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CORPORATE CONNECTIONS

LES CONNEXIONS D'ENSEMBLE

~~ Celebrating our 15th year of publication ~~

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Editorial Team

Carol Anne Clarke
Joan Cox
Chris Harwood
Chris Jarvis
Sheila Jenkins
Rachel Stoparczyk
Lynne Whitehead
Joan Wyatt

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Subscriptions and correspondence can be sent to:
2222 Fillmore Cr., Ottawa, K1J 6A3
cjvrm@yahoo.ca

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EDITORIAL

At first blush, the topic Corporate Connections may seem like an unlikely subject to be explored by a journal devoted to volunteer resource management. Yet, for many of us in the not-for-profit sector, we have come to realize that our 'corporate connections' are often the ones that enable us to do such good work in furthering the goals of our organizations. Partnerships with the business sector come in many forms and we are hoping that this issue will provide you with an overview of the topic as well as some inspiring examples of corporations helping our communities.

We start off with a western perspective as Laurel Benson provides an in-depth look at Volunteer Calgary's Workplace Volunteer Council and the work that they facilitate to benefit the voluntary sector in their city. In her article, *Investing in Volunteer Management- Money in the Bank*, Nadine Maillot share pointers on how managers of volunteer resources can make an effective case to a funder on the financial benefits of supporting volunteer resource management.

Margot Jagger shares her experience with the Loaned Representative Program of the United Way of the Lower Mainland in British Columbia.

An example of companies who place a high priority on community building by helping others and enabling their employees to do the same is presented by authors from MBNA Canada and Bell Canada. Their community building efforts are truly inspiring.

Like Learning to Fly, written collectively by the writers at Stiff Sentences, gives us insight into the benefits of an employer-supported volunteer program to the volunteers involved and the company itself.

Our peer expert, Norma Lamont, shares her ideas on how to nurture a relationship with a business so that it will continue over time while our book reviewer, Danielle Robinson, introduces us to the Volunteer Canada publication, *Making a Business Case for Employer-Supported Volunteerism*.

We hope that the ideas and insights presented in this edition of the journal will inspire you to forge your own community connections as you move ahead with your valuable work.

Sheila Jenkins
Editorial Committee

VOLUNTEER CALGARY'S CALGARY WORKPLACE VOLUNTEER COUNCIL

by Laurel Benson

Volunteer Calgary's Calgary Workplace Volunteer Council (CWVC) is a unique program that works to support companies in developing, implementing, promoting and celebrating successful employee volunteer programs. The CWVC provides Volunteer Calgary's expertise in volunteer management to the business sector recognizing both the similarities and the differences in managing and motivating volunteers within non-profit and corporate environments.

Research demonstrates that employee volunteer programs have beneficial impacts on employee recruitment and retention in addition to providing benefit to our community. More often, we are seeing ratings of business operations including elements of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) including employee volunteer programs and corporate philanthropy. Most recently, the April 2006 edition of Canadian Business included specific reference to employee volunteer programs within their recognition of the Best Places to Work in Canada. Employee volunteering is being integrated into the strategic plans of successful businesses and is being recognized as important by employees, customers, investors and the greater public. Volunteer Calgary sees significant potential in this heightened understanding and awareness of the important impact that businesses and employees can have on community.

The Calgary Workplace Volunteer Council currently has 20 corporate members, the majority being large companies of 150 or more individuals. Many of these members have at least some initial development of an employee volunteer program with some having quite sophisticated programs. A key benefit to new CWVC members at this time is the opportunity to connect with and learn from other companies who are doing well with their employee volunteer programs. In addition, Volunteer Calgary offers quarterly professional development meetings, opportunities to network with other managers of employee volunteer programs and consultation services to member companies to develop, support and assess their volunteer programs.

Each year, Volunteer Calgary supports the CWVC employee volunteer programs by organizing a unique group volunteer experience called Paint the Town. In 1998, the members of CWVC developed an annual project to foster their vision of promoting employee volunteerism by engaging teams of corporate volunteers in making a direct impact on their community. Paint the Town provides CWVC members with a pre-planned and well organized group volunteer experience in which teams of employee volunteers come together to

paint the homes of senior citizens over the course of one day. Many companies find that a short-term, high impact project is relatively easy to involve employees in and provides many of the outcomes they are looking for with their program.

In addition to the complete project being planned and the materials being provided for the employee teams, Volunteer Calgary works with the media to garner attention for the participating companies. This has worked very well in past years, however, a challenge that Volunteer Calgary is facing this year, is a shortage of skilled labour to prepare the homes for the painting projects and the increased costs of materials associated with painting the homes. This year, there are more CWVC member teams wishing to paint homes than we have the capacity to prepare, which means some changes in how Paint the Town will involve employee teams.

