



**Developing Strategies to Meet the
Challenges
in the Voluntary Sector
Volunteer BC Provincial Summit
Summary Report**

September 24-25, 2004

Summit Summary

From September 24 to 25, 2004, Volunteer BC (the provincial association promoting excellence in volunteerism for British Columbia) convened a provincial summit to provide a venue for discussion about the future for the voluntary sector in BC. The Summit, entitled "Developing Strategies to Meet the Challenges in the Voluntary Sector", was a great success with more than 60 representatives from both volunteer centres and voluntary organizations from across the province participating.

The Summit goals were to:

1. Strengthen the infrastructure supporting voluntary organizations in BC;
2. Identify and build upon the collateral we have as a network to move forward;
3. Collaboratively develop strategies to move forward to meet current challenges, ensuring stability and generate province wide support; and
4. Leverage the momentum and energy of pre-Olympic preparations to strengthen and deepen the voluntary sector of BC.

In addition to Volunteer BC's Annual General Meeting, there was also a series of informative and inspirational speakers. Topics and speakers included:

- *Building Community Capacity and Readiness for 2010* – Mary MacKillop, Director of Volunteer Resources for Providence Health Care and Past President of the Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR)
- *Creating a Provincial Funding Foundation for the Voluntary Sector* – Richard Mulcaster, President and CEO of the Vancouver Foundation
- *Highlights from 2003 National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO)* – Dr. Vic Murray, Adjunct Professor in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria and the Voluntary Sector Knowledge Network
- *Regional Technical Training & Support Network* – Peter Royce, Coordinator of the Vancouver Community Network

Recommendations

The following are recommendations that arose from group discussions and reflections on the speakers and their topics. Recommendations are grouped by the goals of the summit.

1. Infrastructure

To strengthen the infrastructure supporting voluntary organizations, Volunteer BC needs to:

- Work with the government to establish a Voluntary Sector Secretariat;
- Establish a listserv to simplify the sharing of information between organizations;
- Facilitate development of communications channels within the sector;
- Establish a provincial funding foundation similar to Alberta's Wild Rose Foundation;
- Convene an annual conference to build capacity and inspire those working and leading the sector;
- Continue to be the provincial leader for the sector – convening stakeholders, disseminating information, facilitating action, advocating for provincially supported networks, and driving the growth and strength of volunteerism provincially;

- Be the hub to connect community needs with community assets (supported by the BC volunteer centres) in order to promote citizen engagement;
- Support and strengthen the capacity of voluntary organizations to enhance and promote the development of a diversified volunteer base; and
- Develop a communications plan for public education and community outreach regarding universal volunteerism messages.

2. Building on Strengths

To identify and build upon the collateral we have as a network to move forward, Volunteer BC needs to:

- Conduct a mapping project to identify who is organizing or support volunteers, their mission, their members, where the gaps exist, how the sector is linked together, to appreciate and identify roles and illustrate how the entire network functions;
- Develop a communications strategy to ensure universal recognition of the voluntary sector as a professional grouping as well as the sector's economic impacts; and
- Work towards new partnerships to build unity, cohesiveness, and clarity in relationships. Promote collaboration across the sector.

3. Collaboration

To collaboratively develop strategies to move forward to meet current challenges, ensuring stability and generate province wide support, Volunteer BC needs to:

- Participate in the roundtable discussions linked to the 2003 NSNVO;
- Initiate a Volunteer Action Day when local, municipal, provincial and federal government representatives are approached by the sector with a unified message increasing their awareness and urging their support for the sector;
- Conduct and participate in sectoral research to help increase awareness about the sector and its issues, strengths, impacts, etc;
- Work with the Olympic Legacies Fund to establish long-term investment in the voluntary sector of the province; and
- Start collaborating and connecting with the private sector, invite them to the table.

4. Olympic Momentum

To lever the momentum and energy of pre-Olympic preparations to strengthen and deepen the voluntary sector, Volunteer BC needs to:

- Establish a collaborative, sectoral, working group to connect with the Olympic Planning Committee early in 2005;
- Involve the entire voluntary sector in the development of pre-Olympic volunteering strategies, programs, and initiatives. No single entity can/should try to take the lead. It requires the contributions of everyone;
- Use the Olympic opportunity to market the message of the value of volunteering outside the sector;
- Use the excitement of the pre-Olympic build up, to inspire more BC youth and people who have not previously volunteered to volunteer;
- Develop training models to help make the volunteering environment more accessible especially to those who have not traditionally volunteered; and
- Learn from other cities and countries who have hosted, and exceed their achievements.