

## Non-profit, Charities, and Volunteers on the Web

The increasing dependence on volunteers to carry out daily tasks has become an important component of operating services throughout Canada. Volunteers come from every walk of life and help with tasks ranging from transporting people to medical appointments to marketing to data entry. This trend has been evident on the Internet as many people spend hours upon hours actually creating, maintaining and improving the information available on the World Wide Web.

### Volunteer Canada:

The Canadian Association of Volunteer Bureaux and Centres (<http://www.volunteer.ca>) is an organization which promotes the benefits and encourages the presence of volunteers in the community. The site has an excellent overview of volunteers and volunteer centres at [http://www.volunteer.ca/for\\_vol.htm](http://www.volunteer.ca/for_vol.htm) which was written by Volunteer Ontario. (Strangely enough, I could not find it on the Volunteer Ontario site!) Full text publications and questions and answers on volunteers are accessible. Another *must-see* on the site is the National Education Campaign: Screening Employees and Volunteers in Positions of Trust with Children and Other Vulnerable Individuals. This summary provides background to the recent focus on screening and provides pointers to resources which are available to interested purchasers. The training campaign is highlighted. The Final Report (March 31, 1997) of Volunteer Canada on the topic is also on the site. Finally, plans for the approved third phase of the project to take place over the next two years are outlined briefly.

### Wild Rose Foundation

(<http://www.gov.ab.ca/wrf/index.html>) has much information of interest to volunteers in Alberta. The site also features the 15th Biennial World Volunteer Conference - IAVE '98 (<http://www.gov.ab.ca/wrf/iaveidx.html>). The theme for this year's conference held in Edmonton is "A Global Quest for a Volunteer Effort". Topics include the role of the volunteer in situations of armed conflict, civil liability and the volunteer, virtual volunteering, taking disciplinary action with a volunteer, and 2001 — the United Nations International Year of the Volunteer.

### Volunteer Vancouver's

(<http://www.vancouver.volunteer.ca>) best feature is its Download Article page at [http://www.vancouver.volunteer.ca/resources/download\\_articles.asp](http://www.vancouver.volunteer.ca/resources/download_articles.asp) Full text publications on topics such as relationships with corporations, working with boards, and liability are present as well as issue alerts and salary surveys. A searchable catalogue of Canada's largest collection of information specifically related to voluntary action and nonprofit management is scheduled to be working shortly.

### **Volunteer Ontario**

(<http://www.volontario.org>) provides among other things a listing of volunteer centres across the province, details about books of interest, and links to other Canadian volunteer sites. A message board allows visitors to the site to post volunteer opportunities and discuss issues relating to volunteers. Although it is not heavily used, the potential for communication and interaction online is there for those interested.

### **Charity Village**

(<http://www.charityvillage.com/>) is "Canada's supersite for the nonprofit sector". Its main street serves as an excellent site map to the wealth of information available on the site. It certainly lives up to its billing as the more I surfed the more fascinating information I uncovered. From individuals debating the under-representation of men in volunteer organizations to sources of funding, this site is worth bookmarking.

### **In Kind Canada**

(<http://www.inkindcanada.ca>) is a unique program which connects businesses with material surpluses to charities in need of assistance. As Canada's first national "Gift-In-Kind" Program, it plays the role of a kind of Robin Hood who takes from the rich and gives to the poor (with the full cooperation of the rich). In 1997, over \$2.7 million in material was transferred. Although an annual service fee of between \$100 and \$500 is charged depending on the operating expenses of the nonprofit, participating organizations received an average of \$5,400 each in material.

### **LawNow 's new Not-for-Profit and Charity Pages**

<http://www.extension.ualberta.ca/lawnow/nfp> include reprints of *LawNow* not-for-profit columns on legal matters such as liability of directors, and for employees and volunteers, plus links to Not-For-Profit FAQs on Canadian Legal FAQs <http://www.extension.ualberta.ca/legal FAQs/>. Much of the initial production of this material was made possible by the sponsorship of Alberta Community Development, Board Development Program.

### **VolNet**

Potentially the most important site to be created is VolNet: Volunteer Organizations on the Internet (<http://www.volnet.org>). It was officially launched on June 20, 1998. VolNet's mission is "to enable voluntary organizations to access and utilize communication technology to further their own missions". VolNet will be receiving over \$15 million dollars over the next three years to strengthen the voluntary sector's technological capability. It hopes that 10,000 volunteer organizations will be connected to the Internet by March 2000. In conjunction with Industry Canada, the representatives from volunteer organizations across the country, government agencies, and community networks will be working together to develop VolNet. One publication of interest is the Voluntary Sector Network Support Program's Internet Readiness Survey which recounts where Canadian charitable organizations are on the information highway. The site will be acting as a major resource for historical documentation of the evolution of the project, consultations with the voluntary sector, and other information useful to volunteers.

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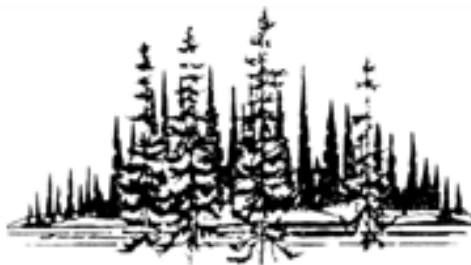
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