Recognizing the dynamic city that the Calgary Workplace Volunteer Council and Volunteer Calgary serve, the CWVC is in the process of making significant changes in both how the CWVC and its Paint the Town employee volunteer event will be run. In the future CWVC will aim to serve the needs of small and medium sized businesses to develop and implement employee volunteer programs. We will also work to meet the diverse ways that employee groups are volunteering in alignment with their business goals. In addition, Volunteer Calgary plans to develop training and consultation services for nonprofit members to help them accommodate corporate groups who are looking for volunteer opportunities as part of their workplace volunteer programs.

The challenges presented by this year's Paint the Town event are being addressed immediately by expanding the group volunteer opportunities to include activities other than painting the homes of seniors. The ultimate goal is to transform Paint the Town into an employee volunteer program that links groups of employee volunteers to the needs of our nonprofit members rather than creating a stand alone program of painting seniors' homes. This requires significant work in training and building capacity within our nonprofit members while also educating employee groups on reasonable expectations from nonprofit organizations in their ability to manage groups of volunteers.

We recognize that not every non-profit has volunteer opportunities that are suitable for employee groups and are working to develop realistic expectations within our CWVC membership. We also recognize that many nonprofit organizations would benefit greatly from the impact that employee groups can have. They simply need to learn how to effectively manage and work with employee groups. Building this capacity on both sides of the equation is the longer term goal for Volunteer Calgary.

In addition, CWVC will seek financial support, through fundraising and sponsorships, that will provide Volunteer Calgary with the resources to effectively support employee volunteer programs in more companies and to build capacity

within our nonprofit member organizations. Volunteer Calgary recognizes the potential that supporting corporate volunteer programs has in creating awareness and demonstrating value for the work that we do with potential corporate supporters. This increased awareness of the importance of volunteerism and of Volunteer Calgary will enable us to strengthen our corporate giving program. It will help companies recognize the role Volunteer Calgary plays in supporting their corporate philanthropic goals.

While we look to the future of the Calgary Workplace Volunteer Council, we also celebrate the success of our past year. Here is a summary of some CWVC's 2005 highlights.

This past year's Paint the Town was a tremendous success, with 18 employee teams comprised of approximately 380 volunteers involved in painting the homes of Calgary seniors. Volunteer Calgary's plans for the 2006 Paint the Town event involve expanding the number of seniors who are assisted, expanding sponsorship opportunities and, of course, increasing the participation of employee volunteers.

Each year Volunteer Calgary celebrates outstanding employee volunteer programs at our annual Leadership Awards through our 'Leaders in Business' category. In 2005, we honoured employee volunteers at IBM, Conoco-Phillips, and SportSwap for their innovation, corporate culture and impact on community. At our 2006 Awards, held in April during National Volunteer Week, we celebrated the employee volunteer programs of CIBC Wood Gundy, GWL Realty Advisors and Southport Dental Care.

Finally, the CWVC held quarterly council meetings providing members with an opportunity to network, discuss best practices, and share information. Topics this year were an overview by IBM of their workplace volunteer program, risk management, group volunteerism and a model to assess program alignment.

With direction from Volunteer Calgary's three year strategic plan, the CWVC is poised for growth both in the depth of service provided in support of employee volunteerism and in the size of our membership.

Volunteer Calgary's mission is: Engaging more people, more effectively, to volunteer in the community. For more than 50 years, Volunteer Calgary has supported volunteerism and the organizations in Calgary and area that rely on volunteers.

At 71%, we can proudly state that the rate of active volunteerism in Calgary continues to be higher than the provincial and national averages. As one of the largest and most active volunteer centres in North America, Volunteer Calgary

and surrounding areas continue to be avid and effective volunteers in their communities.

Laurel Benson, CFRE, joined Volunteer Calgary as their Director of Fund Development and Communications in October 2005 and in this role is responsible for managing the Calgary Workplace Volunteer Council. She is also an Instructor at Mount Royal College, teaching courses in Fundraising, Marketing and Corporate Philanthropy as well as a Faculty Member for the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Volunteer Calgary recently celebrated Calgary's active volunteer participation rate of 71% and proclaimed the city as the "Volunteer Capital of Canada".

