




Family Volunteering: The Final Report



VOLUNTEER
BÉNÉVOLES
CANADA

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For more information on family volunteering
please visit www.volunteer.ca.



Executive Summary

Introduction

Family volunteering is an established, albeit informal principle that has thus far scarcely been utilized by the voluntary sector in the targeted recruitment of volunteers for their organizations.

With the recent decline in actual numbers of one million volunteers in Canada (NSGVP 2000) it is evident that the voluntary sector needs to do more than merely react to this circumstance, but must develop proactive strategies to increase the participation of Canadian citizens in voluntary action. Family volunteering addresses the short-term predicament by increasing the volunteer pool exponentially, as well as securing volunteerism in the future: individuals who experienced volunteering as part of their upbringing are more likely to continue volunteering as adults (NSGVP 2000).

Additionally, family volunteering offers new volunteer opportunities to groups of people who may not otherwise be able to incorporate volunteering into their lives. This ability to participate allows families to spend meaningful time with each other and with their community without diminishing other aspects of family life, but instead enriching their collective experiences. The time has come for this exciting new trend to become a recognized volunteer management practice.

The family volunteering project is an initiative of Volunteer Canada that represents the organization's longstanding interest in the potential of families as catalysts for community change and of volunteering as a shared, transformative experience. This exploratory work on family volunteering in Canada offers insight into how groups of people who may not otherwise be able to incorporate volunteering into their lives can now get involved.

One component of Volunteer Canada's Family Volunteering Initiative was to conduct the National Survey on Family Volunteering. The survey was designed to identify current practices in family volunteering, assess the readiness of the voluntary sector in Canada to approach and accommodate families as volunteers, and to lead to the development of tools for the implementation of family volunteering as a formalized volunteer opportunity.

Developed with the assistance of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, The Vanier Institute of the Family and a volunteer advisory committee, the survey was conducted in three separate parts: a nationwide, mail-in questionnaire, focus groups held in five locations across the country and telephone interviews with key informants in Quebec.

The report describes methodology and results, and also delivers an analysis of the insights gained and recommendations generated to guide the next steps of the Family Volunteering Initiative.

In determining the locations, the selection criteria applied to regional representation, ethnic diversity, as well as communities of varying sizes.

Purpose of Survey

The purpose of the survey was to gain an understanding of the voluntary sector's current organizational practices as they apply to family volunteering from the perspective of managers of volunteer resources and from individual volunteers. In addition, the research was to identify the challenges and opportunities related to family volunteering that may exist in the sector.

Survey Components

The survey consisted of three components: a mail-in questionnaire, focus groups and telephone interviews with key informants.

Questionnaire

The 28-point, self-administered questionnaire was available in French and English and organized into three sections that addressed the structure of the organization, existing volunteer opportunities and family volunteering.

It was distributed by mail to 1,500 agencies, specifically directed to the organization's manager of volunteer resources (or those responsible for managing the volunteer program). Recipients of the questionnaire represented a random selection of small, medium and large community-based organizations across the country, including communities in the North. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter outlining the project and defining "family" for the purpose of the survey.

Questionnaires were completed and returned in a two-week period with a respectable response rate of 49%.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were held between January 15 and February 1, 2002, in five cities across Canada. In determining the locations, the selection criteria applied to regional representation, ethnic diversity, as well as communities of varying sizes.

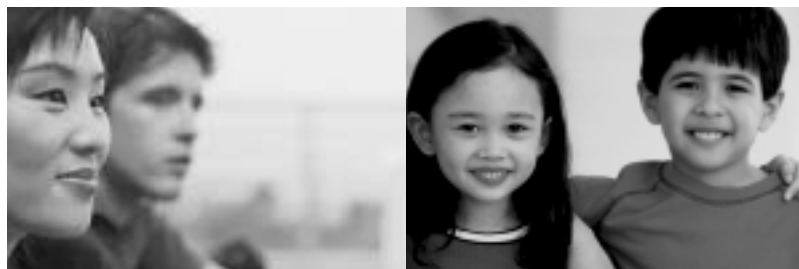
Two focus groups were held in each location: one agency focus group with 10 to 12 managers of volunteer resources and one volunteer focus group with eight to 10 participants who were currently volunteering or had been engaged in volunteer activity.

The objectives of the focus groups were:

- ▶ to ascertain what organizations understand family volunteering to be;
- ▶ to learn more about the capacity of agencies to respond to the increasing demand of family groups wishing to volunteer;
- ▶ to determine barriers to family volunteering and how to overcome them in order to implement or enhance family volunteering.

Telephone Interviews

Eight individual telephone interviews were conducted in Quebec applying a somewhat abridged version of the format and questions from the focus groups. The individuals were chosen by the Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec, according to the same criteria as the focus groups. The interviews were held to capture the experience and views unique to Quebec on the topic of family volunteering.





Survey Responses

A total of 740 questionnaires were returned, with the majority completed by those directly responsible for volunteer management in their organization. Eighty-four managers of volunteer resources as well as volunteers participated in the focus groups and telephone interviews. Overall, there was a satisfactory representation of organizations according to size, field and location.

Family Volunteering: The Final Report breaks the findings into two chapters: those of the questionnaire, and those of the focus groups and telephone interviews. The questionnaire results paint a very clear picture of the current state of family volunteering as addressed by organizational structures, whereas the focus groups reflect the individual experience of managers and volunteers from within that organizational structure.

The results confirmed three general assumptions:

- (1) family volunteers do exist and operate in almost all organizations;
- (2) efforts made to formally incorporate family volunteers as a group are at this point, uncommon;
- (3) judging from the strong positive reaction within the voluntary sector to the survey, there is a tremendous interest in family volunteering as a viable opportunity for the sector's future operations.

Principal Findings

The understanding of family volunteering varies greatly, nonetheless there is general consensus that the provided definition is a practical one. While 60% of organizations state that they have family volunteers, only 15% have programs actually designed for that group. However, 55% indicated that the possibility of incorporating a family volunteering program was likely in the next two years.

Benefits of Family Volunteering

There is general agreement that family volunteering benefits both organizations and volunteers greatly. Organizations see that they can increase the diversity and size of their volunteer pool, increase their impact in the community, expand their range of services, and increase their profile in the community. Family volunteering is viewed overall as providing an important opportunity to develop values for future generations by instilling good social conscience. It is also seen as contributing to healthy family connections by offering venues that give family members a common interest.

Barriers to Family Volunteering

Perceived barriers were numerous, though mostly of a logistical nature. The major issues brought up by the respondents were as follows:

- ▶ staffing and funding issues were identified as the greatest challenges to overcome in order to successfully implement family volunteering programs;
- ▶ there is a lack of best practices with which to address family volunteering;

Participants in the research demonstrated a great interest in being able to meet and discuss new and innovative ideas...

- ▶ constraints on the amount of time that is available to family members to actually volunteer as a unit;
- ▶ including children raised questions regarding supervision, liability and confidentiality.

Requirements for Implementation of Family Volunteering Programs

In order to implement family volunteering programs, organizations felt that they needed to create interesting and socially relevant programs that were appropriate for all age groups. The tasks must be fun and the schedules, flexible.

