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# Canadian Journal of Volunteer Resources Management

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PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

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## EDITORIAL

In the 1990s while I was employed as a manager in a health care facility, departments and organizations established partnerships and alliances to help contain spiraling costs. The alliances were both an opportunity and a challenge. Some succeeded; some did not.

When I moved into the voluntary sector, I noted that partnerships, though sometimes motivated by economic factors, were also voluntary. They were opportunities to share successes, to create resources and to achieve a goal of mutual interest and benefit to participants.

In this issue, Ruth MacKenzie articulates one of Volunteer Canada's current values – collaboration – and discusses the important partnerships that our national voluntary organization fosters.

Tammy Stadt outlines opportunities for partnerships within local Associations of Volunteer Administrators. Lorraine McGrattan discusses a PAVR-O initiative to strengthen links with local Associations of Volunteer Administrators.

Trevor Krahn illustrates the building of partnerships between the corporate sector and the not-for-profit sector through the actual building of a clubhouse.

The Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations was founded because of “the need for a strong and cohesive perspective for the Calgary voluntary sector on cross-cutting policy issues.” Glenda Blissett outlines the nature of its work and the partnerships and collaboration developed as a result.

Brian Tardif discusses the experience of partnering with other agencies to share space and provides tips for others considering this type of collaboration.

The Peer Expert column explores the opportunities and the challenges of a collaborative effort by administrators of volunteer resources in five health care organizations to develop a “Volunteer Resources Balanced Scorecard.”

Paula Speevak-Sladowski provides a comprehensive review of the resource *Alliances, Coalition and Partnerships: Building Collaborative Organizations*.

The editorial team provides an overview of its history, objectives and current operational structure, as authored by Chris Jarvis, the editorial team's resident historian, reminding us of one of the main objectives of the Journal which is “to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and to encourage networking among Canadian managers of volunteer resources”. We enjoy working together, with contributors from across the country, to share new resources and ideas from the field, with you our readers. We hope this issue will inspire you to build some new alliances within your own communities and networks.

Joan Wyatt

## **VOLUNTEER CANADA: VALUING PARTNERSHIPS**

by Ruth MacKenzie

This past year Volunteer Canada celebrated its thirtieth anniversary, and what a year it was! The elimination of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI) is widely known within the voluntary sector, though there may be less awareness of the impact it had on Volunteer Canada. To recapitulate, the result was a loss of 85 per cent of our funding and the downsizing of our staff from 27 to seven. Right on the heels of these circumstances, we faced further organizational change as we searched to replace our president, who departed in April to continue her career with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada.

Today, a revitalized Volunteer Canada has regrouped and has moved forward, leaving the elimination of CVI behind us. I am absolutely honoured to be the new president of Volunteer Canada, an organization with a mission that resonates so deeply with me. With a strong new team by my side, I am thrilled to play a role in bringing that mission into the next phase of the organization.

To build on and strengthen our forward-looking approach to the organization, the Board of Directors of Volunteer Canada recently collaborated in some strategic discussions. We also asked our partners and stakeholders what they thought of Volunteer Canada. Dialogue revolved around what we have done well and what we can improve, where we currently stand and where we want to go. The results of these discussions will ultimately enable us to better drive our mission: to be the leader in Canada, promoting the role and value of volunteering in a civil society.

Engagement of its citizens within their communities is what defines Canada and makes it the country that it is. Volunteering is an important component of that and we believe that Volunteer Canada has a significant role to play in helping to ensure that volunteering is sustainable and strong. The leadership role of Volunteer Canada is critical as we aim to be one step ahead for all who work with volunteers. We strive to support you with knowledge and intelligence and to provide you with tools and “think pieces” that help you prepare for what is around the corner for volunteering in Canada. It is all about partnerships and alliances.

Until recently, Volunteer Canada had but three core organizational values: Integrity, Diversity and Innovation. In February 2008, we adopted a fourth value: Collaboration. This is explained further with the following statement: “We

create and seek out opportunities for partnerships and alliances, recognizing that volunteerism intersects with all segments of society”.

That is the beauty of volunteering. It is not any one thing; it does not happen in any one place. It spans, traverses and overlaps all sectors, all communities, all cultures and all people: this is both the challenge and the opportunity for Volunteer Canada. The challenge because it is hard to pin down, the opportunity because it means we do not have to do it alone. We need others to take what we do and make it work with everyone to strengthen volunteerism and to influence those who make decisions that impact volunteerism.

One of the really exciting elements of working in partnership with others on a shared goal or initiative is the opportunity for “blue sky thinking”. Multiple players enhance it, each of whom bring their own unique perspective. As partnerships and collaborations have become a bit of a buzz concept in our sector over the last ten-or-so years, funders can jump on board and play a significant role in driving the movement. Organizations often find that they are involved in so many multilateral initiatives that they have little time left to focus on their own specific mission. By collaborating, the end result can be so much richer with so much more depth. Determining criteria for when to say yes and when to say no and carefully assessing that criteria for each potential partnership is important.

When I think of those criteria for Volunteer Canada, volunteer centres come to mind first and foremost. Volunteer Canada, formerly the Canadian Association of Volunteer Bureaux and Centres, was created by volunteer centres to be their national organization. In the mid-1990s the mandate expanded beyond volunteer centres to the national lens on volunteerism. The Canada Volunteerism Initiative further diluted the relationship as Local Networks were established across the country. Volunteer centres played an integral role in those Local Networks, but the network of volunteer centres themselves became less of a priority with Volunteer Canada. We recognize this fact, own it and want to change it. I believe that a volunteer centre can be one of the most important organizations in a community and I want Volunteer Canada to do what it can to see volunteer centres recognized for that potential.

It is time to bring volunteer centres closer into the fold at Volunteer Canada so that collectively we can be clear on what needs to happen to enhance volunteerism in Canada and so that we can work together to achieve it. We need to identify issues that are pertinent and real to volunteer centres, enabling them to be in a position of relevance to their community. We also have an opportunity to ensure the network exists and is strong so that individual volunteer centres can see themselves beyond their own communities and as part of something bigger. In turn, capacity can be defined as network capacity, rather than addressing individual challenges.

