



# Volunteer Connections:

**Family Volunteering – Making It Official**



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## Introduction

The number of volunteers in Canada is in decline (2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating). This means volunteer-involving organizations need to develop proactive recruitment strategies that connect them with new groups of potential volunteers. One possibility involves reaching out to family groups.

When organizations actively include families in their pool of volunteers, great things can happen:

“There is general agreement that family volunteering benefits both organizations and volunteers greatly. Organizations see that they can increase the diversity and size of their volunteer pool, increase their impact in the community, expand their range of services, and increase their profile in the community. Family volunteering is viewed overall as providing an important opportunity to develop values for future generations by instilling good social conscience. It is also seen as contributing to healthy family connections by offering venues that give family members a common interest.”<sup>1</sup>

Family volunteering will not be the sole cure for volunteer resource woes. However, it does offer an opportunity for forward-thinking organizations to significantly enlarge their volunteer pool in the short term while, at the same time, groom volunteers for the years to come.

“In its broadest definition family volunteering is about volunteer activities carried out by members of a family as a joint activity.”

Source: *Family Volunteering, The Final Report*

Family volunteering happens informally all around us. Together, families support their elderly family members or neighbors, participate in fundraising drives for schools and canvass for organizations. Families who currently volunteer usually do so more than once a year.<sup>2</sup> Yet family groups that include children seem to have difficulty finding organizations welcoming them and offering enriching opportunities.

<sup>1</sup> Annette Hegel, *Family Volunteering, The Final Report* (Ottawa: Volunteer Canada, Volunteer Canada, 2003) p.3.

<sup>2</sup> Laura Littlepage, Elizabeth Obergfell and Gina Zanin, *Family Volunteering: An Exploratory Study of the Impact on Families* (Indianapolis, Center for Urban Policy and the Environment, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University–Purdue University, 2003) p. 10.

Volunteer Canada, the national voice of volunteerism, is very interested in supporting the concept of formalized family volunteering. Volunteer Canada’s Family Volunteering Initiative, carried out over the last two years, laid the groundwork for this manual. Activities included:

- initiating renewed discussion on involving families as volunteers
- reviewing the literature on the topic <sup>3</sup>
- defining “family” and “family volunteering”
- identifying the benefits and challenges
- conducting an extensive survey (through questionnaire and focus groups) with voluntary organizations and managers of volunteer resources from organizations of all sizes and from across the country. <sup>4</sup>

One of the key findings of the consultations was that, although 60 per cent of voluntary organizations in Canada recognize that they have some form of family volunteers, only 15 per cent have programs specifically designed to maximize this volunteer force. However, more than half indicated that implementing a family volunteering initiative over the next two years was likely.

To build the capacity of volunteer-involving organizations—and to specifically support managers of volunteer resources in engaging families in their volunteer programs—Volunteer Canada is adding to its Volunteer Connection series with this new manual, *Family Volunteering – Making It Official*. In this manual, you will examine the realities that family groups experience, what motivates them to volunteer, their preferences and needs as they relate to volunteering, as well as benefits and challenges to be considered. The manual also addresses the unique elements organizations need to plan for when integrating family groups into their volunteer program. Finally, the manual provides tools, resources and useful links.

This manual presumes a prior knowledge of the fundamentals of volunteer resource management; it focuses on the specific characteristics of family volunteering and the implications those have on volunteer management practices. <sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For an extensive list of publications on the topic of Family Volunteering, see the bibliography of Paddy Bowen, *Family Volunteering: A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa, Volunteer Canada, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> For more information, download *Family Volunteering, The Final Report*. See link in Resource section.

<sup>5</sup> For information on the fundamental elements of volunteer resource management, download *The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement*. See link in Resource section.

# Family Volunteers – A “Value-added” Volunteer Resource

## DEFINING “FAMILY”

Before recruiting and engaging families in volunteer activities, it is helpful to clearly understand what “family” represents today. Knowing this information will help managers of volunteer resources to understand the needs of different family groupings.

The concept of “family” has changed dramatically in a relatively short period of time, from a uniform socially acceptable model of the nuclear family with clear behavioral parameters and roles, to a broadly defined social construct. “Family” is now any group of people that defines itself as such.

“A family is any group of two or more people that considers itself to be a family: parents, children, siblings, foster parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, and any others who consider themselves a family.”

Source: *Family Volunteering: The Ties That Bind*

The family structure has also become much less hierarchical. Spousal relationships are more egalitarian and, with both parents often working outside of the home, children participate more actively in households and in basic decision making. Families now take a team approach to day-to-day living.

## WHAT MOTIVATES FAMILY VOLUNTEERS?

Families cite a variety of motivations. Though social motivations do play a role (for example, other friends or neighbours are already volunteering), value motivation is much more important in the decision of a family to volunteer. The main reasons families volunteer together include parents wanting to be positive role models and transmit values to their children, and families wanting to have fun spending quality time together.

### **Family Volunteering...**

...enables those who are restrained by family care-giving obligations (either responsibilities to children or seniors) to become involved. Family volunteering greatly increases the chances for busy families to engage in service.

...is a natural multiplier of volunteers. Recruiting any family member acts as a catalyst for enlisting other family members.

...is attractive to communities with relatively low rates of involvement. Volunteer Centers are able to attract support from ethnic, immigrant and low-income communities because they are very family-oriented.

...provides a positive effect on personal relationships.

... offers volunteers the opportunity to take responsibility for identifying and addressing the needs of their communities. Empowered family volunteers can directly confront, identify and solve their own needs and those around them.

