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VOLUNTEERING IN SPORTS AND LEISURE

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## EDITORIAL

Robert A. Stebbins, professor of sociology at the University of Calgary, defines volunteerism as “serious leisure” ([www.soci.ucalgary.ca/seriousleisure/](http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca/seriousleisure/)). He typifies volunteer activity as “highly substantial, interesting, and fulfilling [while embodying] such qualities as earnestness, sincerity, importance, and carefulness”. The moniker might find no better fit than with people who donate their time, skills and energy for the betterment of fitness and recreation activities.

This issue celebrates volunteers in sports and leisure. Whether they are Olympic athletes like Canadian swimmer Nikki Dryden or teens providing community service with Annette Urban at Pathways Health Centre, volunteers help ensure that all children enjoy the “right to play”. Michelle Killins underscores the potential for sport and volunteering to build character and a sense of community, by sharing her story of a youth spent balancing the demands and rewards of competitive sport and volunteerism. On a broader scale, Kevin Kitchen captures the powerful impact of community centres in building a vibrant and engaged, neighborhood-driven Saskatoon.

Volunteers are vital to staging large sporting events. Managing hundreds and thousands of short term volunteers at high-profile tournaments is no small feat. Challenges and lessons learned are captured here by Jennifer Robinson from the Vancouver 2010 Organizing Committee and by Barbara Tiffin of the 2009 World Junior Hockey Championship, Volunteer Division. There are also many unsung heroes volunteering to help keep Canadians of all ages active and healthy. Tom Friesen shines the spotlight on volunteer programs with hiking clubs and the Coaching Association of Canada outlines their support for coaches in amateur sport.

No matter which sector you identify with, we hope you will be inspired by both the volunteers and the managers of volunteer resources from the sporting community. Apply their theories to your practice or simply take pause to enjoy some seriously well-deserved leisure of your own.

Rachel Stoparczyk  
Editorial Team

## **GROWING UP THROUGH SPORT AND VOLUNTEERING**

by Michelle Killins

My love for volunteering started many years ago, well before I knew anything about the Paralympic Games. When I sat down to write this article, I realized that I could not express the reasons why I volunteer now with the Paralympic movement without sharing the volunteer experiences I had while growing up.

The summer I was 12 years old marked my first exposure to volunteering. It was my mom who encouraged me to get involved at the local hospital, thinking that it would be a great learning opportunity for me. Outside of my commitment to competitive swimming, I had little free time and would have preferred to spend it with my friends. Luckily, my best friend's mom also encouraged her to volunteer and off we went together to the local hospital to work for a few hours a week with the children in the paediatric ward. After a few sessions, we realized that volunteering gave us so much more than a day spent together. I felt incredibly satisfied and joyful every time I left that hospital. It was so simple; spending time with these children made them happy. The experience left me wanting more and I knew then that I would continue to volunteer throughout my life.

My next significant experience with volunteering moved me closer to my love of sport. From the age of 14 until I was in my mid-twenties, I volunteered as a coach for swimmers in the Special Olympics program. My brother, who has Down's syndrome, was a swimmer in the first club that I volunteered with and this was my motivation for getting involved. Throughout high school I had the pleasure, every Sunday, of coaching a wonderful group of people with intellectual disabilities. These unique individuals taught me to be patient and to take the time to appreciate life. Above all, they made me smile and laugh every time I was with them.

I enjoyed this experience so much that I wanted to continue volunteering with a Special Olympics swimming club when I moved on to university. However, no such club existed near the university that I attended. I decided that this was a perfect opportunity to start a program to address the needs of the people in this community. Since I was still involved in competitive swimming, I recruited some of my teammates to assist us with coaching. For some of them, this was the first time they had volunteered. I felt similar satisfaction and joy as I had in my previous volunteer endeavours but I also started to realize that by spending my time volunteering and encouraging others to volunteer, we could really make a difference in the lives of others.

My post-university travels led me to my first volunteer experience with a major sporting event - the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia. I volunteered full time with the Canadian Olympic Committee, the organization responsible for the care and comfort of our athletes. I spent 12 to 16 hours a day working with the team and I loved every minute of it. We were thanked as volunteers for the work that we had done to ensure that the operations ran smoothly but I did not need any thanks for doing something that I loved. I took great satisfaction in knowing that the hours that I contributed helped the athletes, in a very small way, in their quest for gold.

I returned home knowing that I wanted to work in a sporting field. My first job in sport was with Swimming Canada and this gave me an opportunity to get involved with the Paralympics. This movement enables people with a wide variety of physical disabilities to participate in competitive sport at all levels, from the community level to the pinnacle of the Paralympic Games. I started working closely with Para-Swimming and, in 2002, had the opportunity to travel to Mar del Plata, Argentina as a team manager for the International Paralympic Committee World Swimming Championships. Even though I traveled with the swim team as part of my job, in the years to come I would accompany them many times in a volunteer capacity as their team manager.