Partnerships with corporate Canada are increasingly on the mind of those who work

in the sector and with volunteers. As corporate social responsibility expands and gains profile, businesses are increasingly looking to the volunteer engagement of their employees as an important component. Volunteer Canada has led the establishment of the Corporate Council on Volunteering to drive and strengthen the employer-supported volunteering agenda. The next couple of years will see the work of the Council focus on how to further bridge the gap between voluntary and corporate sectors through the establishment of a Centre for Excellence in Employer-Supported Volunteerism. We believe much can be done to ensure a solid understanding of each other's reality, allowing non-profits to maximize the corporate contributions of volunteer hours and to make sure that businesses achieve their own goals when their employees are out in the community volunteering.

We cannot talk about partnerships in the voluntary sector without speaking of government. All levels of government have a role to play in ensuring healthy volunteerism in communities across the country. For us at Volunteer Canada, our focus will continue to be primarily at the federal level. The elimination of the CVI brought the end of any articulated oversight specific to volunteerism within the federal government. We want to get that back. But volunteerism speaks to the breadth of government and in our government relations work we will make connections with the decision-makers to ensure that volunteering is positioned to contribute to the goals of government and to civil society.

I could go on, but in concluding, one particular partnership warrants mention and that is with managers of volunteers and the Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR) as our national peer organization. As someone who comes from a volunteer administration background, this is of particular importance to me. Volunteerism in Canada cannot be strong without the determined leadership and positioning of those who are the front line contact for most volunteers. We will continue to pursue an alliance with CAVR, a group that recognizes our respective areas of expertise and potential collective impact.

It has been a busy year...another busy year in our 30-year history. With all of the recent changes, I know that Volunteer Canada has turned the corner and as we continue to look forward there is much more of a sense of what a year it is going to be!

*Ruth MacKenzie was named president of Volunteer Canada in July 2007. Ruth joined Volunteer Canada in 2001 and became a member of the senior management team in 2003 as Director of Programs and Operations. She directed the implementation of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, established a network with national voluntary organizations and provided leadership on relationships with volunteer centres and other partners and stakeholders.*

## **MAKING PARTNERSHIPS WORK FOR YOUR AVA**

by Tammy Stadt

The Barrie Association of Volunteer Administrators (BAVA) is made up of managers of volunteer resources whose role is to encourage fellow citizens to "play their part". We support each other while we make a difference within our volunteer services, our organizations and the community.

Our monthly meetings include sharing highlights of our volunteer services, discussing current issues and providing education on the management of volunteer resources. As we strengthened our knowledge and skills through these meetings, we realized over time that we could build on our sense of community to create further partnerships.

Three of our members had already partnered to share training for palliative care volunteers. Managers of volunteer resources from our local hospital, hospice and nursing home shared the work to provide ten weeks of training. Seven of the weeks were common training and the last three weeks were specific to each organization. The palliative care volunteers could be placed with one or all three organizations or they could follow an individual patient from home to hospital to nursing home for improved care.

After hearing of their success, we asked ourselves, where else could we partner? Some suggestions were sharing education and training, creating a directory of volunteers willing to volunteer for one-time events (such as special events or fundraising) and sharing our best practices, policies and procedures.

In 1999 the Ontario Government announced that high school students would require 40 hours of Community Service Learning in order to receive their diploma. The voluntary sector was ill-prepared for the influx of youth to be engaged within our organizations. Some of the struggles our members experienced included limitations for youth involvement within current organizational policies, parents pushing their kids towards their own volunteer passions and dealing with volunteers who did not really want to be involved. I received many panicked inquiring telephone calls from students. When I let them know that we accept students I could hear their relief. A few students told their stories which I refer to as the "ABCs of rejection" syndrome as they worked their way through the telephone book to find organizations that would accept them as volunteers. These stories scared me. Is Community Service Learning not meant to be meaningful for the student and the community as well as the organization?

Colin Thacker, author of *Volunteering in a Unionized Environment* and Manager of Volunteer Services at the Northeast Mental Health Centre in North Bay, Ontario, did his Masters of Education thesis on Community Service Learning. He prefers to look at the situation as an opportunity. "We have an opportunity under Ontario's initiative to have our young people become more appreciative of volunteering, what it has to

offer them, and what they can do to contribute to others in a meaningful way. We need to treat volunteers who surface from our educational program as volunteers, and they need to be part of the overall volunteer movement, not in a class by themselves".<sup>1</sup>

As the Chair of BAVA, I felt we needed to create a solution to give these students the best opportunities possible. As we shared stories about panicked students, demanding parents and lack of information and expectations from the school system, we realized that the primary need was education for all involved.

We started by partnering to create the BAVA Volunteer Opportunities Booklet, a directory for students listing the membership organizations, who we are, who we serve, the kind of opportunities available for students, our requirements such as minimum age, police check, references and our contact information. As a group we divided up the work of sharing information about our booklet with local school boards, guidance offices, parent councils, students and teachers.

After reviewing the booklet, it was found that we still needed to educate the students. One strategy was to host a volunteer fair in order to increase awareness of opportunities for students. Our local public library, which provides BAVA with a room for monthly meetings, provided space for the student volunteer fair. Each organization shared the cost of printing the directory. Almost 100 students turned out for our first event.

As the volunteer fair grew, it expanded to include all potential volunteers in our community while still maintaining an emphasis on engaging students. BAVA formed an Awareness Committee, which promotes volunteerism in our community, including an annual Volunteer Job Fair. The Awareness Committee increased partnerships with the private sector by obtaining sponsorships for space, refreshments and media for the event.

In the words of John Molson, "We are all members of a larger community which depends on everyone playing a part".<sup>2</sup> BAVA partnerships will help to ensure this continues to be true.