...provides the same benefits as individual volunteering, including passing on of social values, building individual self-esteem, and allowing individuals to give back to the community through service. It also strengthens family bonds and communication patterns, and involves parents as role models for proactive social behavior."

Source: Points of Light Foundation. To find out more visit [www.pointsoflight.org/organizations/engage\\_family\\_virtues.cfm](http://www.pointsoflight.org/organizations/engage_family_virtues.cfm)



# Involving Family Volunteers

Formalizing volunteer opportunities for family groups does not require re-inventing the wheel of volunteer program management. Instead, it is an opportunity to assess existing practices and how they apply to a diverse group of people. It is a useful exercise to review all existing practices and policies to determine their appropriateness for volunteers across all age categories. Often the adjustments that need to be made are subtle, requiring more of a change in attitude than in policy. That is not to say that some critical issues will not arise, which could require the organization's review of policy at some point.

Practices and policies that require special attention when developing a family volunteering program arise in the areas of planning, recruitment, risk assessment/screening, orientation/training, supervision, evaluation and recognition

For a preliminary assessment checklist, please see the Tools section at the end of this resource. For a detailed program evaluation, visit Volunteer Canada's website and download *Volunteer Management Audit: The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* (see Resources section for website address).

## MEETING ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

### Volunteer Opportunities

The first step is the assessment of your current volunteer opportunities. Are they suitable for family involvement? Are there any new positions that could be developed for families?

There are few limits for involving family groups in volunteering. Most often, family volunteering opportunities occur for single events—fundraisers, eco-cleanups—or direct short-term services like

### Some questions to ask before you begin:

Can family groups fit into our existing training schedule?

Do we need to add training programs?

Do we have space on our premises to accommodate family groups?

Do we have opportunities that families can perform in their homes?

Can we accommodate families with very young children?

Are there some roles that cannot be carried out by family groups?

Can we schedule events for early evenings and weekends in order to accommodate working families?

Are we prepared to deal with the absence of an entire family on occasion?

Can family schedules be co-coordinated — by the family as well as by the agency?

serving holiday meals in soup kitchens. However, there is plenty of opportunity to involve families on an ongoing basis, as long as there is a clearly defined length of commitment.

In *Family Volunteering: The Ties That Bind*, Kristen Porritt provides a long list of ideas for family volunteer opportunities including one-time events, medium- and longer-term commitments. You can find a listing of her ideas in the Tools section of this manual.

It is also important to ensure a broad range of opportunities, from simple tasks to leadership positions, that allow the family group some autonomy. A family group can be completely able to provide leadership as a team, with the group deciding on how to work together to fulfill the responsibilities of the task. For example, Trout Unlimited, Canada's Yellow Fish Road Program, invites families to take on the full coordination of an awareness-building campaign of painting "fish" stencils by storm drains and distributing information on how to keep our water clean for entire neighbourhoods across Calgary.

Once you have identified the opportunities, follow the regular procedure for developing a volunteer position description. A template is provided in the Tools section (for an in-depth guide to volunteer job design, please download *A Matter of Design: Job design theory and application to the voluntary sector* – see website address in Resource section). The job design process will help you to identify the tasks family volunteers can do for your organization and will clearly distinguish the contribution these tasks will make to your organization's mandate (a significant factor for individuals when volunteering).

The position description for your family volunteer opportunities allows the family group to know exactly what is expected of them. The position description lets families know the requirements of the position, identifies the reporting structure, sets guidelines or role limitations, discusses the parameters of activities, and clearly presents the required time commitment as well as the benefits of involvement.

Family groups will be able to contribute knowing that their own needs will be met and they will stay because they find satisfaction and validation in working under these conditions.

As well, the process of job design helps pinpoint any outstanding organizational issues that need to be addressed before recruiting and involving family volunteers.

## **Diversity**

Family volunteers can reflect the diversity a community has to offer: gender, ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, age, ability, etc. Comparing your existing volunteer pool with the demographics of your community can identify possible groups that are not represented in your organization. The gaps may be due to external factors—such as limited outreach—or internal factors, including a lack of appropriate sensitivity when working with different groups of people. When working with families, organizations need to be sensitive to the different definitions of families and the situations of various family groups such as single parents, same-sex parents or childless families. By making adjustments to include family volunteers, an organization becomes more inclusive and better prepared to serve its community. The Resource section offers a list of manuals available on approaching, recruiting and managing diverse communities.

## **Children as Volunteers**

A lack of experience in dealing with children as volunteers means there are perceived barriers that must be overcome. These barriers are important to address. So, while not wanting to emphasize or perpetuate the issues surrounding children as volunteers, the strong resistance to incorporating them into volunteer programs warrants some attention.

The most commonly cited areas of discomfort have to do with the supervision, training and evaluation of children, as well as confidentiality and liability issues. These are legitimate concerns that can be resolved, especially within the framework of the cooperative approach of family volunteering. From a volunteer management point of view it can actually be less challenging to work with younger volunteers with energetic and unbiased perspectives. It is important when designing volunteer positions for families with children to keep in mind that children also desire meaningful and varied pursuits – a key issue for retention just as with other age groups.

In a world where children under 14 are founding their own child- and youth-driven voluntary organizations, it would be a loss to exclude their idealism and enthusiasm from an organization's volunteer activities.

