

Volunteer and everybody wins.

I CHANGE

Volunteering is ...

Volunteering is a great way to build a better community and improve the quality of life of others. Every day, many people from all walks of life give their time and talent to organizations across Canada with no concern for money or material gain. They work for youth as leaders, coaches, or referees. They care for the elderly, help those with disabilities, and build houses for the homeless. They organize charitable events, fundraise, sit on committees or boards, and deliver meals on wheels.

Others choose to volunteer informally and help others directly without being part of an organization or group. Examples include helping people with health-related or personal care within their home, driving them to appointments, shopping for them, paying bills, tutoring, or helping with lawn and garden care or snow removal.

Some volunteering is skills-based where the volunteer is highly skilled and trained in their area of service. Paramedics volunteer their services for community events such as a charity walk, educators assist with reading programs, and construction trades volunteer to help build homes with Habitat for Humanity.



Volunteering in Canada

The 2004 *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating* states that volunteering is an important part of Canadian life and the volunteer activities of Canadians reflect the variety of their interests and motivations. It is worth noting that, in 2004:

- Canadian volunteers contributed an average of 168 hours
- Top volunteers—the 25% of volunteers who account for 77% of all volunteer hours—contributed 180 hours or more each
- Almost 12 million Canadians—45% of the population aged 15 and older—volunteered their time to charities or other non-profit organizations
- Volunteers contributed almost two billion volunteer hours to organizations
- Canadians volunteered most often for four types of organizations:
 - Sport and recreation (18%)
 - Social services (17%)
 - Religious organizations (16%)
 - Education and research (11%)



Why do Canadians volunteer so much?

Each of us has our own reasons for getting involved with helping others. For some, it may be to gain valuable experience to be more qualified for new job opportunities, to make a real difference in the lives of others, or a chance to meet people with similar interests and make new friends.

For others, it's to learn new skills, take on a new challenge, be a part of something bigger that improves the quality of life in your community, or to honour a friend or family member lost to a disease or in a tragedy.

TOP THREE REASONS TO VOLUNTEER:

- to give back to the community,
- to use one's skills and experiences,
- being affected by the cause supported by the organization.

(As reported by the *Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating*)



Employer-Supported Volunteerism (ESV)

Employers can show their commitment to improving the quality of life in their community by having an ESV program for their employees. An ESV program is good for business; it creates a positive public image of the company and increases positive name recognition and brand awareness. It's also good for employees; it develops their teamwork and leadership skills. And it's good for communities; it energizes them and shows that businesses are committed to helping people and the community as a whole.

Your workplace could participate in:

- A one-day corporate or community events program such as building a children's playground in one day.
- A one-day team building events program such as doing a clean-up project for a youth centre.
- A Habitat for Humanity house-building project in your community.
- An ongoing partnership with community organizations to 'adopt' a youth centre, sports club, or health centre and volunteer assistance on a weekly basis throughout the year.
- Matching money raised by its employees for charity.
- A workplace volunteer recognition and awards program

Before you volunteer

To help you decide on what volunteer role is right for you, ask yourself:

- What interests me?
- What do I want and not want to do?
- What skills do I have to offer?
- Do I want to learn new skills?
- How much time can I realistically give?



“Helping others makes us feel good about ourselves”

Are you looking for a volunteer opportunity?

Volunteering is a “win-win” activity. Helping others makes us feel good about ourselves, brings balance to our lives, and makes our community a better place. Why not look for a volunteer opportunity today! Contact a local organization or charity of your choice in your community or check out these websites:

Volunteer Canada

Find a Volunteer Centre in your province
<http://volunteer.ca/en/find-volunteer-centre>

United Way of Canada/Centraide Canada

Click on “Get Involved”
www.unitedway.ca

Voluntary Sector Connector (of Windsor-Essex County)

Select the red button on the left hand side of the screen that says “Volunteer Opportunities in Windsor-Essex County” on the website
www.vsconnector.ca/



KEY REFERENCES

Statistics Canada. (2006). *Highlights from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating*. Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians. Retrieved May 8, 2009, from http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/CSGVP_Highlights_2004_en.pdf