

---

# Canadian Journal of Volunteer Resources Management

Le journal canadien de gestion  
des bénévoles

2006

Volume 14.3



MOTIVATING VOLUNTEERS

LA MOTIVATION DES BÉNÉVOLES

~~ Celebrating our 15th year of publication ~~

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### EDITORIAL

Chris Jarvis

### ATTRACTING BUSY BEES

Coralie Lalonde, *Ontario* ..... 3

### MOTIVATING VOLUNTEERS AND 2010 LEGACIES NOW

Mary MacKillop, *British Columbia* ..... 5

### THE 40 HOURS PROGRAM

Brenda Doner, *Ontario* ..... 7

### ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Michael Ladouceur, *Ontario* ..... 10

### ALTERING LIFE'S COURSE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Bridget Stirling, *Ontario* ..... 12

### VOLUNTEERING FOR PERSONAL REASONS

David Lussier, *Quebec* ..... 13

### BOOK REVIEW

Kathy Curry, *Ontario* ..... 15

Jerry and Miriam Rothstein, *British Columbia* ..... 16

### PEER EXPERT

Cynthia M. Paguinto, *British Columbia* ..... 17

Valerie Liske, *Manitoba* ..... 18

#### Editorial Team

Gayle Downing

Chris Harwood

Chris Jarvis

Sheila Jenkins

Rachel Stoparczyk

Lynne Whitehead

Joan Wyatt

ISSN 1192-1676

Subscriptions and correspondence can be sent to:

2222 Fillmore Cr., Ottawa, K1J 6A3

contact\_cjvrm@yahoo.ca

No part of this publication may be reproduced, in whole or in part, without written permission from the Editorial Team. All articles are the express opinion of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher or Editorial Team. The Publisher and the Editorial Team assume no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts.

## EDITORIAL

The last time we touched on the topic of motivation was in the last issue of the last century! The volunteer sector would not be alone in facing a shifting Canadian landscape. In that last issue of 1999, key emerging trends were identified to help understand what impelled people to take action and remain involved as we moved into the new millennium. Looking back over the past seven years we can see that to create a motivational climate requires a more complex strategy for today's discerning volunteer.

The Journal is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. We have put out 60 issues on 60 topics. The Editorial Team has changed faces over the years as life and work got in the way of making a substantial volunteer commitment required when publishing four Journal issues each year. Somehow our monthly meetings have retained their crazy, creative, down-to-earth, down-to-business camaraderie. While the face of our publication has kept up with changing technology I suspect our reason for creating a publication where you, managers of volunteer resources, are given the opportunity to contribute articles and information on what matters to you, will not change. This fall we will say goodbye to Carol Anne Clarke for the second time and to Joan Cox who was with us for four busy years. Their contributions have been outstanding and their shoes hard to fill. Fortunately we are welcoming two highly motivated team members: Gayle Downing and Chris Harwood.

The volunteer climate today is both challenging and exciting. I know that you will gain new insights and ideas from the articles that we have in this issue. Coralie Lalonde's 'Attracting Busy Bees: What is the Honey' clearly identifies how to be successful in recruiting volunteers with specific skills. Mary MacKillop, a long time supporter of The Journal, first wrote for us in 1998. Her depth of experience and knowledge is now focused on turning an opportunity for episodic volunteering into creating a legacy designed to last long after the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver are over.

Brenda Doner's article on youth and Michael Ladouceur's article on volunteers with developmental disabilities bring us up to date on these two significant populations. Please enjoy two heart-warming articles by David Lussier and Bridget Stirling; we can never get enough of these kinds of stories. We include two excellent peer expert responses and two interesting book reviews.

As Canadians watching another summer draw to a close, I know that we are already very good at creating and maintaining motivation. Have fun reading this issue as you start another busy fall.

Chris Jarvis

Editorial Team member since 1992

# ATTRACTING BUSY BEES: WHAT IS THE HONEY?

by Coralie Lalonde

When asked by a wonderful fellow volunteer if I would share my thoughts on attracting busy executives to volunteer opportunities, my first thought was "Interesting activity but yikes- do I have the time?" Getting a positive response from this typical first reaction can be challenging but there are ways to increase the odds.