#### References:

1. Chatterton Luchuk, Louise. "Mandatory volunteering: What's in a name?" Retrieved February 23, 2008 from <http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/archive/acov/acov06/acov0607.html>
2. Molson, John (1825). Retrieved from <http://www.molson.com/community/index.php?lang=en>

#### Suggested Reading:

BAVA Volunteer Opportunities Booklet. Available by contacting the author at [tammy.stadt@bchc.ca](mailto:tammy.stadt@bchc.ca)

Volunteer Canada "Volunteering and Mandatory Community Service: Choice-Incentive-Coercion-Obligation" Retrieved February 23, 2008 from [http://volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/MCSDP\\_Views\\_Eng.pdf](http://volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/MCSDP_Views_Eng.pdf)

*Tammy Stadt is a Community Health Worker working at the Barrie Community Health Centre. Tammy is a member in good standing with PAVR-O, CAVR and the Barrie Association of Volunteer Administrators(BAVA) where she has provided leadership as Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Tammy is pending certification through CAVR. She is also a Regional Advisor for the Canadian Journal of Volunteer Resources Management.*

## PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES

by Lorraine McGrattan

Constructive and destructive comments regarding the Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources of Ontario (PAVR-O) were lingering at the local level. When the opportunity arose to represent all Associations of Volunteer Administrators (AVAs) as a PAVR-O board member, it seemed like a worthwhile endeavour.

The need to facilitate dialogue with AVA representatives throughout the province was evident. The barriers associated with the isolation of each AVA regarding best practice, the sharing of knowledge and resources and education of their membership on the current issues affecting volunteerism had to be overcome.

The goal was fueled by the vision of all the AVAs collaborating as one entity with the energy to influence volunteerism and resources to support it.

In early 2006, with financial resources from an anonymous donor, a newly formed group of 23 affiliates were led through the stages of team development: forming, storming, norming and performing.

Forming or getting started took some time. The AVA representatives needed to understand the purpose of bringing this group together. A full-day session to launch the relationship was planned. There was a workshop component to the day and plenty of lively conversation. The group talked about why the team was necessary, its purpose and the role of each member.

The affiliates get together twice a year for professional development, networking,

strategic planning and the sharing of resources. The expectation is that the representative will pass the knowledge on to their own AVA. So the representative's leadership was and still is integral to the success of this group.

Typically, storming is the stage of generating ideas and brainstorming, and before long we were on course and in the norming stage. With any partnership there are ground rules or agreements on success factors. For this group they also include commitment, regular communication, involvement and trust.

The stages slowly shifted from one to the next over a two-year period. We are just now mastering the norming stage and hoping to change gears to a progressive pace in the performing stage. Currently the group is moving ahead and making progress. As with any new initiative, the partnership between the AVA representative and PAVR-O requires minor adjustments and realignment along the way to create efficiencies and meet the needs of both partners.

The momentum of the AVA group may be adversely affected by the cyclical process of bringing in new affiliates to the group and bringing them up to speed on the mission, accomplishments and outstanding tasks of the group.

The AVA affiliates have also been fortunate to experience, on several occasions, the leadership of a consultant and trainer in the voluntary sector, Linda Graff. Her level of expertise has really inspired the group to take on meaningful initiatives by making significant changes in terms of advocacy and raising awareness. Linda, along with Paul Reed from Statistics Canada, share information on the website, CanadaWhoCares.ca. The website identifies the current state of volunteerism and they are challenging people to take action after listening to their campaign. They are activists for the profession and are really trying to get people in leadership positions to listen and provide the resources to make positive and supportive changes necessary to help our communities.

The AVAs met with Linda in the fall of 2007 and were really inspired to work collectively to initiate the desired change and new knowledge.

Some of the successes experienced with this new partnership are:

- sparking the interest of 23 AVAs and having them sign the affiliate agreement to partner with PAVR-O;
- understanding what each of the AVAs does and does not do to enhance its organization;
- networking and relationship-building;
- professional development;

- sector awareness and advocacy; and
- sharing of resources, workshops and especially knowledge.

There are some challenges that remain for future learning:

- The initial forming of the group required no fee but since PAVR-O implemented an affiliate membership rate the numbers have declined.
- AVA representatives are not communicating their roles and responsibilities to the incoming representative, therefore reverting to the forming stage.
- Projects or initiatives are identified but never take off, as the term for the representative at their AVA may be only one year. The commitment to see the project through is then not realized.

To conclude, any new partnership is a challenge. Establishing a relationship that is beneficial and worthwhile to all stakeholders is ongoing. PAVR-O is committed to working closely with all the AVAs in Ontario to enhance the voluntary sector. As a professional, it is necessary to work in partnership with groups that will help to further the profession and the abundant resources necessary to do the job right. Together PAVR-O and the AVAs can make positive changes to the voluntary sector and the broader community.

*Lorraine McGratton CVRM, is Manager of Volunteer Resources at Hamilton Health Sciences and current Vice-President of PAVR-O.*

## **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS, BUILDING CLUBHOUSES**

by Trevor Krahn

It was an abnormally warm day in October when we, 150 corporate volunteers, descended on the Thorncliffe Boys and Girls Club in Calgary. It was a perfect day to change into a pair of jeans and roll up my sleeves in a joint effort to bring some much-needed upgrades to the Clubhouse. I joined my colleagues in the corporate community, not only as Assistant Manager of Community Affairs of one of the partnering companies, but also as a volunteer ready to swing a hammer and lend a helping hand for the children of the community.

The daylong "extreme makeover" event was coordinated by the Corporate Council on Volunteering, a Volunteer Canada initiative that brings together the expertise and energy of over 20 national corporations to promote and enhance corporate volunteering practices and initiatives nationwide. Investors Group, my employer, is an active member of the Council and as such is helping to lead the

way in igniting a culture of employer-supported volunteerism.

The “build day” event in Calgary set the scene for similar efforts that continued throughout the week across the country in Montreal and Toronto.

Being somewhat new to the position in the Community Affairs division at that time, this volunteering event was one of my first opportunities to witness what our employees could accomplish during events such as this and to see what they were experiencing as volunteers. My company has a long history of not only giving back to the people and communities that have supported it through the years, but also of encouraging and challenging our friends in the corporate sector to join in giving back across the country. As I continue to encourage our volunteer initiative, it is also important for me to experience the impact volunteering can have on the community and on the individual corporate volunteer.