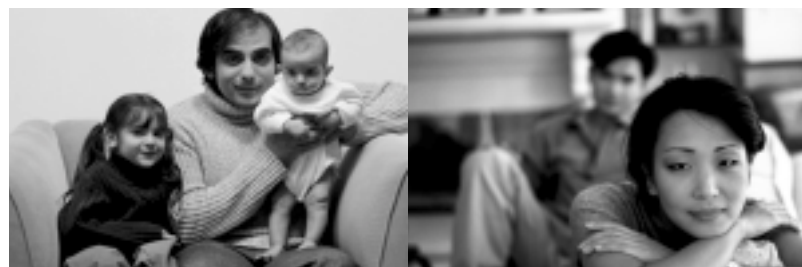
In addition to creating interesting programming for a diverse volunteer base, agencies felt they needed to evaluate the level and type of demand, assess internal organizational capacity (staffing, staff support, structure and resources), invest time in careful planning (volunteer recruitment, training etc.), and create flexible volunteer program schedules. Recognition specific to family volunteering was also seen as very important.

Participants in the research demonstrated a great interest in being able to meet and discuss new and innovative ideas and sought the support of Volunteer Canada to provide guidance and consistency in implementing a family volunteering program.

Recommendations

To properly ready the voluntary sector and successfully implement family volunteering programs, organizations require the following tools:

- ▶ a manual on the benefits and challenges of family volunteering;
- ▶ training materials on how to implement a family volunteering program;
- ▶ awareness building with national organizations to encourage them to promote family volunteering to their provincial and local branches;
- ▶ a public awareness campaign to encourage families to volunteer.





Introduction

Family Volunteering is an established, albeit informal principle, that has thus far scarcely been utilized by the voluntary sector in the targeted recruitment of volunteers for their organizations.

Limited information is available and few statistics exist on the topic within the Canadian context, although the benefits to organizations and volunteers alike have been widely documented in other countries such as the US. With the recent decline in actual numbers of one million volunteers in Canada (NSGVP 2000) it is evident that the voluntary sector needs to do more than merely react to this circumstance, but must develop pro-active strategies to increase the participation of Canadian citizens in voluntary action. Family Volunteering addresses the short-term predicament by increasing the volunteer pool exponentially, as well as securing volunteerism in the future: individuals who experienced volunteering as part of their upbringing are more likely to continue volunteering as adults (NSGVP 1997).

Additionally, Family Volunteering offers new volunteer opportunities to groups of people who may not otherwise be able to incorporate volunteering into their lives. This ability to participate allows families to spend meaningful time with each other and with their community without diminishing other aspects of family life, but instead enriching collective experiences. The time has come to transform this exciting potential into a recognized volunteer management practice.

One component of Volunteer Canada's Family Volunteering Initiative was to conduct the National Survey on Family Volunteering. The survey was designed to identify current practices in Family Volunteering, assess the readiness of the voluntary sector in Canada to approach and accommodate families as a unit and to lead to the development of tools for the implementation of Family Volunteering as a formalized volunteer opportunity.

Developed with the assistance of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, the Vanier Institute of the Family and a volunteer advisory committee, the survey was conducted in three separate parts: a nation-wide mail-in questionnaire, focus groups held in five locations across the country and telephone interviews with key informants in Quebec.

This report will describe methodology and results, as well as deliver an analysis of the insights gained and recommendations generated to guide the next steps of the Family Volunteering Initiative.

Family Volunteering offers new volunteer opportunities to groups of people who may not otherwise

be able to incorporate volunteering into their lives.





Methodology

Purpose of Survey

The purpose of the survey was to gain an understanding of the voluntary sector's current organizational practices as they apply to Family Volunteering from the perspective of managers of volunteer resources and from individual volunteers. In addition the research was to identify challenges and opportunities related to Family Volunteering that may exist in the sector.

The survey consisted of three components: a mail-in questionnaire, focus groups and telephone interviews with key informants.

Survey Questionnaire

Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire was developed by Volunteer Canada in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, The Vanier Institute of the Family and an Advisory Committee consisting of members of volunteer organizations (Appendix A).

The 28-point, self-administered questionnaire was available in French and English and organized into three sections that addressed the structure of the organization, the existing volunteer opportunities and Family Volunteering.

Distribution and Response

The questionnaire was distributed by mail to 1500 agencies, specifically directed to the organization's manager of volunteer resources (or those responsible for managing the volunteer program). Each questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter outlining the project and defining "family" for the purpose of the survey (see Appendix B).

Approximately half of the informants were identified by Volunteer Centres (for criteria see Appendix C), the other half was randomly chosen from Volunteer Canada's database, which consists of members of Volunteer Canada and organizations that have purchased products or resources from Volunteer Canada in the past. Recipients of the questionnaire represented a random selection of small, medium and large community-based organizations across the country, including communities in the North (for a definition of the different organizations see Appendix C).

Questionnaires were completed and returned in a two-week period at the end of April and the beginning of May, 2002. One reminder notice was sent to all agencies. An additional survey-package was mailed to non-respondents with a return date two weeks later. A total of 740 completed questionnaires were returned to Volunteer Canada, resulting in a respectable response rate of 49%.

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Focus Groups

Focus groups were held between January 15 and February 1, 2002 in five cities across Canada: Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Timmins and Moncton. In determining these locations, the criteria applied considered regional representation, ethnic diversity, as well as communities of varying sizes.

Composition of Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held in each location: an agency focus group with 10 to 12 managers of volunteer resources, and a volunteer focus group with eight to 10 participants who are currently or have been in the past engaged in volunteer activity. In all cases, the local volunteer centres were responsible for choosing participants based on the criteria established by Volunteer Canada. For detailed participant criteria see Appendices D through G.

Objectives and Procedure

The objectives of the focus groups were threefold:

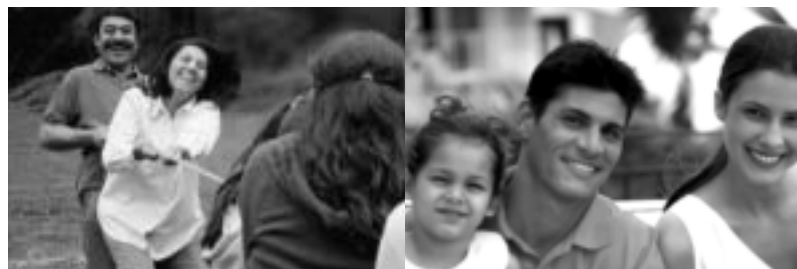
- ▶ to ascertain what organizations understand Family Volunteering to be;
- ▶ to learn more about the capacity of agencies to respond to the increasing demand of family groups wishing to volunteer; and
- ▶ to determine barriers to family volunteering and how to overcome them in order to implement or enhance family volunteering.

The same format and list of questions was used in all focus groups (Appendix H). Responses and comments of the participants were recorded both in written and audiotape format, as well as with flip charts.

Telephone Interviews

Eight individual telephone interviews were conducted in Quebec applying a somewhat abridged version of the format and questions from the focus groups. The individuals were chosen by the *Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec*, according to the same criteria as the focus groups (Appendix C). The interviews were held to capture the experience and views unique to Quebec on the topic of family volunteering (for list of questions see Appendix I).

Questionnaire respondents, focus group participants and interviewees were all informed that their responses would remain anonymous.