## Building the Right Hive

One of my first reactions to a volunteer request is to wonder whether I am the right person for the job. I ask myself if I have the skill set needed for the initiative to be successful and whether my skill set compliments that of the other volunteers and staff with whom I will be working. If most of the participants already share the skills I bring to the table, perhaps the organization would be better off with another candidate who will bring in a fresh outlook or perspective. Prior to approaching a candidate, the organization can increase the odds of success by doing this bit of homework.

For example, at Volunteer Ottawa, we recently went through the process of Board recruitment. Our strategy was to first create a skill set matrix that identified the desired profile of our Board as a whole, particularly in light of both our short and long-term goals. We knew we wanted at least one (but not more than two) board member(s) who had professional designations in the areas of legal, financial and human resources. A particular goal of the Board was to revamp our governance process and therefore knowledge and experience with governance issues was a highly desired characteristic. Another important initiative of the organization was the launch of a fundraising campaign to address our technology needs and therefore expertise needed at the Board level to help with this initiative was identified.

## Identifying the Right Bee

Once you know the needed skills and have identified the existing skills on the team, developing profiles of whom you would like to engage and identifying potential candidates is a simple matter. What might be awkward is determining whether a candidate meets the desired criteria. How do you approach a busy executive with a request for their valuable time but with the additional need to determine if they are the right person for the job and what do you do in the awkward situation where it turns out they are not?

I am most impressed by an organization that has clearly identified what they are looking for and why and has thought about how I fit into their plans. This

work creates a positive first impression and it also provides an opportunity for the candidate to de-select.

For example, I was recently approached to join an organization as a director. Over a casual coffee at the local shop I was given an overview of the organization and its mandate, the position and its expectations, the major strengths and challenges of the organization and its top priorities. I was then introduced to the desired skills they were seeking and what role they hoped I might play. Based on this information and further discussion, I was able to determine that despite my interest in the organization, they really needed and wanted someone with a different skill set and we both happily parted ways without awkwardness. I believe this was a better experience for both of us than a formal application process.

## Getting the Right Honey

Attracting a busy executive to your volunteer opportunity requires an understanding of the needs and motivations of that executive. Volunteering is a two way street and a match is needed between the needs of the organization and the needs of the volunteer. Some of the factors that attract an executive are:

1. The cause. Obviously many executives have particular causes that they care about. Researching the interests of executives can assist you in your approach. Trinity of Hope, an animal rescue organization, recruited me after hearing that I had three dogs. Shad Valley, an organization offering business-like programs to students, recruited me after discovering that I volunteer for Junior Achievement, an organization offering similar programs. Understanding the interests of the candidate can also save you time. If your cause is not a match to his or her interests, there is no point continuing in your pursuit.

2. The motivation. Although many executives are motivated by a desire to make a difference in their community, they may also have professional reasons for volunteering. In this case, they will be looking for a particular type of organization, cause or position that will be of benefit to their career. For example, an up-and-coming business leader may be motivated by their desire to demonstrate their leadership in other aspects of the community. They may seek a leadership position in a well-established and well-known organization. Another executive may wish to be involved in the initial creation and development of a new idea.

3. The requirements. For the busy executive, the requirements of the position are crucial and the expectations need to be clearly presented up front. While this might seem very obvious, I am often approached with a request where the requirements are either unclear or underestimated. Most executives want their contributions to be successful and therefore need to know if this success is possible. I automatically raise a skeptical eyebrow to the request for "only three meetings a year, that's it".

4. Efficiency. By definition, the busy executive is busy and typically expends considerable effort on time management. Being efficient with the use of their time is greatly appreciated. For example, I serve on the Board of Governors of the Community Foundation of Ottawa and the CEO issues an email to all Board members every Friday with news from that week. This news allows me to be an effective ambassador in the community by keeping me up to date with events but is also greatly appreciated as an efficient communication strategy that is much preferred over an email every time there is something to communicate.

The old saying is often true: 'if you want something done, give it to a busy person'. By doing some up-front work in understanding who you want, why you want them and what they need, you will be more successful in attracting the volunteer executives you desire.