## Risk Assessment

Risk management is a recurring concern when considering implementing a family volunteer program. <sup>6</sup> While screening a whole family group can appear more complicated than assessing a single volunteer, if you consider the two factors of risk assessment—activity and person—it is still easy enough to examine the risk associated with the activity. However, the added element is observation of the group dynamic and how that affects the performance of the “unit.” A supervisor’s role is to monitor the family during the orientation and training phases, conduct spot checks and to ask for feedback from the family.

### Basic Risk Management

Establish and follow screening procedures for all family members.

Ask volunteers to sign liability waivers and consent forms.

Establish effective supervision procedures for all family members.

Orient and train all family members before each activity.

Review and update your organization’s insurance coverage.

Screening is really about good volunteer management practices. As with all volunteer positions, continuous communication, training appropriate to the position, performance assessment and volunteer feedback are essential to minimizing risk.

It is worthwhile to check with your organization’s legal council and insurance provider regarding what is required to protect the family group and the organization from harm and liability.

(A risk assessment template is available in the *Tools* section.)

## Goal Setting

An important part of the planning process is developing attainable goals and setting objectives. In any goal-setting exercise, the key is to ensure the goals are specific, realistic, easily measured and with clear timelines. For a completely new program, goal setting requires thorough research. It will be enormously helpful to access information from your local volunteer centre or from another organization with an existing family volunteering program.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information about Volunteer Canada’s Safe Steps screening program and other valuable screening resources, visit [www.volunteer.ca/screening](http://www.volunteer.ca/screening).

For your own organization, consider what it is that needs to be achieved and identify some clear indicators to measure success. For instance, how many families do you aim to engage over a period of time or within a specific program/activity? Another goal could be to integrate families across a variety of levels in the organization (for instance, program or service delivery, fundraising activities or at the board/committee level). Drawing from the experience of all stakeholders – families, clients, other staff – will enable you to ascertain what can be achieved. Remember to ensure that the specific goals of the family volunteer program are connected to the overall mission and goals of your organization.

Based on the set goals and objectives, you will need a record-keeping system to support proper analysis during the evaluation process. While keeping track of numbers (for example, families involved, volunteer hours logged) is relatively simple, measuring outcomes for the more qualitative goals may require the development of surveys or interview questions to gain input from families or other stakeholders regarding their experiences.

**Volunteer Management Policies & Procedures to review:**

Age  
Risk and liability  
Screening  
Training  
Supervision  
Discipline  
Safety and rules  
Consent forms and liability waivers



# Opening the Organization to Family Volunteers

## **INTERNAL ACCEPTANCE**

Clear communication is a key factor in ensuring a welcoming environment for family volunteers. When seeking recognition of family volunteers it is necessary to consult with all stakeholders – board, staff and other volunteers, as well as your client base – during the program development stage and when you create position descriptions to ensure their needs or concerns are addressed early in the process. However, be prepared with a contingency plan, such as additional sensitivity training, to ensure a better understanding of the issues at hand).

## **SUPERVISION**

Providing direction to a family is no more time-consuming than supervising any other volunteer situation. The same basic volunteer management principles still apply. In some instances, the supervision role can, to a degree, be incorporated into the family unit with less direct supervision needed from the manager of volunteer resources. Staff scheduling could be an issue if supervision of the family group is required outside of regular hours of operation.

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

Volunteer centres are the community's portals for matching individuals with volunteer opportunities and they can be a good resource when implementing a family volunteering program. In addition to assistance with volunteer recruitment, volunteer centres provide consultation and support to organizations with planning and ongoing management. Recognition efforts – for example a “day of family volunteers” – are best coordinated through the local volunteer centre that can easily link with other agencies involving family volunteers. Building partnerships with other voluntary organizations that provide family volunteering opportunities is valuable in so many ways, especially in sharing experiences. Partnering with corporations that have employer-supported volunteer programs is a great way to reach family volunteers too, since most of these initiatives encourage employees to include family members and friends when they volunteer.





## Meeting Families' Needs

### OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT

Part of formalizing family volunteering is moving away from the ad hoc recruitment of family volunteers that so often happens. Usually an event is just around the corner when it is identified that there are not enough volunteers. Family members of volunteers and are often asked to step in and fill the gap. Though these can be enjoyable experiences – and provide exposure to both family volunteering and an organization's mission and culture – this is not a sound recruitment strategy. However, it is a very good idea to get to know the families of your volunteers. Reaching out to them is a good place to start when recruiting for a new family volunteering initiative.

To ensure an informed decision-making process by the whole family group before agreeing to a further commitment, Volunteer Calgary's "Families Volunteering Together" suggests asking possible recruits to discuss the following questions:

**Does your family have the time to volunteer right now? Perhaps a different time of the year would be better for everyone?**

**If you have young children, is the volunteer opportunity in the type of environment you feel comfortable exposing your children to? Is it safe?**

**Do you agree with and support the mission of the organization you would like to volunteer at?**

**What is the job description for the volunteer position?**

**Is there a time commitment for the volunteer position?**

**Who is going to be the contact person with the volunteer agency?**

**If you are raising money, clothing, etc. from home for a not-for-profit agency, how will you ensure people that the money and goods will in fact be going to a good cause?**

**Does everyone in the family want to volunteer?**

Source: Volunteer Calgary's "Families Volunteer Together" initiative. Find out more at [www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca/families/index.htm](http://www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca/families/index.htm).

Presenting an inclusive picture of the agency is the first step to successfully reaching a diverse community. The images and language used in information and promotional materials (printed or online) will need to be reviewed and possibly revised to ensure they reflect the community. Accessibility of programming and events will also need to be considered and demonstrated.

