers view their personal health compared to their acquaintances and peers who do not volunteer, and

whether religiosity might be a factor in the lives of volunteers in Northeastern Tennessee. Further, this study compares types of volunteerism and time spent volunteering between rural and urban respondents.

Hypotheses

This study investigates the following hypotheses:

1. Mature adult volunteers in Northeast Tennessee are more likely to participate in religious activities on a weekly basis than are those mature adults in Northeast Tennessee who do not volunteer.

2. Respondent volunteers are more likely to subjectively perceive themselves to be in good health or better off than some of their friends than are non-volunteers.

3. Mature adult volunteers in Northeast Tennessee who live in rural communities are more likely to engage in informal volunteer support than are those mature adult urban community volunteers in Northeast Tennessee.

4. Mature adult males in Northeast Tennessee who volunteer are more likely to engage in formal volunteer activities compared to female volunteers.

Statistical Analysis

Variables were coded for statistical procedures of analysis, and the descriptive analysis results of the main variables in the study are presented in tables containing frequencies and percentages. Open-ended portions of the collected data are analyzed, condensed, and written as a report of the findings. The hypotheses are tested via cross-tabulations and other appropriate measures that assess association.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE AND HYPOTHESES TESTING

Survey of Variants of Volunteerism.

Items 1 through 13 in the Survey of Variants of Volunteerism questionnaire pertain to the demographic characteristics of the study sample. One hundred sixty-two respondents answered the questionnaire. One hundred nineteen (73.5%) were female and 43 were males (26.5%) as indicated by question one.

Question two asked the date of birth which was then coded and grouped into the following: 55 - 60 years old; 61 - 65 years old; 66 – 70 years old; 71 – 75 years old; 76 – 80 years old; 81 – 85 years old; and 86 and over. The largest portion of respondents fell into the 71 to 75 years of category. A distribution of the age groups is shown in Table 1.

Question three asked for the highest grade of schooling completed by the respondent. More than 57 percent of the respondents had acquired some education beyond the high school level. Data for the general population of 55 and older residents in Northeast Tennessee are not available, but according to the U. S. Census Bureau, the 2000 census indicates that the general population of Northeast Tennessee, 25 years and older, had 38.9 percent of residents who had attained education beyond the high school level. In the United States, 51.7 percent of residents 25 years and older attended school beyond high school, and in the state of Tennessee, 44.3 percent of the 25 years and older population have schooling beyond high school. A breakdown of respondent education level is shown in Table 2.

Question four asked the respondent to report his/her current marital status. Of those surveyed, 45.7% were married (74 persons), 38.3% were widowed (62 persons), 8.6% were

Table 1. Age of Respondents

Age of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
55 – 60 (1943 to 1948)	6	3.7
61 – 65 (1938 to 1942)	23	4.2
66 – 70 (1933 to 1937)	36	22.2
71 – 75 (1928 to 1932)	38	23.5
76 – 80 (1923 to 1927)	27	16.7
81 – 85 (1918 to 1922)	17	10.5
86 + years (before 1917)	7	4.3
Missing Responses	8	4.9
Totals	162	100.0

Table 2. Education Level

Years of School	Frequency	Percent
Less than 12 years	26	16.0
High School Graduate	43	26.5
Some College	44	27.2
College Graduate	20	12.3
Some Graduate School	11	6.8
Master's Degree	13	8.0
Doctoral or Professional Degree	5	3.1
Total	162	100.0

divorced (14 persons), and 4.9% were single, never married (8 persons). Two persons were separated, one individual was co-habiting, and there was one missing case.

Question five asked about home ownership. A large majority of respondents, 142 (87.7%) indicated that they own their own home. Fourteen (8.6%) rent their homes and four persons have other arrangements, such as living with a relative. Two cases were missing. The U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2000 that 21.7 percent of the population in the 55 and older age group occupy rental housing units.

Question six inquired about racial identity of the respondent. Of the total, 139 (85.8%) respondents were Caucasian, and 19 (11.7%) respondents represented minority groups (4 African-American, 2 Asian-American, and 13 Native American). It should be noted that in the cases of Native American makeup, it may be that some or all are misreports and the result of pride in their heritage as Americans. Four cases are missing. It might also be noted that the 2000 census reports a total minority population for the eight counties of Northeast Tennessee to be 3.9 percent.

Question seven asked the approximate total income, before taxes, of all members of the respondent's household in the previous year. The modal category was the $30,000 to $49,999 range (24.7%), with 22.2% in the $20,000 to $29,999 range. Twenty-four (14.8%) cases were missing, which may indicate a reluctance to report income. According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2000), the median household income in the United States in 1999 was $41,994. The median household income for the state of Tennessee was $36,360 with a median income of $28,375 for the 55 and older age group. Table 3 shows the distribution of respondent household income.

Table 3: Distribution of Household Income

Income Level	Frequency	Percent
Less than $10,000	15	9.3
$10,000 to $19,999	28	17.3
$20,000 to $29,999	36	22.2
$30,000 to $49,999	40	24.7
$50,000 to $79,999	16	9.9
$80,000 or more	3	1.9
Missing Cases	24	14.8
Totals	162	100.0

Question eight asked about personal religiosity and question nine, an open-ended question, inquired about religious affiliation, if any. Response categories for religiosity were "Yes," "No," or "Not sure." An overwhelming majority, 87 percent (141 persons) indicated that they are religious. Twelve respondents replied "No," two respondents were "Not sure," and 7 cases were missing. Most respondents who replied to the question of affiliation in item nine, gave their membership denomination, rather than simply "Protestant," Catholic," or "Jewish." Thirty-four percent of respondents reported affiliation with a Baptist church. Table 4 shows the varied distribution of respondent reports of religious affiliation.

Question 10 asked how often the respondent attended church or religious services. Respondents reporting attendance one or more times each week totaled 130 (80.2%). Interestingly, some respondents who reported they were not religious do report attending church more than once each week. The frequency of church or religious service attendance is shown in Table 5.