*Coralie Lalonde is the founder and CEO of Katsura Investments, a private equity angel investment group. Coralie currently serves Volunteer Ottawa as Chair of the board and is a board member of the Community Foundation of Ottawa and the Ottawa Heart Institute. She is the co-founder and chair of the Tech Venture Challenge and the co-founder and co-chair of ENGAGE! She also volunteers her time with SHAD Valley, the Curry BizCamp, Junior Achievement, FM-CFS Canada and Trinity of Hope.*

## MOTIVATING VOLUNTEERS AND 2010

### LEGACIES NOW

by Mary MacKillop

In Canada, volunteerism is fundamental to our identity. Our country has been built on the service of citizens who live in a culture of caring for those in need of varied social services. What moves us to give freely is unique to each person and understanding the basis for that motivation leads to knowing how to engage effectively.

The reasons we serve vary from place to place and from one time to another. Those of us in the sector follow these variables, trends and blips. The motivating factor, the changing force that compels people to give, especially in large numbers, is a 'tipping point' of engagement that warrants attention and understanding.

According to Malcolm Gladwell (2000) in my well-thumbed copy of 'The Tipping Point', he describes how a single factor can create an epidemic or mass appeal. There is significant public interest in being connected to the Olympics. Volunteering for the 2010 Winter Games has that mass appeal. Over 40,000 hopeful volunteers, who were willing to serve, signed up

electronically during the bid phase (2000-2004) and there were more applicants than roles for pre-Games volunteer positions three years later.

The Oxford Paperback Dictionary (Hawkins, 1983) defines service as "being a servant to persons in need." True, but what draws us to service in the first place is likely more about the reciprocal nature of serving, be it developing our résumés, gaining skills or enjoying a unique experience for a particular end. I take no issue with the desire to give for something in return. Any qualified manager of volunteer resources would be suspicious of an applicant who cited altruism as their only motivating drive.

I have always been fond of the notion around making a trade. My children think I am unaware of how they trade their lunches at school just as I did. I secretly appreciate these midday negotiations. I am intrigued by how and what people trade, especially things of value, such as time and talent. I consider the 'what is in it for them' as I contemplate these exchanges.

Social commentators of today, such as Putnam (2000) in 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital', often decried the "loss of civil society", which implies a loss of community and empathy. With a noted decline in volunteerism in Canada between 1997 and 2000 this argument could have been supported.

Volunteerism continues to provide the venue to build civic commitment and I would argue that it is alive and well. As opportunities evolve and volunteers increase their savvy around their contributions, the sector is changing. It is looking different but is not in decline.

British Columbia, as Canada's host province of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, has the opportunity to utilize the motivation to be involved in the Games, to build volunteerism by celebrating giving, promoting volunteering and making the connection between volunteering and overall good health.

Understanding that there is an increased desire for episodic volunteering, 2010 Legacies Now created [www.VolWeb.ca](http://www.VolWeb.ca). The system links volunteers who are looking for short-term opportunities and briefer commitments to event organizers.

Understanding motivation led to the creation and establishment of VolWeb.ca. We can utilize Volweb's forum, a web-based system, to meet the demand and educate event leaders on volunteer engagement and to promote other volunteer roles to those registered on the system.

Taking the 2010 Winter Games as a leverage point, understanding a significant motivating factor to large numbers of people and creating a legacy for the volunteer sector sets a stage for meaningful trades that are beneficial to community growth and health. As the world turns its attention to Canada to watch the preparation and then the 2010 Winter Games themselves unfold, the world will also see another pillar of pride that stands at the core of Canadian culture: citizenship that is thriving.

2010 Legacies Now was created in June of 2000 by the Province of British Columbia and the Vancouver Bid Corporation to help build and support for a bid to host the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, a first in the history of any Games bid.

2010 Legacies Now is a not-for-profit society that works in partnership with community organizations, non- government organizations (NGOs), the private sector and all levels of government to develop sustainable legacies in sport and recreation, arts, literacy and volunteerism.