Involving family groups can be a progressive approach. If your organization's mission captures the interest of a family group and if they have a positive experience at a one-time volunteer opportunity, the group is more likely to sign up for other opportunities or perhaps take on longer-term responsibilities.

Allowing for flexibility and encouraging input is also a recruitment tool. Opening the organization to family groups and letting them participate in essential elements of designing their own volunteer position demonstrates a level of understanding about what families are looking for when choosing to volunteer.

Places to look for family volunteers:

- your existing volunteer pool
- employer-supported volunteer programs
- community events
- community websites
- family-oriented events your organization holds (for example, walk-a-thons)

## **ORIENTATION AND TRAINING**

How to deliver orientation and training to new family volunteers depends on a number of factors including the size of family group, the age of family group members, as well as the nature of the volunteer activity.

Orientation sessions are an early stage of the screening process and are also often used as final part of a volunteer recruitment strategy because they provide a good overview of the organization, identifying the range of opportunities for volunteer engagement. Therefore, it's especially important that the organizational overview specifically addresses how family volunteer groups fit into the organization, as well as the expectations of family volunteers in general (for example, who attends to family members with special needs, supervision of children). Talking with the potential volunteer group is essential at this point to maximize positive future outcomes for both the organization and the family.

Training can be delivered in various formats, assuming the above-mentioned factors are taken into account. For instance, you may choose to require every family member to attend training or have one/some member(s) attend with the understanding that they, in turn, train the other family members.

For many of the short-term opportunities for family volunteers, training may be brief. Many short-term positions are relatively low risk and have very specific tasks that need to be completed.

Here are some additional suggestions for preparing sessions with family volunteers:

- Be concise and aware of the time constraints that affect many families.
- Consider that childcare may be required.
- Use interactive activities as much as possible.
- Utilize existing family volunteers to tell the group about their experience.
- Design training materials using clear language and visual aids.
- Consider dividing the group, with one facilitator working with children while another works with adults.
- Be direct about organizational policies and procedures and ensure they are clearly described and explained.
- Present information in a number of ways to address varied learning styles and ages.
- Allow sufficient time for questions.
- Train in a location that is convenient for family volunteers.



## Ongoing Management Considerations

### COMMUNICATION

Clear channels of communication are extremely important when working with a diverse group of people. The supervisor or manager of volunteer resources needs to adopt a style that leaves no doubt in the mind of any member of the group about what's being conveyed. The family, in turn, has to learn to communicate with a collective voice to ensure straightforward dialogue, a process that requires some elements of consensus building within the group.

Ongoing guidance and continuous information flow will enhance the family volunteering experience. Seeking feedback will not only provide the group with a sense of appreciation but will increase the understanding of specific needs of family volunteers and thus enable the organization to better accommodate family volunteers in the future.

### RECOGNITION

Effective recognition of family volunteers plays a vital role in the long-term retention of family volunteers as well as provides a positive experience for young participants in the program. Positive early volunteer experiences are essential in establishing a lifelong commitment to civic participation (2000 National Survey of Giving Volunteering and Participating) and, thereby, shape a new generation of volunteers.

Some suggestions for formal recognition:

- Hold an event specifically for family volunteers that provides an opportunity for family groups to interact with each other (for example, a movie night or a sporting event).
- Give clients an opportunity to thank the volunteers.
- Hold a more traditional gathering (for example, a pizza party or award ceremony).
- Match recognition to the age and interests of the individuals within the family groups.
- Hand out certificates and thank-you letters.
- Send a thank you letter to the coordinating organization (for instance, the school or employer).
- Create a family volunteering photo album.
- Traditional items such as t-shirts and hats are always appreciated.
- Create space on your website to recognize the contributions of family volunteers.

- Recognize events such as birthdays, graduations, etc.
- Share success stories with the media.
- Nominate a family for a volunteer award or special recognition (for instance, community awards or local television spotlights on volunteering or remarkable people in the community)
- Coordinate a “Family Volunteer Day” with the help of your local volunteer centre.
- Celebrate National Family Week (week before Thanksgiving)<sup>7</sup>.

### **FAMILY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM EVALUATION**

No program can deliver effectively without routine goal setting and evaluation. Family volunteering is no exception. Evaluation allows for the evolution of a project in order to operate optimally, which will ensure high degrees of satisfaction for all stakeholders and ingrain family volunteering in the organization’s culture.

Evaluation tools, aside from general recordkeeping, can be short surveys of stakeholders and self-evaluation of the volunteer group (see “Volunteer Self-Evaluation Template” in the Tools section). Based on initial goals, specific aspects of assessing the success of the family volunteering program include the:

- actual number of family groups involved in volunteer activities
- level of awareness of the family volunteering program in the community
- ability of your organization to address critical social issues in the community through family volunteering
- degree of integration of family volunteering throughout the organization’s activities

With this kind of information you will be in a good position to analyze the findings, revise and update strategic goals, identify operational strengths and vulnerabilities and improve the program and its activities.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on National Family Week, visit [www.familyservicecanada.org/nfw/2003/index\\_e.html](http://www.familyservicecanada.org/nfw/2003/index_e.html)

## Conclusion

Every day managers of volunteer resources seek to engage people from of all backgrounds into the organization's volunteer program. Family volunteers can offer diversity and a variety of skill sets in one unit that is able to perform required tasks together as a group. Family volunteering enriches the family and your organization in countless ways. While the family unit is enhanced by improved communication and a strengthened value system, young volunteers increase self-confidence and broaden their skills. Capacity builds for both the community and the community organization.