Item 11 was open-ended and posed the question, "what type of work do you do, or did you perform, in your occupational career?" Of the completed responses, there was no way to determine categories to account for the diversity in jobs. Many respondents left the item blank, while others wrote their current status "retired." It is supposed that lack of careful reading might account for this.

Question 12 asked if the respondent is retired – "Yes," "No," or "Plan to retire in 6 months." Slightly over 90 percent (147) of the respondents indicate they are retired, 11 (6.8%) said "No." Four cases were missing.

Item 13 asked about political affiliation. The highest category of affiliation proved to be Democrat (41.4%) with 67 respondents. This reporting is in contrast to the overall population of

4: Distribution of Religious Affiliation

Reported Affiliation	Frequency	Percent
Baptists of all categories	55	34.0
Methodists of all categories	24	14.8
Presbyterian	6	3.7
Christian	17	10.5
Born again Christian	1	.6
Lutheran	5	3.1
Catholic	9	5.6
Episcopalian	3	1.9
Protestant	10	6.2
Salvation Army	1	.6
Pagan	1	.6
Celebration Church	1	.6
Church of God	1	.6
Church of Christ	2	1.2
None	2	1.2
Missing cases	24	14.8
Totals	162	100.0

Table 5: Church or Religious Service Attendance

Level of Attendance	Frequency	Percent
One or more times each week	130	80.2
At least once each month	7	4.3
On special occasions and/or holidays	5	3.1
Rarely attend church	7	4.3
Never attend church	8	4.9
Prefer listening to or viewing church programs on television or radio	1	.6
Missing Cases	4	2.5
Totals	162	100.0

Northeast Tennessee, which historically has maintained a predominant Republican constituency since the Civil War. Frequency of Political Affiliation is shown in Table 6.

Item 14 invited respondents to check off which leisure activities they enjoy from the list of options that included "Helping Other People." Ninety-eight (60.4%) respondents listed helping other people as a leisure activity they enjoy. Four cases were missing. There was no measure of whether the leisure activities were new in older age or if they were a continuation of the respondent's life-course leisure activities. Reported activities are shown in Table 7.

Question 15 asked whether the respondent had volunteered earlier in life, before the age of 55. "Yes" was the response in 89 (54.9%) cases; 69 (42.6%) respondents indicated they had not volunteered before the age of 55; 4 cases were missing. Item 25 then ascertained when the respondent first performed volunteer service. Options were "Under 17," "18 to 30," "31 to 54", and "55 to present." Up until the age of 55, the largest category was 18 to 30 years old with 31 respondents (19.1%). In all, 73 (45.0%) respondents reported volunteering before the age of 55. Missing cases totaled 31 (19.1%).

Questions 16 through 18 were designed to identify if family obligations perhaps were a factor in limiting volunteerism. Item 16 inquired about older family members the respondent might be providing with care-giving services. Only 28 respondents (17.3%) replied in the affirmative; the largest response was "No," with 73.5% (119 respondents). Given the age group of the sample (55 and older) and particularly that both the modal and median age group is 71 – 75, it is hardly surprising that more respondents did not have care-giving duties for even older parents or family members. Indeed, many mature adults who are in the 71-75 age group are recipients of care from their middle-aged caregiver children. Fifteen cases were missing.

Table 6: Political Affiliation

Party Affiliation	Frequency	Percent
Republican	55	34.0
Democrat	67	41.4
Independent	26	16.0
Not interested in politics	6	3.7
Missing cases	8	4.9
Totals	162	100.0

Table 7: Leisure Activities Enjoyed by Respondents

Activity Reported	Frequency	Percent
Travel	106	65.4
Social Clubs	25	15.4
Cultural Events	32	19.7
Going to the Movies	36	22.2
Reading	111	68.5
Watching Television	105	64.8
Listening to Music	80	49.3
Dancing	29	18.0
Exercise Walking	74	45.7
Swimming	17	10.5
Aerobics/Fitness Training	27	16.7
Needlework	52	32.0
Woodworking	13	8.0
Crafts and Hobbies	29	18.0
Hunting/Camping/Fishing	21	13.0
Hiking	20	12.3
Gardening	59	36.4
Helping Others	98	60.4
Missing Cases	4	2.4

Questions 17, 18, and 19 concerned whether or not the respondent had grandchildren and if so, whether they actively care for them, and whether the respondent lived in the same residence with any of their grandchildren. This question could detect informal volunteer support. More than 78.0% (127) have grandchildren, but only 24.7% (40 respondents) participate in caring for their grandchildren. While this may represent informal volunteer activity, it may also limit formal volunteer activity. Six (3.7%) respondents live in the same residence with one or more of their grandchildren. Missing cases were 4, 37, and 19 respectively.

Question 20 asked if transportation (for any reason) might be a problem for the respondent. The largest response was "No" with 138 (85.2%) respondents. Nineteen (11.7%) said "Yes" transportation is a problem, though there was no space provided for details about whether the problem was mechanical, lack of a vehicle, dependence on others to drive, or failing health/eyesight. Five responses were missing.

Question 21 asked if the respondent's health prohibited volunteering. Again, the largest response was "No" with 141 (87.0%) respondents. The frequency of "Yes" responses was 17 (10.5%). One respondent indicated that "sometimes" health prohibits him/her from volunteering. Only three cases were missing.

Question 22 asked the respondent to subjectively compare his/her health to that of friends of about the same age. Options were: (a) My health is excellent; (b) My health is so-so, but I am better off than some of my friends; (c) My health is not so good, but I still enjoy many activities outside the home; and (d) My health is poorer than that of most of my friends, and I don't get to have many activities outside my home. Sixty-five (40.1%) respondents report their health to be excellent, while 68 (42.0%) respondents perceive themselves to have "so-so" health. Twenty-

five (15.4%) reported not-so-good health, and one respondent reported poorer health than most. Three cases were missing.

