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THE CHALLENGE OF DIVERSITY

LE DÉFI DE LA DIVERSITÉ

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EDITORIAL

The challenge of diversity is respectful inclusion in mainstream action focusing on common human characteristics and life experiences rather than differences such as ethnic background, orientation and physical or mental ability. It allows managers of volunteer resources to effectively incorporate individuals from all walks of life into their volunteer programs.

In this issue, our editorial team has gathered a wide spectrum of articles, which will hopefully enhance your organization's approach to diversity.

Alison Caird addresses a number of pertinent questions. What is diversity? Is there a time when it is acceptable to exclude certain people from volunteering? What do we need to do?

CMHC's Pathway Program places consumers of mental health services in local volunteer positions. Christine Gagné outlines the Program's purpose, philosophy and process.

Laraine Kaminsky focuses on diversity training in order to build a respectful, inclusive workplace.

Krista Flint highlights the valuable community contribution of volunteers with developmental disabilities. Her article includes effective strategies for recruiting and retention of these individuals.

Two dynamic examples of organizations successfully involving diverse groups of volunteers are the Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) program and The Ottawa Police Service Outreach Recruitment project. Enjoy the stories of their evolutionary growth.

Debi Zaret provides information about a self-assessment tool for evaluating an organization's ability to integrate volunteers with limited English and/or French language skills.

We hope that the use of the concepts, hints and tools summarized in this issue will enhance your organization's capacity to successfully involve diverse groups of volunteers.

Joan Cox
Editorial Member

DIVERSITY AND THE ROLE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR OF VOLUNTEERS

by Alison Caird

I was at my doctor's office this morning and on the wall was a poster of brightly coloured paper cutouts of hands being flung into the air by a crowd. The people were a purple and grey monochrome. The caption read, 'Celebrate community - honour diversity'. The message to me was that we are all pretty much the same, but what we accomplish when we pull and work together is vibrant and takes us to new heights.

We are often facilitators of this type of group productivity in our roles as administrators of volunteers. We are the vital conduit that links our communities to our organizations, and our organizations to our communities. Through our efforts, we intimately know the people and the activities, internally and externally.

In order to continue to do this well, we need to have a keen awareness of the issues because they are constantly evolving. We need to reflect upon and endeavour to make improvements to society's exclusionary practices as well as ask ourselves the following questions:

- ♦ What is diversity?
- ♦ Is there a time when it is acceptable to exclude certain people from volunteering?
- ♦ What do we need to do as administrators of volunteers?
- ♦ What is our responsibility as individuals?

What Is Diversity?

"Snowflakes, leaves, humans, plants, raindrops, stars, molecules, microscopic entities all come in communities. The singular cannot in reality exist." Paula Gunn Allen

When you hear the word 'diversity' what immediately comes to mind? Is it a particular group, colour, action - as in affirmative action? On the road to inclusivity we have had our bumps and turns and although we are still moving forward, we are not home yet. Diversity is a continual process of increased opportunity and inclusion.

Barbara Shapero, former member of the Diversity Initiative for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, said her definition of the concept of diversity is, "Respect for and embracing, the differences and similarities in people, because just looking at the differences polarizes people".

In fact, the human race is more similar than it is dissimilar. A result of the human genome project, where they successfully mapped the human genetic

code in 2000, was that we now know that all human diversity is the product of one tenth of one percent of the human genome. The other 99.9% of the genome is identical in all humans. So why do these differences of one tenth of one percent cause so much strife? Is it fear of the unknown? Given this data, that is like standing in a 100 square foot room and being fearful of a one-inch hole in the wall.

All Canadian provincial and territorial law specifically protects the rights of people despite their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, age, marital status, family status and disability (mental and physical).

However, not all human rights codes are similarly inclusive. Not all Canadian codes include pregnancy (e.g. Manitoba and Nunavut do), or political belief/activity (e.g. New Brunswick and Quebec do). And why is it that the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act is the only one that does not include sexual orientation? I was pleasantly surprised to see that Nova Scotia's Human Rights Act states that there is, "Prohibition of Discrimination. No person shall in respect of their...5(1)e Volunteer Public Service;... discriminate against an individual or class of individuals on account of h) age; i) race; j) colour etc."

It is time we started to consider biases concerning a person's size as a new issue that needs addressing. Further, with our experience of SARS and HIV/AIDS, we are faced with an on-going spectre of additional discrimination as it pertains to illness.

Shapero would like to add personality to our list, "We need to consider personality differences. Different personality types will take different approaches to getting tasks done, which creates conflict because it isn't discussed. Until we deal with personalities we won't see a lot of change: we just keep re-arranging the furniture".

Legislation, although critical, does not change people's attitudes. Diversity is a state of mind - an attitude. I am reminded of what Viktor Frankl wrote in *Man's Search for Meaning* about his experience in a Nazi concentration camp, "Everything can be taken from us but one thing - the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given circumstance". Diversity is acknowledging that our community is made up of different members and ensuring we are not excluding any of those members from various opportunities. It is about creating an environment whereby everyone feels welcome and is free to participate; where there are no blatant, covert or systemic barriers to anyone's involvement.

