



The Connector

A Volunteer BC Newsletter

December 2007 Edition

Welcome to this issue of The Connector

December is a month of celebration- of Christmas, of Hannukah and of Eid- and more generally, of the spirit of giving, reflection and joy. Tied to all of this, December is also when we celebrate International Volunteer Day, December 5th, and the immense contributions which volunteers make to building communities, making change and keeping hope alive. Therefore, this issue is dedicated to volunteers around the world, and to a future, in 2008 and beyond, filled with the gifts that volunteerism gives us.

Provincially Speaking

Updates from Volunteer BC



Celebrating International Volunteer Day Around the Province

In November we asked you to tell us about how you celebrated International Volunteer Day on December 5th. We are pleased to showcase some examples of your fabulous and original events and your Super Star Volunteers.

2007 Stars of Volunteerism

From the Nanaimo Francophone Association: L'Association des francophones de Nanaimo is proud to announce that **Berthe Michaud**, has won the AFN's 2007 Volunteer of the Year Award. Berthe has made B.C her home for the past 50 years. She is an engaging person who has generously given time to her community and is very involved with the AFN's Seniors Group. She answers to the call of duty with a smile and we know we can always count on her. As the AFN's Executive and Artistic Director, Nicole Langlois, says: "*Berthe is like freshly baked bread: warm and delightful, we love her!*" Berthe has a big heart and an even greater compassion, which has been exemplified in her life-long role as a caregiver. Berthe also volunteers a great deal of her time to another entity close to her heart, the Port Theatre. Her loyal involvement in the community and her immeasurable generosity make her a shining example for our youths.



For IVD, Parkgate Community Services, celebrates the Parkgate Senior's Centre Craft Group. This group of dedicated volunteers meets weekly at Parkgate's Seniors' Centre to create items to display and sell, with all proceeds going to the Parkgate Senior's Centre. As a group they welcome new members, provide instruction and assistance and a welcoming and happy social experience. The format and support of this group also allows for people with disabilities to participate. This group is so well organized that they have a manager who looks after promoting, advertising and advocating for their group and their crafts. Recently, they helped promote Parkgate's Christmas Craft Fair, where people can come to purchase a variety of knitted crafts and handmade cards. The Group has also donated their hand-knitted items to those in need in the community. In January 2007 the they responded to an urgent request from the Aboriginal Mother's Centre in Vancouver and subsequently delivered several large boxes of hand crafted women's and children's gloves, hats, scarves and sweaters. The Group knits "Comfort Dolls" which are used as packing material for delicate medical supplies destined for orphans and children dying of AIDS in Africa, by local doctors, healthcare workers and ICROSS-CANADA volunteers. Every year the Seniors' Craft Group contributes thousands of hours to Parkgate Community Services; many of their hours are done at home and never recorded. However, in 2007 to date the group contributed 2,436 recorded hours with their busiest period of the year yet to be included.



Jennifer Lewish told us about Mrs. McKay, her first pick for volunteering in Terrace, BC. A gym teacher by profession, Mrs. McKay and her husband have organized a 10 week after-school basketball programme in the community for kids ages 8 years and up. As Jennifer shared with us, "with the latest statistics about kids today with regard to obesity, gangs, and drugs, Mrs. McKay's Mini Basketball programme is providing an opportunity for kids in our area- an opportunity to learn, grow, and to gain skills through sports and to build lifelong friendships."

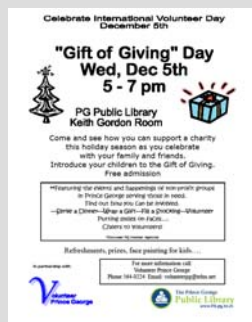


Ilona Grymonpre, Chair of Canadian Parents for French (CPF) in Nelson, BC, recognizes Victoria Vaseleniuk as a super star volunteer. Victoria has played a key role as Chair for CPF in Nelson for the last nine years, a group which promotes French language opportunities for students. When Ilona became president, Victoria as past chair, helped ensure a smooth transition. Over the years Victoria sat on the French Advisory Committee, meeting with the teachers and administrators, and playing an instrumental role in keeping French Immersion in the region strong. Victoria understands the funding and the politics, and has always ensured that money dedicated to French immersion is well spent.

