



Frieda Robertson, Volunteer Burnaby Office Administrator and Manager of Member Services.



VOLUNTEER BURNABY

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
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www.volunteerburnaby.ca

Volunteering to Build Community

by Kelina Kwan

Since the winter of 2011, I have introduced 17 organizations and their volunteers to readers of the Burnaby Now through this series of monthly articles. This month, I'd like to introduce you to the organization that actually makes this possible – Volunteer Burnaby.

For almost 40 years, Volunteer Burnaby has functioned as a key resource for volunteer involvement in Burnaby/New Westminster and the surrounding region. The organization's focus is on creating caring communities.

"We involve individuals in rewarding opportunities close to their heart, inspiring them to contribute their time, energy, and talents. In this way, we mobilize volunteers and we help local community organizations deliver their vital programs and services,"

says Frieda Robertson, Office Administrator and Manager of Member Services at Volunteer Burnaby. This small but vibrant agency helps organizations connect people with volunteer opportunities. "We drive positive change in the community by leading, inspiring, and empowering people and organizations to embrace the value of volunteerism in shaping our communities." "By engaging people in local causes, we facilitate a sense of meaning, fulfillment, enjoyment, personal growth and a sense of belonging within the community. In doing so, we help build capacity for local volunteering and connect people with a sense of social responsibility, while celebrating and cultivating strong, healthy, inclusive, and vibrant

communities."

The facilitation of this series of monthly articles is a case in point. Through these articles, Volunteer Burnaby helps introduce various organizations in Burnaby to people in their community, and in the process, helps promote volunteer opportunities within these organizations. Volunteer Burnaby also organizes and participates in various volunteer festivals, volunteer recognition events, and engages media to increase awareness of community volunteering and volunteerism. Their online database of volunteer opportunities connects agencies with volunteers, and they also respond to telephone inquiries and walk-ins to customize volunteer opportunity searches to individual's interests.

Volunteer Burnaby is also truly inclusive. Their Special Needs Access Program (SNAP) assists people with developmental disabilities that want to volunteer as part of the community inclusion experience. According to Volunteer Burnaby's recent annual report, SNAP has helped more than 227 individuals in their search for community participation opportunities. Today, participants volunteer in

diverse positions, with various organizations ranging from clerical to service.

To ensure that volunteerism continues in the community and into the future, Volunteer Burnaby actively engages youth by putting together volunteer opportunities with our member agencies who wish to develop youth volunteer positions. "We hosted a UBC student project to explore our role in the Career and Work Experience Programs with Burnaby high schools resulting in recommendations and strategies to make volunteer opportunities more accessible to high schools students."

But Volunteer Burnaby's work goes deeper than just connecting volunteers with organizations. One of their key priorities is to increase capacity by increasing membership knowledge based on volunteerism and volunteer sector information. They deliver quality workshops and leadership development. and this year, "Volunteer Burnaby has partnered with Volunteer Victoria to provide on-line learning opportunities. We will extend this strategy to include other learning tools such as webinars and e-learning" Robertson says.

"Recently, Burnaby City Council

approved a work plan for the implementation of Phase 1 of the Burnaby Social Sustainability Strategy. This Phase focuses on 44 of the 127 actions in the Strategy and is expected to unfold over the next five years or so. Volunteer Burnaby has been identified as one of the possible partners to take the lead in helping non-profit organizations identify their needs" Robertson says. Volunteer Burnaby has proven its vital role in building community through their work with volunteers.

Statistics from the 2010 Canadian Survey on Volunteering show that 47 per cent of Canadians volunteer. "While that statistic is significant, it is still less than 50 per cent. You can help us raise the bar," Robertson says and they truly believe that Volunteer Burnaby.

You too can be a "builder of community" - for more information on how to get involved in your community with various initiatives and organizations, please contact Volunteer Burnaby at 604.294.5533 or visit their website at www.volunteerburnaby.ca.

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We're Searching for Volunteers

City of Burnaby

With summer fast approaching, the Burnaby Emergency Program Office is getting ready to promote Personal Emergency Preparedness throughout the City. We need volunteers to help at a number of events and festivals. If you are interested in becoming a Burnaby Emergency Program Volunteer, please register with Burnaby Emergency Program Office by email: getprepared@burnaby.ca or telephone: 604-294-7097.

The Big Fair 2013 • SFU Sept. 23-26



Co-hosted by Volunteer Burnaby, this is a great opportunity for non-profit and community-based organizations to connect with a large number of students looking for meaningful ways to support skill development and civic engagement.

Meet one of Burnaby's local heroes – Ken Ryan

Always enthusiastic and passionately engaged in the community, Ken has been involved with the Burnaby Festival of Volunteers since it began in 2004. As the acting treasurer, Ken continually brings a wealth of leadership and insight to the table, which goes a long way to ensuring the success of the event. Outside of the Festival of Volunteers, Ken serves as President of the Burnaby Optimists Club and is busy this summer organizing the annual Kensington Community Fair.

