

# 2018 MAVA Conference: What Will Your Take Away Be?

Kristina Wilkes

Volunteer management is at a very unique point in its professional history. The Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, and Millennials are all joining the volunteer population with different goals and with different needs in mind. Trying to identify and adapt to the changing environment can sometimes feel like an exercise in reinventing the wheel. The opportunity to attend The National Summit on Volunteer Engagement in Minneapolis last year was something I hoped would help me bridge my personal knowledge gaps.

There were many wonderful moments during the summit that I shared with my colleagues when I returned to Chicago. Hearing Betty Stallings and Susan Ellis talk about professional growth was inspiring and had me enthusiastic about what my future in the industry could be. Sharing frustrations over the limits of volunteer management software with others in the same situation was a cathartic exercise. Even thinking about volunteer insurance issues was something new and different, and a valuable way to spend my time. However, the largest take away for me was just how young this industry felt. We aren't just reinventing the wheel in volunteer management; in many areas we have the opportunity to be the inventors.

From best practices in volunteer recognition to adapting to the changing needs of volunteers, the future of our profession is being written right now! Attending events like the 2018 MAVA Conference will only help you build partnerships that will shape what it means to be in volunteer management over the next decade and beyond. No matter where you are located in the world, get to Minnesota in 2018 and help us elevate our profession. It's happening now, and you have a unique opportunity to invent the wheels that will push us and our industry up to the next level.

Join us June 6th through the 8th for this year's MAVA Conference, Volunteer Engagement Leadership: Next Steps and Beyond. For more information visit [mavanetwork.org/2018conference](http://mavanetwork.org/2018conference).

Kristina Wilkes  
Sr. Volunteer Coordinator  
Museum of Science & Industry, Chicago