We need to change attitudes.

Is There A Time When It Is Acceptable To Exclude Certain People From Volunteering?

"I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stifled. I want all the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But, I refuse to be blown off my feet by any." Mohandas K. Gandhi

When it comes to the question of acceptable exclusion, what immediately comes to my mind are two kinds of scenarios: the First Nation group that wants to hire only First Nation volunteers to be Big Brothers to their clients; and the women's centre that makes a decision to disallow males to sit on their volunteer board.

Scenario One: For the purpose of teaching, coaching, peer support and mentoring, it is acceptable to require only certain persons to participate in that particular role or activity to the exclusion of others. In several circumstances, having similar life and cultural experiences as another can often prove to be a useful asset. It can be educational, unifying and stress reducing. The decision to accept only First Nation volunteers to work as Big Brothers for First Nation boys, is determined in good faith without fraud or deceit. They wish to select from this distinct group, so they can teach, mentor and present a positive role model for their clients. This qualification is bona fide; the exclusion is not grounded in prejudice and is therefore acceptable.

Scenario Two: Shapero says, "It would be understandable and legitimate for a women's centre to exclude men from their board". However, the centre should consider their position thoroughly. As Shapero states, "If you indeed have men who wanted to serve on the board, they would bring a unique perspective to the issues. Ultimately with any discrimination we all lose out".

Recent research does support the fact that diversity promotes creativity and more effective problem solving. "Evidence demonstrates that cultural diversity among group and organization members can increase creativity, improve the quality of decisions and facilitate change by enhancing member flexibility. For example, researchers compared decision-making groups composed of all-Anglo individuals with groups that also contained members from Asian, Hispanic, and black ethnic groups. [Sic] The ethnically diverse groups produced more effective and more feasible ideas and the unique ideas they generated tended to be of a higher quality than the unique ideas produced by the all-Anglo group." 1

Perhaps a man on the women's centre board has networks that can open doors to fundraising possibilities for the centre that did not exist before. Perhaps it would be important for women to be able to see there are men who care and who are willing to support them. With a diverse team, solutions will be more interesting, creative, rewarding and yes, challenging.

It is not unusual to see anger or resentment arise when speaking about diversity. Challenge and conflict can be a frightening experience. However, conflict can be healthy when facilitated in an effective manner. We start by finding a position of common ground and work forward. Remember, "A kite rises against; not with the wind." Effective conflict resolution can produce

better results and it is how we, as Shapero says, "compost all the garbage".

It is healthy from time to time to review, rethink and challenge some of our policies to ensure we do not have the right reasons for the wrong policy, or vice versa.

What Do We Need To Do As Administrators Of Volunteers?

"The keys to any social reform lie in the acceptance of the need for correction and the commitment to finding ways to make that correction." Bobbye D. Sorrels

As administrators of volunteers we are in the enviable position of being able to encourage and facilitate productivity in those who may be marginalized by their circumstances. The volunteer experience of a person with a disability, the new immigrant or our youth can lead to skill building that could potentially assist in attaining employment.

Canada's culture embraces the act of helping others for no monetary gain. As a result, we are starting to observe people participating from every culture - even when volunteerism is not common in their country of origin. As administrators, it behooves us to foster this by recruiting, welcoming, accommodating, encouraging and coaching these populations. We need to learn as much as we can about others. As Shapero says, "Individual fears and anger has a way of landing in our prejudices. The more we know, the less we fear."

We need to strengthen community involvement and have our community's demographics reflected in our membership. If I live in Edmonton, 50% of my membership will most likely not be a visible minority because my community does not echo this percentage. If there are only 5 persons with a physical disability living in my town, representation on an organization's community advisory committee is not required. If our volunteer corps mirrors our community, it enhances our service to the community.

The relevance and effectiveness of the link to community in service delivery has always been intuitively known. However research is now confirming this hypothesis. This past January I attended the Hospital Report Research Collaborative (HRRC) Regional Consultation Sessions with Ontario Hospitals, where they provided the results and details of their work and future directions. What hospitals have sought from the HRRC is that they investigate and report on what constitutes a high performing hospital.

Recent HRRC research on what was 'distinctive' about high performing Ontario hospitals produced unexpected results. It was not the hospital type, size, budget, number of beds, etc., but rather, their:

- strong information/knowledge transference; and
- strong identification/interaction with their community, which was expressed as the strength and the scope of volunteer activities and an Auxiliary/Association presence (i.e. volunteers fundraising for the hospital). 2

Although this is very specific research, I believe we can safely extrapolate that similar findings could be predicted for most community services. It becomes evident then, that volunteers are more than people simply doing 'good works' - their presence could be the key to anticipating and navigating system level challenges and changes that drive success.

The single, most important thing we can do as administrators of volunteers is ensure that our membership represents our community.

What Is Our Responsibility As Individuals?

"Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny." Frank Outlaw

Everyone has a degree of prejudice and bias and we need to accept that this is a part of being a human. We need to be cognizant of our thinking and behaviours when around people who are different from us. Once we are aware of it, we can begin to question the bias. If we do not examine it, then there is no way to change it. Ask yourself this question and answer it honestly: If you saw a young, black man in a BMW wearing several gold chains and a thick, gold bracelet, would you question how he earned his money?