Employee Volunteerism Programs Benefits:

For employees:

1. Builds team cohesion
2. Strengthens and renews relationships
3. Provides training and increases skill sets

For The employee/company:

1. Creates a sense of pride in the company
2. Demonstrates corporate support of employee/community initiatives
3. Strengthens the company's position as "employer of choice"
4. Increased productivity of employees

For the company/suppliers relationships:

1. Creates collaborative opportunities with mutual benefits
2. Enhances corporate relationships
3. Supply chains are enhanced with socially responsible companies

For the community/company:

1. Cultivates good relationships between the company and the community
2. Builds the company's brand/reputation as a "caring company"
3. Creates stronger shareholder value

For the customer/corporation:

1. Brand loyalty increased as the company is community focused

Source: Volunteer Calgary

INVESTING IN VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT- MONEY IN THE BANK

by Nadine Maillot

In the summer of 2004, Volunteer Canada forged a partnership with Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources and UPS Canada to bring a valuable resource to Canadian funders. A Sound Investment: The Value of Adding Volunteer Resources Management to your Philanthropic Portfolio is a resource that informs and encourages funders to support sound volunteer management programs. It is also a resource that should be in every manager of volunteer resources' library. Although the target audience is funders, it also provides managers of volunteers with key information about how to make a case to a funder on the financial benefits of supporting volunteer resource management.

The manager of volunteer resources' job description is constantly changing. Gone are the days when recruiting and scheduling volunteers was the only requirement. In today's environment, we must focus on the task of finding creative, innovative ways to educate our colleagues, both internally and externally, regarding the critical role of volunteers in fulfilling an organization's mission. This new resource can guide you.

We all hear the capacity buzz word. It can be said that this now-familiar term and volunteerism go hand in hand. How? It is simple. As more organizations face a future where innovation in delivering services is key, they look to the potential benefits inherent in expanding volunteer participation. As managers of volunteers, we can position ourselves as the knowledge-bearers, capable of assisting organizations in developing volunteer potential.

Are we ready? When the occasion arises, are we effective at articulating the benefits of a well-planned volunteer resources program? If you had five minutes with a corporate funder with a community investment portfolio, what would you say about the volunteer program you manage? Would you be able to make a strong case for why they should invest in volunteers and volunteer resource management in your organization?

Effective Volunteer Resource Management

The next time you have an opportunity to explain to a prospective funder what effective volunteer resource management does, try out these six key messages:

1. Leverages and improves grant making and corporate community involvement

Making a financial commitment to the effective management of volunteers in a voluntary organization can provide a unique opportunity for an organization

to strengthen its image as a good corporate neighbour.

2. Supports organizational objectives

When volunteers are engaged effectively, they enhance an organization's financial and in-kind resources. Supporting a volunteer program can result in improved organizational competencies, which will have a positive impact on the funder's bottom line.

3. Strengthens the sector by increasing capacity to deliver services

Many are under the assumption that since volunteers are not paid, then managing volunteers must not cost any money. But as we all know, resources must be invested for any initiative to be successful. Investing in volunteer resource management, including a professional manager of volunteer resources, is a means for a funder to demonstrate their commitment to strengthening the human resources in the voluntary sector.

4. Requires organizational and community infrastructure

A one-size-fits-all approach to supporting volunteerism will not succeed. The ability to engage and retain increasingly diverse volunteers requires a highly competent individual committed to a professional approach to managing a valuable human resource within a voluntary organization.

5. Requires training and development

Training and professional development extends beyond the manager of volunteers. Every individual who works in an organization needs to understand how to work with volunteers. Creating a culture that supports volunteers and values their contributions is up to everyone.

6. Contributes to building a civil society

When people know how to support their community, when it is easy for them to get involved in meaningful ways, they are more likely to volunteer over a longer period of time.

Working Together...

As professional managers of volunteer resources, it is up to each of us to understand what it takes to get our jobs done effectively and efficiently. Collectively, we need to promote the critical value of volunteer engagement and the vital need for a sound volunteer program led by a competent, educated manager of volunteers.

Nadine Maillot is a consultant and trainer in the area of volunteerism and volunteer management. She lives, works and plays in her community of Cochrane, Alberta.

UNITED WAY OF THE LOWER MAINLAND LOANED REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

by Margot Jagger

For 75 Years, United Way of the Lower Mainland has been helping people in our community. The organization plays a unique leadership role in the Lower Mainland by understanding and responding to the community's greatest needs, with a focus on investing in prevention based programs.

Each year, thousands of volunteers come together to raise money and the Loaned Representative Team works closely with workplaces to plan and implement fundraising campaigns. The Loaned Representative Team includes about 50 individuals who come from three different sources.

The majority of individuals are loaned by their employer. The employer continues to pay salary, benefits and expenses while the individual works full-time at United Way. Other individuals are sponsored by companies that are not able to send an employee but can provide a cash sponsorship to support the program. Many of these sponsored individuals are university cooperative education students who choose this experience as their work-term. Finally, a small number of special people join the program as volunteers and dedicate themselves full-time for nothing but the satisfaction of making a difference. These volunteers are typically retirees or individuals in career transition interested in learning more about working in the non-profit sector.

