



## WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH VOLUNTEERS

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**DID YOU KNOW** that St. John Ambulance has been participating in a multi-part volunteer program development project since 2003?

Volunteers have always been extremely important to St. John Ambulance. The volunteer labour pool is undergoing radical transformation escalating the role of volunteer managers, i.e. screening and training, policies and procedures, accountability and communication systems. With the ever changing world it is getting increasingly more difficult to recruit and retain appropriate volunteers and cope with the increased cost and time involved. In organizations where volunteers are placed in positions of significant trust and where the potential risks and consequences of error are great, the highest possible standards in volunteer program management is paramount.

In response to this changing scenario, SJA contracted Linda Graff and Associates Inc. to undertake the development of a volunteer management program. The main focus of this project was to research and make recommendations about the standards and infrastructure required to support safe and effective volunteer involvement in St. John Ambulance.

The project consisted of four components:

1. Risk Management Training and Strategy Session – A 2.5 day risk workshop with the Directors of Community Services took place in Winnipeg October 2003. Participants learned and developed a risk management plan of action for the risks they identified as most urgent.
2. Volunteer program Audit – The audit was a mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the managerial systems underpinning volunteer involvement in an organization. The process identified specific opportunities to enhance volunteer management systems, risk reduction strategies and the potential for improved managerial efficiencies, increase volunteer productivity, enhanced volunteer satisfaction, reliability, and retention, and higher quality service delivery.
3. Outcome Development – This 2.5 day September 2004 planning session with Directors of Community Services in Halifax resulted in the identification and refinement of outcomes in the three key community service programs.
4. Best Practice Standards in Volunteer Program Management – The project culminated in the delivery of **A Volunteer Program Management Handbook “Working Effectively with Volunteers”**. This resource has been prepared to help both SJA volunteer leaders and employees to optimize the involvement of volunteers throughout our organization.

This handbook is available to every person (paid or unpaid) in a leadership position whose responsibilities include management or support of volunteer resources. Contact your local Council Office.

# DID YOU KNOW?

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR ST. JOHN AMBULANCE MEMBERS