

2024 League Volunteer Council
Strategic Conversation #1 September 16, 2024 at 3pm Central

Facilitators: Kathy Leibrand, Volunteer Council President
Laurie Skjerseth, Volunteer Council Past President
Melanie Hausmann, League Liaison

Attendees: Rozan Anderson, Madison Symphony Orchestra (League); Julie Brantley, Richmond Symphony; Gail Corvette, Charleston Symphony Orchestra (League); Uta Cross, Kansas City Symphony Orchestra (Symphony Guild); Deborah Happ, Houston Symphony Orchestra (League); Larry Levenson, Arizona Philharmonic; Kellie Sullivan, Kansas City Orchestra (Symphony Alliance); Rachel Solomon, Rochester Philharmonic Volunteer Administrator.
Melanie Hausmann; Kathy Leibrand; and Laurie Skjerseth encouraged everyone to “copy the learning’, to help all, gain knowledge, exchange ideas and make new friends from around the U.S.

Kathy Leibrand, President opened the meeting, and welcomed the 7 symphony organizations and their 8 Presidents/President-elects. She stated the Volunteer Council newly revised mission statement, introduced the volunteer council members, and mentioned the housekeeping rules for the meeting.

Each attendee was introduced by their Symphony Organization and then asked to state their name; tell why they volunteer for symphony and how long they have volunteered.

The attendees have been involved with their orchestras over the past 2-10 years either via a volunteer organization, staff or as a symphony board member. The individuals have served in various positions with their volunteer group/orchestra. Several individuals stated that they had a music background (educator/player). Involvement with their orchestras started because of their backgrounds in music, children, parents, retirement, need to be involved and belief in the transformative power of music. The attendees hope to learn from the attendees and the Volunteer Council.

Kathy then proceeded to wrap-up the session and asked everyone to submit a one-line statement of what they would like to experience and take away from being on Strategic Conversations.

The next session will be on Strategic Planning, presented by Volunteer Council member Paula McReynolds.

Kathy introduced Gail Corvette who will be presenting “Ladders to Leaders” a topic that will help each of us with Volunteer Leadership and Development. A long-range planning created a more rational way.

Gail is from the Charleston Symphony Orchestra League where she serves as their President. She has served her League for many years wearing many hats as many of us are aware. In her free time, she instructs Yoga; serves as a board member on the Southeastern Orchestra Volunteer Association (SOVA) and as the PEO National Treasurer.

She informed us about their quarterly newsletter “Pitch In” , Sign Up Genius and Neon. Their goal is to have members do projects that can be accomplished in one day with small jobs and easy tasks. Gail mentioned the following as important issues: communications, manageable roles, committee health, strong nominating committee, succession planning, and leadership development.

Her presentation was most informative and will be sent to you via email.

“Step Right Up Folks” was a new idea created for the newest members of the CSOL. The event took place at a local library describing three of their fundraisers: Tour of Homes, Golf Tournament and Auction’s. Everyone enjoyed the festive “circus” atmosphere and was a creative way to invite their newest members to sign up for their Fall Fundraising events.

After Gail’s presentation we were divided into three breakout rooms to discuss the following questions:

- 1) What challenges are you facing with volunteerism and leadership?
- 2) What new ideas are you trying?
- 3) How is it working? (not enough time to answer)
- 4) Any other comments or ideas to share? (not enough time to answer)

Question 1) Most reported that members are aging out, have members get to know one another and past chairs have done such a great job, that no one wants to take over that position and budgets for increasing member events are limited Loved the idea of the Volunteer Fair.

Question 2) Quarterly new member orientation at someone’s homes to members involved, mentoring process being brought back in place, focus on couples that joined together so they do projects together, change membership levels, host a reception for members at a certain membership level with drinks and snacks and mingle with musicians after a concert, reach out to colleges in the area for encouraging graduating grad students to join and be board members for experience for resume, and attend local college community service fairs to get reach younger volunteers.

Minutes Submitted by Laurie Skjerseth
Past President, Volunteer Council