Shapero, "When we're taught personal bias, or it is assimilated from culture, simply recognizing the bias is important. Being conscious, being aware, realizing that I don't live in a bubble, I have my own biases too. These need to be voiced in order for change to happen. But they need to be voiced in a place of safety." Further, Shapero states, "My core philosophy is that if I harbour anger and hate, the only person it hurts is me. Therefore, it is my responsibility to heal those wounds whether they were taught or experienced, so that I can be a healthy individual and give back to my community."

We need to look at our own biases, prejudices and fears as part of the process.

In Conclusion

"In the end, anti-black, anti-female, and all forms of discrimination are equivalent to the same thing - anti-humanism." Shirley Chisholm

In struggling with these issues, I try to avoid the word 'normal' in the context of human beings. As soon as I find myself using it, I begin to think in terms of the 'abnormal'. I would go a step further and say, that until we eliminate the word 'different' in the context of humans, we will never achieve full acceptance of all humans. Different can be a loaded word if it is ethnocentric. Again, in this context, to suggest someone is different establishes that there is a 'normal' from which you are basing that opinion. People, with all of our marvelous complexities, just are. It does not need to be explained or labeled: it just is. It should just simply be accepted. We need a global mind.

Shapero, "It is like the seat-belt legislation where it became a part of what everybody does - you get in the car, you put on your seatbelt. We don't think about or question it anymore. That's where we need to be".

As administrators of volunteers it is as if we have all been commissioned to re-create the poster on my doctor's wall. We get to select the colours. Sometimes a colour dominates, because we have more paint in that colour, but we never paint the entire canvas blue. Well, some artists do, but it's rather predictable and boring.

Works Consulted:

1. Robbins, Stephen P. The Truth about Managing People ... And Nothing but the Truth, Prentice Hall PTR, NJ 2003. Page 140

2. HRRC website: www.hospitalreport.ca

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TRANSLATION OF MAIN ARTICLE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

BECOME ACTIVE IN THE SUMMER

The summer is always a big season for volunteer participation with outdoor festivals, sports and leisure games and different summer activities.

To learn about all the available volunteer opportunities, visit your local volunteer centre.

For a complete listing of all volunteer centres, visit Volunteer Canada at www.volunteer.ca

THE PATHWAY PROGRAM: A NEW LOOK AT VOLUNTEERING

by Christine Gagné

The Pathway Program started from a community initiative in 1989 as a result of an increasing number of referrals to Volunteer Ottawa from community mental health professionals. The increasing number of referrals was indicative of the societal shift in the treatment of individuals experiencing mental health problems, which included de-institutionalization and the development of community-based programs. Professionals were looking for a program that addressed the needs and barriers that individuals with mental illness were facing when looking for a volunteer placement in the community. After several years as a pilot project, the Ministry of Health, Province of Ontario through the partnership of Volunteer Ottawa and Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch, funded Pathway.

The mission of the Pathway Program is to help consumers of mental health services connect with and maintain volunteer opportunities in the community. The purpose of the program is to provide supported volunteer experiences for these individuals. This support is defined as:

- 1) "assistance in determining the type of volunteer work best suited to the individual's capabilities;
- 2) contact with the various organizations to locate an appropriate volunteer job;
- 3) sensitization of placements to the needs and skills of the participants;
- 4) regular follow-up contacts with both the Pathway participant and the organization in order to maintain this individual in the volunteer role agreed upon".

The Pathway Program's philosophy, as defined by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch, comes from the 'client-centred' approach and the 'strengths-based model'. This means that we work from the client's (participant's) perspective. This includes the goals that the individual makes, the highlighting of their strengths rather than weaknesses and the involvement of the clients in guiding the process every step of the way. The Pathway staff work very much like a broker for the client. Success is measured only by the individual's own goals.

During the intake interview, we assess the individual's:

- interests (hobbies, kind of volunteer work they want);
- strengths (skills, past employment and volunteer experiences, personal characteristics); and

· needs (barriers to or concerns with volunteering, support needs, problematic situations). We also assess the individual's 'volunteer readiness' (done through the reference check), such as their motivation and reliability level, their mental health stability and their readiness to do volunteer work. Finally, a security check is done for liability purposes since we refer our volunteers to community agencies.

Pathway staff conducts a 'job search' on behalf of the participants and match the volunteer's interests with the agency's volunteer needs. By carefully selecting and matching volunteers to an appropriate organization, we obtain successful placements, in which both the volunteer and the organization are satisfied. This is done through consultation with and the introduction of each individual to the appropriate organization.

Even though we are now in the year 2005, in a technologically advanced society, barriers to participation in society for people who are consumers of mental health services still exist. Stigma regarding mental health is still a huge barrier for most of our clients to overcome. The individual is seen as the client and not as a volunteer. We view them as what they cannot do rather than what they can do and what they can offer. Finding volunteer placements that accept volunteers who are consumers of mental health services is a challenge. Fortunately there are many organizations that are willing to accommodate and take the time to work with these volunteers.