On site, I was assigned the task of team leader, guiding a group of enthusiastic volunteers in stripping and painting benches and tables, refitting carpeting and assembling furniture. These are tasks that would otherwise take a not-for-profit organization, short on staff, a considerable amount of time to complete. With the energetic team of volunteers I was assigned to, we accomplished all of our tasks in one day.

Around me, other teams were busy assembling cubbies for children’s backpacks, fixing the outdoor ramp that welcomes children every day and constructing custom-made park benches. Behind the scenes, team leads from The Home Depot Canada, Volunteer Canada and the Thorncliffe Boys and Girls Clubhouse were ensuring that safety precautions were met, tools and equipment were available and functioning, disposal was coordinated and media was kept at a safe distance from flying hammers. Collectively, we reached our objective of making the Club’s facilities more functional, clean, organized and safe for the children that use it daily.

As an appropriate launch to the new face of the Thorncliffe Boys and Girls Club, volunteers were joined by community leaders and a few of the families that use the club in a board-cutting ceremony at the end of the day. The children delivered a heart-felt thank you and the pride in the work we had accomplished that day was felt throughout the crowd. At times, even tears were shed.

When we walked away from the “extreme makeover build day”, t-shirts and jeans a little dirtier than when we first arrived, we left behind a new Clubhouse, with dramatically improved facilities indoors and out. I walked away knowing that I made a difference alongside my peers in the corporate community and appreciating what it truly means to volunteer. In addition, I gained a more

personal understanding of the employee volunteer initiative I am helping to deliver.

Allowing employees the time to give back to the community in which they work is a win-win-win situation. First and foremost, the community benefits from an increased number of active volunteers, the influx of skilled workers, support for needy individuals and groups and strengthened philanthropic donations. The company benefits from improved relations with community groups, the public and employees. It also helps to create a healthier economic and social environment and to improve employee morale, productivity and loyalty. And the employee – an individual like myself – benefits from acquiring new skills and enhanced confidence and gains new experiences for personal growth.

*Trevor Krahn is an Honours graduate from the Business Administration program at Red River College in Winnipeg, MB. He began working with Investors Group in 2000 and contributed to several departments before embarking on the role of managing the Community Investment Program. Trevor is currently working towards a Certificate in Corporate Community Involvement through Boston College.*

## **THE CALGARY CHAMBER OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS: A MODEL OF COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

by Glenda Blissett

Working together with business and government to build a strong, vibrant community, the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO) is a registered charity seeking to strengthen Calgary’s diverse voluntary sector and provide leadership and representation on cross-cutting matters impacting the sector as a whole. It is focused on long-term change as well as immediate impact. Not specific to one community, cause or client, CCVO works to support its more than 380 members and the non-profit sector as a whole. Through work in public policy and government relations, research and resources, educational and knowledge-sharing events, and membership engagement, CCVO helps the sector to thrive.

### **A Cohesive Perspective Emerges**

The emergence of CCVO corresponded to a momentum in Calgary and across Canada to build cohesion in the voluntary sector.

*Individual charities tend to struggle in their separate silos for survival,*

*with little knowledge of, or time and energy for the sectoral issues they have in common. For many the issue is organizational survival ... there is a need for them to look at the meta-level.*

- Bob Wyatt

Executive Director

The Muttart Foundation

([http://www.pfc.ca/files/Grant\\_Stories\\_muttart\\_EN.pdf](http://www.pfc.ca/files/Grant_Stories_muttart_EN.pdf))

After a renewed interest in the voluntary sector fostered by the federal commitment to the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI), an extensive community consultation process confirmed the need for a strong and cohesive perspective for the Calgary voluntary sector on cross-cutting policy issues. Local leaders recognized that non-profit agencies were directly affected by government policy and regulatory decision, yet there was little capacity or opportunity to engage in policy dialogue or to address cross-sectoral issues. There was also a lack of data about the sector or research on common issues. At the same time, organizations were being submerged in a flood of information, without the time or resources to cull the relevant pieces.

CCVO was created in March 2004 to provide leadership on cross-cutting policy issues, to connect Calgary's non-profit organizations to these important resources and to help build a common perspective for the sector.

### **The Voluntary Chamber Model Delivers Impact**

Today, CCVO functions similarly to a Chamber of Commerce by providing research, education and a vehicle for consultation and public policy development on issues of concern to the voluntary sector. With the support of our members, volunteers and partners, we address the broad issues that affect the voluntary sector by:

- **Providing leadership on emerging policy matters** at the municipal, provincial and federal level on cross-sectoral issues such as human resources, funding, insurance and legislative change;
- **Partnering and collaborating** with a number of local, provincial and national organizations and governments to address the key policy issues in the sector. Some examples of current partnerships and collaboration include: the United Way of Calgary on the Calgary HR Initiative; the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations on the development of the Alberta Voluntary Sector Workforce Strategy; the Alberta Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Initiative (ANVSI), a collaboration between the Alberta Government and Voluntary Sector leaders that will help address current and future challenges; a Canada Revenue Agency project with the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks; and the Alberta Voluntary Sector Insurance Council;

- **Engaging members of the sector** to create a dialogue about the issues that have a broad impact on non-profit and charitable organizations. CCVO provides an opportunity for members of the voluntary sector, public sector and private sector to network and learn about key issues affecting the voluntary sector through seminars, presentations, events and membership surveys;

- **Promoting an awareness and understanding of the sector** by championing the role and value of the voluntary sector and promoting dialogue with governments, the private sector and the community;

- **Acting as a clearinghouse of information and resources** for and about the sector, through a website, emails, electronic bulletins, newsletters, briefings, annual reports, and articles, and

- **Conducting and disseminating research** to inform and guide our work and the work of our members on key issues such as funding, insurance, human resources and legislative change.