Being involved with the Paralympic movement has been a life-changing experience. At every event no matter where in the world, I have encountered these fabulous volunteers who are committed to creating a better world for people with disabilities within their own countries.

In 2007, I travelled to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for the first ever Para-Pan American Games as a volunteer with the Canadian swim team. We had heard that we might encounter some difficulties because the organizing committee had just completed the running of the Pan American Games and might be a little tired. It struck me that the volunteers that I talked with had worked full time during the first set of games and were now equally (if not more) committed to volunteering for our games. They looked exhausted and in dire need of sleep but every single volunteer that I interacted with was willing to go out of their way to help us in any way they could. A number of them even assisted us after their shifts were done. Throughout the duration of the games, these volunteers had smiles on their faces and were sincerely happy to be part of this historic event.

This past summer I was fortunate to travel again with the Canadian swim team to Beijing, China for the Paralympic Games. This trip intrigued me more than any that I had been on in the past. I did not know how people with varying disabilities from countries around the world would be received in a country that historically did not have a great track record for their treatment of people with disabilities. Any worries were eased as I arrived in Beijing and encountered the incredible volunteers that were there to assist us for the duration of the Paralympics. The volunteers were

open and wanted to learn about our athletes and our culture. Through volunteering at this event, I was able to positively influence the lives of many Chinese people just by sharing my story and the stories of the amazing athletes that were part of my team. Who knew that the simple act of volunteering would allow me to gain so much?

Although my volunteer story began many years ago, I feel that each of these experiences has played an integral role in my development as a human being.

*Michelle Killins is Senior Programs Officer at Sport Canada. She currently volunteers as a team manager and a classifier with the Canadian Paralympic Swim Team.*

## **MAXIMIZING VOLUNTEERS IN RECREATION: THE SASKATOON MODEL**

by Kevin Kitchen

Volunteers have long been important players in the delivery of recreation and leisure programs in Saskatoon. Indeed, from the very beginnings of the city, groups of volunteers organized themselves for the good of sport and recreation. We know that by 1887 there was organized baseball and cricket being played, impressive given that the first settlers had only arrived in the city five years earlier. By 1930, the Saskatoon Playgrounds Association was formed with the belief that “wholesome activities and the right use of spare time made for the building of right character, and useful citizenship” (City of Saskatoon Archives, 2006 Saskatoon Centennial Calendar). The Association managed recreational facilities and organized recreation programs such as swimming and hockey. In 1942, the Saskatoon Lions Speed Skating Club was started. By the 1960s, the City of Saskatoon (municipal government) began to formally develop and support volunteers in newly built subdivisions to help them deliver recreation programs at the neighbourhood level. By 1980, the City of Saskatoon had established a decentralized neighbourhood parks and recreation delivery system that was led by volunteers but supported by the City’s recreation administration.

Today Saskatoon has 44 neighbourhood community associations. Each is an incorporated non-profit organization governed by the Non-profit Corporations Act of Saskatchewan. They are administered by elected boards of directors. These community associations recruit and train volunteers, plan and administer recreation programs and generally work to enhance the quality of life of residents within their neighbourhoods. The City of Saskatoon’s Community Services Department provides annual operating and programming funding, averaging about \$5,000 per association.

The programs that community associations offer include: beginner fitness classes for adults, indoor soccer for children, Friday night youth centres and arts and cooking classes for young and old. In the winter, outdoor hockey and skating rinks, mostly located on school board property, are owned and operated by the associations. In essence, these are low-cost beginner recreation and leisure experiences. As the model has evolved, these community programs have come to serve as a feeder system to the larger city-operated facilities that have indoor pools, gyms and arenas, where more intensive and advanced recreation programs are offered.

For Saskatoon, a city of some 200,000 people, the model has been successful from a number of perspectives. First, there is a level of accountability that might not otherwise exist. Community association programs are designed for residents by residents. In other words, residents get the programs they need and want. In 2008, the community associations offered 15,131 hours of recreation and cultural programming to over 10,000 registrants.

The model also ensures a high degree of geographical accessibility in that an overwhelming majority of residents are able to walk to these programs. Almost every neighbourhood of 4,500 has its own community association. All community associations offer programs in their neighbourhood school.

Finally, the model provides for affordability as programs are administered by volunteer boards with little overhead; community associations have free after-hours access to their local schools’ gym, library or multi-purpose room, thanks to a joint-use agreement between the two local school boards and the City of Saskatoon.

Volunteers are the backbone of Saskatoon’s community associations. They sit on the association boards as executive members, they coach sports teams and they organize neighbourhood special events such as a winter carnival or a community clean-up. Some volunteer on a regular basis, while others volunteer once in a while. The City of Saskatoon estimates that just under 2,000 residents (nearly one in one hundred Saskatonians) volunteer for a community association. In an average year this accounts for 75,000 volunteer hours. Using the value of minimum wage as a reference point, this volunteer time commitment is valued at a minimum of \$600,000.

