



YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

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DID YOU KNOW that youth volunteers are an essential part of any non-profit organization?

St. John Ambulance's mission statement states we improve the health, safety and quality of Canadian lives by providing training and community service. This includes youth.

In Canada from 1987 to 1997, the rate of volunteering by youth aged 15 to 24 years old in the voluntary sector went from 17% to 33%. Although the percentage of youth volunteers has decreased slightly since then, our organization stands to benefit from a high rate of young volunteers. Youth can challenge our ways of thinking, bring with them new ideas and an energetic perspective. They have much to contribute.

The needs of young volunteers vary from those of the adults. They require different support, training, and recognition. Youth seek flexibility in the programs they want to be involved in and want their experience to be varied, stimulating and interesting. Youth also need incentives and a variety of opportunities to fulfill personal goals. Along with all these expectations they want to enjoy themselves and have a few laughs along the way. By volunteering, youth develop new communication, career building and social skills that will be useful in other facets of their lives.

St. John Ambulance's Youth Program addresses all these needs. SJA has enthusiastic and energetic youth leaders with excellent leadership qualities and communication skills who nurture young people into becoming skilled leaders. Our program provides opportunities for social, educational and personal development through training, community service, leisure activities and special events. We give them a chance to serve the community and to grow in the process.

This fall, during the traditional recruiting season, the expectations of the young should be kept in mind. The manner in which we recruit and portray the organization is of the utmost importance. Welcome the new recruits and provide plenty of information to ensure a smooth, memorable and rewarding transition into our organization. We want to encourage youth to become adult members and future leaders of the St. John family.

Youth volunteers are not leaders of tomorrow, not the hope of the future – rather they are leaders of today and the future is now! (Becky Anderson, Volunteer Coordinator, Canadian Cancer Society) .

References in support of recruiting youth: April 2003 DYK "Mentoring", and November 2003 DYK "Volunteer Retention". Also check SJA Youth Leaders Manual and Volunteer Canada website for Youth Volunteerism article www.volunteer.ca

DID YOU KNOW?

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR ST. JOHN AMBULANCE MEMBERS