Item 23 invited respondents to indicate what activities they undertake in helping others. Optional responses were listed that distinguish between formal volunteer activities and informal volunteering, but because of the invitation for multiple responses, additional categories that show a broader picture of the individual's volunteering spectrum or range had to be coded. If the respondent indicated only volunteer time through a civic or church organization, the response was shown as "formal volunteerism;" if also indicating other volunteer activities, the response was shown as "formal volunteerism plus other activities." If the respondent indicated only one informal activity, the activity was noted, but if more than one informal was indicated, then the response was coded as "Multiple 'informal' volunteer activities." Overall, 74 (45.7%) respondents reported formal volunteerism plus other activities that assist or support others; and an additional 10 (6.2%) reported formal volunteer time only. Multiple informal volunteer activities were reported by 26 (16.0%) respondents. Volunteer activities in helping others is shown in Table 8.

Question 24, "how often do you perform volunteer services?" is the defining question of volunteerism, as pertains to this study. With this one query, the respondent identifies him/herself as a non-volunteer or indicates about how frequently volunteer time is dedicated. Non-volunteers numbered 15 (9.3%) respondents. Most respondents (57 or 35.2%) reported volunteering more than once per week. The second highest category was "on an 'as needed' basis," with 24.7% (40 respondents). Frequencies for item 24 are shown in Table 9.

Table 8. Volunteer Activities in Helping Others

Helping Activities	Frequency	Percent
I often take care of my parents.	3	1.9
I often take care of my parent(s)-in-law.	1	.6
I often help a sick neighbor.	4	2.5
I help when there is a community crisis or need.	2	1.2
I help family, friends, and neighbors when they need help.	20	12.3
I sometimes drive a neighbor to doctor's appointments.	2	.2
I formally volunteer time through a civic organization or church.	10	6.2
Formal volunteerism plus other activities	74	45.7
Multiple "informal" volunteer activities	26	16.0
Other	9	5.6
Missing cases	11	6.8
Totals	162	100.0

Table 9. Volunteerism

Performance of Volunteer Services	Frequency	Percent
More than once per week.	57	35.2
One day each week.	22	13.6
Two or three times each month.	16	9.9
Once each month.	3	1.9
On an “as needed” basis.	40	24.7
I am on a waiting list to serve as a volunteer	3	1.9
I do not volunteer.	15	9.3
Missing cases	6	3.7
Totals	162	100.0

Questions 26 through 29 were designed to get an understanding of the volunteer's dedication of time per month to his/her volunteering activities (question 26), to learn (questions 27 and 28) if some volunteers work at more than one agency or organization, and to learn (question 29) if the volunteer had an understanding of the funding that supports the agency(ies) where s/he volunteers. Item 26 was open-ended, so answers varied from a few hours per month to a questionable "600 hours per month." Responses to question 27 showed that more than half of responding volunteers (82 of 147 = 55.8%) work at more than one agency. Sixteen cases were missing. Question 28 was to be completed only if the respondent worked at more than one agency. Response codes were: (a) two; (b) three; and (c) four or more.

Question 29 asked about the funding of the agency or agencies where the respondent volunteered. Unfortunately, many respondents did not know exactly who or what level of government funding affected their volunteer agency/organization. Thirty-one respondents (21.01%) admitted to not being sure of funding, and 36 (24.5%) left the answer blank. Because so many respondents work at more than one agency, it is unlikely that all sponsoring agencies for a given respondent would have the same source of funding. In other words, some respondents divide their volunteer support between church sponsored activities (private funding) and perhaps a nutrition program that could be supported by state or federal funds, or a combination of both.

Question 30 asked about the groups or age level the respondent worked with. Respondents were invited to check all categories that applied. Because of SPSS limitations on the number of codes for a given variable, some categories were combined for coding purposes. For instance, "Infants," "Pre-school age children," and "Children aged 6-12" were coded "Children under 12," and "Adults 65 to 79" plus "Adults aged 80 and older" were coded "Adults 65 and over." "People with physical disabilities" and "People with mental disabilities" were

coded as one category. Many volunteers work at more than one agency, and they often work with diverse groups from one setting to another. Certain volunteer efforts, such as food pantries, actually administer to families with a variety of ages, from children to the elderly, and perhaps to those with physical or mental conditions. Overall, 93 (63.3%) respondents indicated working with more than one category of groups and ages. Allowing for non-volunteers (15 respondents), missing cases totaled 26. Categories served by respondent volunteers are shown in Table 10.

Questions 31 and 32 identified informal volunteer activity among respondents. Ninety-nine (67.3%) respondents reported having helped a friend through a difficult time during the past year; 38.1% (56 respondents) reported having taken a friend or neighbor to the hospital. It cannot be ascertained if respondents were reporting the two separate support activities or if there was overlap and perhaps may have involved, in come cases, the same voluntary effort for the same non-family individual. Missing cases, excluding non-volunteers, were 24 and 27 respectively and most likely indicate lack of informal voluntary support activity.

Items 33 and 34 allowed the volunteer respondents to express in their own words why they volunteer and for how long have they volunteered. The open-ended format was provided to give respondents the opportunity to express themselves freely, as opposed to question 35, which gives optional reasons for volunteering. Open-ended responses for Item 33 were coded into common theme categories. Most used responses are shown in Table 11.