It is difficult for some of these individuals to make the initial connection to an organization for volunteer work due to anxiety, difficulty retaining information or memory and fear of not being accepted. Some individuals may be well when they start volunteering, but have a relapse and lose their volunteer placement without proper intervention. The Pathway Program helps these individuals find suitable volunteer roles and offers reassurance to placement agencies accepting the volunteers.

Why do people who are consumers of mental health services want to volunteer? Some want a chance to get out of their home, develop some routine in their lives and keep busy. Some want a chance to meet new people, to brush up on their skills and to give back to the community. Finally, some want to feel useful, find a way to increase their self-confidence and self-esteem to help them prepare for entry or re-entry into the paid workforce. Whatever the reason, these individuals have amazing talents and abilities and are quite capable of making a contribution to the community.

Endnotes:

1. Pathway Procedure Manual, n.p., n.d., p.2

Christine Gagné is an Outreach Worker with the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch. For the past year, she has been the coordinator of the Pathway Program. Christine has a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Carleton University.

UTILIZING DIVERSITY TRAINING TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

by Laraine Kaminsky

"It is impossible for a man to learn what he thinks he already knows." (Epictetus)

Should training be mandated or voluntary? How long does it take? Should groups be divided by functional level or in intact teams? Don't you have an off-the-shelf product?

These are the kinds of questions I have been asked over the past 16 years that our firm has been designing and delivering diversity training. This article will address those questions and provide an overview of some of the current national and international trends regarding best practice in diversity training.

Dimensions of Diversity

There are multiple dimensions of diversity and each organization determines in collaboration with our firm which aspects require attention in the specific context. Themes common to many organizations in Canada, as well as internationally, are race or ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, culture, religion, age or ability. Any of those, and even intersections of dimensions of diversity, may be found to have an impact on overall performance in an organization. For this and other reasons, we follow a partnership approach with our clients. Only collaboration can ensure that the training is applicable and has impact in each specific environment. The consulting company should follow an ascribed framework to partner with the organization to build on the organizational values so that there is an action plan for the promotion of an Inclusive Workplace.

Training from a Compliance Perspective

Some organizations explore and implement diversity training because legislation requires them to ensure equal opportunity and compliance. In this case, we speak of training from a compliance perspective. The focus can be on one or all of the Employment Equity groups. In this context extra care must be given to the marketing and framing of a training intervention. Communicating a

consistent and engaging message can support buy-in and enhance both the actual value and impact of the training. Many organizations start out with this approach. Other organizations, through experience, find that a strategic diversity approach can support organizational goals far beyond meeting legislative requirements. Our recommendation is that even training from a compliance perspective should include a strong message explaining the concept of inclusion.

From Compliance to Commitment

In order to successfully approach diversity training as a component of an overall strategy to build a more respectful, inclusive work environment, the initiative needs to be championed by the most senior team in the organization. In these cases, when organizations go from compliance to commitment, a single champion is rarely sufficient to create the momentum that is necessary to change an organizational culture from being 'exclusive' to one of being 'inclusive'. By inclusiveness, we mean a culture in which everyone is engaged and contributes to their full potential. Recently this has been linked with the concept of employee engagement.

Inclusive Leadership

Many participants attending diversity training ask, "Did my boss attend this training as well?" Now, more than ever, the launching of diversity training needs to start with the leaders who demonstrate an understanding of the benefits of the characteristics of Inclusive Leadership. This leadership approach values and leverages the diversity of the employee base and recognizes the importance of human capital and employee engagement to any organization's success. Leaders who 'walk the talk' also help avoid 'flavour of the day' cynicism.

Diversity training has turned out to be especially effective if cascaded down through an organization. This would suggest mandated training. It can be powerful to involve complete teams or functional levels together if they have similar primary objectives. The training needs to be customized and relevant so that it resonates with the audience and is applicable to a participant's daily experience at work. Customization is one of the prerequisites to integrate training into an organization's overall strategy and direction. Whether training should be mandated or optional has to be looked at in every specific context. There is no generic recipe.

Building Diversity Awareness and Creating a Culture of Respect

The fundamental form of diversity training focuses on building awareness about one's own diversity in terms of culture, values, beliefs, biases, historical context and the impact on behaviour and worldview. Participants learn about diversity around them and the dangers of stereotypes. Knowledge and awareness are the cornerstones on which a respectful and

inclusive workplace can be built. Even basic diversity training should discuss the actual impact of diversity in a participant's environment. If training is participatory and engaging, participants can apply their knowledge in an experiential and safe way while building transferable skills.

Managing Diversity

A more advanced form of diversity training deals with managing diversity by including components on building skills for communicating in a diverse environment. Also, effectively accommodating differences is a very common request. This is especially effective if participants have similar roles in terms of staff management such as hiring, promoting and giving feedback.

Diversity - A Competitive Weapon

Diversity training can be an opportunity to increase knowledge, respect and build a more inclusive environment where employees can contribute to their fullest potential. Diversity training, which is part of a diversity strategy, can be leveraged to support other organizational goals such as retention, customer satisfaction or productivity.

"Diversity isn't an idea. It's a competitive weapon." Raymond W. Smith, Chairman & CEO, Bell Atlantic.