*Our goals are to ensure that non-profit organizations are engaged in decisions that affect the quality of life in our city and to support those organizations so they can continue to provide the level of service we expect and value in Calgary.*

- Katherine Van Kooy  
President and CEO  
CCVO

### **The Measures of Success**

Much of our focus is on long-term sector-building work. CCVO continues to comment on government budgets and programs. CCVO provides submissions on cross-cutting initiatives and works with government officials. Furthermore, CCVO participates in collaborative initiatives such as the Alberta Nonprofit Voluntary Sector Initiative (ANVSI) to ensure non-profit views and challenges are accurately and consistently presented.

*CCVO recognizes [our diversity]. It provides us, for the first time, with a much needed forum for connection, discussion and the development of strategic solutions to our common challenges.*

- Marnie Schaetti  
Former Executive Director  
Literacy Alberta

Major successes often come through a series of smaller "wins". Having just celebrated our fourth anniversary, CCVO is now seeing these wins add up in powerful ways. One of the measures of CCVO's success is the increasing number of calls received from government and other organizations. More and more, CCVO is being invited to the table and recognized for providing a credible, whole-sector view. After much time spent posing questions,



offering information and starting conversations, we are now being called on for our advice and perspective.

At the same time, CCVO's more immediate efforts and resources are gaining momentum and support. Based on 2007 membership survey results, event evaluations, website statistics and other feedback, CCVO's efforts to inform, educate and give voice to the sector are valued. In the past year alone, around 2,000 people have received (and forwarded to many other people) relevant news, research and resources through CCVO's free bi-weekly electronic bulletins. In addition, more than 500 participants have taken part in nine educational sessions and the traffic on the Online Job Centre has doubled to over 2,000 hits per month, viewing an average of 35 position openings in the voluntary sector. As a result, 90% of CCVO members said they would recommend CCVO membership to others and membership has grown 40% in just two years to over 380 members.

### **Going Forward**

In the current strategic plan, the Board of Directors has confirmed and extended CCVO's current strategic directions.

Going forward, top priorities for the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations will be to continue to develop its role as a leader on policy issues that affect Calgary's voluntary sector, raise its public profile, strategically grow its membership and offer many of the programs and services on which it has built its reputation.

*Glenda Blissett is the Communications Advisor for the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. She previously held positions at the National Kidney Foundation of Canada and was, most recently, Manager, Client Relations, and Manager, Programs for Calgary's CentrePoint Non-Profit Management.*

## **A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP - FROM VISION TO REALITY**

by Brian Tardif

As the result of a successful partnership, 1 Community Place has been the home of three Ottawa-based non-profit voluntary sector agencies since December 2000. Bringing this partnership to reality was an experience that required focus on a clear vision, unwavering commitment, willingness to embrace risk, comfort with a degree of uncertainty, the need for mutual respect and enormous community support.

While this initiative took about three years to come to fruition, the vision for this initiative started some 13 years earlier with different partners. Initially, Citizen Advocacy, Family Services à la famille Ottawa, Big Sisters of Ottawa and the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre were collaborating on a vision to co-locate in a jointly owned building. While the vision was considered to be sound by a range of funders and other community supporters, securing a commitment from our respective Boards of Directors and funders proved to be elusive. The result of this early initiative was that the four organizations did co-locate together for a period of time under one roof in a rented facility. This experience provided an opportunity to learn more about the realities of co-locating and sharing space, equipment and services. As the expiry date for the 10-year lease neared, the original vision was revived but with a change in partners since the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre had purchased its own building and Volunteer Ottawa had moved into this shared, rented space.

Now a partnership of four - Citizen Advocacy, Family Services à la famille Ottawa, Big Sisters of Ottawa and Volunteer Ottawa- a joint agency committee was established comprised of the Executive Director and one board member from each organization. We began to articulate a clear vision and realized how important it was to have a participatory model of decision-making and the need for a Project Manager to help develop a sound business case. A successful proposal for start-up funds from the Ontario Trillium Foundation enabled us to secure the services of a Project Manager who was instrumental in helping us to develop a solid business case, to build support for our vision among our boards and staff and to engage community leaders as champions.

Developing the vision proved to be the easier element of the process. When the search for property to purchase was underway, the realities began to register with the partners. There was increasing recognition of the requirement for an investment of financial resources, staff and board resources, of the inherent risks of any undertaking of this nature and of the need for participating members to bring authority to make timely decisions. The partnership changed again when two partners determined that the risks were too great and the timing was not right for them to move towards a shared purchased property model. This left Citizen Advocacy and Family Services a la famille Ottawa to persevere. The search for a new partner began and shortly thereafter, Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services joined the partnership. The result, a partnering of two medium-sized and one small-sized organization was viewed as sufficient to move forward. While we believed that there was room for others, we also believed that our vision needed to be modified to reflect both short-term and longer-term needs of each partner. We believed that purchasing a building that could accommodate tenants for a period of time would fill the gap in the

short-term and provide for longer-term growth potential.

The process continued to unfold and we quickly recognized the critical importance and constant effort required to balance mutual needs and responsibility while maintaining each organization's autonomy. It was important to understand each other's mandates, our respective strengths and how we could leverage these to benefit the partnership and contribute to the vision, rather than only our individual organizations.

By the spring of 2000, we had identified an ideal property. The building was purchased, gutted, and renovated. In December 2000, Citizen Advocacy of Ottawa, Family Services à la famille Ottawa and Rideauwood Addiction and Family Services successfully moved into their new home. The vision that was created 13 years earlier became a reality and in the spring of 2001, 1 Community Place officially opened. While we were fortunate to have sufficient space for tenants in the first five years, it became abundantly clear in the fourth year of occupying the building that each of the partners would require additional space. Since 2006, the partners of 1 Community Place have occupied all of the space. Late in 2007, we began discussions about the future evolution of our partnership and how it can remain current and responsive to the changing needs of each organization.

For others wanting to explore a similar path, consider the following critical elements of a successful partnership:

- Know what you want to achieve and articulate a vision.
- Consider if the timing and climate is right for your partnership.
- Build support for your vision.
- Possess an unwavering commitment.
- Embrace a willingness to risk.
- Understand the potential for a degree of uncertainty.
- Build a sound business case.
- Recognize the need to invest time and money.
- Understand your commonalities and your uniqueness.
- Incorporate participatory decision making into your process.
- Enjoy the results and prosper from the benefits.