Question 35 asked the respondent to choose one response that best reflected their feelings (about volunteering). Thirty-nine (26.5%) respondents feel volunteering allows them to be productive members of society while 20 (13.6%) respondents feel volunteering makes them feel needed; 15 (10.2%) respondents enjoy giving back to their communities; 6 (4.1%) respondents feel everyone should perform volunteer work to help other people; and 4 (2.7%) respondents volunteer because

Table 10. Group Categories Serviced by Volunteers

Groups	Frequency	Percent
Children under 12	1	0.7
Teenagers	1	0.7
Adults under age 65	2	1.4
Adults aged 65 to 80 and over	13	8.8
Sick People	3	2.1
Poor People/Homeless People	4	2.8
Friends, Neighbors, Family	4	2.8
Multiple Groups and Ages	93	63.3
Physical and Mentally Challenged	0	0.0
Missing cases	26	17.7
Totals	147	100.0

Table 11. Primary Reasons for Volunteering

Reason Given for Volunteering	Frequency	Percentage
Volunteering is the result of Christian Faith/Teachings	23	15.6
To help others in need	27	18.4
For self-fulfillment or to feel better	18	12.2
To feel needed	5	3.4
To "Give back" to the community	7	4.8
Other	26	17.7
Missing cases	41	27.9
Totals	147	100.0

someday they themselves may require service programs. Thirty-four (23.1%) respondents marked two or more responses. Cases of two or more selections were coded "more than one response." There were 29 missing cases, allowing for non-volunteers.

Questions 36 and 37 investigated the social aspect of volunteering by asking if the respondent has friends who volunteer at the same agency or organization where the respondent volunteers and whether the respondent has made new friends through his/her volunteer work. In the question of friends at the same agency or organization, 108 (73.4%) respondents indicated "Yes" they have friends who volunteer at the same agency. In the question of new friends made in the course of voluntary work, 122 of 147 volunteers (83.0%) indicated that "Yes" they have made new friends through their volunteer work. Missing responses were 22 and 21, respectively.

Items 38 through 40 asked about acknowledgement of the volunteer's work by the coordinating agency or organization. Question 38, asking whether the respondent's volunteer service is acknowledged in a special way, elicited a "Yes, often" response from 47.6% (70 respondents). "Sometimes" and "No" were chosen by 47 (32.0%) and 7 (4.7%) respondents, respectively. Missing cases were 23.

Question 39 asked for a description of the acknowledgement given, if any, and question 40 asked the respondent to describe the type of acknowledgement the respondent would prefer. These were open-ended and really did not yield particularly useful information because of the relatively high percentage of cases that were acknowledged at least "sometimes." In any event a number of respondents allowed that they do not volunteer for the acknowledgement from others, only for the personal satisfaction and benefit of "doing what is right."

The final question, item 41, asked the respondent if any barriers kept them from volunteering as much as s/he might like. Response categories included: (a) No, (b) Yes, and

(c) If yes, please describe. Responses for (c) were coded into categories as follows: "Yes, personal health issues;" "Yes, family caregiving responsibilities;" "Money issues are a barrier;" "Lack of time prevents further volunteer services;" "Age is a factor;" and "Driving/Transportation/Bad weather." The largest category of response was "No," with 65 (44.2%) respondents reporting no barriers to their volunteering more time; 6 (3.4%) respondents simply indicated "Yes" with no further description. Reported barriers to voluntarism are shown in Table 12.

Agency/Organization Questionnaire Regarding Volunteerism.

The Agency/Organization questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed to learn from the sponsoring organization more about volunteerism in Northeast Tennessee. It was felt that a better picture of volunteer needs in Northeast Tennessee would provide better understanding of what Northeast Tennessee's volunteers, and more particularly mature adult volunteers, are contributing to their communities and to society's needs. Table 13 shows the results of some of the questions posed in the questionnaire. Twenty-eight (28.0% of those who received the questionnaire) agencies or organizations returned the questionnaire. According to responding agencies, 78.6% of them need additional volunteers. Fifty-seven percent of responding agencies revealed that mature adults over age 55 account for one-third or more of their volunteer staff. Two agencies that work exclusively with the aging population, the First Tennessee Development District Area Agency on Aging & Disability and the Shepherd Center of Kingsport, report that 90 and 93.3 percent respectively, of their volunteer workers are 55 years and older. Contact-Concern of Northeast Tennessee, an organization that serves approximately 5,000 community people each year via a telephone help-line reports that 91.6 percent of their volunteers are 55 years and older. Roan Mountain State Park, dedicated to preserving and protecting a natural and

Table 12. Reported Barriers to Volunteerism

Barriers	Frequency	Percent
No barriers	65	44.2
Yes, there are barriers	5	3.4
Personal health issues	24	16.3
Family caregiving responsibilities	5	3.4
Money issues are a barrier	1	.6
Lack of time prevents further volunteering	12	8.2
Age is a factor	4	2.7
Driving/Transportation/Bad weather	2	1.4
Missing cases	29	19.7
	———	———
	147	100.0

Table 13. Agency Responses to Questionnaire

Agency #	Agency Category A/O/C/P	Total # Volunteers	# Volunteers Needed	# Vols over 55	% of Volunteers over 55	# Female Volunteers over 55	# Male Volunteers over 55
1	2	130	150	10	7.6	3	7
2	1	60	80	22	36.6	12	10
3	2	4	5	1	25	1	0
4	4	50	85	23	46	16	7
5	2	60	100	55	91.6	36	19
6	1	100	100	20	20		
7	2	40	50	20	50	10	10
8	3	10		7	70	4	3
9	1	50	50	7	14		
10	3	925	906	417	47.5	232	208
11	1	24	20	0			
12	2	1000	1200	330	33	150	250
13	1	300	600	225	75	140	85
14	1	100	150	75	75	40	35
15	4	9	8	9	100	4	5
16	1	200	varies	50	25		
17	1	120	many	84	70	42	42
18	3	135	175	126	93.3	66	60
19	2	200	250	42	21		
20	4	130	6	30	23	10	20
21	1	2	4	0			
22	2	2	2	0			
23	1	40	35	2	5	0	2
24	2	91		51	54.9	44	7
25	2	22	35	12	54.5	10	2
26	1	20	30	18	90	18	0
27	2	300	400	100	33	80	20
28	4	2	4	1	50	0	1

Categories: 1 = A (Agency)
2 = O (Organization)
3 = C (Church/Religious Based Group)
4 = P (Park/Historic Site)

cultural resource in Appalachia, reports that 100 percent of their volunteer staff is 62 years of age and older. Interestingly, this facility reports more volunteers than required for optimum efficiency, and it also has a waiting list of 125 percent of the volunteers required for optimum efficiency. The ratio of paid staff to volunteer staff varies from agency to agency and may depend on the population served. Some agencies support multiple age groups in their communities, and few agencies have a sufficient number of volunteer workers.