Certainly from the city’s perspective, the numbers are impressive, making this story a quantitative success. There is more, however, to the story than numbers. Interestingly, community associations and their volunteer boards have proven to be an excellent training ground for community leaders. Numerous school board trustees, city councillors and even members of the provincial legislative assembly got their start by volunteering on their local community association board, organizing neighbourhood sport and recreation programs. As was the case with the old Saskatoon Playgrounds Association, volunteering in recreation today can still make for “the building of right character, and useful citizenship”.

*Kevin Kitchen is the Community Initiatives Manager, Community Services Department at the City of Saskatoon and has worked in municipal recreation & culture since 1988.*

## THE HUMAN LEGACY OF THE 2010 GAMES

by Jennifer Robinson

Imagine almost 7,000 athletes and team officials from over 80 countries around the world; 27 days of intense competition with 150 medals awarded; 10,000 international media representatives clamouring for stories; and three billion TV viewers worldwide!

In the middle of this international maelstrom will be 25,000 unsung heroes – the volunteers – who will help the 2010 Winter Games go off without a hitch in Vancouver and Whistler. The members of this small army come from every walk of life and all adult age groups. They speak such languages as Mandarin, French and Polish, and will groom ski hills, provide first aid and chauffeur dignitaries and athletes to and from Olympic and Paralympic venues.

“Next to the athletes, volunteers are perhaps the most important participants in the 2010 Winter Games. They will welcome the world, set lasting impressions and play the largest role in actually staging the Games,” John Furlong, Chief Executive Officer of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games (VANOC), has said.

The call for volunteers by VANOC, issued worldwide on February 12, 2008, is quite possibly the largest request for volunteers during peace time in Canada. By comparison, the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics relied on an estimated 10,000 volunteers and the 1976 Montreal Summer Olympics had a total personnel number (likely staff and volunteers included) of around 23,000.

VANOC is now in the one-year home stretch and finding and training volunteers is moving into high gear. Volunteers with language skills are required, especially those who speak Eastern European tongues. It is a challenge to find volunteers with skills in technology, telecommunications and “helpdesk” I.T. technician experience and media relations. VANOC also needs more drivers, as well as volunteers living in the Sea-to-Sky Highway area between Squamish and Whistler to fill general and specialized roles.

Much has changed since Canada last hosted the Games. The number of sports included on the Winter Olympics roster has grown with more athletes participating. Technology has dramatically altered the pace of just about everything that happens, from the fastest times recorded in bobsleigh and luge, to the millions worldwide who have access to the latest spills, thrills and results at the click of a button online. The biggest change of all is the addition of the Paralympic Winter Games, a totally separate international sporting event that runs for nine days, just two weeks after the Olympics are completed.

Since Vancouver won the bid to host the 2010 Winter Games in 2003, experts in workforce planning have been refining the numbers of volunteers needed for the

event, which is split between British Columbia’s Lower Mainland and the scenic mountain resort of Whistler, located about two hours from Vancouver. The 25,000 figure is based on volunteer numbers used at past winter Olympics in Italy and the United States, as well as the unique needs for hosting Canada’s Games, explains Nanine Artup, VANOC’s manager of volunteer recruitment.

“We’re looking for enthusiastic, dedicated and committed people who will uphold our values of team, trust, excellence, sustainability and creativity. People who want to welcome the world and be a part of Canadian history,” she says, adding, “We have thousands of roles to fill, some general and some that require specific knowledge and technical skills.”

So far, VANOC has received over 57,000 online applications from hopeful volunteers in every Canadian province and territory and from 144 different countries, including Lithuania, Barbados and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. After applying, candidates are invited to one-hour interview sessions in person and asked to attend three to four training sessions covering areas such as: general orientation, service excellence, event leadership and venue specific training. These programs are complemented by e-learning materials offered through VANOC’s volunteer web portal.

“The process to manage and deploy such large numbers of volunteers across so many venues and for over 400 roles is very complicated,” says Artup, who previously worked in volunteer management with Wheelchair Sport NSW, the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games and the Doha 2006 Asian Games. “A large team of paid staff and volunteers are in place to support this deployment. This includes the interview process, training, scheduling and communications, as well as co-ordinating activities to motivate and inspire those volunteering.”

To be accepted as a 2010 Winter Games volunteer, candidates must be available for the entire Games period (February 12-28 and/or March 12-21 in 2010) and work a minimum of 13 shifts for the Olympics and/or eight shifts for the Paralympics. A normal volunteer day will be around eight to ten hours long, including breaks. VANOC will also need people with extended availability who can start volunteering in December and continue through to the Games.

With such large numbers to find in such a short time period, Artup says it is no surprise that a number of challenges have cropped up. With the Games still a year away, some candidates are finding it hard to understand why they have to be interviewed as soon as possible. It will take VANOC about a year to process, interview and place all 25,000 of the needed volunteers, she explains.