Annually, our Loaned Representative Team is very diverse. This year, we had a woman in her twenties loaned from the City of Vancouver whose regular job is coordinating programs at Trout Lake Community Centre. We have several Customer Relationship Managers from banks. We have front line workers and management trainees. Some individuals are in the early phase of their career and some are closer to retirement. Though diverse, these individuals come together for a full week of intense training (we call it "Boot Camp") in August and bond around a common goal of raising dollars to create positive impact for our community.

The individuals who participate in the program benefit from the unparalleled professional development that occurs. This includes public speaking, negotiation, problem-solving as well as project and time management. In addition, this experience provides a unique opportunity to learn about our community's needs and the power of individuals to make a difference.

This 16-week adrenalin rush keeps Loaned Representatives extremely busy. A typical day can include making an early morning presentation in a Board Room downtown and a planning meeting with a committee at a municipality followed by

a lunchtime BBQ with workers from a railyard ending with meetings with fellow Loaned Representatives back at United Way's offices in Burnaby. All Loaned Representatives are required to have a vehicle and there is a lot of driving because United Way's supporters are across the Lower Mainland. This is a job for someone who wants to be challenged and is not afraid of hard work. It is extremely tough but immensely rewarding for those that participate.

Companies that loan an employee benefit in several ways. First, employees who participate in the program return to work following the 16-week term with new skills, contacts and increased productivity and enthusiasm. Companies also benefit by being profiled as a supporter in all presentations made by the Loaned Rep and through the materials produced by United Way.

For many, the Loaned Representative Program has been a life-altering experience. A handful of individuals return every fall to participate. At least half of United Way's fundraising staff began as Loaned Representatives and many individuals working in fundraising today in the Lower Mainland have been a Loaned Representative.

The Loaned Representative program is a key tool for United Way to ensure that fundraising costs are kept extremely low. Because employers continue to pay salary, benefits, and expenses, we estimate that the program saves United Way over \$1.5m.

The program is quite magical, and can only be compared to a theatrical or musical production where a large group of strangers, each with a unique talent, come together to learn a performance and then execute in a short amount of time. Before long, the production is over and everyone must say goodbye. They have learned new things, made new contacts and will likely, never forget the experience.

For more information on the Loaned Representative Program, please contact Margot Jagger at 604-268-1301 or margotj@uwlm.ca. Margot is the Director of the Workplace Campaign at United Way and manages a staff of 15 who help coordinate the work of the Loaned Representative Team. Margot herself was a Loaned Representative in 1998.

MBNA CANADA: A COMPANY OF PEOPLE WHO LIKE TO HELP PEOPLE

by Wendy A. Mitchell and Lee Rose

MBNA Canada's community volunteer and giving programs continually reaffirm the company's longstanding commitment to assisting others. MBNA seeks to improve the quality of life for people in communities where its associates live and work by supporting and encouraging community involvement and initiatives.

As a result, the associates of MBNA Canada are very active in local community efforts and will volunteer an expected 24,000 hours of their time to charities and education initiatives this year. In addition to volunteer support, MBNA provides financial support to help create opportunities for people who are disadvantaged, with funding targeted to initiatives in education, human services and health services.

Community Partnership Programs

The community partnership programs match MBNA associates with organizations or schools to establish ongoing, long-term relationships. MBNA works closely with the community organization to provide volunteers to assist with a variety of tasks ranging from tutoring and mentoring to delivering meals and serving as members of the organization's board.

MBNA Canada has partnerships with seven organizations. In 1998, MBNA Canada established one of its first partnerships with LiveWorkPlay (LWP), a registered Canadian charity operating primarily in the Ottawa area. MBNA Canada supports the organization's mission to assist people with intellectual disabilities to progress as self advocates and contributing citizens.

MBNA Canada currently employs two LWP clients through the Competitive Employment program, which gives individuals with disabilities the opportunity to enhance their skills and gain valuable work experience in a professional business setting. Volunteers facilitate workshops during Active Community Experiences in Summer (ACES), a learning program geared toward employment preparation. As title sponsor of the annual LWP fundraising auction since 2000, MBNA has helped raise \$75,000 for the charity.

Volunteer Recognition Programs

This year, MBNA Canada is recognizing 56 associates who qualify for the company's Volunteer Service Donation Program. MBNA associates qualify by volunteering 40 or more hours with a particular charitable organization in a calendar year. These charitable organizations each receive a cash contribution based on the hours volunteered by MBNA associates. MBNA will donate \$53,000 to 36 different charitable organizations in the Ottawa region in

recognition of the volunteer support provided by the 56 associates.