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NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CITIZENS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

by Krista J. Flint

The most deeply powerful of our attributes as citizens is our ability to contribute to the betterment of the human family. Inherent in this exchange is an understated and yet profound assumption of competency. Becoming the 'giver of support' rather than the 'receiver' is an often-overlooked vehicle to shifting the power differential that resides so often in the experience of people with developmental disabilities.

Call it charity or benevolence; one cannot overlook the danger of a person with a developmental disability constantly being the recipient of these efforts. To what degree then could this change in roles forever alter our paradigm about the ways in which we measure the value and contributions of one another?

What is the value of one who teaches us to be more human?

Citizens with developmental disabilities are taking their rightful place as classmates, employees, neighbours and, for the first time, as volunteers. Communities are coming to see that schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods are bereft without the participation of those people who have been most marginalized. Sadly, many people with developmental disabilities have experienced profound wounding as a result of segregation, isolation, loneliness, poverty and institutionalization. The effect of such is often the most disabling of conditions. What could be learned from these experiences and from the untapped potential for empathy and support that exists in people with developmental disabilities?

For some time we have known how good it is for people with developmental disabilities to participate in the volunteer sector. It has provided valuable job skills training for people for whom entry into the workforce has been difficult if not impossible. It has allowed many to experience the camaraderie and soul affirming effects of working in a group to achieve something larger than any individual's set of circumstances. There have been litanies of positive effects that have been researched and documented but what of the value to community volunteer resources? We can no longer afford the cost of ignoring the depth and significance of the giftedness that exists in the participation of people with developmental disabilities.

It is imperative that we focus greater resources on formulating and articulating the reasons that communities are better and stronger when they include individuals with disabilities. We need to use vast and far-reaching tools to demonstrate to the world that all of our children benefit when children with disabilities learn in regular classrooms. We must find ways to illustrate that the approaches used to include an individual with a disability as a volunteer are the same ones we can employ to access the important resources of new Canadians or new moms as volunteers. Accommodation and inclusion are most often a matter of re-thinking our approaches to inviting participation. Re-tooling those approaches create strategies that will welcome their gifts. We must invest the appropriate resources in challenging ourselves and those in volunteer resources to consider the terrible cost of ignoring this potential. Our volunteer sector, our communities and indeed our human family are in terrible peril of forever losing the ability to see the giftedness in each other.

The human condition is one of interconnectedness. The key to ensuring this important link to one another exists in the voluntary contribution and in the act of welcoming the participation of those with developmental disabilities as the bestower of important gifts.

The following list represents a number of salient points which, with due consideration, may foster the effective recruitment and retention of long term

volunteers with developmental disabilities.

Environmental Accessibility - Does your organisation's physical spaces accommodate people who use adaptive devices for mobility? Are wide doorways, ramps and accessibility technology an integrated part of your location?

Material Accessibility - Is the written information about your organization and the volunteer opportunities therein available in alternative formats like plain language text and adaptive communication? Do you have the resources for interpretation, Braille or audio? Many of the member organizations of the Canadian Association for Community Living have resources which can support this effort.

Advertising and Marketing - Do your agency's materials illustrate an environment which embraces diversity? Do you feature pictures and stories of volunteers and service recipients which represent a rich variety of cultures and abilities? Citizens want to be able to imagine themselves participating in your work. Consider using the power of advertising to this end.

Role Development - Ensure that all volunteers (including those with developmental disabilities) are engaged in normative duties. Do not expect volunteers with disabilities to perform duties for which you would most often have paid employees. Janitorial duties have often fallen under this category.

Duty Carving - Consider the individual and their unique gifts when creating roles for volunteers. Be creative when bundling roles together to create an engaging and rewarding experience for volunteers with developmental disabilities.

Disability Awareness Training - Consider accessing the resources available through local self-advocacy organizations like Community Living and Ability Societies. Many have training curricula, often offered on a sliding fee scale for not-for-profit organizations, which can help your organization become well prepared to engage volunteers with developmental disabilities.

Do not be surprised if very little is required in order to be welcoming of the voluntary contribution of citizens with developmental disabilities. A common misconception is that accessibility involves massive efforts, monumental construction or technological gadgetry. In reality, the most necessary shifts often come under the heading of attitudinal. When these small but important paradigm shifts occur the result is a voluntary team which is healthier, more vibrant and abundantly more powerful.

Krista Flint is the Manager of Social Marketing at the Developmental Disabilities Resource Centre of Calgary, Alberta. Krista has a keen interest in the use of Social and Cause Related Marketing as powerful tools for inspiring inclusion. Krista can be reached at: KristaF@DDRCC.com

OPERATIONAL STRESS INJURY SOCIAL SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

by Mark Cardwell

A decade ago, Pierre Trépanier decided to abandon a promising career with the Canadian Forces and open a restaurant near Quebec City. Things, however, did not work out as planned. Within months the business was bankrupt and Trépanier, a once-calm sergeant with 14 years of military experience and three United Nations' peacekeeping missions under his belt, was a nervous wreck. Suffering from insomnia, panic attacks and thoughts of suicide, he drifted between towns, jobs and relationships until 2004, when he was finally diagnosed with an operational stress injury (OSI) sustained during a 1994 deployment to the former Yugoslavia. With regular medical treatment, Trépanier is finally learning to manage his symptoms. He is also now helping other soldiers deal with invisible war wounds as a volunteer with the Operational Stress Injury Social Support (OSISS) program. "I suffered for ten years without knowing why," said Trépanier. "I'm working hard to get better. But I also want to help others avoid what happened to me".