2010 Legacies Now actively helps communities discover and create unique and inclusive social and economic opportunities leading up to, during and beyond the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

For more information, visit [www.2010LegaciesNow.com](http://www.2010LegaciesNow.com).

*Mary MacKillop is the Director, Volunteers Now at 2010 Legacies Now. She holds a Masters degree in Leadership from Royal Roads University, B.C. and undergrad degrees from St. Mary's and Mount St. Vincent Universities in Halifax. She has been involved in the field of administration of volunteer resources for the past 20 years. She has led volunteer coordination for the federal government for events with both world leaders and royal visits. Her present focus is on creating strategies to leverage the 2010 Olympic games in order to profile and grow the Canadian volunteer culture. Mary has two young children and although she calls B.C. a wonderful place to live, Nova Scotia will always be home.*

## THE 40 HOURS PROGRAM IN ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOLS: WELL KNOWN BUT POORLY COMMUNICATED

by Brenda Doner

The 40 hours community involvement program in high schools is likely the most public face of volunteerism in Ontario - everyone knows about it and everyone has an opinion. However, virtually no research or evaluation exists and stakeholders report that communications about the requirement are missing or inconsistent, although the policy has now been in place for six years.

The Ontario Ministry of Education created the policy that every student must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities as part of the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The provincial policy outlines what does not qualify, i.e. activities during school hours or for credit in a course or for the benefit of immediate family members.

Activities with business or political groups can be eligible and there is no requirement for 'public service'. However, the policy leaves the responsibility for the program with individual school boards across Ontario. As a result, what qualifies and how the program is delivered varies widely from school board to school board.

The only comments on the requirement that the Ministry of Education has initiated to date appear on pages 122 to 125 of a report by Dr. Allan King that covered a wide range of curriculum changes. Dr. King concludes that monitoring and research is needed.

In February of 2005, the Volunteerism V Symposium brought together practitioners and academic researchers to review the successes and challenges of the requirement (see selected presentations). Consensus from the participants was that the 40 hours program should only be continued with changes. The Ontario Network of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (OCVI), one of the sponsors of the Symposium, convened a roundtable of stakeholders in March of 2005 that established priorities including research that included students' perspectives. OCVI asked the Ministry of Education if they would support the research but they declined, citing other priorities and a reluctance to raise expectations of change. However, they said that they would be interested in seeing the results if OCVI did the research on its own.

The Ontario Ministry of Education created the policy that every student must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement activities as part of the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). The provincial policy outlines what does not qualify, i.e. activities during school hours or for credit in a course or for the benefit of immediate family members. Activities with business or political groups can be eligible and there is no requirement for 'public service'. However, the policy leaves the responsibility for the program with individual school boards across Ontario. As a result, what qualifies and how the program is delivered varies widely from school board to school board. Thus, in February and March 2006 OCVI promoted online surveys in French and English for youth (ages 14 to 24) and for adults (combining parents, school and agency personnel) and sponsored seven adult focus groups and seven youth focus groups, each containing five to fifteen people throughout the province. At May 3, 2006 we had 571 adult responses and 456 youth responses to the English online surveys.

The goal of the research is to determine:

- What factors contribute to a good experience with the 40 hours requirement for youth, parents, school personnel and community agencies?
- What changes to the program would stakeholders recommend?
- What best practices exist?

Below are the preliminary results including the strengths, barriers and changes to the requirement ranked by frequency of responses from the surveys and the focus groups.

#### **Youth - strengths:**

- involves youth in their community, creates a sense of belonging, strengthens community relationships;
- gain work experience, meet people and network, explore different opportunities, looks good on résumé; and
- altruistic: helps people in the community, feels good giving back.

#### **Youth - barriers:**

- stressful finding a placement, some hours are not accepted;
- not enough hours to make an impact on the student, not enough to learn/grow;
- unclear process/guidelines and no school assistance;
- students procrastinate to the last minute then everyone rushes;
- mandatory nature takes away motivation; and
- should be fewer hours.