Questionnaire Findings

Organizational Structure

A total of 740 questionnaires were returned, 70% had been completed by managers of volunteers, or those directly responsible for volunteer management in their organization. Fifty-three percent (53%) of those responding represented organizations with 10 or less staff, 27% had 11 to 99 staff and 20% of the agencies had 100 to 2000 staff. Thirteen percent (13%) of all organizations were completely volunteer run.

Table 1 details the breakdown of the various fields in which these organizations deliver their services.

Table 1 – Type of Organization

Type of Organization	actual number	percentage
Health	173	23.4%
Arts, Culture, Sports, Recreation	159	21.5%
Social Services	139	18.8%
Education, Research	49	6.6%
Philanthropic, Foundations, Charities	32	4.3%
Development, Housing	24	3.2%
International	19	2.6%
Environment	15	2.0%
Law, Advocacy, Politics	15	2.0%
Religious	9	1.2%
Other	85	11.5%
not stated	21	2.8%
TOTAL	740	100.0%

Eighty percent (80%) stated that they had an established volunteer programme. Table 2 shows the staffing status of the respective volunteer departments.

The respondents saw the aspects of multi-generational interaction, collective activities and flexibility in scheduling as key aspects to make family volunteering an attractive opportunity for potential participants.

Table 2 – Staffing of Volunteer Department

# of staff	full-time/actual	full-time/%	part-time/actual	part-time/%	seasonal/actual	seasonal/%
0 to 3	551	74.5%	557	75.3%	588	79.5%
4 to 10	64	8.6%	52	7.0%	52	7.0%
11 and up	45	6.1%	52	7.0%	18	2.4%
not stated	80	10.8%	79	10.7%	82	11.1%

The volunteer departments managed up to 40,000 volunteers in a single organization, with over 60% of organizations reporting an average active volunteer pool of up to 100 people. Recruitment methods are mainly informal through word of mouth, direct approach of individuals or through existing volunteers (68%).

Volunteer Opportunities

The majority of organizations stated that they had regularly scheduled, as well as short-term volunteering opportunities.

Table 3 – Frequency of Volunteer Opportunities

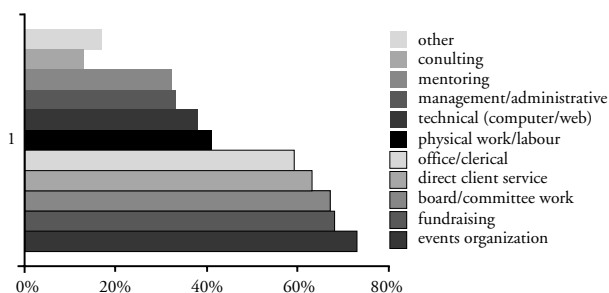
	regular/actual	regular/%	short-term/actual	short-term/%
yes	528	71.4%	585	79.1%
no	178	24.1%	135	18.2%
not stated	34	4.6%	20	2.7%
total	740	100.0%	740	100.0%

Regularly scheduled opportunities were mainly conducted on a daily (44%) or weekly (32%) basis with short-term volunteering opportunities being an occasional occurrence for 64% of the organizations. There are a great variety of volunteer activities available to volunteers. Nonetheless event organization, fund raising, board and committee work and direct client service are the clear leaders of opportunities, all of them being offered by over two thirds of the agencies.





Figure 1 – Volunteer Opportunities



The majority of volunteers (63%) give their time on a weekly and monthly basis, though there is a significant group (25%) that participates on an occasional level, several times a year. Volunteers are available any day of the week with half choosing evening hours, the other half mornings and afternoons. Eighty per cent (80%) of these volunteers do their work individually, only 13% do so as a group.

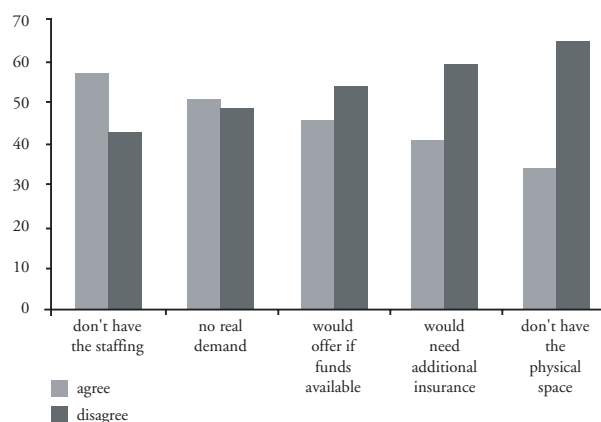
Family Volunteering

Sixty percent (60%) of responding organizations have family volunteers. Family Volunteers participate mainly in direct services (46%), but also in fund raising, special events and event organizing, as well as in governance. Sixteen percent (16%) of the agencies surveyed offer volunteer opportunities specifically created for family volunteers, the top three of those being fundraising, direct services and special events, however 66% did not see any demand within their own organizations to offer family volunteering opportunities. In contrast, more than half of the organizations state a likelihood of the implementation of family volunteer programmes within the next two years.

When asked to assess the benefits of family volunteering to their organization, only two-thirds of respondents chose to answer. An enlarged volunteer pool, increased diversity and higher community exposure were identified as the key advantages of family volunteering. As to benefits to their organization’s volunteers the respondents cited the chance for bonding as family members, community involvement and the sense of accomplishment. Overall the public would benefit from an increased sense of community and a new generation growing into civic participation.

The respondents saw the aspects of multi-generational interaction, collective activities and flexibility in scheduling as key aspects to make family volunteering an attractive opportunity for potential participants. Capacity was cited as the most important element needed in order to implement a family volunteer program in their organization. Respondents reactions to possible barriers to the application of successful family volunteer programmes were as follows:

Figure 2 – Barriers to Family Volunteer Programmes



Only 15 percent of organizations had events or programs designed specifically for family volunteers.

Summary

- ▶ The high return rate of questionnaires at 49% indicates that there is significant interest in the sector on the topic of family volunteering.
 - ▶ The health sector and social services had the highest response rates at collectively just over 40%, affirming that these sectors are under particular pressure to find volunteers to continue servicing their clientele while dealing with ongoing budget cuts.
 - ▶ Eighty percent (80%) of organizations have established volunteer programmes, and almost the same percentage offer regular and short-term volunteer opportunities.
 - ▶ Fundraising is the most frequently offered single volunteer opportunity.
 - ▶ Only 60% of responding organizations chose to complete the section on “Family Volunteering”.
 - ▶ While two-thirds of the organizations reported having family volunteers, these families are not likely participating in family volunteering as defined in the survey, i.e. volunteering for the same organization, but not necessarily together.
 - ▶ Only 15 percent of organizations had events or programs designed specifically for family volunteers.
 - ▶ It appears that most volunteers participate on their own, rather than in a group or with family.
 - ▶ While only one-third of the organizations felt there was a demand for family volunteering opportunities among their volunteers, 55% indicated that the possibility of incorporating family volunteering programs was likely in the next two years.
- ▶ Organizations felt that families would benefit from participating in family volunteering programs in the following ways: developing closer family bonds, developing closer ties to the community, feeling as if they had given back, and feelings of satisfaction and skill development.
 - ▶ Organizations felt that they would also benefit from implementing family volunteering programs. They felt this change would: increase the diversity and size of their volunteer pool, increase their impact in the community, expand their range of services and increase their profile in the community.
 - ▶ In order to implement family volunteering programs organizations felt that they needed to create interesting and socially relevant programs that were appropriate for all age groups. The tasks needed to be fun and flexible schedules needed to be created.
 - ▶ In addition to creating interesting programming for a diverse volunteer base agencies felt they needed to
 - 1) evaluate the level and type of demand,
 - 2) assess internal organizational capacity (staffing, staff support, structure and resources),
 - 3) invest time in careful planning (volunteer recruitment, training etc.) and,
 - 4) create flexible volunteering program schedules.