Of primary interest are the ratio of mature adult volunteers (aged 55 and older) to the total number of volunteers and what percentage pertains to older women vs. older men (see Table 13). Questions about average length of volunteer service and if the agency or organization requests contracts for specified terms of service were also of interest. The typical older volunteers continue in the same volunteer field of interest for long periods. Two (7.0%) agencies reported volunteers with 20 years of service, and nine (32.0%) other organizations reported service of 5 years or more. Approximately 25% of agencies ask volunteers to sign a contract at least some of the time, meaning the volunteer is expected to work for a minimum of one to three years. For agencies at full volunteer capacity, the questionnaire asked if the agency maintains a waiting list; few do.

The questionnaire also asked what type of recognition is given volunteers. Is there an honorarium or a service pin? Are there newspaper articles to describe honored volunteers, or does the agency sponsor award dinners? Space was provided for acknowledgements not mentioned. Fifty-four percent of respondent agencies report award dinners as a means of recognizing and thanking their volunteers; another eleven percent report giving volunteer recognition luncheons. Twenty-five percent of respondent agencies reported acknowledging volunteers in newspaper articles; some agencies publish newsletters for their members and thank

their volunteers there. One agency acknowledges a Volunteer of the Year, while 14 percent award service pins for accumulated hours/years of service; 11 percent give honorariums. Some volunteers are rewarded with socials, receiving personal thank-you letters, and/or the fun of accumulating points for their volunteer hours then bidding on special items at an auction. Others receive small thank-you gifts from time to time.

Last, the agency was asked if they would be interested in the results of this survey of volunteers, for more purposeful recruiting and retention of volunteers. Yes or No responses were provided. It is interesting to note that 50.0% of agencies dealing with children's services are not interested in the findings for recruiting purposes, yet they have a shortfall (20.0% to 25.0%) of volunteers. Results of this research will be forwarded to agencies that indicated an interest in receiving more information.

Testing the Hypotheses

The chi-square test is most often used by researchers when testing whether there is an association between two nominal variables in the population. This is done by computing the cell frequencies that would be expected if no relationship exists between the variables, given the existing row and column totals. The expected cell frequencies are then compared to the observed frequencies in the cross-tabulation table. If no relationship exists between the variables in the sample, then any deviation from the expected values are due to chance or sampling error. While some small deviations can be reasonably expected, large deviations, which produce large chi-square values, are unlikely. Thus, large chi-square values imply that a relationship or condition of dependence exists between the two variables. The chi-square is based on the null-hypothesis that assumes there is no relationship between the two variables in the total population.

Sufficiently large chi-square values produce small p-values (<.05) that constitute sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis of independence, i.e., no association between the variables.

The chi-square test assumes a random sample. This purposive study acknowledges the lack of randomness in this study, and in this instance, chi-square is used more as an indicator of a possible association between the variable under consideration. Results should not be taken as a definitive test of whether an association exists in the population and should not be generalized to the general population. Because of the relatively small sample, (n = <1000) an alpha level of .05 will be used to determine whether there is a possible association.

Hypothesis 1 states that: Mature adult volunteers in Northeast Tennessee are more likely to participate in religious activities on a weekly basis than are those mature adults in Northeast Tennessee who do not volunteer. The cross-tabulation in Table 14 indicates that 115 (92.0%) respondent volunteers reported they attend religious service one or more times per week compared to 10 (8.0%) who reported not attending religious services at least once per week. With one degree of freedom and a .05 level of significance, our obtained chi-square of 5.96 is unlikely under the null hypothesis. Therefore, we reject the null since there does appear to be an association between the two variables.

Hypothesis 2 states that: Respondent volunteers are more likely to subjectively perceive themselves to be in good health or better off than some of their friends than are non-volunteers. One hundred nineteen (91.5%) respondent volunteers report that they perceive themselves to be in good health or better off than some of their friends, compared to 22 (88.0%) of the 25 respondents who also volunteer but perceive their health to be not so good or poorer than most. (See Table 15.) The chi-square value of .628 with one degree of freedom results in p > .05. This

indicates that there is virtually no association between the variables "Perceived Health" and "Volunteerism" in this sample.

Hypothesis 3 states that: Mature adult volunteers in Northeast Tennessee who live in rural communities are more likely to engage in informal volunteer support than are those mature adult urban community volunteers in Northeast Tennessee. As Table 15 demonstrates, informal volunteer support among rural communities is compared with informal volunteer support among urban communities. Fourteen (43.8%) of rural volunteers reported informal volunteer activities compared to 43 (36.4%) of urban volunteers reporting informal volunteer support. Based on the chi-square value of .672 ($p > .05$), we fail to reject the null hypothesis since there is the possibility of no association.

Hypothesis 4 states that: Mature adult males in Northeast Tennessee who volunteer are more likely to engage in formal volunteer activities compared to female volunteers. Cross-tabulation in Table 17 demonstrates that 18 (47%) of 38 males volunteers report formal volunteering activities compared to 66 (58%) female volunteers. Based on the chi-square value of 1.27 with one degree of freedom, $p > .05$. We fail to reject the null hypothesis since there is the possibility of no association.