The annual Francis X. Norton Community Service award is one of the most prestigious honors bestowed upon MBNA associates. An MBNA vice president, Francis was tireless in his efforts to spearhead the company's outreach efforts until his death in 1988 at age 85. This award, named in honor of Francis, is presented to an MBNA associate whose volunteer service demonstrates an outstanding commitment to helping others in the community.

Donations Program

The primary focus of MBNA Canada's Community Donations Program is to help create opportunities for people who are economically disadvantaged. The program provides support to nonprofit organizations for specific programs demonstrating measurable results.

Each request for funding is reviewed and discussed by the Community Relations Committee and senior managers to determine eligibility and conformity to program guidelines and priorities. In 2005, MBNA Canada received over 250 requests for funding and contributed over \$260,000 to 125 organizations.

Since first opening for business in 1997, MBNA Canada and its associates have raised over \$1.6 million dollars for United Way / Centraide Ottawa. According to United Way / Centraide, MBNA Canada associates are twice as likely to give when compared to people at other companies having campaigns.

People Helping People

The Show of Hands Wall, a wall mural commissioned in 2001, features the handprints of over 500 MBNA Canada associates who volunteered in the community since the company opened for business in 1997. Prominently displayed in the solarium, it serves as a reminder of the power of community involvement and its importance to the associates of the company.

MBNA Canada has a progressive community relations program with an abundance of information and incentives to encourage and create the opportunity for community involvement. The decision to contribute, to take action, 'to be the difference', ultimately lies with the individual. The associates of MBNA Canada, through their countless volunteer hours, fundraising campaigns and their hands-on approach to giving back to the community, continue to demonstrate that they truly are a company of people who like to help people.

MBNA Canada

Through a merger between MBNA and Bank of America that was completed effective January 1, 2006, MBNA is now a subsidiary of Bank of America Corporation. MBNA Canada is the leading provider of co-branded affinity credit card programs in Canada and the second largest MasterCard issuer in the country. MBNA Canada credit cards and related products and services are endorsed by nearly 500 Canadian organizations. MBNA Canada provides financial products and services throughout Canada from its headquarters in Ottawa.

Bank of America

Bank of America is one of the world's largest financial institutions, serving individual consumers, small and middle market businesses and large corporations with a full range of banking, investing, asset management and other financial and risk-management products and services. The company provides unmatched convenience in the United States, serving more than 38 million consumer and small business relationships with more than 5,800 retail banking offices, more than 16,700 ATMs and award-winning online banking with more than 14 million active users. Bank of America is the number 1 Small Business Administration (SBA) lender in the United States and the number 1 SBA lender to minority-owned small businesses. The company serves clients in 150 countries and has relationships with 97 percent of the U.S. Fortune 500 companies and 79 percent of the Global Fortune 500. Bank of America Corporation stock (NYSE:BAC) is listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

www.bankofamerica.com <<http://www.bankofamerica.com>>

Wendy A. Mitchell is the Community Relations Manager for MBNA Canada. She is actively involved with a number of organizations including LiveWorkPlay and United Way/Centraide of Canada.

Lee Rose is the Communications Manager for MBNA Canada. He is involved in numerous community activities including managing MBNA Canada's community partnership with Pineview Catholic School.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

by Cheryl Burwash and Patti Murphy

The people at Bell are good neighbours. For more than 125 years, employees and retirees have been giving back to their communities, donating funds, time, expertise and enthusiasm to help others in need.

"There's a real tradition and culture of volunteerism here at Bell," says Renato Discenza, Bell's Senior Vice President of Enterprise Sales in Ontario. "Our employees make considerable contributions to their communities, both within and outside the workplace, and we are extremely proud of their efforts."

Community Engagement

A key component to volunteering at Bell is the company's Volunteer Grant Program which recognizes employee and retiree volunteer contributions with grants back to the charities and community sport groups with which they volunteer. Eligibility for a grant is based on a minimum of 50 volunteer hours per year with a registered Canadian charity and/or community sport group. In 2005, Bell presented \$940,000 in grants to charities and another \$410,000 to community sport groups.

"There's an incredible sense of contribution and accomplishment when you volunteer," says Bell employee and active volunteer Michelle Davis. "Volunteering also opens up opportunities of meeting new people and being part of something bigger than yourself."

While most volunteers do not look for recognition, their efforts often inspire others to do the same. During National Volunteer Week every April, and regularly throughout the year, Bell recognizes employees and retirees who are active community volunteers through profiles of them on the company Intranet and in its retiree publication. In 2005, as part of the company's 125th anniversary, employees and retirees nominated 125 peers as Bell Heroes, many in recognition of their significant contribution in the community.