Such sentiments are widespread among the many military men and women who turn to OSISS, most often in times of personal turmoil and crisis. Since it began operating as a federally-funded, peer-support pilot project in February 2002, the program has provided education and counseling for more than 1,300 soldiers of all ranks and ages, many of whom have been drummed out of the military due to psychological difficulties and/or medical conditions resulting from their operational duties. "We figure we've reached about 20 percent of the total number of people who are suffering," said Lieutenant Colonel Stephane Grenier, the OSISS program manager. "But the numbers keep growing because the military keeps producing more cases".

To meet that demand, the OSISS program relies on a network of dedicated veterans who are themselves affected by OSI's, but have recovered to the point where they are able to help others. At the heart of the network are regional peer-support coordinators whose job, among other things, is to find, guide and refer OSI-injured soldiers to the appropriate healthcare services and professionals within either the Department of National Defence or Veterans' Affairs. "It's not easy," said Shawn Hearn, a former soldier and the regional coordinator for Newfoundland and Labrador. "People who are hurting from an

OSI tend to isolate themselves and resist getting help. If and when they finally do come forward, the recovery process is usually rocky. So we've got to be there to support them at all hours, day and night".

Considering the scope and nature of the demand for their services, together with their personal needs and efforts to stay healthy, the dozen or so salaried regional coordinators across Canada are finding it hard to keep up. "Peer support is the most effective way of dealing with the psychological effects of trauma. Our track record proves that," explained LCol Grenier, a pioneer of the OSISS program and an OSI sufferer himself. "The downside is that it's extremely demanding on everyone involved." As a result, the program is forced to rely increasingly on the efforts of dedicated volunteers like Pierre Trépanier.

According to LCol Grenier, volunteers were not part of the OSISS program when it first began operating at a half dozen sites across Canada. But he said it did not take long for him and the regional coordinators to realize that 'almost everyone' who received help through OSISS wanted, in turn, to help others. "The problem," he added, "was that we couldn't just pat people on the back and send them out into the field. We needed to give them training and structure and the tools they needed to do and say positive things because they would be dealing with people who have been through trauma like them." So with the help of military and veterans' health professionals and civilian organizations like Volunteer Ottawa, OSISS officials quickly designed and built a volunteer program that is unique in Canada - and possibly the world.

Like regional coordinators, OSISS volunteers must be soldiers or veterans who are recovering from an OSI and are deemed healthy enough (by a psychiatrist or registered clinical psychologist) to assist others. Volunteers must also have a security background check done by police, commit to the program for a full year and attend the standardized orientation and social-support skills workshops that are held regularly in all regions.

Run since their inception by Francine Gagnon, a veteran mental health nurse at St. Anne's Veteran Hospital in westend Montreal, the three day workshops teach volunteers the many rules of engagement in dealing with OSI-injured comrades. In addition to communication skills and crisis intervention techniques (including suicide prevention), volunteers learn the physical, psychological and even spiritual boundaries of their work. First and foremost, however, the workshops focus on self-care. "The first question I ask people in every course is, 'do you know your triggers and how to deal with them?'" said Gagnon. " If they are affected by a sight, a sound or a smell that 'buzzes them out' and sends them back to the situation that started their problem, they'll be less effective. That's why we tell them, 'Help yourself first, then help others' ".

Once trained, volunteers are a valuable asset for regional coordinators, who control and direct their activities. In addition to being an extra set of eyes and

ears in the community, volunteers provide overworked coordinators with a critical human link to OSI sufferers in their area. "I wouldn't send a volunteer to see a guy who's suicidal," explained Shawn Hearn, who works with two of the approximately 40 volunteers who are currently active within OSISS across Canada. "But when someone's feeling blue or is in hospital and needs a friendly voice, someone who understands what they're feeling and won't judge, a volunteer is perfect."

The relationship is beneficial for volunteers too. Trépanier, who organizes twice monthly self-help seminars for OSI sufferers at a legion in the Montreal area during the winter months and group motorcycle outings in the summer, said his implication in OSISS has sped up his recover. "It forces me to get involved and gets me out of the house" he said. "It also gives me a nice feeling to help others and to know that, if I'm down, I can count on them." For her part, Gagnon said she witnesses that same esprit de corps in every workshop she gives. "In the 28 years I've worked in the mental health field, I've never seen such cohesion between people. Because of their military background, and the fact they share the same problem, if not the same experiences, they are able to quickly form bonds and become a family. That's good for their bodies and souls", she said.