Focus Groups Findings

The questions in the focus groups can be divided into five main sections:

- ▶ current status of family volunteering within your organization
- ▶ defining family volunteering
- ▶ perceived benefits of family volunteering
- ▶ perceived barriers to family volunteering
- ▶ tools needed to implement family volunteering programs.

Current Status of Family Volunteering

Respondents appeared to be familiar with the concept of family volunteering. Most cited that this form of volunteering was occurring on some level within their organization, although it was often happening by default, rather than through a formalized family volunteering program.

“Mothers end up bringing their kids and eventually find something for them to do.”

“Often family members help out with some special event, and then they just stay on.”

(manager of volunteer resources)

Some who were formally targeting families as volunteers, were extremely satisfied with the results.

“We had so many families responding, they had to be turned away.”

(manager of volunteer resources)

Still others who had formalized family volunteering showed some regret at having done so.

“As soon as we turned it [family volunteering] into a program, interest seemed to wane”

(manager of volunteer resources)

Defining Family Volunteering

The discussion around a definition for family volunteering was based on the one provided by the Vanier Institute of the Family (see Appendix J). However, the perception of “family” varied greatly within diverse communities, from the narrowest definition to the broadest:

“...aren’t all people I volunteer with my family?”

(volunteer)

The following were the most commonly asked questions and comments during the discussions:

- ▶ Does family volunteering require that immediate family members need to volunteer together?
- ▶ Is it family volunteering when family members volunteer for the same organization, but in different programs?
- ▶ Is it family volunteering when family members volunteer for different organizations?
- ▶ Can “chosen” family be included – i.e., friends, co-workers?
- ▶ Is it just formal, structured volunteer programs that count as family volunteering or are informal volunteer activities such as being a good neighbour also included?

Many volunteers enthusiastically commented that they had been doing “family volunteering” since their parents involved them as children.

Participants repeatedly suggested the inclusion of family pets and step-family in the definition. In addition, it was felt that the definition provided lacked reasons why people come together. There were repeated suggestions to add a phrase such as “who give their time and support to organizations both individually and together.”

Perceived Benefits of Family Volunteering

Benefits to Volunteer Organizations:

Organization representatives across the country were quick to point out that their organization either benefited, or had the potential to benefit greatly from family volunteering initiatives.

“Family volunteering has the potential to greatly enhance the volunteer pool—instead of getting one volunteer, the organization gets several volunteers. This increases reliability because volunteers will share the load and when one can’t show up another family member will come in their place.”

“... it [family volunteering] helps to add new skill sets to the pool. When family members of different ages volunteer, they bring different skills based on interests and also age—family volunteering provides diversity that would be otherwise difficult for an organization to capture.”

(manager of volunteer resources)

At the same time they were uncertain how, or what types of initiatives would be most suitable for their organizations.

“What makes a family volunteering experience work? Is it a well run organization where a volunteers needs are met... specific jobs, shared interests, time availability, a good selection of roles?”

(manager of volunteer resources)

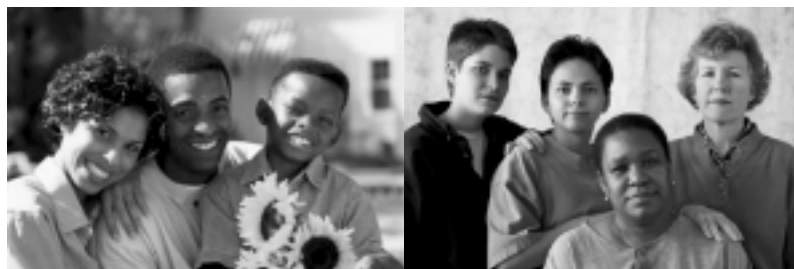
Some of the most frequently mentioned benefits were:

- ▶ Successful recruitment of families could increase volunteer resources, with increased potential for long term retention
- ▶ An expanded culture of the organization
- ▶ An expanded skill base of volunteers to draw on—organizations will attract new types of volunteers because of the family connection
- ▶ Organizations are better able to meet needs of clients with a more varied skill base
- ▶ A solid potential for increasing commitment of volunteers, if they no longer have to juggle between volunteer work and family interests
- ▶ Sharing the volunteer workload with family members will ensure consistent client contact, service and care (greater reliability)
- ▶ Reliability can be enhanced - individuals will be more inclined to go if they have family/friends counting on them

Perceived Benefits to Community:

Managers of volunteer resources and volunteers alike saw great advantages for the community as a whole through the implementation of Family Volunteering.

“Not all family members need to be doing the same thing - the family can diversify—there are lots of opportunities for training for younger members of the family as well and this is a long-term benefit to the community... this will help the community to grow...”





“Family volunteering teaches young people about the needs of others in their communities—builds the future and broadens the horizons of youth.”

(manager of volunteer resources)

Participants repeatedly voiced that family volunteering:

- ▶ Instills good values—a sense of caring makes stronger community, stronger family connections
- ▶ Promotes socialization—bridges isolation problem
- ▶ Makes better citizens
- ▶ Enables the individual to consider one’s good fortune, to get out and get something done, not wait for it to be done for you—essential for community services.

Benefits for Families:

Volunteers welcomed and embraced the possibility of the recognition of family volunteering and all of its attributes. Many volunteers enthusiastically commented that they had been doing “family volunteering” since their parents involved them as children. These volunteers looked forward to increased recognition for bringing family members with them to their volunteer activities, thereby making an even greater contribution than they do coming alone. Volunteers suggested that this is an age old activity whose time has come—but an activity that needs to be embraced by the organizations that use volunteers. Volunteers were quick to list the positive aspects of family volunteering:

- ▶ Brings families together
- ▶ Teaches kids the positive aspects of volunteering and teaches them how to give
- ▶ Increased gratification if whole family gets involved

- ▶ Opportunity to “plug-in” the next generation to values and community involvement
- ▶ Enhances family functioning, with broader base of common experience
- ▶ Volunteer experiences give family members a new perspective on each others strengths and promotes mutual respect

Perceived Barriers to Family Volunteering

Barriers for Families:

The number one issue cited by all participants was time.

“My time is precious to me... I have three children, I work full-time and I have parents who also need me. And yet I was raised with parents who volunteered and I feel a commitment to the community in which I live. Yet, I can’t do it all—work, shopping, extra-curricular activities and just getting to see my husband—it takes up all my time. Family volunteering offers an opportunity for me to ‘take my kids to volunteer’ rather than taking my kids to work. I can help them to understand and experience what I did as a child—how to help others. It can help to foster values and a sense of community that I otherwise can’t. If we do it together, many of these issues no longer exist!”