Community Events

When Bell steps up to a charitable program or event, it is Bell employees who are front and centre to help out, whether it is community reading programs, the annual Bell Walk for Kids Help Phone, the company's annual Employee Giving Campaign for United Way and other charities or countless other initiatives. With Bell's internal network of Volunteer Captains from Bell regions, these captains recruit supporters, organize fundraising events and participate in everything from community spring clean-ups to answering phones at various fundraising telethons.

HOW TOS on engaging volunteers

Bell, like other large national organizations, receives hundreds, even thousands, of requests for volunteers from the non-profit sector each year. As in the case with most large corporations, Bell would welcome the opportunity to actively recruit and fill the hundreds of volunteer requests received from community groups in a given year, however this is not always possible. What the company

does do to support organizations in search of volunteers is to post volunteer opportunities on their intranet site where employees can search and find volunteer activities that interest them

Here are some additional tips and ideas when making volunteer requests to large companies:

1. Make it timely

Ensure you give sufficient lead time prior to the event/activity for which you are recruiting volunteers.

2. Make it easy

Be sure your request for volunteers is clear (how many, for what event/initiative, dates/time, location, training provided, transportation, key charity contacts, on and off-hours, etc.).

Encourage companies you are approaching for volunteers to communicate your volunteer opportunities to their employees/retirees through their company Intranet, newsletters, mass email, etc.

Now that you have recruited your network of volunteers....

3. Make it thorough

- Conduct a briefing session or conference call with your volunteers well in advance of the event and ensure they receive regular communications leading up to and following the event.
- Provide key details to your volunteers so they understand roles and responsibilities and know what is expected of them.

4. Make it special

- Volunteers are a special bunch of people, as you well know, so making them feel valued and appreciated is essential. Whether a thank you letter from your CEO or other key executive, an informal volunteer recognition event or some small token of appreciation, these small gestures go a long way to making your volunteers feel appreciated for their contribution.

5. Make it tradition

- Retain your volunteer network. Employees rally together for many causes throughout the year and enjoy the tradition that comes with getting involved with recurring annual events and campaigns, so keep your network informed of other or recurring opportunities.

For more than 125 years, Bell has been deeply committed to the success of Canadian communities. We connect them and are connected to them through our people and the customers we serve every day. Vibrant, strong, safe communities from sea to sea are the key to Canada's success in the 21st century.

Cheryl Burwash is the Regional Director of Community Affairs at Bell Canada and has been with Bell for 30 years working in various positions in planning, product management, marketing and communications and community affairs. She currently sits on the Board of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) Foundation and the Ottawa International Hockey Festival/Bell Canada Cup.

Patti Murphy is the Associate Director, Employee Giving Program at Bell Canada and has worked at Bell for 10 years in corporate communications and community investment. Patti is an Account Executive with the United Way's Business Division campaign team.

LIKE LEARNING TO FLY

Volunteering enables a company of writers to impart the transformative power of the written word

The writers at Stiff Sentences Inc. have been exercising the power of the written word since 1988- serving clients in government and industry throughout Canada and abroad. Given their passion for language, it is no surprise to learn that many of the company's writers volunteer with OttawaReads.

OttawaReads is an early literacy initiative sponsored by the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI). It is a unique school/business partnership in which corporate and public-sector volunteers dedicate an hour a week reading one-on-one with students in junior and senior kindergarten and grade one.

Andrew Kirkwood, a senior writer and the company's vice-president of operations, knew right away that the OttawaReads program was a perfect fit for Stiff Sentences. "When the idea of volunteering for OttawaReads came up in our firm, everyone was intrigued," he says. "The program seemed fun and it was perfectly suited to our values and interests as a company of writers." But once he actually began going into the classroom, the abstract appeal gave way to something much more meaningful and rewarding. "I didn't expect the children's reactions to be so strong, so coloured with genuine excitement and engagement," he says. "The real thrill of volunteering, I discovered, is not in feeling proud because I've done something good, it's in feeling happy that this little thing I've done has made such a big difference to someone else."

Strong personal motivations

In fact, all Stiff Sentences writers derive a similar satisfaction from volunteering. Their commitment is also driven in some cases by strong personal motivations- as is the case of Meredith Fraser-Öhman, leader of the company's rapid-editing division.

"My four-year-old triplets have slightly delayed language skills and their speech-therapy sessions have heightened my awareness of the role adults must play in children's development," she says. I know first-hand how closely linked language skills are to early literacy and I want to make use of that knowledge and help other children catch up to their peers."

It seems as if for every one of the company's writers there is unique reason for taking part in a program like OttawaReads. For writer John Phillips, it is because he can still vividly recall the impact of being read to in his school days. For Heather Gander, it is about finding a greater purpose. She says in a large city like Ottawa, volunteering provides the opportunity to identify with the place where you live in a personal way.

