



VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

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DID YOU KNOW that the involvement of volunteers in Canada is as old as the country itself?

With the increasing demand for volunteers, organizations recognize now more than ever that volunteers' time and contributions must be respected. New roles for volunteers are emerging which are better suited to the needs, interests, and limitations of volunteers themselves, and which create greater opportunity for productive and satisfying involvement.

Satisfying volunteer involvement begins with understanding the volunteer and defining their role clearly in both the governance and service sectors of the organization. Each organization needs to create its own involvement philosophy consistent with its overall mission. This is the base on which to build volunteer program goals, policies, and other decisions affecting volunteers.

Establishing clear relationships between volunteers and paid staff is helpful for recruiting, and demonstrates the organization's appreciation for citizen involvement.

Volunteer Canada launched *The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* as part of the International Year of Volunteers in 2001. The Code provides a framework for organizations to develop effective volunteer practices and the mechanism to evaluate and improve their volunteer programs. The code outlines organizational principles and values (accompanied by standards). You can find this useful tool on the Volunteer Canada Website (www.volunteer.ca).

When developing a code of volunteer involvement remember that

- Volunteers can be passionate spokespersons and advocates because of their dedication to the cause
- Volunteers have the potential to significantly extend the organization's sphere of influence because of their number, diversity, access to additional people, businesses, opportunity, etc.
- When volunteers and paid staff work together as equal team members, the organization reaps the rewards of the unique gifts of each. Neither is a substitute for the other. Each adds value.
- Volunteers with specialized skills can be recruited from any walk of life, any profession, and any area of influence. Volunteers provide the organization access to all of the resources of the community; they hold potential to assist SJA to overcome any barrier it might encounter and solve any problem that might arise.
- Volunteers have the luxury to focus on a particular issue, client, or initiative. In contrast to paid staff who must frequently spread their energies and talents among a variety of projects, tasks, and/or functions.
- Involvement of a range of volunteers who come into the organization over time helps the organization stay current, guarding against resistance to change and "inside the box" thinking.

Volunteers are an integral part of the SJA team. Without them, we would be unable to offer the outstanding quality of service that we provide to our clients.

DID YOU KNOW?
AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR ST. JOHN AMBULANCE MEMBERS

For more information on *The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* go to www.volunteer.ca