By breaking the process down into four basic elements it doesn't seem quite so intimidating to build a family volunteer program – especially considering that the ultimate benefits to everyone involved are phenomenal:

1. Identify opportunities to involve families.
2. Create an organizational culture that embraces family volunteering.
3. Design meaningful positions for both the family and the organization.
4. Evaluate and seek feedback from all involved parties.

While not the answer to all your volunteer recruitment challenges, integrating family volunteers within your organization might provide an innovative solution to a current trend and a way to turn a challenge into an opportunity.





# **Tools to Support the Implementation of a Family Volunteering Program**

**Appendix 1: Assessing Readiness to Include Family Volunteers**

**Appendix 2: Some Volunteering Ideas for Families**

**Appendix 3: Position Description Template**

**Appendix 4: Risk Assessment Template**

**Appendix 5: Family Volunteer Group Self-evaluation**

**Appendix 6: Resources and Links**

## APPENDIX 1: ASSESSING READINESS TO INCLUDE FAMILY VOLUNTEERS

(Adapted from Family Volunteering: The Ties That Bind)<sup>8</sup>

PLANNING ELEMENTS	Currently in place to a large degree	Currently in place to some degree	Currently not being done	Actions to follow
one-time seasonal events				
ongoing programs				
family volunteer component				
policy adaptations to implement family volunteering				
insurance that covers risks in using volunteers				
support from board of directors				
learning program for staff and administration				
staff orientation on the best ways to actively involve volunteers in programs and projects				
adequate volunteer supervision and direction needed to do the job properly				
flexibility to waive age requirements if a child is accompanied by an adult				
confidentiality agreement requirement from volunteers				

<sup>8</sup> Kristen Porritt, *Family Volunteering: The Ties That Bind, An Introduction to Preparing your Agency for Family Volunteers* (Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage, 1995) p. 18.

<b>RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT</b>	<b>Currently in place to a large degree</b>	<b>Currently in place to some degree</b>	<b>Currently not being done</b>	<b>Actions to follow</b>
recruit family volunteers				
actively recruit from schools, community centres, corporations or faith-based organizations				
actively recruit from culturally diverse areas				
actively recruit from the population with physical challenges				
actively recruit from the senior population				
actively recruit young people				
have positions suitable for child or youth volunteers				
need to develop position descriptions for family volunteers				
meet the volunteers' need for flexible working arrangements				
have cross-generation volunteering opportunities				
include families in leadership roles, such as boards or advisory groups				

<b>ORIENTATION AND TRAINING</b>	<b>Currently in place to a large degree</b>	<b>Currently in place to some degree</b>	<b>Currently not being done</b>	<b>Actions to follow</b>
provide orientation and training for all volunteers				
provide orientation specifically for family volunteers				
have orientation and training material sensitive to populations that are culturally diverse or cross generational lines				
provide volunteer information packages to all new volunteers				
need to develop information packages especially for family volunteers				
ensure that adequate and continuing 'on-the-job' training is provided				

<b>RECOGNITION AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>Currently in place to a large degree</b>	<b>Currently in place to some degree</b>	<b>Currently not being done</b>	<b>Actions to follow</b>
provide recognition to volunteers				
provide recognition to family group volunteers				
allow volunteers an opportunity to give feedback				
ask volunteers for input				
evaluate volunteers' performance				

<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>Currently in place to a large degree</b>	<b>Currently in place to some degree</b>	<b>Currently not being done</b>	<b>Actions to follow</b>
document volunteer numbers and time contributions				
update position descriptions				
document family statistics and relationship of the family participants				

## APPENDIX 2: SOME VOLUNTEERING IDEAS FOR FAMILIES

(Adapted from *Family Volunteering: The Ties That Bind*)<sup>9</sup>

Among the activities that families can take part in are helping older people, programs for children and young people, church groups, sports and school programs, environmental projects, and aid to the homeless. Following is a list of areas that can easily accommodate family groups as volunteers. Many of these activities could be undertaken by a single volunteer, but family participation adds support and numbers, especially in highly emotional areas like reading to terminally ill patients or working with disabled children.

- Helping in a hospital gift shop
- Visiting the elderly
- Organizing a fundraiser or a food drive
- Participating in a fundraiser
- Day camp helper
- Team driver
- Assistant at a zoo or animal shelter
- Host volunteer for other people or families
- Surrogate family for developmentally disabled people
- Inviting a housebound elderly person in for lunch or dinner
- Shopping for a housebound person
- Bringing a family pet to a nursing home
- Family pen pal
- Helping with yard work
- Special Olympics
- Donating clothing or toys
- Organizing an after-school program
- Cleaning up the environment
- Helping at a vacation bible school
- Teaching life skills
- Befriending a street youth
- Helping at a shelter or soup kitchen
- Starting a community newspaper
- Writing for a community newspaper
- Organizing a street dance
- Helping at a therapeutic horse ranch for people with developmental disabilities
- Acting as a co-Big Brother/Sister
- Starting a breakfast club
- Painting or making repairs to a hostel or mission
- Spring cleaning at a nonprofit agency
- Organizing a community closet-cleaning day
- Planting a garden at a shelter
- Putting on a musical/play/puppet show
- Organizing a coalition with other families on an important community issue
- Family tutoring another family
- Befriending an out-of-town family with a child in hospital nearby
- Helping at a museum
- Reading to terminally ill patients
- Leading school groups
- Delivering Meals-on-Wheels
- Helping at a food bank
- Helping with Christmas hampers
- Family outings with mentally or physically challenged people
- Helping at daycares
- Organizing parties at a shelter
- Stuffing envelopes
- Forming a family council
- Taking part in cross-generation activities
- Teaching crafts classes
- Building a home (Habitat for Humanity)
- Teaching kids to swim
- Organizing a community garden or play area on an unused plot of land
- Running a soda shop with teens to raise funds for other teens
- Building equipment for a playground
- Supporting new Canadians
- Planting trees
- Staffing a concession booth
- Selling raffle tickets

<sup>9</sup> Kristen Porritt, *Family Volunteering: The Ties That Bind, An Introduction to Preparing your Agency for Family Volunteers* (Ottawa: Department of Canadian Heritage, 1995) p. 11.