#### **Youth - changes:**

- volunteer day or fair;
- yearly quota, e.g. require ten hours per year throughout high school;
- website/hotline/information resources centralized in an area;
- fewer hours or delete program entirely;
- optional hours for increased credit, volunteer during school day; and
- better matches with student interests.

#### **Adults - strengths:**

- connects to opportunities that allow exploration of career choices, build real responsibilities, teach new skills;
- increases civic responsibility and value of giving to the community; and
- increases community awareness and fosters self worth, instills pride in their experience.

#### **Adults- barriers:**

- accessibility of volunteer positions, awareness by students of the process, requirements, screening, orientation and training;
- inadequate communication about the program to students, parents and community, no one is selling the benefits; and
- students are fearful, unmotivated and procrastinate, time to volunteer is inflexible, conflicts with school obligations.

#### **Adults - changes:**

- streamline information delivery to students and provide clear, consistent information to parents, students and organizations through central process;

- add volunteerism to the curriculum;
- have a manager of volunteer resources per school board; and
- have students start early, distribute information in grade eight.

If there is one common thread in the survey and focus group responses, it is a lack of communication about the program and the roles of everyone involved including the students, the parents, the school personnel and the community agency personnel. There is almost no monitoring or evaluating. Youth often complained that their peers 'cheated' and got away with it. However, 91% of youth who responded to the online survey and had completed their hours (about 50% of the total respondents) reported that their 40 hours experience was 'good' or 'great', despite the problems they consistently identified. Just think what the results might be if the program was improved.

The survey remained open until June 15th, to gather more input from guidance counsellors and from youth with disabilities or other barriers to volunteering. Preliminary findings from the report are on the '40 hours' page on OCVI's website and the final report and best practices gathered will be launched in the fall

*Brenda Doner has twenty-eight years experience working and volunteering with non-profit groups in the arts, social service, criminal justice and international development. Since April of 2003, she has managed the Ontario Network of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, a federally funded initiative to promote and strengthen volunteerism.*

## ENGAGING VOLUNTEERS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

by Michael Ladouceur

The concept of having individuals with a disability volunteer is not new and yet, for a variety of reasons this significant resource, for the most part, remains untapped.

The Ottawa Carleton Association for Persons With Developmental Disabilities (OCAPDD), an agency that advocates for individuals who have a developmental disability, has over fifty clients involved in volunteering in their community.

OCAPDD has individuals contributing to their community by helping seniors in social activities, sorting and hanging up snow suits for distribution, organizing and packaging food stock in food bank outlets and performing maintenance in churches. There are individuals volunteering in restaurants where they learn work skills in a real business environment.

The opportunities for volunteering are endless as long as the parties involved understand the challenges and the rewards of the undertaking. On an individual

basis, those challenges may include issues with communication where their expressive and their receptive skills may not be strong. The volunteer may not be able to comprehend complex instructions or abstract terms. Using a communication method familiar to the individual or employing landmarks and cues to aid individuals with remembering are two options to lessen the impact of this challenge. Individuals may not have had exposure to the norms of a workplace. Providing clear expectations and guidelines for appropriate behaviour establishes parameters, which allow the individuals to understand their role. Other challenges include low self esteem, isolation and the cognitive challenges faced by individuals with a developmental disability. Providing ongoing verbal reinforcement for encouragement, setting up a 'buddy' system to facilitate participation and accommodating an individual's cognitive limitations will help to ensure that the person's placement will be successful and the organization will have a long term volunteer. The common key to all these challenges is to ensure that the match between the volunteer and the placement is compatible. Matching the volunteer's skills with the needs of the organization is the foundation for success.

When it comes to engaging individuals with a disability, as volunteers, the biggest challenge is the social stigma associated with disabilities. Despite our progressive Canadian society, the feeling of being uncomfortable around individuals with a disability persists. In information sessions I promote the fact that there is a cache of volunteers that has not been fully explored. However, it is obvious that presenting information to the audience is not sufficient to change perceptions and attitudes. We need to address what makes us uncomfortable about disabilities. Ironically, to address the topic itself makes us uncomfortable as does delving into the root of the issue. The fact remains that with realistic expectations there is no reason why individuals with a disability cannot become an integrated member of a volunteering team. The investment in the volunteer is more than offset by the longevity of service and by the contribution of the individual.