Table 14. Cross-tabulation of Weekly Religious Service Attendance and Working as a Volunteer

Work as a Volunteer	Weekly Religious Service Attendance		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	115 (92.0%)	10 (66.6%)	125
No	10 (8.0%)	5 (33.3%)	15
	125 (100.0%)	15 (100.0%)	140

Chi-square = 5.96; 1 df; $p < .05$

Table 15. Cross-tabulation of Perceived Health and Working as a Volunteer

Work as a Volunteer	Perceives Health to be Better than Friends about the same age		
	Yes	No	Total
Yes	119 (91.5%)	22 (88.0%)	141
No	11 (8.5%)	3 (12.0%)	14
	130 (100.0%)	25 (100.0%)	155

Chi-square = .628; 1 df; $p > .05$

Table 16. Cross-tabulation of Informal Volunteer Activities and Rural vs. Urban Community Volunteers

Informal Volunteer	Community		
	Rural	Urban	Total
Yes	14 (43.8%)	43 (36.4%)	57
No	18 (56.2%)	75 (63.6%)	93
	32 (100.0%)	118 (100.0%)	150

Chi-square = .672; 1 df; $p > .05$

Table 17. Cross-tabulation of Formal/Informal Activity and Gender

Formal/Informal Activity	Gender		
	Male	Female	Totals
Formal	18 (47%)	66 (58%)	84
Informal	20 (53%)	47 (42%)	15
	38 (100.0%)	113 (100.0%)	151

Chi-square = 1.27; 1 df; $p > .05$

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In the course of acclimating to Northeastern Tennessee, the idea to research volunteerism among mature came from observing older citizens active in their communities, helping out in situations where there was a need. Why, one might ask, would someone who has worked hard and finally reached retirement age take on responsibilities that might be demanding of his/her time and physical strength? The answers are various and are specific to the individual, but there is no doubt that Northeast Tennesseeans have spirit and pride, and they not only take care of their own, they take care of their communities by doing what they can as often as they can, with enthusiasm. This researcher has realized that volunteering in Northeast Tennessee is as American as apple pie.

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the non-family volunteer involvements of people aged 55 and older in the eight counties of Northeast Tennessee. The primary goal of the research was to learn more about volunteer involvements with an emphasis on factors related to variants of volunteerism among mature adults in rural and urban communities. Focus was placed on variants between rural and urban volunteers within communities of Northeast Tennessee, between male and female volunteers, and self-reports of relative health while also assessing the overall needs of agencies and organizations.

The demographic composite of volunteers obtained in this study was similar to other studies. In other words, volunteers in Northeast Tennessee are predominantly female, married, well-educated, own their own homes, are religious and attend church or religious services one or more times each week. More than half of reporting volunteers indicated household income

above the median income for the 55 and older age group. Politically, the sample was predominantly democrat – a surprise, given the conservative pattern of voting exhibited in the region as a whole. Perhaps this phenomenon may be explained by the timing of life transitions and experiences in the life-course perspective of this aged cohort. Most of them saw the Great Depression as youths and how a Democratic president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, sought to rescue a nation by signing the Social Security Act to assist the elderly and by creating jobs, including the Tennessee Valley Authority, that directly affected many families in Northeast Tennessee. That same president took their nation to a war that is credited with ending the depression, and his successor, also a Democrat, was tough enough to end the war, bringing peace and opening the door to progress far beyond the imaginings of many. It is possible that as children, this cohort saw their parents believe that politics was for the common man. As this cohort entered early adulthood, advances in transportation, housing, and technology were at their whim. In fact, this cohort was at the helm and saw America's space program come into being, and they were there when their president, John F. Kennedy was slain. This cohort was witness to and perhaps assisted in a war on poverty that had success and directly affected their parents and grandparents, through another Democratic president, Lyndon B. Johnson. Just as importantly, they witnessed the Watergate scandals, the release of mentally-ill and challenged people from protective institutions, and their taxes raised because of trickle-down economics that never quite trickled down to them.

Though similar to other studies, these data cannot be used to provide population estimates with a particular demographic attribute because the respondents were not obtained via random the sampling.

The first hypothesis presented in this analysis was: mature adult volunteers in Northeast Tennessee are more likely to participate in religious activities on a weekly basis than are those mature adults in Northeast Tennessee who do not volunteer. Support for this hypothesis was found to exist among the respondents in this study.

Hypothesis two was: respondent volunteers are more likely to subjectively perceive themselves to be in good health or better off than some of their friends than are non-volunteers. In this analysis, no association was found between perceived health and volunteerism, and the hypothesis was not supported.

Hypothesis three stated that: mature adult volunteers in Northeast Tennessee who live in rural communities are more likely to engage in informal volunteer support than are those mature adult urban community volunteers in Northeast Tennessee. Support for the research hypothesis was not found.

Hypothesis four was: mature adult males in Northeast Tennessee who volunteer are more likely to engage in formal volunteer activities compared to female volunteers. Support for this hypothesis was not found. There is the possibility of no association between gender and formal volunteer activities.

Reviewing the literature based on other studies of volunteerism raises and expands an awareness of the breadth of volunteerism in America. Researchers have used varied approaches in examining volunteerism, its relationships to society and the organizations who use volunteers to meet their goals, and to the individuals who volunteer. Volunteering is believed to be beneficial to most volunteers' health and well-being, and it often helps individuals make the transition from paid work to loss of master status during retirement. It is important that society continue to offer and even expand opportunities for mature adults to remain active in their

communities. By offering an avenue for older people to contribute to the well-being of their communities and therefore to stay connected to society, it is difficult to determine who gains more in the exchange.

Suggestions for Further Research

Demands on community agencies and organizations in Northeast Tennessee are high and probably will increase dramatically as the baby boom cohort reaches retirement age. It is important to learn more about those who step forward to volunteer – what motivates them, what demographic profile agencies should look to for recruitment to fill the ever-increasing need for volunteers. With our aging population, it may be that mature adults will have to spend more time caring for their own aging parents.

Future research may well address the issue of what will be the cost to formal volunteer organizations as volunteers withdraw from formal volunteerism and devote more time to informal caregiving to family. The issue of gender will be of primary interest as researchers investigate whether males undertake more informal caregiving, or will they continue to support formal volunteer programs while mature adult females lend more support to informal care-giving to family.

