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“Technological developments are opening up spaces for people to volunteer in ways that have no parallel in history.”

(United Nations Volunteers, State of the World’s Volunteerism Report)

Today’s rapidly evolving technology landscape provides more opportunities for Canadians to volunteer than ever before. This critical culture shift is the core insight behind the development of Volunteer Canada’s newly refreshed website, www.volunteer.ca, which goes live December 5, 2012, on International Volunteer Day.

“Nearly one year ago Volunteer Canada co-led the Canadian launch of the United Nations Volunteers’ State of the World’s Volunteerism Report,” said Ruth MacKenzie, President and CEO of Volunteer Canada.

“Since then, Volunteer Canada has taken action to develop and deliver a new www.volunteer.ca that responds to key findings emphasized in the report.”

The State of the World’s Volunteerism report highlights how “online volunteering, online activism through social media and micro volunteering are fast growing trends.” That’s why Volunteer Canada’s forthcoming website makes it easier to connect with community involvement opportunities in person, and virtually. The new www.volunteer.ca recognizes the geographic location of each site visitor and serves up the coordinates of the nearest volunteer centre on the site’s home page. At the same time, contact information for every volunteer centre in Canada is available through the site’s searchable database.

“These features offer Canadians, voluntary organizations, businesses and other volunteering leaders with quick access to their local and provincial experts on 21st-century volunteering,” said MacKenzie.

As part of this project, and in partnership with Getinvolved!, Volunteer Canada recently completed the technical build and pilot testing of an API (Application Programming Interface). This technology can

connect databases of volunteer opportunities from across Canada and can display volunteer opportunities from these databases in multiple online locations, including the popular www.getinvolved.ca.

The API alleviates the extra work required by organizations to post volunteer opportunities in multiple databases. At the same time, it raises awareness of local volunteer opportunities and volunteer centres among a pan-Canadian audience – including virtual volunteers.

“Working with Volunteer Canada on the API has helped us push the boundaries on how technology can ease the burden on organizations in the recruiting of volunteers. At the same time, the API exposes organizations to new audiences and connects them to the power of social media,” said Dorothy Engelman, owner of q media solutions and founder of Getinvolved!

Everyone is invited to join Volunteer Canada and Dorothy Engelman on Monday, November 26 from 3:30 p.m. ET to 4:30 p.m. ET as they co-host an interactive Facebook conversation to discuss the role of technology in volunteering. Volunteer Canada will also outline how the new www.volunteer.ca responds to a distinct need for a central entry point to Canada’s volunteering community. This interactive event takes place on [Volunteer Canada’s Facebook page](#).

“No matter how advanced technology becomes it will never replace the distinct need for more traditional style, face-to-face volunteering roles,” said MacKenzie.

“We all have an opportunity to get involved along a broad spectrum of engagement – everything from quick bursts of volunteering on mobile handsets to front-line volunteer aid in war-torn regions of the world.”

“At the end of the day, technology must bring people together, not create divides.”

Stay tuned Wednesday, December 5, when Volunteer Canada launches www.volunteer.ca and announces full details about the site.

The new www.volunteer.ca is designed to support Canadians, Canada’s voluntary sector and audiences worldwide through generous funding from the Government of Canada. Serving francophone and cultural communities effectively and developing new online volunteering services and tools are among the strategic priorities for the website.

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