

A Message from the President on International Volunteer Day: December 5, 2008

Volunteers – A Certainty in Uncertain Times



It's hard to deny it – we are living in rapidly changing times. There is significant economic and political change on the horizon. And it's not even the euphoric change that a certain US President-Elect has been talking about for some time now. No, there are definitely tough times ahead, which will put many individuals, institutions and governments to the test.

In these uncertain times, International Volunteer Day is so timely, as it provides a much needed reminder to recognize and celebrate the unwavering force that are British Columbian volunteers who, among countless other things, support, care, encourage. Social and economic commentators agree, when the economy takes a downturn, the need for community and social services grows.

Of course, as need grows, so too does the demand and pressure for volunteers who deliver and support these vital services. However, the operating budgets of community and social service agencies across the province will likely stay the status quo or even shrink. Funders are already beginning to cut back their support as they try to deal with the realities of a harsher investment climate. Volunteers themselves will be hard pressed to offer the kind of time and commitment they would normally contribute as they too need to cope with their own changing or uncertain circumstances.

Under these conditions, organizations will be put to the test in their efforts to recruit, manage and retain volunteers. But this situation is not new and I am confident in our collective capacity to rise to the challenge and be there when the need is the greatest.

For Volunteer BC, we too are not immune to the changing times. We are adjusting and adapting our plans and activities and we look forward to working closely with volunteer centres across the province and our broader membership of volunteer-involving organizations on how we move forward. Our commitment to promoting and strengthening volunteerism in the province will remain unwavering. Let this resilience, found everywhere within the sector, be a cause for celebration this International Volunteer Day.

Continued happy volunteering,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Ho'.

Justin Ho
President
Board of Directors



Volunteer BC
302-207 West Hastings St.
Vancouver BC V6B 1H7
604-873-5877
volbc@vcn.bc.ca
www.volunteerbc.bc.ca

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