



DID YOU KNOW that Employer-supported Volunteerism might just be the answer to finding more time to volunteer?

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AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR ST. JOHN AMBULANCE MEMBERS

With the busy lives we lead it is becoming more apparent that time for volunteering is at a premium. Our time is being split between work and family and the demands of everyday living has put a tremendous amount of pressure on us. It's like a balancing act. In light of increasing demand and decreasing supply, volunteer resources are in even-greater demand. What can we do? Can we turn to our employer for help?

The idea is not that far fetched. The most recent *Canadian Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating* reports that 27 percent of companies helped their employees to volunteer by allowing them to modify their work hours in order to take part in volunteer activity. This represents a five percent increase from 1997 to 2000. Employer-supported volunteerism is about enabling employees to donate their volunteer time and talents. It can take many shapes and forms with varying levels of employer support ranging from simple acknowledgement that employees perform volunteer work in the community, through to ongoing staff time-off and in-kind support of community efforts and charitable causes.

Employer-supported volunteerism is a win-win situation, both the employee and the employer gain. Everyone is involved. Having employees involved in voluntary activities sends a message to the community that the business sector is concerned about community issues. In turn, a better business climate is established and the well being of employees and customers increases. Supporting employees who are in leadership roles in the community increases the visibility of the business, strengthening employee morale and the pride employees have in the company they work for. Employees gain job-related skills needed to enter, stay in, and progress in the world of work. Research has shown that volunteering is extremely beneficial to the health of those engaged in it; it creates better immune system functioning, lowers stress levels, helps in the retention of mental acuity, and heightens sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Employees whose employers support their involvement in the community are more loyal to their employer and stay longer, reducing the costly need to recruit and train replacements.

Don't hesitate to let your employer know that you volunteer. Knowledge of your role in the community might bring future support by your employer to our organization.

Resource document: "*Making a Business Case for Employer-Supported Volunteerism*" published by Volunteer Canada and written by Linda Graff. This document can be downloaded from their website www.volunteer.ca