Artup feels that, in the end, the Olympic and Paralympic volunteers in 2010 will form part of the human legacy of the Games. Through their memories and stories, they will act as the living history of how the Games were put together, the people who came and visited from around the world and the excitement of the

athletic accomplishments they witnessed.

It is not too late to volunteer. For more information or to apply visit [www.vancouver2010.com](http://www.vancouver2010.com) or [www.Workopolis.com](http://www.Workopolis.com).

*Jennifer Robinson is the media writer for the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC). Previously, she worked as a reporter/editor with The Canadian Press, Canwest News Service and the Vancouver Sun.*

## **VOLUNTEERS: THE LIFE BLOOD OF TRAIL ASSOCIATIONS**

by Tom Friesen

Ontario boasts dozens of trail associations or hiking clubs that are responsible for thousands of kilometres of pedestrian trails. Like other features of our cultural and social life such as churches, recreation and sports programs, music festivals, scouting and guiding, trail associations could not exist without the hard work and dedication of thousands of volunteers. Good volunteers pump life into an organization, making it robust and healthy.

### **Roles of Volunteers in Hiking Clubs and Pedestrian Trail Associations**

Few hiking clubs have or can afford paid staff so volunteers are absolutely essential to their operation. They take on roles such as board members, hike leaders, trail maintenance captains and workers, publicity representatives, membership secretaries, newsletter editors, fund raisers and social directors. Volunteers give freely of their time, talent and even their money to trail clubs so that many others can enjoy safe trails at no charge. In many hiking clubs, directors' and liability insurance fees are the greatest expense in order that board members, trail workers, hike leaders and the land owners who volunteer the use of their land are protected from financial losses. In paying these costs, club members donate a portion of their membership fee so the general public may benefit by having free trails to walk on.

### **Rewards and Challenges**

Having volunteers perform important tasks presents both rewards and challenges. A good fit between skills and the role being filled can add considerably to the health of the local association. The volunteers often receive

as much as they give, acquiring new skills, knowledge, friendships and improved self-esteem through job satisfaction and sense of purpose. Of course, shortfalls in performance leading to risk management issues may result if compatibility between responsibility and capability is limited.

### **Volunteers on Club Boards**

Another important concern facing clubs is succession and renewal planning. Boards are often reconstituted yearly and this can be a challenge. Boards may find it easier to function smoothly and recruit the talent they need in several ways. Having clear expectations for the duties of positions on the board and designating people knowledgeable with these responsibilities to recruit successors may create the "best fit". Allowing individuals to serve as "directors at large" with an understanding that they will move to a more responsible position can create a comfortable starting position on a board. Offering "board retreats" or having social or training activities can create the common sense of purpose a board needs to function together. Board members can often be recruited from individuals who are willing to train as hike leaders or key maintenance workers, so offering regular training courses is a sound practice in creating a healthy board.

### **Volunteers on the Trails**

The "boots on the ground" workers such as trail captains, trail maintenance workers or hike leaders keep the trails inspected, maintained and well guided for the members. There is an ongoing need for establishing training for a consistent inspection approach, proper use of maintenance tools, construction and hike leadership techniques. Volunteers, too, often teach these skills. The Bruce Trail has a Guide for Trail Workers (2001) which covers trail inspection, construction and maintenance techniques. This valuable resource, currently out of print, is available on the Internet ([www.bruce-trail.org/pages/trail-changes](http://www.bruce-trail.org/pages/trail-changes)) and trail associations can obtain permission to photocopy it from the Bruce Trail Conservancy.

### **Training Volunteers**

Appropriate training for using trail maintenance tools such as chainsaws, mowers and other mechanized equipment is a sound risk management practice and some associations find it good practice to pay their volunteer workers training fees. Hike Ontario trains and certifies hike leaders and some hiking clubs have their own trainers. Normally, hike leaders train during a daylong session with simulated scenarios that certifies them for five years. The Certified Hike Leader Training Programs and new Safe Hiker Program are two valuable training programs that Hike Ontario is currently providing across the province.

### Financial, Time and Talent Contributions of Volunteers

Many club activists personally subsidize the cost of operating a trail by buying materials without seeking remuneration, paying for gas without being reimbursed for mileage or using personal resources for club purposes. All this goes above and beyond the value of their volunteer service and is rarely recorded as a “gift in kind”. Occasionally the value of these contributions is recognized by the practice of “trading cheques” as the volunteer is reimbursed for their costs or talent and then donates a cheque to the trail association in that amount in order to get a tax receipt for charitable donation purposes. Revenue Canada has been willing to accept these receipts and deem part or all of the costs of membership as a charitable donation, recognizing that the members are providing service in their community simply by providing the money to keep a trail association functioning as a non-profit organization. In Ontario, money is almost never paid to a hike leader of a trail association and members and non-members alike are welcomed to come on most club hikes. This contrasts sharply with practices in some other locations and the use of trails by mechanized trail users where fees and licences are charged, creating revenue that allows workers to be paid for their time.