Suggestions for future research include finding a solution for obtaining a probability sample and consideration of a longitudinal study to track decline of volunteerism with age and perceived benefits of volunteerism from the volunteer's view. Also, future research should consider the following: (1) As the baby boomer cohort comes into retirement, a larger percentage of women will have worked in fulltime professional roles with little time devoted to volunteer work. It will be of interest to note if they tend to volunteer as they retire, or will the

volunteer differences between genders even out? (2) How will the relationship between voluntary activities and membership in voluntary civic/social organizations change with the rapid and dramatic increase in longevity? (3) Do positive, healthy people actively seek out volunteer opportunities, or do organizations actively recruit individuals of these types (or both)?

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

AGENCY/ORGANIZATION QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING VOLUNTEERISM

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data about volunteerism in Northeast Tennessee. Information from this questionnaire will be used for research only and will be held in strict confidence. Please answer the following questions and return the questionnaire in the envelope provided. Your thoughtful responses are appreciated. If you have any questions pertaining to this survey, contact Martha W. Edwards at 423/477-6433.

1. What is the purpose or goal of your agency or organization? *Please feel free to attach a brochure that describes your organization and its goal(s).* _____ _____.

2. What is the size of your paid staff? _____.

3. What population does your agency attempt to reach?
   _____
   _____

4. Approximately how many people does your agency serve in a year? _____.

5. Does your agency have a volunteer coordinator? _____Yes. _____No.

6. How many volunteers would your agency need to run at its optimum efficiency?

   We prefer/need _____ volunteers.

7. How many people are enrolled as volunteers at your agency? _____.

8. Is your volunteer staff at capacity? *Choose one answer from below*.

   a. Yes b. No c. It usually is, but not at the moment

9. Do you actively recruit volunteers?

   a. Yes, regularly b. No, volunteers seeks us c. Only as needed

10. To the best of your knowledge, how many of your volunteers are 55 and older? *Please be as specific as possible.* _____.

11. Please provide a breakdown of your volunteers. Please list the number of volunteers in each category.

    a. Females under 55 _____; b. Females over 55 _____

    c. Males under 55 _____; d. Males over 55 _____

12. Do your volunteers sign a contract for specific periods of service?
    a. Yes b. No c. Sometimes

13. What is the average length of service of your volunteers? _____.

14. Do you have a waiting list of people who want to volunteer?
    a. Yes b. No c. Sometimes

15. If yes, how many on your waiting list are 55 and older? _____.

16. Does your agency acknowledge volunteers in special ways? *Indicate from the list below or describe in the space provided.*
    a. Honorarium
    b. Service Pin
    c. Newspaper article
    d. Award dinner
    e. Other (Please describe.)

    _____

17. Which of the following activities does your agency sponsor and in which activities do you also need volunteers? (Check all that apply.)

Provide:	Use volunteers:
___ Food Center	_____
___ Nutrition programs	_____
___ Transportation programs	_____
___ Home maintenance	_____
___ Housing location	_____
___ Legal services	_____
___ Long-term care	_____
___ Hospice programs	_____
___ Friendly visitation	_____
___ Telephoning	_____
___ Social activities	_____
___ Office work (includes filing, sorting, mailing, typing, answering phones)	_____
___ Other (Describe other):	_____

    _____.

18. Would your agency or organization be interested in the results of this survey, for your recruiting and retention of volunteers?

    (a) Yes (b) No

Thank you for your time and effort in responding to this questionnaire.

Appendix B

Survey of Variants of Volunteerism

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data about volunteerism in the Northeast Tennessee region. Information from this questionnaire will be used for research only and will be held in strict confidence. Please answer the following questions and return the questionnaire in the envelope provided. While your participation is voluntary and without compensation, your input is valuable, and your time and thoughtful responses are appreciated. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. If you have questions pertaining to this survey, contact Martha W. Edwards at 423/477-6433.

Please tell us about yourself by providing the following information. Please circle the letter that best represents your answer or fill in the appropriate blank. The information you provide is confidential and does not require you to identify yourself.

1. You are:
   (a) Female (b) Male

2. What is your date of birth? _____.

3. Please indicate the highest grade of schooling you completed.
   (a) Less than 12 years
   (b) High school graduate
   (c) Some college
   (d) College Graduate
   (e) Some graduate school
   (f) Master's Degree
   (g) Doctoral or Professional Degree

4. What is your current marital status?
   (a) Single (never married)
   (b) Married
   (c) Separated
   (d) Divorced
   (e) Widowed
   (f) Co-habiting

5. Do you own your home?
   (a) Yes (b) No, I rent (c) Other (Please specify)_____

6. You are:
   (a) African-American
   (b) Asian-American
   (c) Caucasian (white)
   (d) Hispanic
   (e) Native American
   (f) Other (Please specify) _____

7. What was the approximate total income, before taxes, of all members of your household in the calendar year 2002?

(a) Less than $10,000
(b) $10,000 to $19,999
(c) $20,000 to $29,999
(d) $30,000 to $49,999
(e) $50,000 to $79,999
(f) $80,000 or more

8. Do you consider yourself to be a religious person?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

9. What is your religious affiliation, if any?

_____

10. About how often do you attend church or religious services?

(a) I attend at least one or more times each week.
(b) I attend at least once each month.
(c) I attend on special occasions and/or holidays.
(d) I rarely attend church.
(e) I never attend church.
(f) I prefer listening to or viewing church programs on television or radio.

11. What type of work do you do, or did you perform, in your occupational career? (If you had more than one occupation, please indicate the one of longest duration):

_____
_____
_____

12. Are you retired?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Plan to retire within 6 months

13. What is your political affiliation, if any?

(a) Republican
(b) Democrat
(c) Independent
(d) I am not interested in politics.

