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The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Block  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

October 6, 2006

### Federal Government Support for Volunteerism and the Voluntary Sector

Dear Prime Minister,

On September 25th, the federal government eliminated its support for the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI). We want to ensure that the federal government continues to invest in volunteerism.

In 2004, 12 million Canadians volunteered with 161,000 nonprofit organizations that provide critical services to citizens. The quality of life of every Canadian is better because of the work of volunteers across this country. Volunteerism contributes \$90.5 billion in revenue (making up 12.5% of the GNP) and touches every sector from tourism, arts, sport, social services, and numerous other industries and sectors.

The act of volunteering for those 12 million Canadians impacts services at all levels of government: local, provincial and federal. Volunteerism – the movement that supports, engages, and retains volunteers – requires support at all of these levels, particularly here in British Columbia, with the province and the country preparing to host the World in 2010, with the help of some 20,000 volunteers.

While millions of volunteers across the country are committing their energies to community service, there is evidence that this core Canadian value is being undervalued and not supported. Of those 12 million volunteers, 1.3 million are doing the majority of the work that society expects nonprofits to deliver. We cannot take their commitment for granted. Over the past 5 years the CVI, Volunteer Canada and Imagine Canada, has been effective in bringing strength to this movement. **Continued investment by the Federal Government is essential.**

The Federal Government eliminated CVI on the grounds that it is “not a priority for Canadians.” This seems contrary to the 12 million Canadians engaged in civil society and ultimately to all those whom they serve. It is a priority for Canadians who depend on health services, who access social support systems, whose children are involved in sports, who have school age children or aging parents... the list goes on. It includes all of us.

Federal investment in volunteering and volunteerism is a priority for Canadians. With the elimination of the CVI, we must work together to ensure Federal Government support for Volunteerism and the Voluntary sector is not eroded and is enhanced as an essential service and critical for Canadians quality of life, health and economic wellness. We are prepared to discuss ways in which both the voluntary sector's priorities and the priorities of the federal government might be met.

Sincerely,

Michael McCoy  
President

cc: Volunteer Canada

**Excellence in Volunteerism to Build a Better British Columbia**