Volunteers who are motivated, trained, organized and diligent can provide exceptional service and are the lifeblood of a trail association. They give generously of their time and talent and have created thousands of kilometres of trails that they inspect, maintain and lead hikes on, creating benefits for millions of Canadians. There is no doubt that the committed volunteer will continue to be the crucial centre-piece in the operation of trail associations for as long as these entities continue to maintain and operate public pedestrian paths with almost no government support.

*Tom Friesen is the current president of Hike Ontario and past president of the Thames Valley Trail Association, Inc. He worked for 32 years as a teacher of the deaf in London. When not in Ontario volunteering with hiking clubs and summer music festivals, you may find him doing volunteer work on the Camino de Santiago or walking there as a pilgrim. The author thanks the following people for their editorial assistance: Harold Sellers, Gail Kreek, David Francis and Deanna Friesen. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Hike Ontario.*

## VOLUNTEERING FOR A WORLD-CLASS EVENT - WE DID IT!

by Barbara Tiffin

The City of Ottawa and Canada's National Capital Region welcomed the world and created and delivered an unparalleled and unprecedented hockey experience for all of the participants, spectators and visitors of the 2009 IIHF World Junior Championship. The dedication, experience, enthusiasm and expertise of the 1,500 volunteers who came forward to offer their time and energy to this tournament are to be commended. The region of Eastern Ontario is “Hockey Country” - a place not only rich in hockey heritage but volunteerism.

History has shown that a well-organized and smoothly operating volunteer team is the most important factor in a memorable, exciting and successful event. The IIHF World Junior Championship is the most prestigious hockey tournament in the world for players under 20 years of age. This year's tournament, held between Boxing Day and January 5 in Ottawa, marked the first time that all championship games took place in one city and the eighth time that this international event has been staged in Canada.

The World Junior Championship volunteers are a group of proud, dedicated Canadians with a passion for hockey that represented our cities, province and country. We delivered exceptional service and hospitality to spectators, participants, sponsors and fellow volunteers. We consistently and professionally assisted the 2009 IIHF World Junior Championship (WJC) in setting gold standards off and on the ice, contributing to Canada's hockey legacy. This was our mantra for our volunteer team.

Eighteen months before the championships started, we began to build the volunteer team. The key to the planning, organizing and staging of the successful 2009 WJC was a strong, large and committed volunteer team. The population base of the Ottawa region, combined with the existing volunteer capacity of the community and the extensive membership of the organized sporting and hockey communities, guaranteed a significant pool of volunteers for the event. The aim of the Volunteer Division of the Host Organizing Committee (HOC) was to provide the 2009 WJC with the best volunteers possible from the pool of volunteers registered. In this regard, the organization's volunteer assessment program was careful in identifying the skill set of each volunteer and determining the best fit with the requirements established by the other HOC's operating committees/divisions.

Volunteer management practices and standards of operation became the guiding principles for an event of this magnitude. We made every effort to recruit local talent to fill positions available before reaching out to other

Canadian communities. While some volunteer positions required specific skills and experience, our base requirements were that volunteers must

- be 16 years of age or over
- be willing to make a minimum commitment of 30 hours
- be available to volunteer over the holiday period
- complete established screening requirements
- attend training sessions in advance of the event and
- represent the interests of Hockey Canada.

The Co-Directors of the Volunteer Division set the best practices for volunteer engagement for the championships and assembled a talented team whose expertise was paramount in the development of the volunteer programme. From the time of position design to recruitment, screening practices, reference checking, interviewing, orientation, training and monitoring once the championships began, the Volunteer Division was actively involved.

The volunteer positions required:

- **Team Services** - offered support to the managers of each team federation;
- **Transportation** - offered support to event personnel by transporting people, equipment and food between the various venues and shuttle routes;
- **Interpreter** - offered interpretation for various media covering the event, team personnel and as required throughout the tournament;
- **Protocol** - offered assistance with enforcing and maintaining protocols as set out by Hockey Canada and the IIHF;
- **Security** - ensured access to personnel in restricted areas and maintained crowd control and flow where necessary;
- **Community Event** - supported numerous events that were held throughout the tournament, such as Fanfest, Golf Tournament, Pre-exhibition games, etc.;
- **Communications and Public Relations** - offered assistance in supporting event staff in operating the media centers and public relations initiatives; and
- **Volunteer Support** - offered support with food services, volunteer offices, accreditation, customer service and as hosts/ambassadors for the many visitors.

Fifteen hundred wonderful volunteers shared their time with the world in our city and came together in overwhelming displays of enthusiasm and camaraderie.

This was the kind of spirit we knew prevailed among all of our volunteers. They were an integral part of the success of these championships. Our volunteers were held in high regard by the organizers, the teams and the world!