(Volunteer)

The finite resource of time has come under increased pressure through demands at work and additional responsibilities within the family, such as caring for extended family. Family volunteering poses a scheduling problem—it’s sometimes difficult to find a time when everyone is available.

The program has evolved and is now an integrated component of the volunteer centre's recruitment and referral service.

Other commonly mentioned barriers included:

- ▶ Costs, such as transportation, screening process, gas, parking, insurance, childcare, and meals are a few of the examples volunteers gave as barriers to family volunteering activities
- ▶ When you lose one family member, you lose the whole family unit
- ▶ Difficulty in finding programs and activities that can accommodate young children
- ▶ The public may resent the efforts of volunteer organizations to structure something that has been a tradition (helping one's neighbour)
- ▶ Accountability: when children and parents are volunteering, who supervises and gives direction to the children—staff or parents?

Barriers for Voluntary Organizations:

Many organizations identified barriers to the use of family volunteers because of their strong sense of uniqueness. They think that their issues are often very individual and are unlike those of other groups.

"Family volunteering fits organizations [that] can be less selective than if they were recruiting individuals."
(manager of volunteer resources)

Greater flexibility is required, which contradicts the need for more structured programs with tight policies and procedures. The list of barriers continues with:

- ▶ Lack of staff support
- ▶ Liability insurance that pertains to children
- ▶ Confidentiality—policy development and implementation regarding children
- ▶ Adapting screening process to children

- ▶ Mandatory volunteering— an issue that needs to be resolved and is seen by some as undermining the whole concept of volunteering
- ▶ When volunteer needs are diverse, it is more difficult to prioritize the needs of the client

Tools needed to implement Family Volunteering Programs

Appropriate resources are identified as the most important consideration in the promotion, implementation and sustainability of family volunteering both within organizations and the community. Organizations looked to Volunteer Canada and to their volunteer centres as the appropriate groups to develop and distribute needed resources as well as to be the points of contact for learning about family volunteering and how to adapt best practices to newly-developed family volunteering programs. Participants saw these two groups as essential contacts to troubleshoot issues with the organizations when they needed specific guidance.

Organizations require:

- ▶ Guidelines that address the incorporation of young people (children) into their volunteer programs
- ▶ Brochures, videos – similar to the "Power of One", the IYV video
- ▶ A toolkit with suggestions for slogans, promotional materials, recruitment techniques
- ▶ Sample job descriptions
- ▶ A checklist to help match families of volunteers and clients—this could help with screening suggestions for recognition tools appropriate for families, rather than individuals
- ▶ A menu of best practices for family volunteering: case studies, examples of what worked, what did not



- ▶ A generic checklist to give to all volunteers outlining responsibilities, rights, things not to do Volunteer Canada could be the central distribution point through their website
- ▶ A designated recognition day within National Volunteer Week
- ▶ To reduce costs of volunteering, Volunteer Canada could recommend consistent guidelines around policies re: mileage rebate with charitable receipts
- ▶ More information to organizations re: tax breaks
- ▶ Organizations need Volunteer Canada to develop and implement standardized Terms of Reference for mandatory volunteering by high school students, and clients from Ontario Works (so that it is not left to managers of volunteer resources)
- ▶ Promote volunteering as a way to provide new exposures to intergenerational fellowship (grandparents, extended family opportunities)

Models of Family Volunteering Programs

Both Volunteer Calgary and Volunteer Kingston have developed successful family volunteering programs. Volunteer Calgary developed the Families Volunteering Together program over six years ago. The program has evolved and is now an integrated component of the volunteer centre's recruitment and referral service. Likewise, Volunteer Kingston incorporated a family volunteering initiative into its recruitment and referral program.

At Volunteer Calgary:

"...the family volunteering program has two focuses—one focuses on increasing the capacity of organizations to engage family volunteers and the second addresses the engagement of families as volunteers. For our member organizations, we have developed an on-line

Families Volunteering Together resource available at www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca. We also offer two seminars, Introduction to Family Volunteering and Expanding Your Family Volunteering Program. In addition to these, we provide individual consultations. The on-line searchable database identifies family volunteer opportunities. For families living in Calgary, we provide an informative brochure with details on the benefits of family volunteerism as well as information on how to get involved. We have also developed an on-line Families Volunteering Together (FVT) resource at www.volunteercalgary.ab.ca with further details including a family volunteering opportunity of the month. Within FVT, we launched the Kids Who Care program which includes the new children's storybook series, Patrick & Sara Volunteer."

The Volunteer Kingston Family Volunteering Program is supported through a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The purpose of the program is to increase the capacity of non-profit organizations to involve families as volunteers, and to recruit local families.

"As a result of this initiative, Volunteer Kingston has produced a manual, designed for non-profit organizations who want to enhance their programs and services by involving families as volunteers. Through the work of pilot sites and an advisory committee representative of local families, the manual focuses on the development of support systems for volunteering families (e.g. policies, procedures, forms, etc) that complement an organization's existing volunteer management practices."

For more information about the Volunteer Kingston manual or to obtain a copy for your organization, visit www.volunteerkingston.ca.

Community-based sports, education, certain types of specialized care facilities and programs, and childrens' programs depend almost exclusively on the family of members or clients for volunteer support.

Summary

Participants held very diverse views and had varied degrees of familiarity with the concept of family volunteering. They questioned what it means to be a “family” volunteer. There was general consensus that “family” volunteering suggested that the organization needed activities that engaged children. Many participants from both groups were hard pressed to think of a mother and daughter delivering meals on wheels or a husband and wife volunteering at the cancer clinic as a “family” activity because there were no young children or adolescents volunteering with them.

Participants argued that “family volunteering has always existed, but in an unstructured, less formal way. Families have always done good work in their communities. This [research] is only an attempt to formalize this work.” They called for the development of a standard, clear and concise definition of family volunteering that went beyond existing explanations.

In the majority of cases, organization representatives were uncertain of what family volunteering entailed. They stated that their organization did not engage in the family volunteering activities and cited money and supporting infrastructure as the overriding barriers to it. There was also an expression of reticence that family volunteering could be a viable part of certain organizations because of liability and legal issues.

Some participants reported knowledge of a particular family volunteering program, while most had experience with family members in one or more of the volunteer programs with which they were associated. Community-based sports, education, certain types of specialized care facilities and programs, and childrens' programs depend almost exclusively on the family of members or clients for volunteer support.

The most common areas for family volunteering were with 'host family programs' associated with multicultural organizations assisting new immigrants with settlement and adaptation, in organizations providing respite care to children with disabilities, school related activities and sporting activities. Another common area was with nursing homes where families took turns assisting with their elderly parents and grandparents to ensure that they got the best possible care.

Programs need to offer a wide range of activities that include short-term and one-time events developed to fit the lifestyles of today's families. It was also noted that organizations felt that volunteers “shopped” for the organization they were interested in based in part on “perks”—this seemed especially true of short term events—and includes t-shirts, mugs, tickets to things, (free access to events themselves) and of course recognition. Recognition specific to family volunteering is seen as a very important aspect by the groups of volunteers.

Lack of time is considered to be the greatest barrier to family volunteering.