Value of employer support

Another strong motivating factor is the support the company provides its writers to volunteer during working hours and how this support helps build group morale. Tina Reilly of Stiff Sentences appreciates the fact that the company not only enables her to volunteer during working hours, but also encourages her to do so: "Being part of OttawaReads enables me to volunteer on a regular basis during working hours, leaving my evenings and weekends free for family, friends and household responsibilities."

Denise Perrier, the company's French-language specialist, seconds Tina's thoughts. "When I started working at Stiff Sentences, I was eager to volunteer with OttawaReads," she says. "The experience adds tremendous value to the workplace." Steward Dudley, a senior writer at Stiff Sentences, adds that volunteering as a company helps transform willingness into action. "It's easy to volunteer as a group, partly because the responsibility is shared," he says. "You come to realize that even minimal involvement makes a difference as part of a collegial, collective effort."

A sense of unity

Because Stiff Sentences was able to find a volunteering opportunity that meshed perfectly with its mission and priorities, its entire writing team has enjoyed a deeper sense of unity and common purpose. Everyone involved derives satisfaction from being able to share his or her professional passion for the written word.

The company's founder and president, Brian Hanington, is perhaps the most deeply impassioned of all. He personally gives his time to OttawaReads. For Hanington, fostering a love of reading in children and helping establish strong literacy skills are part of a lifelong impulse to teach and share. His second company, The BackDRAFT Corporation, is the latest expression of that impulse: it provides corporations with a system to improve the quality of the writing they produce internally

Hanington sums up the OttawaReads experience this way: "It is thrilling to see

the sheer delight that kids have in their power to read. You'd think they were leaning to fly. I love being a witness to that excitement".

Stiff Sentences, the Company of Writers, is a unique enterprise: a company of writers working in every medium where words must inform and inspire, illuminate and engage. See www.stiffsentences.com for more information.

PEER EXPERT

Scenario:

A corporation has assisted my organization with an initiative. How do I nurture the relationship so that they will continue to be involved?

Response:

As a fundraiser, stewardship of donors is key to the success of our organization. Equally, stewardship of our volunteers is important to our efforts. For indeed, many of those volunteers become donors.

When approaching a corporation for sponsorship dollars, which is different from charitable dollars, one of the things that interest them is the ability to involve their staff. Many corporations encourage staff participation, up to and including matching employee charitable donations.

With our major events, we make room for participation by representatives of the corporation. As an example, our annual Telethon broadcast, is an event where volunteers are eager to participate. There is something about being part of a live television broadcast that appeals to volunteers. We reserve spots on the phone banks, as a priority, for representatives of those corporations that support us and encourage them to wear their t-shirt or another item that demonstrates that they represent their corporation. Like all of our volunteers we make sure that they have a positive experience, providing refreshments, specific directions on their responsibilities and by following up with appropriate expressions of appreciation. This also includes sending photos to them. We all like to see ourselves in photos, either with a group, or a celebrity or performing a volunteer duty.

If their experience is positive they will be willing to participate in other activities, either one of ours or, hopefully, create one of their own. If they create one of

their own, it has the domino effect of increasing the number of volunteers, to say nothing of increasing revenues.

In an effort to encourage their efforts, we offer a tour of our hospital, or ask one of our patients (or a family member), if appropriate, to meet with them at their workplace. We will also organize meetings in our facility's boardroom, providing a video of a patient, a patient in person or a medical staff person who can articulate the importance of their efforts to the business. Sometimes, it can be that little tug on the heart strings that encourages volunteers to go the extra step and give some of their precious time.

Stewardship of corporate volunteers includes acknowledging them as often as we can. As a matter of course, we have tried to acknowledge and thank volunteers in media interviews. If it makes it past the editors' knife, it reminds the volunteers that they are being remembered.....and appreciated.

A few years ago, we developed a program to formally recognize certain volunteers and donors that excel in their efforts to support our cause. Modeled on the volunteer recognition dinner, we host an annual Order of the Good Bear Event. It is a reception where volunteers and donors are inducted into the Order of the Good Bear. When a fundraising event is recognized, the entire group involved is inducted. They are presented with a certificate and a copy of the written description about their organization and their efforts. It is framed and presented to them by the Chair of the Foundation Board. A photo is taken and sent to them. That corporate group or individual returns proudly to their workplace. If there is an internal communication vehicle, print or electronic, the individual or group and their activity can be highlighted. It is a new spin on a tried and true concept that is received very well.

As the epitome of volunteer acknowledgment, we have asked representatives from corporations to serve on the Foundation Board of Directors. It tells them that we value their contribution to our organization and allows them to learn about all aspects of our charitable foundation.