Challenges, however, remain. One is the fact that, because they are themselves recovering from OSIs, trained volunteers are not always able - or willing - to put their shoulders to the OSISS wheel. "The key word is volunteer," said LCol Grenier. "We can't order people around like we do in the military. We can only get what we're given. Turnover is also a problem", he added, "As is the bare bones funding the program receives for its activities". That is why LCol Grenier is hoping OSISS will soon be accredited by Volunteer Canada. "That would allow us to tap into a much wider network and give us more access to community resources," he said. "Our program is working. We've saved a lot of lives".

Mark Cardwell is a freelance journalist and writer in the Quebec City region.

If you would like to submit an article to an upcoming edition of the Canadian Journal of Volunteer Resources Management, please email us at joanniecox@sympatico.ca

OUTREACH RECRUITMENT

by Diana Boudreault

The face of Canada's capital city is changing and the city's Police Service does not want to be left behind. In an effort to reflect the community that it serves, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) is in the second year of an 'Outreach Recruitment' project. This project is aimed at attracting the additional members required, with the help of some specialized volunteers, to serve a growing population from among the city's diverse communities.

Ottawa Police Chief Vince Bevan is determined to turn the 'project' into standard operating procedure. He has dedicated Staff Sergeant Syd Gravel, a veteran police recruiter, to the cause and has mobilized the entire Human Resources Section - indeed the entire Police Service to 'think diversity'. Since Ottawa is growing, the Service is too. While we are seeking civilian staff, police personnel, volunteers or students, we are ensuring that the door is open to all members of our community.

Do we have a quota? No, but we do have an idea of what we need to do. We would like to ensure that every one of our recruit classes has an excellent representation of the diversity that exists within the City of Ottawa. To this end we are reaching out to women and the ethnic, racial, aboriginal, gay, lesbian and transgendered communities. When we know that members from all of these groups are in the process and competing for positions that have not been ones for which they have traditionally competed, we in the Human Resources Section, breathe a sigh of relief. We cannot do that without VOLUNTEERS!

We have discovered that volunteers from these diverse communities can be our key links into the communities. The profession of policing is not as prestigious in all circles as it is in traditional British based North American cultures. For many newcomers to Canada, policing as a career option is not only unacceptable as a honourable profession but is even feared. In some countries the police forces are militaristic or corrupt; a violent reminder of a violent past. When second-generation Canadian youth express an interest in the profession of policing here in Canada, their families and friends may steer them away from pursuing such an interest because of beliefs born in other places and other times. In the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered community (GLBT) older gays and lesbians remember persecution and ridicule; they recall being arrested and bashed as a result of their lifestyle and find it hard to believe that the City of Ottawa would actively recruit officers who are 'out'. Women, especially women of colour and women of the aboriginal peoples, may not have considered policing as an attractive profession. We are determined to attract and count them among our ranks within the Ottawa Police Service.

Service.

Past efforts to 'reflect the community that we serve' simply by hiring from the community without addressing issues of creating a welcoming police service have failed to produce the appropriate results considering the diversity of our city. It was evident that we were not making inroads as the City of Ottawa's visible minority population grew from 9% in 1998 to 18% in 2002 and the OPS remained at an estimated 7% visible minority population throughout the same time period. For many years, the Race Relations and Diversity Section fostered good relationships with many leaders of diverse communities from across the city. It made good business sense to reach into the varied communities within Ottawa by taking advantage of these good relationships.

The OPS hosted an 'Outreach Program Information Night' to which we invited as many of the leaders and members of diverse communities as we could possibly contact. The event was a great success. We gathered several lists of names: those who attended; those who were interested in learning more about the career of policing; and those who would consider volunteering to become Community Recruitment Champions.

Community Recruitment Champions are individuals who are not interested in a career with the Ottawa Police but can see the value of a policing career for others in their minority community. They become a fully-fledged OPS volunteer by passing our screening procedure including a background check by our Intelligence Section, a Police Records Check by our Records Section; several reference checks and an interview. The volunteer assignment description outlines the volunteer Recruitment Champion's desired qualifications, duties and training. Champions will assist with presentations and events; will learn the hiring processes and collective bargaining protocols and support potential applicants through the hiring process as part of a team, which includes an Internal Recruitment Champion.

Internal Recruitment Champions are current members of the OPS staff who are committed to the concept of diversity in the workplace and share the desire to make the OPS an employer of choice. They have volunteered to take part in the Outreach Recruitment Project as Internal Champions and have also agreed to help recruit and mentor new applicants from minority communities. Like the Community Champions, Internal Champions have formally applied, been screened and interviewed for the volunteer positions.

This is not the only innovative measure the OPS has undertaken to encourage applicants from minority communities. In partnership with Graybridge-Malkam, the Service has developed the 'Enhanced Language Training Program for Police', a program whereby newcomers to Canada learn English using job

specific vocabulary. The language program includes presentations and tours of police facilities. Students wishing to pursue the profession after completing the program can then be matched with an appropriate volunteer Community, or Internal Recruitment Champion who will act as mentor and guide through the complicated testing, application and screening process to become a police officer in Ontario or a civilian member of the Ottawa Police.

The new Outreach Recruitment Project has placed us in the odd position of recruiting volunteers to act as recruiters. As a result we may have found the key to creating a stronger and more reflective Police Service in the nation's capital.