Conclusion

The national survey in all its parts clearly demonstrates that there is tremendous interest in family volunteering in Canada. Participants suggest that greater involvement in family volunteering activities and programs could be very beneficial to many different aspects of life and community. Family volunteering is seen as having the potential to increase the size of the volunteer pool, extend organizations' community activities and expand the benefits organizations provide to the community. The community constituents serve two crucial functions—they furnish the volunteer resource that organizations involve to operate and serve people in need, and these same stakeholders are the very reason that organizations exist.

Family volunteering is viewed as possibly increasing the diversity of a volunteer pool, especially when it comes to broadening the age of volunteers. Facilitating new programs will help to extend the range of an organization's activities and its impact in ways that would not be possible otherwise. Furthermore, family volunteering is described as a mechanism through which the next generation of volunteers is created. The population is aging and the NSGVP shows that children of parents who volunteer are more likely to volunteer when they become adults.

There is a great desire to implement family volunteering initiatives across Canada especially in the health care and social service sectors where the impact might be greatest for organizations under these umbrellas. Dedicated long-term (more than five years) regular volunteers (see Handy's 2002 IYV article on nonprofitscan.ca) in most segments of the voluntary sector are aging and declining in numbers but this is especially noticeable in the health sector during a time when government cutbacks and increased pressures

on health care see a greater level of demand for volunteers. However, these organizations must deal with individual constraints as well. In particular some organizations may be poorly equipped to appropriately address increased organizational and management issues due to an influx of family volunteers.

Organizations articulated a need for support. The implementation of family volunteering activities and programs in the sector are thought by many to be far-reaching, affecting volunteers, families, communities and the organizations that facilitate them. They recognize that family volunteering is sometimes a costly undertaking and that they need support and guidance in re-organizing structures, developing capacity, leadership, program planning, recruitment, training, retention and overall management of volunteers. They recognize that without staff support, training and resources organizations cannot deliver programs to the community or its constituents in a consistent and well-planned manner. Organizations call for greater support from Volunteer Centres and Volunteer Canada in identifying infrastructure, training initiatives for staff and volunteers (for example regarding program development and implementation), and in particular, more educational opportunities that encourage dialogue among staff, volunteers and community members regarding best practices.

Participants state that best practices need to be reviewed and shared by groups that have implemented successful programs with those organizations that want to implement family volunteering initiatives. For example, participants suggested that some of the most successful programs included "tailor made" projects for families and cited environmental clean-up projects in parks and highways as ideal for families—and indeed entire neighbourhoods of families.

Several important issues emerged from the research. Family volunteering is not new. It has always existed in some fashion.

Several important issues emerged from the research. Family volunteering is not new. It has always existed in some fashion. Whether a staff member of an organization or a volunteer for an organization, it is common knowledge that when there is a shortage of volunteers both groups are likely to ask their family members to assist them to ensure that an event goes well or a client is served. However, the research reveals that the concept of family volunteering is not well understood within organizations. Participants in all aspects of the research pointed to the need for a clear and current definition of what family volunteering entails, and assurance that such a definition is consistent, readily available and easily accessible to organizations.

Ideas about family volunteering seemed to vary according to the understanding of the individual staff member. Definitions of family were also wide-ranging. Some participants did not think of a family under any other rubric than the nuclear definition with parents and children. Staff participants responded frequently that family volunteering would not work in their organization(s) because children simply could not be utilized given the type of service that was provided. One of the most obvious examples of this came from the health sector, which comprised the largest group of survey respondents. Issues of liability, co-ordination and insurance were the first issues cited. Next, respondents felt that the sensitivity of their clients situations precluded the use of children as volunteers.

Respondents expressed considerable interest in family volunteering and often discussed the difficulties many of their organizations had in recruiting and retaining volunteers. Respondents recognize that it is no longer possible to simply expect volunteers to 'arrive and stay' with an organization for several years. The 'new breed' of volunteer is more mobile in that they want to do many

things that interest them. Volunteers are also more time constricted and are experiencing greater pressure from their work and family responsibilities. In order for volunteering to regain its momentum (after losing a million volunteers between 1997 and 2000 (NSGVP 2000)) organizations need to offer a wider spectrum of activities to appeal to the interests of this changing population. None of this can be accomplished without addressing the needs of the organizations themselves.

Repeatedly, respondents appealed for tools that would help them to serve their communities better. There is a strong recognition that to accomplish this goal there needs to be a re-thinking of how to capture the interests of volunteers and to provide new and innovative opportunities to potential volunteers that will include their families. In order to do this staff need training opportunities that will enable them to provide better service to their volunteers and the community whom they serve. There is a need for workshops and conferences that assist organizations in assessing their capacity to manage family volunteering and to implement best practices that will make family volunteering a sustainable program option. Many organizations have already made changes to accommodate family volunteering although only 16% acknowledge or recognize their activities as fitting the family profile. For example, almost all organizations engaged in various degrees of short-term volunteering events that included fundraising, direct service and other special events—all strategies that can accommodate families in the volunteering activities.

Participants in this research agreed that family volunteering was a viable avenue to pursue to increase volunteer numbers and to capture the interests of the busy family. However, they were also quick to point out that this was not viable without assistance from volunteer centres and Volunteer Canada.



While only one-third of respondents felt there was a demand for family volunteer opportunities within their organizations, after listing the benefits of family volunteering and what they felt was necessary to implement a family volunteer program, their perspective on demand issues seemed to change. There was a greater recognition of the benefits of family volunteering to organizations and families. Yet, respondents were clear that none of this can be done without the appropriate supports

that include funding for assessment, training for staff and volunteers and recruitment tools. Participants in the research demonstrated a great interest in being able to meet and discuss new and innovative ideas and sought the support of Volunteer Canada to provide guidance and consistency in implementing a family volunteering program.

Recommendations

To properly prepare the voluntary sector and to successfully implement family volunteering programs, the project team identified a number of tools to be provided to the organizations, based on the research undertaken in the preceding national survey. In addition to the development of new tools, a number of existing resources should be assessed and if necessary need to be adapted to the specifics of Family Volunteering.

The production of an effective set of tools can be separated into four basic units:

- ▶ a manual on the benefits and challenges of family volunteering;

- ▶ training materials on how to implement a family volunteering program;
- ▶ awareness building with national organizations to encourage them to promote family volunteering to their provincial and local branches; and
- ▶ a public awareness campaign to encourage families to volunteer.

Participants in this research agreed that family volunteering was a viable avenue to pursue to increase volunteer numbers and to capture the interests of the busy family.





Appendices

Appendix A

National Survey on Family Volunteering: 2002 and Beyond

Please take 10 to 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire. Once you have completed the questionnaire please return it to Volunteer Canada in the enclosed prepaid envelope by **May 2, 2002**.

Thank you for your participation in this important study!

Family Volunteering Defined

For the purpose of this survey the term "family" refers to any group of two or more people who consider themselves to be a family. Family volunteers may include parents, partners, children, siblings, foster parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and any others who consider themselves a family. A family volunteer unit contributes time to the same organization; however family members may not always volunteer together at the same time. While the specific time of the day each members of the family volunteering unit contributes to the organization may vary, the experience is shared. It is the shared experience among members of the family volunteering unit that helps to reinforce family and community bonds.