### APPENDIX 3: POSITION DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

(Source: A Matter of Design: Job design theory and application to the voluntary sector)<sup>10</sup>

<b>Assignment</b>	
<b>Purpose</b>	
<b>Tasks</b>	
<b>Time commitment</b>	
<b>Firm vs. flexible time</b>	
<b>Skill requirements</b>	
<b>Job</b>	
<b>Training and skill development</b>	
<b>Supervision</b>	
<b>Authority/decision making</b>	
<b>Supporting policies</b>	
<b>Working conditions</b>	
<b>Benefits</b>	
<b>Agreement/approval</b>	
Family Volunteer Rep's Signature  Date	Supervisor's Signature  Date

<sup>10</sup> Volunteer Canada, *A Matter of Design: Job design theory and application for the voluntary sector* (Ottawa: Volunteer Canada, 2001) p. 43.

### **Explanation of the position description template <sup>11</sup>**

**Assignment:** What do you want done? Give it a title. You can always go back and change the title to something that more clearly reflects the task when you have fully defined it, but for now, giving it a name helps give you focus.

**Purpose of Assignment:** What do you need accomplished and why? Think short-term and also long-term. Most activities are not one-shot; they also reflect on your organization one way or another and can have a long-term effect.

**Tasks:** The individual activities that combine to create this position. List everything that you think is part of the job (or assignment) you need to be done.

**Time Commitment:** Don't underestimate. Consult with anyone who has done the task before. If you give this to a volunteer with an unrealistic time line, it won't get done and the volunteer will feel either embarrassed or abused.

**Firm vs. Flextime:** Are there hours that absolutely must be covered or can this be done at the volunteer's own time and pace? Also consider duration. Is this a job that will be very intense for three months or are you looking for someone who can make a regular commitment over two years?

**Skill Requirements:** Consider both hard skills and soft skills. Is there equipment to run or graphics to be designed? Will the volunteer be working with others, have to attend many meetings or make oral presentations?

**Training and Skill Development:** Who is going to teach this volunteer how to do the task assigned? Is there someone around who has done it before? Will you provide a course? Is there a manual? What skills will the volunteer gain by working in the office? Will any additional training or "professional development" be provided?

**Supervision:** Your volunteers deserve to know to whom they answer. If two different people give them instruction, how do they know which to respond to first? The reporting system must be clear and they must also know that they will be evaluated and on what basis they will be evaluated. This is especially important when it comes to positions in which the volunteer must be screened.

**Authority/Decision Making:** Imagine yourself going into a new office – would you know automatically what you can and can't do? Too often, we don't give volunteers clear guidelines. Decide now what they can handle in terms of money, authority, speaking for the organization etc.

**Supporting Policies:** These can be either internal (bylaws or a volunteer manual, for example) or external (such as government imposed non-smoking policy or Health and Welfare standards).



**Working Conditions:** Establish where the volunteer will be working: inside, outside, in a shared office, out in the field or going door-to-door in the community. List whatever applies. Physical conditions should take into account special footwear needs, building accessibility, physical strength required for the job, manual dexterity or the ability to handle heights, to name just a few. Be sure to list any special equipment provided.

**Benefits:** What is in it for the volunteer? Will the volunteer be able to attend concerts of the symphony group for which he is volunteering? Will he/she be invited to the Christmas party? Is parking or bus fare provided?

**Agreement/Approval:** When you have found the volunteer you are looking for – the person who has or can acquire the skills and meets all, or at least most of these conditions – get it in writing. The very act of signing the agreement can strengthen the commitment for the volunteer. Having a supervisor’s signature also gives the volunteer some degree of assurance that the organization will meet its commitment to him or her as well. We all like to see it on paper!

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, 42.

## APPENDIX 4: RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

(Source: *Risk Management by Position Design: A guide for community support organizations in Ontario*) <sup>12</sup>

Probability rating	Occurrence
LOW	Occurs rarely
MEDIUM	Occurs in some situations
HIGH	Occurs in all or most situations

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Risk :Activity		Probability of Occurrence		
Risk Category	Risk Factors in Position	L	M	H
<b>Access to Property</b>	has access to personal property or money of persons served			
	involves access to personal information			
	involves handling funds of the organization or of the persons served			
	involves access to property of the organization			
	has a perceived or actual level of authority (i.e. enters into agreements on behalf of the organization)			
<b>Risk Category Column Totals</b>				

<sup>12</sup> Reva Cooper, *Risk Management by Position Design: A guide for community support organizations in Ontario* (Ottawa: Volunteer Canada, 2002) p. 35.

