



# Clearinghouse for Volunteer Accounting Services

a California Public Benefit Corporation

Spring/Summer 2003



## The Glass Menagerie

...a message from Paul Glass, President of CVAS

Summer...the season for barbecues and beachwear, vacations and volunteering! *Volunteering??*

Absolutely! Any time is a good time to become involved with CVAS, but summer seems to be especially advantageous. Life is a little more relaxed. The days are longer, and our schedules are less demanding. Tax season is behind us (or just around the corner if you're a bit paranoid!) This issue of the CVAS newsletter is dedicated to our volunteers – what they do, why they do it, how you can do it too. There are a lot of factors that make CVAS the special organization that it is, but volunteers are the heart and soul of this operation.

When we conceived CVAS twenty years ago, we discovered a niche in California that hadn't been filled. Turns out that the need we identified, pro bono accounting assistance for nonprofits, was not unique to our home state. Since the launch of our Web site in 2001, we've been flooded with requests from nonprofits around the world. The need for guidance and accounting expertise is universal. Grassroots organizations everywhere, usually staffed by volunteers without financial backgrounds, desperately need the help that CVAS volunteers provide. They may be very good at teaching kids to read, or assisting homeless persons, or raising awareness for human rights or disease prevention, but that doesn't mean they know how to balance the books or file a tax return.

In addition to thanking all of our volunteers, I'd like to welcome our newest staff members, and say goodbye to retiring staff. LeAnn Walters, Lois Mason, and Tracy Chisolm– you have your work cut out for you! You have all shown spirit for the CVAS mission, and I have no doubt that you will prove your value to our team in short order. Terri Simmons, we will miss your wit and enthusiasm as you leave us to pursue other avenues. I will especially miss Shirley Alblinger. As an integral part of the team that reinvented CVAS not so long ago, Shirley wore many hats, and never once complained (at least not to my face!) Enjoy your retirement, Shirley.

What would a President's Message be without an appeal for donations? So here it is: as with any nonprofit organization, in addition to volunteers, we are in need of financial support. If your schedule doesn't allow you to dedicate your time or talents, perhaps a monetary contribution will allow you to help CVAS continue its work. Checks can be sent directly to CVAS at 920 Hampshire Road, #A-29, Westlake Village, CA 91361, or we are able to accept donations on-line at [www.cvas-usa.org](http://www.cvas-usa.org) using American Express, Discover, Mastercard, or Visa, via our secure Web site connection. Remember, Clearinghouse for Volunteer Accounting Services is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, so your donation is tax deductible. We are grateful for any and all support.

Wishing you all a relaxing and fun filled summer...

## Inside This Issue

**CVAS Volunteers –  
The Heart of What We Do!**

**Welcome Aboard**

**Opportunities For Service**

**How To Contact CVAS**

## CVAS Volunteers The Heart of What We Do!

by Kelly Alblinger, CVAS Program Administrator

I am often asked to describe a "typical" CVAS volunteer. The one thing I've learned during my tenure as Program Administrator is that there is no such thing! CVAS volunteers run the gamut from corporate executives to independent practitioners, MBAs to bookkeepers, wingtips to Birkenstocks. Aside from their obvious expertise in the world of numbers, the only common denominator linking CVAS volunteers is HEART.

*"The rewards of serving the nonprofit community have been many. First is the personal gratification of knowing I am assisting organizations that make our society a better place."*

- J. Bolsky

### Why Would I Want to Volunteer Through CVAS?

There are many benefits in choosing CVAS as a means of community service:

- CVAS makes every attempt to place volunteers with nonprofits located in their own community. That way, volunteers know they are creating a better environment for their families as they support their community at large.
- CVAS provides a means for volunteers to utilize their training and skills in a more creative way, and encourages volunteers to spend time educating nonprofits about fiscal management practices.
- CVAS makes it easy to volunteer. We provide an on-line database that can be accessed 24/7 by volunteers or nonprofits, making it simple for parties to locate and contact one another. We offer Regional Coordinators who are eager to facilitate a match for a willing volunteer.
- You are in control. Volunteers can choose to be listed on the public portion of the database, allowing any interested nonprofit to contact them directly, or they can choose to be contacted only by CVAS Regional Coordinators. Every volunteer may accept or reject any opportunity that is presented to them.
- Last, but certainly not least, is the opportunity to enhance the image of the CPA profession. Becoming active in the community in the capacity of a CVAS volunteer is an excellent representation of the profession as a whole.

### What Does a CVAS Volunteer Do?

The variety of needs is as broad as the diversity of the nonprofits requesting assistance. Many groups need help completing paperwork filing for nonprofit status; others need guidance in setting up their books. Tax returns and reduced fee audits are popular requests. Board member service is an excellent way to become involved without donating a great amount of time. The one request CVAS makes of its volunteers is that they spend a portion



## CVAS Volunteers, continued from page 1

of their service time instructing and educating the nonprofits in correct accounting procedures. The old saying, "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime" is apropos to the mission of CVAS: teach nonprofits fiscal responsibility, giving them the opportunity for ongoing success.

