

Stephen F. Austin State University

SFA ScholarWorks

Diversity Conference

Feb 12th, 2:00 PM - 2:50 PM

Socio-economic Stratification, Disorganized Volunteerism, and the Key to Multicultural Diversity

Sue B. Whatley
swhatley@sfasu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/diversityconference>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), [Education Commons](#), [Life Sciences Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Tell us how this article helped you.

Whatley, Sue B., "Socio-economic Stratification, Disorganized Volunteerism, and the Key to Multicultural Diversity" (2021). *Diversity Conference*. 2.

<https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/diversityconference/2021/schedule/2>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Diversity Conference by an authorized administrator of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu.

Socio-economic Stratification, Disorganized Volunteerism,
and the Key to Multicultural Diversity

In the last few years, there has been a proliferation of requests for donations to organized charities. It has become the expected norm to be asked if we would like to “round up” our payment at fast food counters or grocery stores. There is nothing inherently wrong with organized volunteerism and charitable organizations; indeed, various groups have worked diligently to raise massive amounts of money for those in need and for research. I have been both a recipient of and a contributor to these highly structured collectives. These organized activities provide awareness and a safe environment in which to become involved.

And yet, when volunteer opportunities spring from organizations, they automatically structure an “us/they dichotomy.” Often the recipient feels the embarrassment of being a recipient, and even when they don’t face their donors (because the dichotomy is hidden behind the institutional organization), there is de-personalization and very little exchange of ideas or culture between individuals. Three experiences in my early days of volunteerism—charitable giving of time and resources—have led me to the conclusion that for the purposes of the embracing of multicultural diversity, these charitable systems fail. Disorganized volunteerism springs from seeing need and acting on our personal empathy to relieve suffering; it is this type of charitable act that I would like to examine.