Diana Boudreault is the Coordinator, Volunteer Resources for the Ottawa Police Service. She can be reached at Boudreault.D@ottawapolice.ca

BOOK REVIEW

by Debi Zaret

Untapped Resources - Opportunities for Volunteers with Limited English and/or French Language Skills

In 1999, Volunteer Ottawa developed a self-assessment tool to be used by those agencies wanting to integrate a multicultural component into their volunteer program or to assess the effectiveness of existing programs in being open and welcoming to those with limited English and/or French language skills. The tool is designed for use by executive directors, managers of volunteer resources and volunteers who may supervise the activities of other volunteers.

In recognizing that volunteering is an excellent vehicle for personal growth and skill development, new Canadians continue to be a very valuable pool of volunteer resources. However, non-profit organizations continually face the challenge to develop the capacity to provide opportunities to those individuals with limited English and/or French language skills. While being aware of the growing needs of these diverse populations, community organizations struggle to meet their needs due to limited resources.

The tool consists of twenty-six questions which are scored with a yes/no/don't know format. A final score is tabulated at the end, which ultimately will reflect the organization's volunteer program ability to accommodate those with limited English and or French language skills.

Untapped Resources may be downloaded from Volunteer Ottawa's website www.volunteerottawa.ca in both English and French. It provides a framework

to assess an agency's ability to accommodate volunteers with limited English and/or French language skills and suggests what changes may be made in order to more effectively serve this population. Benefits of the tool include identification of elements within the organization, which contribute to the successful placement of volunteers as well as highlighting certain areas where, with very little effort, the volunteer program could be modified in order to enhance the organization's ability to involve this untapped pool of volunteer resources.

Debi Zaret has recently retired as manager of Recruitment and Referral at Volunteer Ottawa where she has worked for the past eight years. She is currently working as a consultant in the voluntary sector.

PEER EXPERT

Scenario:

As a manager of volunteers, how can I encourage our volunteers to include volunteers from other cultures and provide them with a welcome and encouraging environment?

Response:

Respect for diversity is one of the hallmarks of Canadian values. It is in fact, one of six core values of the Accord between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector.

Volunteering is one of the best ways to involve and engage people from other cultures in building and positively contributing to community. It can also provide a platform for community agencies to learn about the different cultures, languages, history and traditions of the people we serve.

In 2003, the John Howard Society of Greater Moncton Inc. and PolicyLink New Brunswick partnered to develop a guidebook that could be used by organizations in the voluntary sector and the multicultural community, to enhance the volunteering experience of people from other cultures and increase the number of active volunteers from other cultures, in our communities.

Through a series of consultations, focus groups, and literature reviews, people from the voluntary sector and the multi-cultural communities provided us with valuable information that was incorporated into the guidebook titled "Creating a More Inclusive Voluntary Sector: A Focus on Diversity".

People who manage volunteers would find helpful information in the book, as well as from the various websites listed, on how to encourage existing volunteers to be more inclusive of other agency volunteers who are of different cultures, as well as suggestions around how to create a welcoming and

encouraging environment. Some of those suggestions are:

- Organize a welcoming program for new volunteers that might include a buddy system or a group activity that focuses on sharing traditions, cultures, history, etc.
- Organize multi-cultural pot-luck events as part of volunteer recognition efforts. As part of the event, volunteers could share information about their cultural traditions around food.
- Special holidays provide great opportunities to talk about each other's traditions and way of life.
- Include opportunities to discuss different cultural understandings of the word 'volunteerism' in training and orientation activities.

Aside from organized activities, the agency should actively encourage a spirit of open dialogue and sharing of the variety of skills and experiences, interests, hobbies and worldviews that each volunteer brings to the organization. For more ideas, check out the on-line resources that are listed in the Guidebook. It is available for download through the PolicyLink New Brunswick website: www.policylinknb.ca

Joanne L. Murray is the Executive Director of the John Howard Society of Greater Moncton, Inc. You can contact her at: jhsmctn@nbet.nb.ca

GRANT DEADLINE APPROACHING

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) recently updated its grant application form - in addition to the new form you will find tips and tools as well as examples to help you apply for grants on their website.

OTF is also conducting a survey as part of an outreach process about its granting programs.

Grant applications deadlines for the remainder of 2005 are July 1 and November 1. For more information about the new guidelines or to take part in the survey, visit: www.trilliumfoundation.org.

LOOKING AHEAD

**June 23-26, 2005
Vancouver, BC**

Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources conference
for all the details
www.CAVR.org/conference2005/

**November 2-5, 2005
Jacksonville, Florida**

Association for Volunteer Administrators conference

Click on the following websites if you want either more information or to become a member of: PAVR-O www.pavro.on.ca or CAVR www.cavr.org

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS & THEMES

□	Issue □ □	Deadline □ □	□	Theme
□	Summer '05 □ □	articles due on the □	□	Future Trends
□	□ □	24th of July		
□	Fall '05 □ □	articles due on the □	□	Communication Strategies
□	□ □	24th of September		
□	Winter '06 □ □	articles due on the □	□	Corporate Connections
□	□ □	24th of November		