Risk :Setting		Probability of Occurrence		
Risk Category	Risk Factors in Position	L	M	H
<b>Degree of Isolation</b>	involves being alone with persons served			
	involves activities that are off-site (for example, road trips, parties)			
	involves visits in private homes			
	involves office, meeting room or activity-room doors with no windows			
	involves unpredictable or remote setting			
<b>Risk Category Column Totals</b>				

Risk :Activity		Probability of Occurrence		
Risk Category	Risk Factors in Position	L	M	H
<b>Degree of Physical Contact</b>	involves demonstrating a skill to persons served			
	involves touching persons served			
	provides a personal service (for example, personal care, assistance with mobility)			
	involves potential for contact with bodily fluids or disease			
	boundaries for appropriate behaviour/code or conduct are provided			
<b>Risk Category Column Totals</b>				

Risk :Activity		Probability of Occurrence		
Risk Category	Risk Factors in Position	L	M	H
<b>Degree of Physical Demands</b>	requires extreme physical exertion, strength or endurance			
	requires specialized physical abilities or skills			
	involves exposure to extreme weather conditions or dangerous settings			
	predisposes to stress or burnout			
	requires travel to and from work site locations			
<b>Risk Category Column Totals</b>				

Risk :Activity		Probability of Occurrence		
Risk Category	Risk Factors in Position	L	M	H
<b>Degree of Inherent Risk</b>	involves contact with unfamiliar persons			
	involves operating or handling potentially dangerous equipment (for example, motor vehicle) or other hazards (for example, handling hot food or drinks, exposure to loud noise)			
	increases likelihood of personal, physical, mental injury (for example, workplace injury, auto-incident, accusations from persons served) or property damage (for example, theft or damage of personal property)			
	does not have insurance coverage			
	does not provide policies, procedures, training or other “refresher” type training			
<b>Risk Category Column Totals</b>				

Risk :Activity		Probability of Occurrence		
Risk Category	Risk Factors in Position	L	M	H
<b>Skills and Knowledge Required</b>	requires specific knowledge or service eligibility requirements			
	requires specific skills (for example, computer, teaching, etc.)			
	requires specific qualifications (for example, certificates, degrees, etc.)			
	requires judgment to perform task competently			
	requires related experience			
<b>Risk Category Column Totals</b>				

Risk :Activity		Probability of Occurrence		
Risk Category	Risk Factors in Position	L	M	H
<b>Degree of Supervision</b>	involves unsupervised contact with persons served			
	does not receive feedback on performance			
	does not have activities observed or monitored			
	does not involve documenting or record keeping (meetings, activities, incidents, reports, logs, record of complaints)			
	does not have a sufficient number of trained volunteers or staff to supervise activities			
<b>Risk Category Column Totals</b>				

Risk :Activity		Probability of Occurrence		
Risk Category	Risk Factors in Position	L	M	H
<b>Degree of Trust</b>	involves developing close, personal long-term relationships with persons served			
	involves transporting persons served			
	involves one or more of the following: one-to-one supervision of persons served (overnight or out-of-town activities), befriending or spending a lot of time with persons served, counseling, advising or offering guidance to persons served			
	contributes to making career or other important decisions regarding future of persons served			
	involves access to confidential information			
	<b>Risk Category Column Totals</b>			

Determine how you can manage the risks (eliminate the risk, modify the activity, transfer the liability or assume the risk).

Make decisions on the selection of screening steps for individual volunteer positions based on the completed assessment, and re-assess the risks in the position regularly.

**APPENDIX 5: FAMILY VOLUNTEER GROUP SELF-EVALUATION**

Our three main goals for this volunteer position are:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Strengths we bring to the position: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Skills we would like to develop/things we'd like to learn: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who or what helped us to achieve our goals: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

New skills we have learned: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who or what helped us to acquire skills: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Areas where we have had difficulty: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Areas/skills that we feel need improvement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What we have learned from this volunteer position: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We'd like to continue in this role \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We'd like to explore other opportunities within the organization \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Family Volunteer Group Rep's Signature

## **APPENDIX 6: RESOURCES AND LINKS**

### **RESOURCES – RECRUITING AND MANAGING DIVERSITY**

#### **Family Volunteering: A Discussion Paper**

This discussion paper examines family volunteering in Canada by presenting the key issues and opportunities for the voluntary sector.

#### **Family Volunteering: The Final Report**

This exploratory work on family volunteering in Canada offers insight into how groups of people who may not otherwise be able to incorporate volunteering into their lives can now get involved.

Both resources can be downloaded at [www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/resources.php?display=3,0,3#family](http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/resources.php?display=3,0,3#family).

#### **Volunteer Connections: Creating an accessible and inclusive environment**

Accessibility can be created through the cultural and physical environment of voluntary organizations. Guide your organization through an in-depth examination of the issues and barriers related to involving people with disabilities as volunteers. Offering useful information, practical tips and advice, this manual provides a framework to help organizations create an accessible and welcoming workplace. It also assists organizations in developing partnerships with organizations that serve the disability community.

Download this resource at [www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/resources.php?display=3,0,3#accessible](http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/resources.php?display=3,0,3#accessible).

#### **Volunteer Connections: New strategies for involving older adults**

Once again, Baby Boomers are poised to change the world. Over the next five years, Canada's population of older adults will triple in number. By 2006, Canadians over 50 will be almost 15 million strong. For a manager of volunteer resources, this population shift presents unique opportunities and challenges. With the experience and expectations of Baby Boomers in mind, this guide outlines dynamic, new strategies to recruit and retain older adults volunteers.

Download this resource at [www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/resources.php?display=3,0,3#older](http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/resources.php?display=3,0,3#older).



