



Suite 302-207 West Hastings Street
Vancouver BC V6B 1H7
Phone: 604-873-5877
Fax: 604-279-7038
E-mail: volbc@vcn.bc.ca
Website: www.volunteerbc.bc.ca

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The Editor
The Vancouver Sun
200 Granville Street, Suite #1
Vancouver, BC V6C 3N3

Dear Editor,

On September 25th, the federal government announced \$1 billion in cuts, eliminated funding to many programs that directly and indirectly affect the voluntary sector and volunteer-involving organizations across the country, including the elimination of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI).

Undoubtedly, this sudden and surprising decision will impact organizations across BC. Not only has CVI been effective in helping these groups become stronger and better connected, through this national initiative on volunteerism, BC's health sector, social services and sports and recreation programs have all benefited.

Specifically in BC, our colleagues at CVI-BC have worked hard to bring important resources and networking opportunities to help organizations and volunteers in our province do what they do best – make our communities better.

The CVI was cut as a “non-core program” – a program that doesn't meet “the priorities of the federal government or of Canadians.” This surely cannot mean that the federal government places no value on Canadians being involved in their communities through volunteering. Volunteerism and a healthy voluntary sector is especially important here in British Columbia, where the value of volunteers is undeniable, with the province and the country preparing to host the World in 2010, with the help of some 20,000 volunteers.

We hope this simply means the federal government has a better plan for how they will invest in volunteerism.

However, here is the problem: we have not heard anything about what this plan might be.

The federal government now has the opportunity to develop a new way to support the engagement of Canadians in their communities – of volunteering and volunteerism. We urge them to begin discussions as soon as possible if we are to continue moving forward.

Sincerely,

Michael McCoy
President

Excellence in Volunteerism to Build a Better British Columbia