*Brian Tardif is Executive Director of Citizen Advocacy of Ottawa-Carleton, a United Way supported agency, since 1985. He has held positions with a number of other United Way agencies including Executive Director of the Ottawa Distress Centre and Social Work positions with both the Distress Centre of Ottawa and Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Dartmouth-Halifax. He is a consultant, trainer and facilitator in the not-for-profit sector.*

## PEER EXPERT

by Christine Burych, Alison Caird, Joanne Fine-Schwebel, Michael Fliess and Heather Hardie

*"Do not covet your ideas. Give away everything you know and more will come back to you."*

-Paul Arden

This quote has been the motto of a group of professional administrators of volunteer resources who decided they wanted to change how volunteer contribution is measured in their organizations. Approximately five years ago, Christine Burych of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Alison Caird of the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, Joanne Fine-Schwebel of Mt. Sinai Hospital Toronto, Michael Fliess of Toronto Grace Health Centre and Heather Hardie of the Princess Margaret Hospital were all concerned about how to measure and report volunteer contributions that impacted the strategic directions of their organizations.

Quickly they identified the value of working together to develop a framework, which would provide a common tool, and indicators to more effectively measure volunteer programs, support benchmarking and quality improvement. This tool became the "Volunteer Resources Balanced Scorecard". To populate data for the indicators, a standardized volunteer opinion survey was created. The survey is now offered through the Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources of Ontario (PAVR-O) and provides organizations (small or large) an opportunity to evaluate their programs by looking at seven quality dimensions which support best practice.

As a collaborative work team, they had a vibrant and robust experience that led to mutual respect and lasting friendship. Each member of the group came to this project with an openness and genuine interest in not only supporting excellence in their own programs, but also an interest in developing practices that help support excellence in volunteer management. Below is a group interview with the five members about their project.

### **What were the pros and cons of this collaborative approach?**

Alison: Collaboration is about building relationships, trust and respectful strategies to handle conflict. We were able to accomplish that with this project.

Christine: The pros of this approach have included the opportunity to learn about similarities and differences in our programs to identify what we could each do better and to learn from those who are leading in specific areas.

Joanne: Collaboration opens up other possibilities. More creative thinking happens in a group. Each group member had their own strengths: the whole was greater than the sum of its parts. I felt accountable to the group to move the project forward.

Michael: For me, it has been a wonderful opportunity to dialogue in a much more meaningful way, to learn and to grow professionally.

**As a group, how did you handle any conflict that arose?**

Christine: We did encounter times when we disagreed on issues but we had to develop trust among ourselves "to put it out on the table". Once all viewpoints were discussed we came to a consensus on how best to proceed. As well, off-line conversations were kept to a minimum so that there would be no splitting of decisions or smaller groups created.

Joanne: As a group member you sometimes need to give up your own agenda for the greater good.

Heather: My sense during any discussion was that for each one of us the success of the project overcame any disagreement.

Michael: It was an atmosphere of working together for a common good, not just for our own programs.

**What strategies did you use to keep on track?**

Alison: Concrete milestones such as meetings with expert advisors, grant proposal and publishing deadlines assisted greatly.

Heather: A strong desire to succeed.

Michael: I found that the skills, experience and talents of each member of the group helped keep us on track. Our ability to move seamlessly between each member taking a lead was very helpful, as was a willingness to adjust the workload as needed.

**Did you ever feel "threatened" by the process, and if so, how did you handle this?**

Christine: I believe all of us were at a point where we could be realistic and share the good and bad without feeling judged.

Joanne: Never. In some other collaborations I have experienced people co-opting the process for their own good, power struggles and inequitable

sharing of work. I never had these experiences with this group.

Heather: I found this process to be affirming rather than threatening.

Michael: On the contrary, it was a gift to have the opportunity to learn from my colleagues in this forum.

**For you personally, what have you gained through this collaboration?**

Alison: The opportunity to "give back" to the profession. To develop a tool that finally captures the true value of our volunteer programs is immensely satisfying.

Christine: Not only has this partnership benefited me professionally but when I need to bounce an idea off of someone or ask for procedures in a new area, I have colleagues in the field who understand what I do and how we can help each other. As well, we have had opportunities to present the work that we have accomplished together to further the profession and its development.

Joanne: My volunteer program is stronger because of advice I have received from my peers. My hospital looks favourably on collaboration of this sort and so I have received encouragement from the senior leaders in my organization about the process and the outcome.

Heather: I no longer feel that I have to "go it alone" when facing professional challenges. I can connect with any or all of the team and be assured of sage and timely advice. The whole process allows me to put the weight of four other organizations behind my strategies.

**For you personally, what was the most challenging part of this collaboration?**

Alison: Trying to juggle the project deliverables with my workload. It required a significant amount of volunteer time.

Christine: Trying to find time to book meetings that we could all attend and maintaining the momentum of the work that we were doing.

Joanne: The challenge was in the work, such as creating indicators. The solution was the collaboration.

Heather: The biggest challenge was getting momentum for the project and finding a common starting point. We spent a great deal of time in the beginning trying to ensure we had universal language and definitions.

### Would you recommend/not recommend this approach to others?

Christine: I would not use this approach if you were solely looking for an advocacy group to help push one person's agenda forward. There needs to be a shared purpose to the group where everyone is willing to contribute and do the work.

Heather: This collaborative approach provides incredible insights into other volunteer programs and certainly promotes the opportunity to share and adopt best practice. In particular the mix of experiences and health care institutions in our group created a safe and fertile environment for learning.

Michael: On a final note, and another interesting observation, this article is very much reflective of our collaborative process!

*For further information on the Standardized Volunteer Opinion Survey, refer to the PAVR-O website at: [www.pavro.on.ca](http://www.pavro.on.ca)*

## BOOK REVIEW

by Paula Speevak Sladowski

*Alliances, Coalitions, and Partnerships: Building Collaborative Organizations*  
by Joan M. Roberts, 1999.