It is unfortunate that society is not involving more individuals who have a disability as volunteers. From my point of view, it is a win-win scenario: win for the organization as it can access a variety of volunteers who are willing and able to help out and win for the individuals who gain real experience and opportunities for growth. Too often, individuals with a disability are on the receiving end of support. Volunteering allows them to reverse this trend and give back to society.

*Michael Ladouceur is a Social Worker with the Ottawa Carleton Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities and he is a certified Crisis Prevention and Intervention instructor. Michael has been advocating for individuals with a developmental disability for the past 23 years.*

## ALTERING LIFE'S COURSE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

by Bridget Stirling

Are you tired of hearing that you lack experience? How do you get experience when no one will hire you? Well there is always a way to find work, as long as you are willing to work for free!!

The concept of volunteering, to some, is unheard of. Even close friends of mine cannot believe that I would wake up early, travel far distances and even spend money out of my own pocket to volunteer. I, on the other hand, do not understand why they would not!

Growing up, community service was a negative term, often reserved as punishment when caught breaking the law. Today it is mandatory in high school, which I believe, if done correctly with proper research, is an excellent way for students to discover their true interests before choosing what to study.

For me, it all started in December 2004. I was having a 'quarter-life crisis'; unsure of who I was, where I was going or what I wanted to do with my life. I started daydreaming of far off locales, roughing it and meeting people from all over the world. I looked into joining the Peace Corps but did not fulfill the requirements, so I had to think of another way to achieve my goal.

I had been out of work for a few years so the thought of finding a 'real job' in such a competitive market just did not seem feasible. I needed to think of a way to gather not only experience but references as well. It took a while, but I finally decided to volunteer.

Those are not the only reasons I chose to volunteer. I was getting rather bored with my daily routine and was looking for a way to get out and meet new people. I wanted to be part of something fun and exciting. My first step was to visit [volunteertoronto.ca](http://volunteertoronto.ca). I was overwhelmed with all the positions available. I suddenly realized I could do (almost) anything I wanted! I narrowed down my search by checking out upcoming events and located a local not-for-profit organization that was doing some fundraising. The next couple of weeks were spent with them, while I started looking for more upcoming events. I think there was a time that I was actually addicted to volunteering; it gives you a natural high. What struck me initially was how great it felt to be doing something out of the goodness of my heart. It is truly rewarding.

Eventually I joined two local humanitarian organizations and took on a leadership role at one of them. Like anything in life you get as much out of it as you put into it and volunteering is as much or as little responsibility as you

want it to be.

Then one day on the subway, I noticed an advertisement for the Go Abroad Fair. Again, due to my lack of experience, I thought that volunteering would be a good opportunity to gain overseas experience and determine if working overseas is something I could actually do. That is when I found Youth Challenge International. The spirit of volunteerism is key at YCI, with youth playing a central role in Canada and overseas. Upon examination, my reasons for volunteering locally are different than those for volunteering abroad.

I will soon be embarking on a six week volunteer mission entitled Project Grenada, where I will be working with eight other Canadians as well as a diverse group of local organizations teaching disaster preparedness, holding youth summits and aiding in the hurricane recovery efforts. The catch for this adventure is that it costs \$3,000! This is the participation fee and covers things like training, food and accommodations while in Grenada. I look at this as a truly unique learning experience that has the potential to completely alter the course of my life. This is the character building, soul-searching experience that I dreamed about in 2004. Part of this challenge is raising the funds to participate. So, in actuality, I may not have to cover the entire cost myself. Since I am interested in the not-for-profit sector, this is a great way to develop essential fundraising skills.

Volunteering has had only a positive impact on my life and has brought me closer to my authentic self. It has boosted my confidence level and self esteem. It has given me a different perspective on my world. There may be times when I am a more or less active volunteer, but it will always be a part of my life.