Section A: Organization Structure

A1. Which one of the following best describes your organization? (Please select one response.)

- Arts, Culture, Sports, and Recreation (including libraries, museums, zoos, media, aquariums, etc.)
- Education and Research (including pre-schools, elementary and secondary schools, boards, colleges, universities and other education.)
- Health (including public health and wellness education, outpatient rehabilitation, crisis hospitals, intervention, treatment, emergency services.)
- Social Services (including child, youth, disabled and elderly welfare and services, day care, disaster prevention, and temporary shelter.)
- Environment (including environmental conservation, pollution control and prevention, animal protection.)
- Development and Housing (community and neighborhood organizations, housing, employment and training.)
- Law, Advocacy and Politics (including legal services, political organization, promotion of civil or other rights.)
- Philanthropic, Foundations, Charities, Fundraising (including organizations that promote charity, grant making organizations, foundations, and fundraising organizations.)
- International (including promotion of cultural understanding, emergency relief, promotion of development and welfare abroad.)
- Religious / Faith Based (including churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, shrines, seminaries, monasteries and other religious institutions and auxiliaries of such institutions.)
- Business and Professional Associations, Unions (including organizations promoting, regulating and safeguarding business, professional and labour interests)
- Other, please specify: _____

A2. Does your organization have an established volunteer program? (Please select one response.)

- Yes
- No

A3. Are you the person who is responsible for volunteer recruitment activities within your organization? (Please select one response.)

- Yes → **PLEASE go to A5.**
- No

A4. What is the job title of the person who is responsible for volunteer recruitment in your organization? _____

A5. What is your job title? _____

Section B: Volunteer Opportunities

B1. How many programs involving volunteers did your organization offer in 2001?

B2. How many volunteer opportunities (*different tasks*) did your organization offer in 2001?

B3. Did you have regular scheduled volunteering opportunities in 2001? (Please select one response.)

- Yes
- No → **PLEASE go to B5.**

B4. How often did these volunteering opportunities take place? (Please select one response.)

- Conducted on a *daily* basis
- Conducted on a *weekly* basis
- Conducted on a *monthly* basis
- Conducted *once* a year
- Other, *please specify:* _____

B5. Did you offer short-term volunteering opportunities in 2001? (Please select one response.)

- Yes
- No → **PLEASE go to B7.**

B6. How often did these short-term volunteering opportunities take place? (Please select one response.)

- A few short-term events
- Many short-term events
- Other, *please specify:* _____

B7. Do the programs your organization offers serve or assist any of the following groups?
(Please select all responses that apply.)

- People with disabilities
- Older adults
- Children or youth
- Women
- Visible minorities
- Refugees
- Other, *please specify:* _____

B8. Approximately, how many paid staff are employed by your organization?

_____ Staff (*full-time, part-time and seasonal*)

B9. How many full-time, part-time, part-time and seasonal staff are part of your volunteer department?

_____ Full-time staff
_____ Part-time staff
_____ Seasonal staff

B10. Does your organization offer any volunteer opportunities within the following categories?

(Please select all responses that apply.)

Management/administrative

Office/clerical

Technical (web, computer)

Board/committee work

Events organization

Fundraising

Mentoring

Performing physical work/labour

Consulting

Direct service to people

Other, please specify: _____

B11. In total, how many volunteers gave time to your organization in 2001? _____

B12. What method do you most frequently use to recruit volunteers? (Please select one response.)

Word of mouth

Approach individuals directly

Existing volunteers provide new recruits

Local volunteer centre

Local career centres

Volunteer Opportunities Exchange (VOE)

Public appeals in the newspaper or on the radio

Internet advertisement on organization website

Other, please specify: _____

B13. How frequently do most of your volunteers give their time? (Please select one response.)

Once a year

Occasionally, several times a year

Several months a year

Every month

Every week

Other, please specify: _____

B14. When do most of your volunteers give their time? (Please select one response.)

On weekdays

On Saturdays

On Sundays

Saturdays and Sundays

A mixture of days

B15. What time of day do most volunteers give their time? (Please select one response.)

- All day
- Mornings
- Afternoons
- Evenings
- Varies

B16. How do most of your volunteers give their time? (Please select one response.)

- Individually
- With friends
- With family
- With a group
- As part of a church or religious group
- Other, please specify: _____

Section C: Family Volunteering

C1. Does your organization have any family volunteers?

For the purpose of this survey the term "family" refers to any group of two or more people who consider themselves to be a family. Family volunteers may include parents, partners, children, siblings, foster parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and any others who consider themselves a family. A family volunteer unit contributes time to the same organization; however they may not always volunteer together at the same time. While the specific time of the day each members of the family volunteering unit contributes to the organization may vary, the experience is shared. It is the shared experience among members of the family volunteering unit that helps to reinforce family and community bonds. (Please select one response.)

- Yes
- No → **PLEASE go to C4.**

C2. Approximately how many family units, as described above, participate in your programs?

C3. What are some of the volunteer opportunities your family volunteers participate in with your organization? (Please list)

C4. What do you think are the three most important things that might make family volunteering more attractive for potential participants?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C5. Do you have one or more opportunities that have been created specifically for family volunteering? (Please select one response.)

Yes

No

If yes, please describe the opportunities.

C6. How likely is your organization to implement a family volunteer program* within the next 2 years? (Please select one response.)

* (making a conscious decision to plan for and support families to volunteer in your organization)

Very likely

Likely

Somewhat likely

Unlikely

Very unlikely

C7. Do you think that there is a demand among volunteers for your organization to offer family volunteer opportunities? (Please select one response.)

Yes

No

Please explain.

C8. What do you think are some of the benefits your organization might gain as a result of having family volunteer programs?

C9. What do you think are the three most important aspects needed to implement a family volunteer program within your organization?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

C10. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Statements	Agree	Disagree
a) There is no real demand for family volunteer programs among our organization's volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
b) Our organization would offer family volunteer programs if funds were available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
c) Our organization doesn't have the physical space to offer family volunteering activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
d) We do not have the staffing to supervise the activities of larger groups of people such as family volunteers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree
e) We would need additional insurance to cover the participation of volunteers under 18 years of age.	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree

C11. What do you think are some of the benefits your organization's volunteers might gain as a result of participating in family volunteer programs?

C12. What do you think are some of the benefits your community might gain as a result of your organization organizing family volunteer programs?

Appendix B Appendix B Appendix B

Covering Letters

April 18, 2002

Dear

I would like to invite you to participate in a new research project Volunteer Canada is undertaking to discover your views on Family Volunteering. We hope that you will take a few minutes to respond to this survey and contribute to this important research on family volunteering in Canada.

From formal (organized) or informal (being a good neighbour) activities, family volunteering enables parents, partners, grandparents, children, and extended family members to give their time to worthwhile activities in the community.

You have been selected to participate in this national survey based on your association with an organization that involves volunteers. Your comments on family volunteering are essential and we would appreciate fifteen minutes of your time to complete it. Please return your completed survey to Volunteer Canada in the enclosed self-addressed, prepaid envelope by May 2, 2002.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you choose to share your ideas with us, your comments will remain anonymous. Your identity will not be disclosed. All of the data will be summarized and used for research purposes only.