*Alliances, Coalitions and Partnerships* will appeal to the practitioner, scholar and policy-maker alike as it gives the reader a tour of key theories on collaboration and provides a step-by-step approach for how organizations can work together.

Roberts uses the generic term “trans-organization system,” which is adapted from the organizational theory of Thomas Cummings, to cover the range of collaborative models including coalitions, alliances, partnerships, networks, consortia and joint ventures. The trans-organizational system (TS) is defined in the book as an “organization of organizations”. Trans-organizational systems develop their own identity but have defined feedback loops and accountability to the member organizations. Why are they important and how do they work?

Drawing from her personal experiences working with the public, private and non-profit and voluntary sector, Joan Roberts shares her insights from her positions as city councillor, government policy analyst, private consultant and trainer. She shares success stories about bringing business, governments and local organizations together to address community-wide issues such as economic revitalization, housing, safety and health promotion.

The first chapter lays out the *Context and Societal Drivers*. “Now we are global citizens needing filters to mediate the information explosion” (p.11). Here, Roberts discusses the influence of globalization, technology, isolation and a renewed awareness of the importance of social connections. At the same time as we are exposed to events, trends and issues around the world, we are drawn back to our local community. Organizations are less hierarchal and more democratic. Modern structures are designed to build consensus rather than reinforce power.

The term *co-opetition* (a combination of co-operation and competition) is introduced as the prevailing mode for organizations today. It is through working co-operatively that we actually maintain or achieve our competitive edge. These shifts in thinking have created the backdrop for the drive towards trans-organizational systems where organizations work together to achieve common goals. In the second chapter, the nature of organizations and the various forms of collaboration are outlined, including “exchanging information for mutual benefits; altering activities; sharing resources; and enhancing the capacity of another to achieve a common purpose” (p.28).

A framework for developing trans-organizational systems is offered in the third chapter, breaking down the process into six phases:

1. Determining the Need for a TS and Exploring the Problem Set
2. Motivation to Collaboration
3. Member Identification and Selection
4. Collaborative Planning
5. Building the Organization (of organizations)
6. Evaluation

Roberts goes on to describe the various models for integrating members into a collaborative TS. The first is an *Expanding Network Model*, where you begin with a core group of interested people from a few organizations and gradually include others as you learn and identify new needs and opportunities:

- whose views need to be reflected?
- whose skills do we need?
- who do we need to make this happen?

The second model is the *Stakeholder Analysis Model*, where you begin with a process of identifying who needs to be there. You may base your selection on a variety of criteria including position, reputation, social participation, opinion leadership, or demographic representation. Chapter 3 also contains a number of useful worksheets, check-lists and diagrams.

Power and Authority are discussed in chapter 4. Here, Roberts offers some useful language for understanding and naming various types of formal and informal power and a number process for managing power dynamics. These are elaborated on in chapters 5-8, where the *Tri-Process Model* is described, which includes Trust Building Processes, Co-ordination Processes, and Governance Processes.

The concept of *Lateral Leadership* is introduced in chapter 9. “[Collaborative] Organizations characterized by power sharing and collective learning require a different kind of leadership” (p. 123). Earlier in the book, there is great emphasis on developing a shared vision, valuing each member’s contributions, consensus-building decision making and creating a flexible organizational structure.

Those providing leadership in networks, partnerships, alliances, and coalitions are often serving as facilitators, animators and conveners, rather than managers or directors. Additionally, leadership is not positional or fixed but rather different members assume leadership as the needs and situations arise. This is sometimes called roving leadership, situational leadership, or diverse and distributed leadership. To some this may sound disorganized and chaotic, which is a characteristic of organizational collaboration that needs to be understood, embraced and leveraged.

This type of leadership structure can also be challenging for those who assume leadership. According to Roberts, leaders of trans-organizational systems need to develop ways to:

- handle their stress;
- set boundaries;
- identify and share their emotions;
- develop communication skills;
- learn how to influence and persuade; and
- accept conflict and learn to resolve it.

The final chapter offers a case study of a trans-organizational system that Joan Roberts was instrumental in creating during her term on city council for the City of York, beginning in 1991. The Community Economic Development Advisory Committee developed a process that won an award from the Royal Bank of Canada and was eventually adopted by the federal government as a model for local economic revitalization. Roberts walks us through the six phases discussed earlier in the book, sharing the challenges and success factors that she encountered along the way.

*Alliances, Coalitions and Partnerships* would be a good handbook for anyone involved with or considering participation in a collaborative initiative with other organizations, whether they are in business, the non-profit and voluntary sector, or any levels of government. For those who are less interested in the technical language, history and theoretical references, the middle chapters that provide the framework, check-lists, tables and templates may be more valuable. This book is recommended as a good addition to any library on the subject of collaboration.

*Paula Speevak-Sladowski is the Managing Director of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development, a joint initiative of Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. More information can be found at [www.cvsrd.org](http://www.cvsrd.org)*

## **CJVRM’s EDITORIAL TEAM**

In 1990, when a small group discussed starting a professional journal for managers of volunteer resources in Canada, they envisioned a tool that would unite the profession across the country and provide a forum for critical thinking by encouraging experienced and new practitioners to participate.

In the very first issue, Spring 1992, Debbie Comuzzi, president of the Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration, (now PAVR-O), wrote this about the Journal:

“As it grows and develops, the Journal will publish more and more articles that will get to the meat of an issue. My hope is that it will raise questions and challenge us to reflect about our jobs and the impact the profession can have on our communities. The Journal should explore various aspects of the profession and look at issues and trends. Hopefully, readers will feel ownership for the Journal and will feel comfortable about contributing ideas or articles. You don’t have to be a writer. The editorial committee will work with you to make your work “sound right”.

For 16 years now we have been continuing to do just that. This is our 61st issue! The Editorial Team is still composed of a small group of volunteers who meet monthly. Our Terms of Reference state that:

*Composition:* The team will have no less than 4 members and no more than 8.