*Bridget Stirling is currently studying Fundraising and Volunteer Management at George Brown College, Toronto. She volunteers with the homeless in Toronto and spent part of this past summer assisting with hurricane recovery and disaster preparedness in Grenada, through Youth Challenge International.*

## VOLUNTEERING FOR PERSONAL REASONS - A VIEW FROM THE WELCOME HALL MISSION

by David Lussier

*"If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain.  
If you want ten years of prosperity, grow trees.  
If you want one hundred years of prosperity, grow people."  
-- Chinese Proverb*

Volunteering can be described in general terms as a way of telling your community you care, showing friends, colleagues and neighbours that people matter and changing needy people's lives by trying to make their world a better

place.

However, on a personal level, volunteering can help you find the truth about who you are, change your heart and your life and discover that the needy and underprivileged are 'ordinary people' and that they all have a story which is similar to yours.

We often think that we volunteer to help others. Could it be possible that we get something out of it as well? We can all learn from other people's lives and experiences, even if they are less fortunate than we.

Charities, not-for-profit agencies and community organizations whose goal is to help and serve our communities need to come to a better understanding of volunteering. A volunteer may also have needs to be met. Many do not recognize why they volunteer. There are times when we are inclined to see volunteers merely as a workforce and other times when we do too much ourselves rather than asking a volunteer for help. We need to create opportunities in an open structure where all people may act and use their gifts. Volunteering can be the start of many individual transformations if we, in our organizations, are willing to encourage relationship building and personal development and to educate volunteers about the social context of their involvement through workshops.

"The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands, and then work outward from there."

-- Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*

As charities, not-for-profit agencies and community organizations, we often like to share what 'we' do, whom 'we' help and how many people 'we' have served in the past year. Yet, we hardly ever share or hear personal stories or testimonies from individuals who may be struggling through tough times or who have overcome some of their hardships with our help. We ought to have some individuals who have found success share with volunteers why they are here or how they returned to a more stable life.

By sharing their life stories, people can put into words the difference volunteers make every day. These life stories often enable a volunteer to relate to a person in more profound ways. It is amazing to hear volunteers talk about how much they have learned from the people they are serving, by listening to their stories, spending time and sharing in the same way that friends do. In fact, often they continue to volunteer because they have made friends.

As charities, we have come to understand that if we had to choose between a corporation's money and its staff's skills, we would choose their people almost every time. We have come to see that individuals with their heart and hands bring more than any money ever could. Let us not kid ourselves, any charitable



organization also knows that if some employees from a company are committed to supporting a cause, as individuals or in groups, it will not be long before decision makers financially support their personnel's favourite charity.

Volunteering changes people as much as it helps our organizations grow. If people have no personal agenda and volunteer to simply act out of 'love', it will transform how they see people struggling with homelessness and poverty.

"What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?"

-- George Elliot

*David Lussier is the Communications Coordinator and Spokesperson at Welcome Hall Mission in Montreal. Born and raised in Quebec, David lived, travelled and volunteered in Asia. Since, he obtained his B.A. in Social Communications at l'Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières in 2000, he's always been professionally involved with not-for-profits and charities.*

## THE YOUTH VOLUNTEER AUDIT: BEST PRACTISES FOR ENGAGING YOUTH AS VOLUNTEERS

by Donna Lockhart

The Youth Audit is an excellent tool for those agencies or managers of volunteers wishing to develop strategies to engage youth as part of their volunteer team.

The Audit tool is divided into three sections.

- A. Philosophy: Organization Readiness
- B. Research: Youth Opportunities and Relationships
- C. Development Process and Practice

Each of these sections includes a Question Area, with examples and a checklist:

- Yes, Ready;
- Needs Work; or
- No, Not Close.

Answering these questions is a way of determining where your agency is in respect to the readiness to engage youth as volunteers. Included at the back of the book is a Summary Chart for the development of processes and practices that your agency might want to undertake. As well, an Action Planning Template is included, along with samples and examples of how to begin the process of engaging youth.

Once you have decided to complete the Audit, gather together a small team or group that is comprised of a variety of staff, volunteers and, if possible, youth. This group will engage in discussions regarding the questions and will complete

the audit by answering the questions provided in the booklet. If possible, choose people with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds.