Many large corporations look for ways to 'look good' in the community. If you can help them do that through opportunities for volunteering, they will be receptive.

Norma Lamont, Vice-President Community Development and Children's Miracle Network Director at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) Foundation, is responsible for the annual CHEO Telethon, Teddy Bears' Picnic and two Radiothons. She liaises with community groups on over two hundred events annually and works closely with many corporate sponsors, both at the senior levels and with those employees who wish to volunteer.

BOOK REVIEW

By Danielle Robinson

Making a Business Case for Employer Supported Volunteerism

Yesterday's corporate chequebook philanthropy has largely been superseded by today's corporate community investment models. Employees' skills and time are an important resource and a crucial component in a company's community investment strategy. A strategic approach to community involvement enables a company to bring the skills and time of their employees to areas of community need, along with other resources such as financial donations, gifts-in-kind, matched giving and more. During the past decade, employee volunteering has been the fastest growing form of community involvement internationally. With an increased emphasis from governments worldwide on civic engagement and active communities, the movement looks set to continue its growth. Why then, according to recent national statistics, is Canada falling behind in this international trend?

Published in 2004 by Volunteer Canada, *Making a Business Case for Employer Supported Volunteerism*, provides its readers with an excellent overview of the benefits enjoyed by a company when it includes a component of employee volunteerism in its corporate investment program. The 26 page publication, available free for download in both English and French at www.volunteer.ca, also explores the positive benefits employee volunteerism programs offer the community and the employees themselves. Additionally, the publication provides readers with compelling empirical evidence that Canadian companies not supporting some form of employee volunteerism are missing out on a key piece of their community engagement strategy.

Making a Business Case for Employer Supported Volunteerism issues a strong statement to Canada's business community. It invites them to investigate for themselves what so many companies around the world are already attuned to: employer supported volunteerism just makes good sense!

Danielle Robinson is currently the Director of Corporate and Community Affairs at the Ottawa Senators Foundation. Most recently, she held a lead role on the Resource Development team at United Way/Centraide and also worked with Clarica/Sun Life Financial where she co-designed an award winning, national employee engagement strategy for more than 10,000 employees in offices across Canada. She has first hand knowledge of the impact employee volunteerism can have within the workplace and the community.

JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Editorial Process and Guidelines for Authors

Objective

The Journal of Volunteer Resources Management is intended:

1. to serve as a credible source of information on the management of volunteers in Canada;
2. to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and to encourage networking among managers of volunteers;
3. to provide a professional development tool for managers of volunteers;
4. to recognize and encourage Canadian talent in the field of management of volunteers;
5. to include in each issue at least two articles that will consider different views on a specific and predetermined theme.

Target Audience

The Journal's intended audience includes managers of volunteers, educators, media and funders of not-for-profit organizations across the country.

Submissions

All manuscripts will be accepted on diskette or via e-mail in either Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. Submissions should be written according to "Canadian Style - A Guide to Writing and Editing" - Secretary of State, Dundurn Press. External reviewers may be engaged to review content if deemed advisable by the committee.

The revised draft is edited for clarity and consistency by the Editorial Team.

The edited version is returned to the author for acceptance along with an approval form for signature.

The signed form is to be returned to the Editorial Team within a week along with any suggestions for final revisions.

Format and Style

Authors are asked to respect the following word counts:

	Words	Pages
Lead Article	1000	5-6
Secondary Article	700-800	2-3
Book Review	150	1

The lead article will look at the topic in some depth and will normally require the author to conduct research into current trends and perspectives on the subject.

The secondary article will adopt a more practical approach, including personal experiences and opinions.

Advertising

Limited advertising space will be allowed in the Journal, for materials of direct relevance to managers of volunteer service, and as long as it conforms to the guidelines set out by the Editorial Team.

Guidelines:

1. Only ¼ page and ½ page ads will be accepted.
2. Ad must be camera-ready.
3. A maximum of one page of ads will be permitted per issue.
4. Job ads are not recommended.
5. Cost is to be determined by the Editorial Team.

LOOKING AHEAD

June 22-25, 2006

Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR) Conference,
St. Johns, Newfoundland

September 22-26, 2006

International Association for Volunteer Effort - World Volunteer Conference,
New Delhi, India

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS & THEMES

□	Issue □ □	Deadline □ □	Theme
□	Volume 14.3 □	articles due on the □ □	Motivating Volunteers
□	□ □	30th of September	
□	Volume 14.4 □ □	articles due on the □ □	Positioning our Profession
□	□ □	30th of September	
□	Volume 15.1 □ □	articles due on the □ □	Risk Management
□	□ □	30th of January □ □	