

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Volunteers listen with their hearts

Serving the community has a nice ring to it, doesn't it? It sounds very important, and it is! Without volunteers all charitable and nonprofit organizations would suffer. We rely on volunteers to protect the environment, clean streams, provide maintenance to our trail systems, coach hockey and baseball games, organize Boy Scout or Girl Guide outings, help the elderly, raise funds for schools, hospitals and sporting organizations and much, much more. Volunteers are the ones that help single parents or children with disabilities. They are the ones who raise urgently needed funds for medical research or organize outings for the underprivileged in our community. They are the ones who provide leadership on boards of directors and the governance for all voluntary, nonprofit and charitable organizations. Put simply, volunteers are the people who make our communities a better place to live.

It is not always easy being a volunteer. It can be exhausting and nerve-wrecking. It can be heart-breaking, but it can also be enriching and empowering, and it is wonderfully worthwhile. Those that have volunteered know what I mean – they have felt the frustration, suffered the exhaustion,



Jim Burton, FRI, MVA, Honorary Chairperson, Volunteer Week

yet they carry on. Understanding the fact that we know there is a need for our work; we know we are making a difference. That in itself is its own reward.

It has been said in selling that 68 per cent of sales are not made because of failure to ask for the business. Interestingly, the same seems to be true for volunteering. In

comparison, some 55 per cent of all those volunteers who initially get involved in an organization are a direct result of someone asking (i.e. asked by someone inside the organization). Volunteer organizations that continuously encourage members to ask others to get involved strategically grow and bring fresh ideas, which promote the life and success of our communities.

Being a volunteer provides endless opportunities for growing new friendships, developing professional and personal skills and learning from other volunteer gifts. Employer and workplace supported volunteer programs are good for business. There is developing evidence that employer-supported volunteering leads to greater employee motivation and builds employee competencies.

If you haven't been asked to join a voluntary organization, may I suggest you visit the Community Services Council web site at www.envision.ca and click Volunteer Connections to see where you might get involved. You can also call CSC at 753-9860 for more information. There are 5000+ voluntary organizations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador so there are many different opportunities for you to participate.

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