14. What leisure activities do you enjoy? (Check all that apply, and fill in blank for activities not listed.)

___ Travel
___ Social clubs
___ Cultural Events
___ Going to Movies
___ Reading
___ Watching television
___ Listening to Music
___ Dancing
____ Exercise Walking
___ Swimming
___ Aerobics, Fitness training
___ Needlework, Knitting, Crochet
___ Woodworking
___ Other Crafts or Hobbies
___ Hunting, Camping, Fishing
___ Hiking
___ Gardening
___ Helping Other People
(Identify Other)_____

Volunteer will be defined as any person who gives freely of his/her time on a regular basis, to an agency, organization, or institution involved with charitable, civic or social programs, and activities.

15. Did you perform volunteer work or service before the age of 55?

(a) Yes (b) No

16. Do you have older family members to whom you provide care-giving services?

(a) Yes – How often? _____ (b) No

17. Do you have grandchildren? (a) Yes (b) No

18. If you answered "Yes" on question 17, are you actively involved in caring for your grandchildren?

(a) Yes – How often? _____ (b) No

19. Do you live in the same residence with any of your grandchildren?

(a) Yes (b) No

20. Is transportation a problem for you? (a) Yes (b) No

21. Does your health prohibit you from volunteering?

(a) Yes (b) No

22. How does your health compare to that of your friends who are about the same age as you?

(a) My health is excellent.
(b) My health is so-so, but I am better off than some of my friends.
(c) My health is not so good, but I still enjoy many activities outside the home.
(d) My health is poorer than that of most of my friends, and I don't get to have many activities outside my home.

23. Indicate from the following list what activities you undertake in helping others (check all that apply).

(a) I often take care of my parent(s).
(b) I often take care of my parent(s)-in-law.
(c) I often help a sick neighbor.
(d) I help when there is a community crisis or need.
(e) I help family, friends, and neighbors when they need a helping hand.
(f) I sometimes drive a friend or a neighbor to doctor's appointments.
(g) I volunteer time through a civic or church organization.
(h) Other _____

24. How often do you perform volunteer services?

(a) I do not volunteer
(b) More than once per week
(c) One day each week
(d) Two or three times each month
(e) Once each month
(f) On an "as needed" basis
(g) I am on a waiting list to serve as a volunteer

IF YOU ANSWERED (a) ABOVE, PLEASE STOP HERE. Thank you for your cooperation.

25. At about what age did you first perform volunteer service?

(a) Under 17
(b) 18 to 30
(c) 31to 54
(d) 55 to present

26. How many hours per month would you say you currently participate as a volunteer?

_____.

27. Do you volunteer at more than one agency? (This may include additional volunteering at a church, school, hospital, or some other institution.)

(a) Yes (b) No

28. If the answer to Item 27 is “Yes,” please give the total number of agencies or institutions where you participate as a volunteer worker: _____.

29. The agency/agencies where you volunteer is/are: (Indicate all that apply.)

a. Privately funded
b. Federally funded
c. State funded
d. Funded by local government
e. Not funded at all
f. Not sure of funding

30. Does your volunteer service involve working with: (Check all that apply.)

___ Infants
___ Pre-school age children
___ Children aged 6-12
___ Teenagers
___ Adults under age 65
___ Adults 65 to 79
___ Adults aged 80 and older
___ Substance Abusers
___ Care-giving for the sick
___ Seeing or Hearing-Impaired persons
___ Poor people
___ Friends, Neighbors, Family
___ People with physical disabilities
___ People with mental disabilities

31. In the past year, have you helped a friend through a difficult time? (a)Yes (b) No

32. In the past year, have you taken a friend or neighbor to the hospital? (a)Yes (b) No

33. Please describe in your own words why you volunteer. (Please use the back of page, if needed.)

_____
_____
_____
_____

34. Overall, how long have you been helping others through your current volunteer efforts?

_____.

35. Would you say that: (choose the response that best reflects your feelings)

(a) Volunteering allows me to be a productive member of society.
(b) Volunteering makes me feel needed.
(c) I enjoy giving back to my community.
(d) Everyone should perform volunteer work to help other people.
(e) Volunteering overextends me, and I have little time for myself.
(f) Volunteering is fairly humdrum. I can take it or leave it.
(g) I volunteer because someday I may require service programs staffed by volunteers.

36. Do you have friends who volunteer at the same agency/organization where you volunteer?

(a)Yes (b) No

37. Have you made new friends through your volunteer work?

(a)Yes (b) No

38. Where you volunteer, does the agency/organization or institution acknowledge your service in a special way?

(a) Yes, often
(b) Sometimes
(c) No

39. If the answer to question 38 is "Yes" or "Sometimes," please describe the type of acknowledgement you and/or others receive from the agency, including how often such acknowledgement is given: _____
_____
_____.

40. If the answer to question 38 is "No," please describe the type of acknowledgement you would like, if any: _____
_____

41. Are there any barriers that keep you from volunteering as much as you would like?

(a) No
(b) Yes
(c) If yes, please describe _____
_____

Thank you for your participation in this research project regarding volunteerism in Northeast Tennessee.

VITA

MARTHA WILCOX EDWARDS

Personal Data: Date of Birth: December 4, 1940
Place of Birth: Athens, Tennessee

Education: Public Schools, Athens, Tennessee
Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, Virginia
General Studies, A.S., 1981
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
Economics, B.S., 2000
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee;
Sociology, M.A, 2004

Professional Experience: Graduate Assistant, East Tennessee State University, College of Arts and Sciences, 2001 – 2003

Volunteer Experience: Navy Relief Society, Camp Pendleton, CA

Red Cross Society, Tripler Army Hospital, Honolulu, HI

LaPaloma Elementary School, Fallbrook, CA

Lake Braddock Secondary School, Burke, VA

Crisis Center, Auburn, AL

Prince William Area Agency on Aging, Manassas, VA

Zonta International, Prince William County, VA

Hospice, Mountain States Health Alliance, Johnson City, TN

Volunteer Ombudsman Representative, Johnson City, TN