### **Volunteer Connections: New strategies for involving youth**

Along with their enthusiasm and energy, youth bring a fresh perspective to volunteering. Young people are looking for new experiences and new skills. Managers of volunteer programs can be hard-pressed to meet the demand for interesting youth-specific volunteer positions with the appropriate level of oversight and opportunity. This guide offers practical suggestions for engaging youth in your organization for the benefit of the volunteer, the organization and the community.

Download this resource at [www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/resources.php?display=3,0,3#youth](http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-management/resources.php?display=3,0,3#youth).

### **Children as Volunteers**

Explore how to integrate volunteers under the age of 14 into an existing adult volunteer program: multi-age teams, designing work, preparing the agency, liaising with schools, and legal issues.

Download this resource at [www.energizeinc.com/xmlEi/top.php](http://www.energizeinc.com/xmlEi/top.php).

### **Stronger Together – Recruiting and Working with Ethno-cultural Volunteers**

This manual looks at ways to help your organization, its staff and its volunteers become more sensitive and responsive to ethnic minority volunteers. We won't be telling you how you can make these new volunteers act more like your old volunteers. We will, however, suggest how your organization can adapt to the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of the community you serve, and become part of the multicultural reality that is Canada today.

Download this resource at [www.nald.ca/fulltext/heritage/ComPartnE/Strongr1.htm](http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/heritage/ComPartnE/Strongr1.htm).

### **Family Volunteering: The Ties That Bind, An Introduction to Preparing Your Agency for Family Volunteers**

The report is intended to guide agencies through the process of involving family groups in programs and projects. We hope agencies that already use this excellent source of volunteers will also find useful suggestions to support their programs. We encourage them to spread the word about family volunteering.

Download this resource at [www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/pdfdocs/Family.pdf](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/pdfdocs/Family.pdf)

## **RESOURCES - OTHER**

### **The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement**

Volunteers and the voluntary sector play a vital role in Canadian society. Volunteers across Canada are engaged in delivering services and programs that improve and enhance the life of the community. While Canadians are proud of this contribution, there has never been a clear articulation of the important values and benefits received from volunteer involvement. Broadly defined, a code can provide a framework for decision making by an organization. The code can specify organizational values, guiding principles and the specific rules or standards that align with these values. It can help an organization make decisions based on the organization's values and principles. The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement is designed to present a setting in which organizations can discuss how their volunteers are engaged and supported.

Download this resource at [www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/resource-eval/index.php?resource=pdf/CodeEng.pdf](http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/resource-eval/index.php?resource=pdf/CodeEng.pdf).

### **Volunteer Management Audit: The Canadian Code**

This resource is a tool for non-profit and charitable organizations to assess their volunteer resources program. This audit tool is composed of seven sections, that provide important information about volunteer involvement and management practices within your organization.

Download this resource at [www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/can-code/can-code.php?display=3,0,1](http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/can-code/can-code.php?display=3,0,1).

### **Screening: Volunteer Canada's Safe Steps Screening Program**

Following completion of this workbook, you will have a thorough knowledge of the screening process and how it applies specifically to your organization. Completing the exercises, reflecting on the current practices of your organization and using the information learned in the workbook will allow you to analyze the risk in your organization and take steps to reduce that risk. You will learn about the 10-step screening process and how to use a combination of those steps in different situations to ensure, to the best of your ability, the safety of the participants and to protect your organization and volunteers.

Download this resource at [www.volunteer.ca/screening](http://www.volunteer.ca/screening).

### **A Matter of Design: Job design theory and application to the voluntary sector**

The role of volunteering has changed and the voluntary sector faces many challenges: changing demographics, changing expectations of volunteers; concerns of risk management; and a rethinking of governance theory. Volunteers have changed—they have less time to give and greater skills to offer. By adapting learnings from a wealth of human resources and corporate theory, A Matter of Design provides an exciting new perspective on engaging volunteers. By challenging organizations to fundamentally rethink the involvement of volunteers, starting with an analysis of mission and moving through the elements of volunteer involvement, this thought-provoking resource examines how to create volunteer opportunities that both help the organization fulfill its mandate and are satisfying for volunteers. The manual will give you the theory, and then walk you through the process, using helpful templates and examples of small, medium and large voluntary organizations.

Download this resource at [www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/MatterofDesignEng.pdf](http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/MatterofDesignEng.pdf)

### **LINKS – ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **Volunteer Canada**

[www.volunteer.ca/volunteercanada](http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteercanada)

#### **Volunteer Centres in Canada**

[www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-centres/locations.php?display=2,5,2](http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/content/vol-centres/locations.php?display=2,5,2)

### **LINKS – VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT RESOURCES**

#### **Canada's site for information on volunteering Volunteer Canada**

[www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/iwork.php?display=3](http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/iwork.php?display=3)

#### **Association for Volunteer Administration**

[www.avaintl.org](http://www.avaintl.org)

#### **Serviceleader.org: for volunteer managers**

[www.serviceleader.org/new/managers/index.php](http://www.serviceleader.org/new/managers/index.php)

## **LINKS – FAMILY VOLUNTEERING WEBSITES**

**Families Volunteering Together – Volunteer Calgary**  
[www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca/families/index.htm](http://www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca/families/index.htm)

**Family Volunteers, Volunteer Kingston**  
[www.volunteerkingston.ca/family.htm](http://www.volunteerkingston.ca/family.htm)

**Points of Light Foundation, Family Matters Program**  
[www.pointsoflight.org/organizations/engage\\_families.cfm](http://www.pointsoflight.org/organizations/engage_families.cfm)

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