### How Do I Volunteer Through CVAS?

The key to getting started as a CVAS volunteer is to register your availability on the CVAS Web site, [www.cvas-usa.org](http://www.cvas-usa.org). Our on-line database allows you designate the services you are willing to offer. We've even created a space for you to post your resume or express your preferences about the types of organizations you would like to work with: i.e., animal activism, children's services, the arts, literacy, job training, etc. For those who wish to volunteer but don't want their information displayed on the public portion of the database, CVAS can accommodate your desires by making your contact information available only to the Regional Coordinators, who will contact you personally when an opportunity for service becomes available in your area.

### How Much Time Does It Take?

That's up to you. CVAS places no time requirements on its volunteers. You are free to donate as much time as suits your schedule. "I currently volunteer approximately 8 to 10 hours per month," states Jenny Bolsky, a volunteer in North Hollywood, California. Jenny also attends bi-monthly board meetings, and spends additional time educating herself about the nonprofit she works with. "This experience has also contributed significantly to my professional growth, I believe, by forcing me to research new areas and expand my technical expertise in order to best serve the organizations I assist."



Additionally, our volunteers come from all walks of life, and all types of businesses. Whether you are employed by one of the Final Four, or are a sole practitioner, we can find a nonprofit that needs your expertise! Though the majority of our volunteers are CPAs, we

welcome anyone with a financial background to volunteer. If you are a bookkeeper in Boston or a financial planner in Fort Worth, we want to match you with an organization that needs your skills. All it takes is a few hours and a willingness to serve.

## Opportunities For Service

### West of the Mississippi:

Colorado  
Hawaii  
Kansas  
El Paso, Texas

### East of the Mississippi:

Florida  
Maine  
New Jersey  
Washington D.C. area

Volunteers are needed in every state, but we are seeking volunteers to assist nonprofits in these specific geographical areas. If you are interested, please contact the appropriate CVAS Regional Coordinator.

## **Thanks to CalCPA!**

CVAS is pleased to acknowledge the California Society of Certified Public Accounts (CalCPA) for their donation of \$5,000.00. CEO Susan Waters states, "Promoting the integrity of our profession has never been more important." We thank the members of CalCPA for sharing CVAS' commitment to furthering the value of the accounting profession to society.



## **WELCOME ABOARD!**

### LeAnn Walters, National Coordinator

LeAnn has more than 20 years experience as an Information Systems professional, and holds degrees from Indiana University, Coleman College, and California Lutheran University. A very well rounded individual, LeAnn is also a certified hypnotherapist and handwriting analyst. She is an accomplished professional speaker. LeAnn brings her considerable project planning experience to CVAS, to assist with our expansion of services across the country. We are very fortunate to welcome LeAnn to the CVAS family.

### Lois Mason, Western Regional Coordinator

Lois is a graduate of Ohio State University, with a degree in English Literature. After moving to California in 1991, she developed a long career in technical writing for the computer industry. Lois elected to stay home for several years, raising her sons Markus (9) and Nicholas (6), and getting them into school before seeking work outside the home again. She and her husband, Ron, are very involved with the boys' football and basketball leagues. Says Lois, "I am so excited about working with CVAS, because this organization provides such a valuable service." Lois is the "go-to" person for nonprofits and volunteers located west of the Mississippi River. We are so pleased to include Lois in our line-up!

### Tracy Chisolm, Eastern Regional Coordinator

Tracy is a true believer in volunteering in the community. She is an active member of Delta Gamma, which provides mentors for the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, and has volunteered with many nonprofit organizations. Currently working toward her MBA at UCLA, Tracy is also a graduate of California State University at Long Beach. The mother of a very inquisitive three-year-old, Tracy keeps busy with her family and schooling. Volunteers and nonprofits located east of the Mississippi River should contact her to get started with CVAS. We are delighted to add Tracy to our team!

## **BON VOYAGE...**

### Shirley Alblinger

Shirley was instrumental in the revitalization of CVAS in 2001, and has worn many hats. We will miss her calm efficiency and her sense of humor. Our California volunteers will especially miss her tenacity in following up with them! Shirley is retiring from the working world in order to spend time with her grandchildren and catch up on her reading! Our best to you, Shirley, and our thanks for your years of service.

### Terri Simmons Yates

Although she was only with us for a short time, Terri managed to bring enthusiasm and fun to the CVAS office. Her cheerful personality and "can-do" attitude defined what CVAS is all about - making matches happen. In addition to having more time for her performing career, Terri is now lending her talents to Cause Force, the organization behind the fundraising walks for breast cancer. Best of luck in all your endeavors, Terri.

## **Who/Where/How to Contact CVAS**

### **Clearinghouse for Volunteer Accounting Services**

920 Hampshire Road, A-29  
Westlake Village, California 91361  
Phone: (805) 495-6755  
Fax: (805) 374-2257  
Web site: [www.cvas-usa.org](http://www.cvas-usa.org)

### **For nonprofits or volunteers:**

West of the Mississippi River:  
Email: [Lois@cvas-usa.org](mailto:Lois@cvas-usa.org)  
East of the Mississippi River:  
Email: [Tracy@cvas-usa.org](mailto:Tracy@cvas-usa.org)



### **For CVAS Administration, Accounts Payable, or if you just don't know who to ask:**

Email: [info@cvas-usa.org](mailto:info@cvas-usa.org)