*Barbara Tiffin was Co-Director, with Jim Kyte, of the Volunteer Division for the 2009 IIHF World Junior Hockey Championships. Jim Kyte is a retired professional defenseman who was renowned for his strong, reliable defensive play and made history by being the first deaf NHL player. Jim is currently the Academic Director of the Sport Business Management program at Algonquin College. Barbara Tiffin was formerly the Manager of Volunteer Services for the City of Ottawa and holds a degree in Recreation and Leisure.*

## **VOLUNTEERS: PARTNERS ALONG THE PATH TO POTENTIAL**

by Annette Urban

“Partners along the path to potential” is the vision statement of Pathways Health Centre for Children, a treatment facility for those with physical, developmental and communication needs. The therapeutic recreation programs give opportunities to our clients to become the best that they can be. The volunteers involved have certainly proven themselves to be “partners” extraordinaire! Representing all ages, abilities and skills, their participation, interest and support lend significant value to our activities.

Friday Night Junction provides teens with social challenges with the opportunity to be independent by expanding social networks and building social confidence with peers in a non-threatening, accepting environment. Volunteers are teens/young adults who serve as role models. They communicate with clients on the same level, talk about high school issues and give feedback with age-appropriate ideas. The volunteers have as much fun as the clients and are excited to be there. A typical session is having fun for an hour in the therapeutic pool, followed by watching a video. On other occasions, they have gone to a hockey game or held a dance.

In the summers, clients aged six through 12 are involved in Striker Soccer, a community-based program. The volunteers (two teens, a university student and a “young-at-heart” grandfather) make learning the sport a fun activity. It is also a non-threatening environment because the volunteers have the attitude that it is OK not to know how to do something. They serve as mentors by giving appropriate feedback and encouragement.



According to Amy Spadafora, the staff Therapeutic Recreation Specialist overseeing the program, the volunteers “make the program”. In the 12 weeks of the program, not one volunteer was absent. At the end, one volunteer decided she wanted to make certificates for all the participants. They also handed out trophies and had their pictures taken with teammates. Their smiles were just as wide as those of the players!

In the therapeutic pool, volunteers work one on one with children under the direction of lifeguards/instructors. By giving individual attention, they help the children to become comfortable in the water. There are two types of swim programs in which volunteers are involved.

Teens assist in the after school programs, teaching the school-aged children to learn the different levels of swimming skills. In Lil’ Splashers, the volunteers are mainly seniors, working with preschool-aged children. Most volunteers have been involved with this program for a number of years. When asked what they like most, the reply is “seeing the progress the child makes over time”. The sessions are geared specifically to other therapies the child receives in other parts of the building. For example, “Get Writing” is for children who come for occupational therapy and have hand/eye co-ordination challenges. In the pool, volunteers use Magna Doodles, toys and shapes to supplement the therapy in an aquatic, fun environment.

Pathways has developed a partnership with the city of Sarnia and the local centre for the arts to create a one-of-a-kind program, “The Garbage Can Connection”. Our clients, eight to 13 years old, have the opportunity to experience an art “adventure”, decorating brand new garbage cans, which are then displayed as pieces of art. An artistic teen volunteer supports the participants in their creation, giving positive direction and allowing them to see their potential.

Volunteers have also helped with a horseback-riding program at stables in a neighbouring community. Tom Saul of Tomlynn Acres acknowledged that without their support, the program would not operate. The teen volunteers had the experience of owning their own horses. The adult volunteers were retired elementary and secondary school teachers. They each brought their expertise to help make the experience a safe and enjoyable one for the participants.

During 2000, 2003 and 2007, the ParaProvincial “Games for the Disabled” took place in Sarnia, Ontario. More than 100 volunteers of all ages assisted each year with all aspects of the games. They came away with an appreciation for what these athletes can achieve.

These are just some examples of sports and leisure programs and events that our volunteers have helped make possible. Volunteering gives opportunities to the teens/young adults to learn and practice skills they will need later in their careers, such as with children or as health care professionals. Adults continue to learn with each child, program and experience. The clients learn to develop and enjoy skills in different areas that will last a lifetime.

Dave Schaller, a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and Manager of Family and Community Services at Pathways, states that, “because these volunteers now have an awareness of the abilities of our clients, they become great role models themselves in the community and often advocate for the rights of people with disabilities – a win-win situation for all involved!” With the proper screening and training, our volunteers are truly “partners along the path to potential”.

*Annette Urban has an honours degree in English from Loyola University, Chicago. She is a life-time member of its honour society, Alpha Sigma Nu, with the mandate to use “knowledge in the service of others”. She also has a certificate in Volunteer Management from Lambton College, Sarnia, Ontario. She has been a very active volunteer with the local chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society for 24 years and received a Certificate of Exceptional Achievement from MS Ontario Division in 2007. She has been the Supervisor of Volunteer Services at Pathways Health Centre for Children for 17 years.*

## **SUPPORTING EVERY CHILD’S RIGHT TO PLAY**

by Nikki Dryden

As a human rights lawyer by profession and an Olympic swimmer by perseverance, there is not a more perfect union of my passions as Right To Play, an international organization that rebuilds the lives of children using sport, while teaching healthy psycho-social development. In developing countries, refugee camps and villages around the world, Right To Play volunteers and staff use sport and play to improve the lives of children and their communities. It was thus an easy decision to become one of Right To Play’s other volunteers, their Athlete Ambassadors, and it is a role I have proudly kept since 2003.