Once your Audit has been completed, The Action Planning Sheet will assist you with planning the direction your group might take. It will enable you to determine the strategy your organization might take to engage youth as volunteers.

Should you require additional information or wish to purchase a copy, please contact:

The RETHINK Group

Email: donna@rethinkgroup.ca

Web Site: www.rethinkgroup.ca

*Reviewed by Kathy Curry, Coordinator of Volunteer Resource Development Parks & Recreation Branch, City of Ottawa*

## THE CARING COMMUNITY: A FIELDBOOK FOR HOSPICE PALLIATIVE CARE VOLUNTEER SERVICES

by Jerry and Miriam Rothstein

When this book was reviewed in the 2000 edition of *The Journal of Palliative Care* by Suzanne O'Brien, Andrée Prendergast and Ellen Wallace they wrote, "*The Caring Community* is an extraordinarily thorough document, which should be on the desk of every volunteer manager." "Its value to new and veteran volunteer managers alike is its systematic, organized and comprehensive look at each of the key components in creating, sustaining, evaluating and invigorating a program of care. It strongly endorses and stresses that, regardless of setting, volunteers should be part of an interdisciplinary palliative care team. It recognizes that, across Canada, volunteer community groups and coalitions have been the driving force behind the creation and development of palliative care services."

"...we highly recommend this field book to our fellow volunteer coordinators...It provides concrete suggestions, worksheets and strategies to guide us in developing our programs"

They recommend *The Caring Community* both as "a reference book and a working journal" particularly because of the "inclusion of many training exercises and draft documents, which have been tested and submitted by fellow palliative care coordinators and volunteers". Individual chapters highlighted were 'Sharing the Vision' because it "provides a template for looking at vision, mission and standards of practice and uses the Canadian Palliative Care Association to both



**There is usually a fear component in contemplating change.**

People ponder:

- Why are we changing?
- How will I manage the change?
- How much work will this be?
- Is it worthwhile to change?

Plain language answers to these questions throughout the process may prevent a natural 'fight or flight' response from volunteers. Some people may react to change in a way that undermines the process and/or benefits. Careful one-to-one exploration with a volunteer can determine whether the volunteer needs support to work through the change(s) or permission to leave because they are no longer intrinsically motivated to support the organization's current mission, mandate or vision.

Communication is key in managing any process and especially important in change processes. **Consider developing both a strategic communication message and an ongoing communication plan to give updates, indicate how challenges are being handled and to highlight any success.** This should assist volunteers to 'come on board' with the changes, which in turn can dissipate tension and increase comfort levels. Change may be exciting but it is always uncertain. Take time to disseminate key information to volunteers and staff particularly in terms of changes to their role and/or team. Adjust performance expectations as effectiveness may dip while people try to understand how to incorporate the change. Plan for a six-month adjustment period to allow people to adapt to the new culture the change produced. Consider offering a free workshop such as 'laughter is the best medicine' to help people 'go with the flow' during this period of uncertainty. Laughter can reduce tension, increase blood and oxygen flow and, when done skilfully, can help volunteers re-incorporate light-heartedness and joy into their efforts. Stay hopeful! Human beings are in constant flux but are always resilient. In time, new norms and comfort levels will be established and volunteer connectedness, motivation and attachment to the agency will increase.

*Valerie Liske currently resides in Brandon, Manitoba and manages the volunteer program at the Shilo Military Family Resource Centre. She holds a MSW from the University of Toronto and her extensive volunteer and work experience has been primarily in the not-for profit sector.*

## LOOKING AHEAD

**September 22-26, 2006**

International Association for Volunteer Effort - World Volunteer Conference,  
New Delhi, India

**December 5, 2006**

International Volunteer Day

To become a member of: PAVR-O [www.pavro.on.ca](http://www.pavro.on.ca) or  
CAVR [www.cavr.org](http://www.cavr.org)

## DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS & THEMES

Issue	Deadline	Theme
Volume 4	articles due on the 24th of October	Positioning our Profession
Volume 15.1	articles due on the 24th of January	Risk Management
Volume 15.2	articles due on the 24th of March	International Volunteering
Volume 15.3	articles due on the 24th of May	Program Funding