



Replanting endangered trees on the fire site of Gosnell Creek, BC.



Canadian Cancer Society's Quesnel Relay for Life



**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
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www.volunteerburnaby.ca

Managing Volunteers – Your Opportunity for a Rewarding Profession

by Kelina Kwan

"Our group of 50 employees would like to volunteer for a few hours this weekend, can you tell us what we can do?"

Many of us want to volunteer and give back to our community. But in order for volunteers to get involved, support is needed to make our volunteer experience worthwhile and fulfilling. Behind the teams of volunteers who contribute in a large variety of organizations are a team of heroes – volunteer managers, who support our efforts to give back to society. Leaders of volunteers are a very important but often over-looked group who support and manage volunteers, especially for programs and events that involved large numbers of volunteers from diverse background, such as the Canadian Cancer Society's Quesnel Relay for Life, or the replanting of endangered trees on the site of the Gosnell Creek Fire. We often focus on volunteers but forget that volunteers

need leading, and their roles and contribution need to be aligned with the goals of the organization. Volunteers also need to be recruited, screened, trained, scheduled, assigned to various tasks, and monitored. Volunteer management is truly a full-time profession.

"Leaders of volunteers are unique, they differ from other human resources professionals primarily because they need to know how to motivate people and to keep them involved without a pay cheque" said Clare O'Kelly, president of Administrators of Volunteer Resources BC (AVRBC). Volunteer managers also need to be able to identify the resources volunteers bring and apply them appropriately. "If you are working in HR, you will be told what the company needs, and you then go out to look for people to fill the needs. But volunteers come to us, and volunteer managers

have to figure out how to best use volunteers in the organization." This will not only help the organization and the community, but also make a volunteer's experience more meaningful, fulfilling, and enjoyable.

Many leaders of volunteers began their journey as volunteers themselves, but as an organization grows, volunteer management often needs to become a paid position in order to fill the need of both the organization and volunteers, and to provide continuity and accountability. For such a multi-dimensional job, volunteer managers need professional support, and that's where AVRBC comes in. AVRBC is a professional organization whose mission is "building a strong, vibrant profession by inspiring exceptional leadership of volunteers, fostering connections and shaping the future of volunteerism." AVRBC supports leaders of volunteers by providing education and

professional development workshops, advocating for leaders of volunteers, such as the recent effort of making the provincial criminal record check process more effective, and providing networking opportunities. "There is usually only one volunteer manager in an organization. So they don't have the benefit of being able to talk to other people in the organization about their work" said O'Kelly. "It is important to be able to network with others doing the same work, so AVRBC strives to pull together volunteer managers, and allow them to network with others who are doing the same type of work." Networking and educational opportunities offered by AVRBC include conferences, Speakers Series, and Regional Meetings featuring practical experts in the field of volunteer management.

If you are interested in working with people and contribute to your community, you may want to checkout how to become a volunteer right manager. O'Kelly suggests first attend one of the introductory

sessions run by Volunteer Burnaby or Volunteer Richmond. If volunteer management is for you, then enroll in one of the online certificate programs provided by Red River College in Manitoba (www.rrc.mb.ca) or Humber College in Ontario (www.humber.ca). The national affiliate association to AVRBC, Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR) is also working with a US organization to provide international certification in volunteer management. AVRBC is hosting information sessions and study groups to help managers go through the process.

To learn more about AVRBC, please visit www.avrbc.com, you will find workshops and events in their event calendar under the "Professional Development" tab.

For more information on how to get involved in your community, please contact Volunteer Burnaby through their website at www.volunteerburnaby.ca. Or call 604-294-5533

Volunteer
...you'll be glad you did



Volunteer Opportunity!

Volunteer Burnaby is looking for **gift wrap volunteers week days only**, for our annual fundraiser at Brentwood Town Centre. Training will be provided to all selected volunteers. To learn more or to sign up please email jeff@volunteerburnaby.ca - call 604.294.5533 or visit www.volunteerburnaby.ca

We salute all Managers of Volunteers who make community through involvement possible.

**Happy International
Volunteer Managers Day!**

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