

**Monday, March 7, 2011**

**In this issue:**

- Non-Profit & Private Sector Leaders Unveil Landmark Campaign to Transform Volunteerism in Canada
- 

*For Immediate Release: March 7, 2011*

## **Non-Profit & Private Sector Leaders Unveil Landmark Campaign to Transform Volunteerism in Canada**

### ***Unique Digital Tools Match Volunteers with Meaningful Opportunities***

**TORONTO** – A national campaign aimed at enriching volunteer experiences for Canadians and strengthening the country’s volunteer sector was launched today by Volunteer Canada, the voice of volunteerism in Canada, and Manulife Financial, whose signature cause is to encourage volunteerism nationwide.

The multi-faceted, two-year campaign features an interactive website <[www.Getvolunteering.ca](http://www.Getvolunteering.ca)> that offers volunteer tools for the public and non-profit organizations, along with creative examples of how Canadians show their volunteer spirit.

Today also marks the launch of Canada’s first *Matching Tool*, a platform provided by Manulife Financial to engage Canadians in finding volunteer opportunities and organizations in finding great volunteers. Manulife and Volunteer Canada invite Canadians to join in the effort to populate the matching tool so that it becomes Canada’s best volunteer resource.

Organizations seeking volunteers can also leverage the *Matching Tool* by posting volunteer opportunities on a national social network platform, now accessible to Canadians as an integrated feature on <[www.Getinvolved.ca](http://www.Getinvolved.ca)>. A key partner of Volunteer Canada, Getinvolved.ca is ‘Canada’s social network with a social conscience’ and the Manulife *Matching Tool* is the centrepiece of this newly enhanced site that connects like-minded individuals and organizations to make change possible.

“Volunteering is fundamental to a healthy, democratic society so it is essential for the future of the sector that volunteers are more meaningfully engaged in Canada,” said Ruth MacKenzie, President & CEO of Volunteer Canada. “Organizations who seek volunteers need to recognize that every action counts and that people should be able to contribute in ways that work for them – this extraordinary *Matching Tool* is just one of the resources Volunteer Canada and Manulife Financial will jointly unveil in 2011 to help us do just that.”

Also in collaboration with Volunteer Canada, Manulife will sponsor the ‘Get Volunteering’ Facebook page to honour 2011 as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nation’s International Year of Volunteers

(IYV+10). Along with engaging Canadians in an ongoing conversation about volunteering, the page will feature an application to integrate the volunteer *Matching Tool* in the Facebook environment.

To further engage visitors, the app will invite Canadians to build their volunteer 'good-ometer' and earn points that result in a \$25 donation to one of six charities. Manulife will sponsor donations up to a maximum of \$10,000 to demonstrate the company's commitment to do its part, just as much as it is encouraging Canadians to do their part.

"To honour this special milestone of IYV+10, Manulife is excited to join with Volunteer Canada to sponsor a range of initiatives that will help Canadians more easily and positively build a better future in their communities," said Nicole Boivin, Senior Vice President of Human Resources and Communications, Manulife Canada. "It's all a part of helping volunteers build a better future for Canada, one hour at a time."

"Volunteerism has always been part of who we are as a company," said Boivin. "The driving force of Manulife's commitment will be, and always has been, our employees and our advisors and their long tradition of giving back." Last year alone, Manulife employees donated more than 20,000 volunteer hours across Canada.

The campaign was conceived in response to the results of a landmark study, titled *Bridging the Gap* (<[www.volunteer.ca/study](http://www.volunteer.ca/study)>), commissioned by Manulife Financial, on the changing culture of Canada's voluntary sector. The study was conducted in late 2010 on behalf of Volunteer Canada in collaboration with the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research & Development.

Aimed at increasing knowledge around volunteerism and building capacity to more effectively leverage volunteers' skills and abilities, the study revealed there are significant gaps across the country between the opportunities organizations provide and the meaningful experiences sought by today's volunteers.

"More than ever before, volunteers are playing a pivotal role in Canadian society alongside public and private institutions," said Dorothy Engelman, President of q media solutions, founders of Getinvolved.ca. "Collaborative partnerships like the one we have with Volunteer Canada and Manulife Financial are essential to the success and ongoing evolution of the volunteer sector."

### **Volunteer Canada – The National Voice for Volunteerism in Canada**

With more than 30 years of passionate commitment to the cause of volunteering and civic participation, Volunteer Canada (<[www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)>) inspires Canadians to be engaged from coast to coast to coast. Volunteer Canada creates and develops programs, national initiatives, vital research, and tools for the non-profit sector.

Focused on influencing social policy and developing valuable resources around volunteerism, the organization helps non-profits and businesses build capacity for the changing culture of volunteerism. It recognizes the impact of Canada's 12.5 million volunteers through national campaigns and works with its Corporate Council on Volunteering to catalyze conversations about corporate community involvement. Volunteer Canada works collaboratively with volunteer centres, business, and non-profit organizations to support volunteerism and the ultimate agents of social change, Canada's volunteers.

## **Manulife's Commitment to Volunteerism**

Preparing for the future is something Manulife (<[www.manulife.ca](http://www.manulife.ca)>) gets behind every day. The Manulife Volunteer Commitment focuses on *helping Canadians build a better future* on three important levels: by *inspiring* Canadians to want to get involved and give back; by *supporting* initiatives that help Canadians match their unique skills and talents with meaningful volunteer opportunities; and by *engaging* Canadians in the idea of volunteerism and its value to the future of our country.

### **q media solutions**

A Volunteer Canada partner and developer of the Getinvolved.ca site, q media solutions is a full service independent producer— creating series, commercials, print, web and video content. Getinvolved.ca connects over 3,000 active members and 500+ respected not-for-profit partners. The Huffington Post recently featured Getinvolved's video contributions as one of the '10 New Radical World-Changing Ideas'.

– 30 –

**Visit <[www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)> for details on campaign components including *Getvolunteering.ca*, *Matching Tool*, *Getinvolved.ca*, *ActionBenevoleCanada.ca*, *Get Volunteering Facebook page* and *Get Volunteering Facebook App*.**

### **For additional, information, contact:**

- Graham Machecek, Volunteer Canada Ph: 613 231 4371, ext. 226; [gmakecek@volunteer.ca](mailto:gmakecek@volunteer.ca) / Phoebe Powell, Volunteer Canada Ph: 613 231 4371, ext. 244; [ppowell@volunteer.ca](mailto:ppowell@volunteer.ca)
- Tom Nunn, Manulife Financial Ph: 519 594 8578; [tom\\_nunn@manulife.com](mailto:tom_nunn@manulife.com) / Jasmine Mangalaseril, Manulife Financial Ph: 519-594-4185; [jasmine\\_managalaseril@manulife.com](mailto:jasmine_managalaseril@manulife.com)
- Dorothy Engelman, q media solutions (Getinvolved.ca) Ph: 416 361 5907; [de@qmediasolutions.com](mailto:de@qmediasolutions.com)