As a two-time Olympic swimmer, I use my profile to raise money and awareness for Right To Play (RTP). I have travelled to the Pakistani-Afghan border town of Peshawar where I saw first hand how RTP’s sport for development programs have positively changed the lives of hundreds of refugee children, their families,

their teachers and their communities. I donate my Canadian National Swim Team memorabilia to auctions to raise money and I host many fundraisers in New York City where I now live. I write about RTP for magazines and newspapers, speak on radio and in person and attend events and fundraisers for RTP. Most recently, I have also used my professional experience as a member of the Young Trustees Committee in New York City, which assists the US office of RTP with development, fundraising and recruitment.

This marriage of sorts is unique, but simple. I have seen first hand the power of sport to change lives, from my own life, to the children I met in Pakistan and those whose stories I hear and see through RTP's website and newsletters. While RTP is an athlete-driven organization, we are also driven by volunteers who commit to delivering programming in the field.

RTP's international volunteers spend twelve months in one of many countries throughout Africa and Asia, including Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda and Zambia. Without these volunteers, RTP could not function and would not be able to deliver sport and play programs or train local leaders.

As Canada gears up for the next Olympics to be held in Vancouver in 2010, it is fitting to celebrate and reflect on RTP and its beginnings in the Olympic Movement. At the 1994 Winter Olympics, the Lillehammer Olympic Organizing Committee conceived Olympic Aid (now Right To Play). The focus was to show support for people in war-torn countries and areas of distress. Olympic athletes became ambassadors of Olympic Aid before and during the Games to assist with fundraising. The lead Athlete Ambassador was four-time Gold Medalist speed-skater, Johann Olav Koss, who donated a large portion of his winnings to Olympic Aid and challenged fellow athletes and the public to donate money for each gold medal won.

Eighteen million US was raised and used for five main projects: building a hospital in Sarajevo; building schools in Eritrea; supporting a mother/child program in Guatemala; supporting refugees in Afghanistan; and a disabled children support program in Lebanon. When I joined in 2003, Olympic Aid, led by Johann, had evolved into Right To Play, and has since grown into the global authority on sport for development. Whether it is promoting good health and disease prevention, developing life skills, fostering peace or improving communities, Right To Play exists because its international volunteers and its athlete ambassadors give their time, energy, hearts and minds to this incredible humanitarian and development agency.

In the last three years, Olympic Athlete Ambassadors have taken their fundraising to even higher levels. In 2006, following in the footsteps of his fellow skater, Joey Cheek donated his \$25,000 prize money for his Olympic gold medal to RTP, which led to a flurry of donations amounting to \$300,000 in one week. At the 2008 Games in Beijing, corporate sponsor Johnson & Johnson came on board, donating \$450,000 on behalf of RTP's medal-winning athlete ambassadors, including \$80,000 for swimmer Natalie Coughlin.

As the world gathers again in 2010 to celebrate elite sport for the next Olympic Games, it is crucial we continue to promote sport in countries affected by war, poverty, disease and natural disaster. These children may never ski down the slopes of Whistler to thousands of cheering fans, but their stories are heroic and so too are those of the people who support them. Whether it is our elite athlete ambassadors or the hundreds of international volunteers in the field, Right To Play is a truly perfect combination for anyone who believes in the ability of sport to make positive change in the world. For more information about Right To Play please visit our website at [www.righttoplay.com](http://www.righttoplay.com)

*Nikki Dryden is a 1992 and 1996 Olympic Swimmer and currently acts as an Athlete Ambassador with Right to Play.*

## **VOLUNTEER COACHES ARE ESSENTIAL TO CANADIAN SPORT**

by Coaching Association of Canada

Canada is a nation of volunteers, and no sector is more reliant upon the volunteer than the Canadian sport community. National Volunteer Week is one of the opportunities the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) takes to say "thank you" to the nearly two million volunteer coaches and the huge number of Canadians who also give freely of their time as sport officials, sport administrators, event organizers, fundraisers and facility maintainers.

"Sport volunteerism is Canada's largest volunteer sector, and as such, has a powerful impact on our country's youth and on building national and community spirit," says Dr. Jean-Marie De Koninck of Quebec City, chair of CAC's volunteer board of directors. "In fact, sport as Canadians know it could not exist without volunteers. Because of them, sport has a profound impact on virtually every facet of life in Canada."

Many CAC programs and initiatives benefit sport volunteers who are serving as coaches at the community level.