*Meetings:* 1 day per month for 2-3 hours

*Financial Policy:* The team manages its own finances with the intention of at least breaking even and with revenues being dedicated to the production of the best possible resource for its subscribers.

### *Responsibilities:*

1. To plan the content of the Journal at least 3 months in advance for 3 issues per year.
2. To market the publication to managers of volunteer resources in Canada.
3. To solicit and select items for inclusion in the publication.
4. To develop and revise guidelines for selecting and editing items.
5. To manage the financial and logistic aspects of publication
6. To administer subscriptions and distribution functions.

### *Editorial Process:*

1. Minutes will be taken at each meeting with copies distributed to all members.
2. Each issue of the Journal will have a theme chosen by the Editorial Team.
3. Each issue has a main article that looks at the topic in some depth and 4 or 5 other articles that adopt a more practical approach. Soliciting articles is divided up among the team members.
4. Potential authors are identified and initial phone calls or emails are made by the team member responsible for request.
5. Each member is responsible for being the editor on an evenly distributed rotational basis with the editorial written by the member responsible.
6. Each member ensures distribution of the draft article to all team members, oversees the editing process of that article and makes all corrections before returning the edited version to the author for acceptance along with an approval form for the authors signature.

### **The current Editorial Team:**

Jennifer Campbell came to the Journal in the winter of 2007. Jennifer is a member of the Editor's Association of Canada. She has a background in library science and is currently employed by the Ottawa school board. Her background and skill as an editor has been a tremendous asset to the Team.

Chris Harwood joined the Team in the spring of 2006. Chris taught and coordinated the Management of Volunteer Resources certificate program at Algonquin College. She works as a consultant with community literacy initiatives.

Chris Jarvis joined the Journal's Team in the fall of 1992. Having watched the Journal's progression from the beginning, Chris brings the "historical" perspective to the group and continues to provide it with a sense of continuity.

Sheila Jenkins, Manager of OttawaReads, arrived in the spring of 2004 with a tremendous amount of enthusiasm, ideas and contacts. She is still very involved reaching out and encouraging potential authors to contribute to each issue.

Rachel Stoparczyk is the Coordinator of Volunteer Resources & Quality, Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre. Rachel joined the Journal in July 2005, when she was employed at Volunteer Ottawa. She has taken on many administrative tasks including assuming the reins of treasurer and coordinating the new team of regional representatives.

Lynne Whitehead, Supervising Producer at Rogers TV has been with the Journal since the fall of 1999. Lynne hosts our monthly meetings. She is the publisher and final distributor of our e-Journal that eventually makes its way to you our readers as well as to our authors.

Joan Wyatt joined in the spring of 2004. Joan had a very successful career as a manager of volunteer resources until her retirement two years ago. She continues as an active member of the Team contributing both her knowledge and wisdom especially in the area of theme development.

Our newest member is Lesley Abraham. Lesley has a certificate in the management of volunteer resources and is completing a master's degree in international development, with a focus on volunteerism on the global stage. She has experience working and volunteering with several voluntary sector organizations in the Ottawa area.

A much-needed resource has been the creation and addition of our Regional Representatives. They are Rosemary Byrne, Montreal, Charlene Robson, Vancouver, Faiza Kanji, Toronto, Tammy Stadt, Barrie, Joan Roberts and Tricalynn Zacharias, Winnipeg. We will tell you a little more about them and the role they play in our next issue.

# JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Editorial Process and Guidelines for Authors

## Objective

The Journal of Volunteer Resources Management is intended:

1. to serve as a credible source of information on the management of volunteers in Canada;
2. to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and to encourage networking among managers of volunteers;
3. to provide a professional development tool for managers of volunteers;
4. to recognize and encourage Canadian talent in the field of management of volunteers;
5. to include in each issue at least two articles that will consider different views on a specific and predetermined theme.

## Target Audience

The Journal's intended audience includes managers of volunteers, educators, media and funders of not-for-profit organizations across the country.

## Submissions

All manuscripts will be accepted on diskette or via e-mail in either Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. Submissions should be written according to "Canadian Style - A Guide to Writing and Editing" - Secretary of State, Dundurn Press. External reviewers may be engaged to review content if deemed advisable by the committee.

The revised draft is edited for clarity and consistency by the Editorial Team.

The edited version is returned to the author for acceptance along with an approval form for signature.

The signed form is to be returned to the Editorial Team within a week along with any suggestions for final revisions.

## Format and Style

Authors are asked to respect the following word counts:

	Words	Pages
<b>Lead Article</b>	1000	5-6
<b>Secondary Article</b>	700-800	2-3
<b>Book Review</b>	150	1

The lead article will look at the topic in some depth and will normally require the author to conduct research into current trends and perspectives on the subject.

The secondary article will adopt a more practical approach, including personal experiences and opinions.

## Advertising

Limited advertising space will be allowed in the Journal, for materials of direct relevance to managers of volunteer service, and as long as it conforms to the guidelines set out by the Editorial Team.

## Guidelines:

1. Only ¼ page and ½ page ads will be accepted.
2. Ad must be camera-ready.
3. A maximum of one page of ads will be permitted per issue.
4. Job ads are not recommended.
5. Cost is to be determined by the Editorial Team.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Taking Action on Volunteerism - We Care Canada!!

Thursday June 26, 2008

Shangri-la Convention Centre

Markham, Ontario

[www.pavro.on.ca](http://www.pavro.on.ca)

Sharing our Strengths Community Conference 2008

June 10 & 11, 2008

Algonquin College - Ottawa, Ontario

Sharing Our Strengths Community Conference

[www.unitedwayottawa.ca](http://www.unitedwayottawa.ca)

20th Anniversary of Vitalize 2008

Shaw Convention Centre - Edmonton, AB

June 12, 13 & 14, 2008

[www.wildrosefoundation.ca/vitalize/](http://www.wildrosefoundation.ca/vitalize/)

## DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS & THEMES

Issue	Deadline	Theme
Volume 16.2	articles due on the 30th of June	Intergenerational Volunteering
Volume 16.3	articles due on the 30th of September	Technology