Victoria has contributed hours of time to helping with course selections, with administering surveys to grade 9 and 12 students annually, tabulating the results for school administrations, which has helped teaching staff to identify weaknesses and build strengths. This year, the highlight of the French immersion programme was a student exchange to Quebec for two months, a programme launched by Victoria. The programme succeeded in helping students become fully bilingual. Victoria also loves to read and organizes a major event each fall bringing together authors and readers from across Canada. Victoria's children have all grown up and graduated, but she continues to give her time to the PAC, Parent Advisory Committee. Victoria remains a provincial representative to CPF, working hard at the policy level by, for example, meeting with the Deputy Minister of Education. As Ilona tells us, "I realize most parents do not know that it takes a parent like Victoria to make a change. I know that French Immersion in our district is a better programme due to her efforts."

How You Celebrated December 5th

The Vancouver Aquarium hosted volunteers and their friends and family ----> at Winterfest, their annual celebration of Aquarium volunteers' contributions and achievements. Volunteers are recognized when they reach 100 hours of service, for example, or for when they reach a certain number of years of volunteering with the Aquarium.



Volunteer Prince George, one of the most active volunteer centres in the province, hosted a Gift of Giving Day for International Volunteer Day in Prince

<---- George, BC.

Volunteer Canada's website has a wealth of resources on IVD and used the opportunity to help promote volunteer centres around the country through a

campaign celebrating December 5th ---->



Policy, Practice and Action

News from the Sector in BC and Nationally

Listing your Volunteer Opportunities On-Line: New Resource

In November, Macdonald Youth Services launched The Global Directory of Web Sites that List Online Volunteer Opportunities. This unique global directory, organized by country, will allow non-profit organizations to easily find web sites to list their web-based volunteer opportunities. All sites listed in the directory provide the name of the Web site, the site's address, who is eligible to list online volunteer opportunities, the geographic area the site serves and if any costs are involved to list. To learn more, visit: <http://www.mys.ca/directory> or contact Randy Tyler at MYS at 204-949-4292.

Focus on Child Poverty in BC: Take Action

First Call, a cross-sectoral child and youth advocacy coalition, has recently released their 2007 Child Poverty Report Card for BC. They offer numerous ways that you can take action on the concerns highlighted in the report, including a letter template you can download and adapt to include your own statements: <http://www.firstcallbc.org/>

Did You Know?



Charitable donations increase in 2006, but the number of donors falls

Statistics Canada reports that charitable donations rose 8.3% to \$8.5 billion in 2006, but the number of donors decreased 1.4% to 5.8 million. In Alberta 600,000 people gave a total of \$1.29 billion to charity in 2006, a 15.5% increase in donations. Nationally, 25% of all taxfilers claimed charitable donations and the average donor age was 52 years. Canadians earning \$20,000 to \$60,000 per year were more likely to give than those with higher incomes.

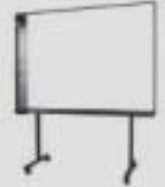
Source: *Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)*

Back to the Classroom

Learning opportunities to build a stronger sector

Volunteer Programme On-Line Training Course

Charity Village is offering a Great Volunteer Programme on-line course, a learning opportunity intended to give you and your organization the benefits of a structured volunteer program that will help you manage recruiting, retaining, and rewarding volunteers. You can sample the first section of the course on-line before signing up. E-mail info@charityvillage.com or visit <http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/learn/coursedemo.html>



Opportunities

Funding, Capacity-Development and More

New Fellowship Opportunity for Civil Society Leaders

The Carold Institute is offering the Alan Thomas Fellowship to promote civil society and voluntary action, a major new initiative to strengthen leadership for civil society. This new Fellowship will be awarded to a leader in the NGO/non-profit sector, who would not normally have access to a sabbatical leave. The award, valued at a maximum amount of \$50,000 for one year, is intended to allow the recipient, at a transitional moment in his or her career, to make a significant contribution to the sector, through research and reflection, leading to possible publication or dissemination in another medium. The award is designed to support individual leaders, but also to build a broader network of researchers and practitioners. The deadline for application is February 29, 2008. To obtain an application form or learn more, contact Juliet Huntly at (613) 376-3391 or jhuntly@kos.net



Arts Funding Database On-Line

2010 Legacies Now's website includes a database of funding opportunities where organizations can find information about other arts funding organizations and opportunities at the following link: <http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/152/>.

In Print / Audio

Books, Publications and Other Learning Tools for You



Information Services Vancouver offers deal on Red Books

Many of our readers will be more than familiar with the indispensable directory of non-profit organizations and services in the Lower Mainland of Vancouver. The 2007-2008 Red Book is now available at Information Services Vancouver. One copy of the Redbook costs \$70, but if you purchase a second copy, you receive 20% off. Visit http://www.vcn.bc.ca/isv/isv_enevs_oct07.html for more information



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