The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP), which trains and certifies coaches in 66 sports, reaches all levels from the first-time coach to national team coaches. “Each year, more than 70,000 coaches take an NCCP workshop. Since the program began in 1974, more than one million coaches have participated, making the NCCP one of Canada’s largest and most effective adult education programs,” says CAC CEO John Bales.

CAC’s Petro-Canada Sport Leadership sportif has grown into one of the world’s premier conferences for sport leaders. Held every fall, the conference brings together high performance, development and community coaches, sport administrators, coach educators and athletes. The conference provides a unique opportunity for coach development, learning, networking and celebration of achievements at all levels of coaching. The conference is held in communities across the country and in 2009 will take place in Vancouver, November 13-15.

General Motors of Canada also forms a unique partnership with CAC. Making Dreams Possible is a \$1.2 million program that not only directly supports high-performance coaches, but provides direct support to coaches at the local club level. The program annually provides ten GM High Performance Coach grants of \$10,000 each and 100 GM Club Coaching grants of \$2,000 each to help fund activities that support development of community sport programs.

Another vital community program aimed at the volunteer coach is CAC’s partnership with Investors Group. Since 1991, this program has provided financial assistance to communities and organizations interested in hosting an Investors Group Community Coaching Conference. These conferences offer an ideal opportunity for coach education, networking and community involvement. A unique forum for participation from all levels of sport, especially grassroots coaches and administrators, to date this program has given out over 550 grants that have benefited over 300,000 volunteer coaches throughout Canada. CAC and Investors Group also team up each year to honor Volunteer Sport Administrator Award recipients and select the National Volunteer Sport Administrator Award recipient. The award recognizes the contribution to community sport programs made by dedicated volunteers who give countless hours of time so that coaches and athletes can enjoy the benefits of well-organized sport.

One of CAC’s most recent programs, Chunky MVC: Search for the Most Valuable Coach, is a new partnership with Campbell’s® Chunky® that aims at celebrating coaches from the playground to the podium. It highlights the important role coaches play within their communities and provides much deserved recognition for those unsung heroes across the country.

Another CAC recruitment initiative targeting the volunteer coach sector is We are Coaches, a unique campaign designed to increase the number of women coaching softball, ice hockey and soccer at the community level. “Although more than 95 percent of Canada’s coaches are involved at the community level, estimates suggest that less than five per cent of the coaches in the targeted sports are women, even though the number of female participants in these sports are growing significantly,” says Bales.

CAC, through its Coaching Research Committee, is also heavily involved in research initiatives that are intended to advance coaching knowledge and inform the sport communities on issues and solutions related to coaching. One of the topics these studies may assess is the potential impacts of volunteers in sport.

*The Coaching Association of Canada is a not-for-profit amateur sport organization with the mission of enhancing the experiences of all Canadian athletes through quality coaching. CAC and its partners deliver a leading-edge coaching system whose goal is to have an impact on 1,000,000 athletes through the training of 100,000 coaches each year in the National Coaching Certification Program. Visit [www.coach.ca](http://www.coach.ca) for more information about coach education and training.*

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

### Guide to Resources on the Sports and Recreation Sector

Imagine Canada Nonprofit Library Commons

[http://nonprofitscan.imaginecanada.ca/en/sports\\_and\\_rec](http://nonprofitscan.imaginecanada.ca/en/sports_and_rec)

### Volunteer Resources Tip Sheets from Coaching Association of Canada

The following tip sheets are available free at <http://coach.ca/eng/tips/>:

- “Recruiting volunteers and keeping them!”
- “Recruiting volunteers and coaches”
- “Your role as a Sport Parent”

### Children's Fitness Tax Credit

Starting with the 2007 tax year, the Government of Canada allows a non-refundable tax credit based on eligible fitness expenses paid by parents to register a child in a prescribed program of physical activity. Visit <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/fitness/> for information for families with children who are, at the beginning of the year in which an eligible fitness expense is paid, under the age of 16 or, if eligible for the disability tax credit, under the age of 18. If you are part of an organization that provides programs of physical activity for children, please see “Information for organizations providing prescribed programs of physical activity” on the same web page.

# 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
<b>Lead Article</b>	1000	5-6
<b>Secondary Article</b>	700-800	2-3
<b>Book Review</b>	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



## VOLPEDIA

*Define Together. Change Forever.*

**May 31 to June 3, 2009 in Edmonton, Alberta**

2009 CAVR National Conference hosted in partnership with Volunteer Alberta, Edmonton VMG and Volunteer Canada.  
For conference details, go to [www.cavrCanada.org](http://www.cavrCanada.org).



**May 19 to 21, 2009 in Ottawa, Ontario**

2009 PAVR-O Conference

Go to [www.pavro.on.ca](http://www.pavro.on.ca) for program details and registration.

## DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS & THEMES

Issue	Deadline	Theme
Volume 17.2	articles due end of April 2009	The Economy and Volunteerism
Volume 17.3	articles due end of September 2009	Boomer Volunteer Engagement