If you have questions about the survey, please contact A-J McKechnie (Research Manager), either by telephone at (416) 223-2937 or via email (ajmck@sympatico.ca). To obtain a copy of the survey in French, please contact Brian Stratton (Project Manager) at 1-800-670-4041 ext. 241 or via email (bstratton@volunteer.ca).

Thank you for helping with this important research project on family volunteering in Canada. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Paddy Bowen
Executive Director,
Volunteer Canada
Encl.



Appendix C

Survey Organizations – Selection Instructions

1,500 agencies and groups across Canada will be surveyed to assess current voluntary sector organizational practices regarding family volunteering and to identify challenges and opportunities that may exist in the sector vis à vis family volunteering.

Thank you for agreeing to provide 15 contacts for each of the three categories (if possible) including name, organization name and full mailing address and representing a cross-section of agency types.

How to send your list:

It would be desirable to have the list sent electronically (in an email or as an attachment). If this is impossible, please fax to my attention.

Deadline date for submission of list: November 30, 2001

Agency Categories (15 each if possible):

Small Agency (defined as all-volunteer managed or with limited staff)

Medium Agency (defined as more than 5 staff and volunteer involvement)

Large Agency (defined as very large staff and volunteer involvement for example hospital, educational institution, etc)

Agency Representation to include in the above categories (where possible)

Multicultural group

(immigrant services, culture-specific groups, etc)

Senior serving

Family & Children /Family Relief/Support Services

Service club

Education

Single parent

Mentorship (Big Brother/Sister type organizations)

Local funding organization

(community foundation, UW, etc)

Healthcare (Palliative care, disease related, etc)

Youth serving

Sports/recreation

Disabilities (any disability)

Social services (food bank, etc)

Faith

Cultural (museum, art gallery, music festival, etc)

Please be assured that the contacts you provide will be used for this national survey only and the list will be destroyed at the end of the research project.

If you have any questions, please call or email me. Thank you for your support in this important research project.

Brian Stratton
Senior Project Manager
Volunteer Canada
430 Gilmour Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0R8

mail to: bstratton@volunteer.ca
(800) 670-0401 ext. 241
(613) 231-4371 ext. 241

Appendix D

Agency Focus Group – Selection Instructions

Each Agency Focus Group will be limited to 12 managers of volunteers (or those responsible for this function within the agency or group).

Please select agencies or groups based on the type of organization as indicated below. Issue the invitations to participate in the focus group. Confirm participation by the deadline date. Re-confirm participation 2-3 days in advance of the focus group.

We recognize that there may be unavoidable cancellations at the last minute however, it is imperative that the focus group consist of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 12 people.

Agency Focus Groups must include 1 representative from a:

large organization (many staff/volunteers)
small organization or group (little or no staff, volunteers)
multicultural group (immigrant services, culture-specific group, etc)

In addition, please select 9 reps from the following group types (no more than 1 rep from each type):

Healthcare (Palliative care, disease related, etc)	Senior serving
Youth serving	Family & Children /Family Relief/Support Services
Sports/recreation group	Service club
Disabilities group (any disability)	Education group
Social service group (food bank,	Single parent group
Faith	Mentorship (Big Brother/Sister type organizations)
Cultural group (museum, art gallery, music festival, etc)	

If you have any questions, please call or email Brian Stratton.

Brian Stratton
Senior Project Manager
Volunteer Canada
430 Gilmour Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0R8

mail to: bstratton@volunteer.ca
(800) 670-0401 ext. 241
(613) 231-4371 ext. 241



Appendix E

Agency Focus Group

Invitation Letter to Managers of Volunteers (or those responsible for this function within the agency or group)

Dear

Volunteer Canada is researching family volunteering in Canada. The first objective is to assess the current involvement of families as volunteers and secondly to evaluate the readiness and capacity of voluntary organizations to involve families (Assessment Phase). Based on the findings of this research, promotional and capacity building tools will be created to encourage families to consider volunteering and give organizations the management information needed to adapt their volunteer programs accordingly.

In order to determine the needs of agencies and volunteers across the country, 6 focus groups will be held – 2 in the west, 1 in the prairies, 1 in Ontario, 1 in Quebec and 1 in the Maritimes

You have been selected as an essential part of the assessment phase to participate in an agency focus group. The focus group will be held:

Location:

Date:	Vancouver	January 22, 2002	(SELECT YOUR DATE)
	Calgary	January 23, 2002	(REMOVE OTHER LOCATIONS)
	Winnipeg	January 24, 2002	
	Timmins	January 17, 2002	
	Quebec	to be determined	
	Maritime	January 31, 2002	

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Light refreshments will be provided.
Parking costs/transit fare can be covered.

You will be provided with a Discussion Paper (7-8 pages) on family volunteering to read in advance of the focus group. There will be a facilitator to lead discussion and the session will be tape-recorded to ensure all information is available to the researchers.

Please confirm your participation by (insert date here) to (confirm to?). Thank you in advance for considering our request.

Sincerely
Local Volunteer Centre

Appendix F

Volunteer Focus Group - Selection Instructions

Each Volunteer Focus Group will be limited to 10 volunteers. Please select volunteers based on the type of organization and other criteria as indicated below. Issue the invitations to participate in the focus group. Confirm participation by the deadline date. Re-confirm participation 2-3 days in advance of the focus group.

We recognize that there may be unavoidable cancellations at the last minute however, it is imperative that the focus group consist of a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 10 people.

Volunteer Focus Groups should include 1 representative from:

large organization (many staff/volunteers)
small organization or group (little or no staff, volunteers)
multicultural group (immigrant services, culture-specific group, etc)

Please select 7 reps from the following group types (no more than 1 rep from each type):

Healthcare (Palliative care, disease related, etc)	Senior serving
Youth serving	Family & Children /Family Relief/Support Services
Sports/recreation group	Service club
Disabilities group (any disability)	Education group
Social service group (food bank)	Single parent group
Faith	Mentorship (Big Brother/Sister type organizations)
Cultural group (museum, art gallery, music festival, etc)	

Note: Where possible, please include one volunteer who has “ceased” volunteering for whatever reasons, a volunteer currently involved in family volunteer activities and a non-volunteer.

If you have any questions, please call or email Brian Stratton.

Brian Stratton
Senior Project Manager
Volunteer Canada
430 Gilmour Street
Ottawa, Ontario K2P 0R8

mail to: bstratton@volunteer.ca
(800) 670-0401 ext. 241
(613) 231-4371 ext. 241



Appendix G

Volunteer Focus Group

Invitation Letter to Volunteers

Dear

Volunteer Canada is researching family volunteering in Canada. The first objective is to assess the current involvement of families as volunteers and secondly to evaluate the readiness and capacity of voluntary organizations to involve families (Assessment Phase). Based on the findings of this research, promotional and capacity building tools will be created to encourage families to consider volunteering and give organizations the management information needed to adapt their volunteer programs accordingly.

In order to determine the needs of agencies and volunteers across the country, 6 focus groups will be held – 2 in the west, 1 in the prairies, 1 in Ontario, 1 in Quebec and 1 in the Maritimes

You have been selected as an essential part of the assessment phase to participate in a focus group of volunteers. The focus group will be held:

Location:

Date:	Vancouver	January 22, 2002	(SELECT YOUR DATE)
	Calgary	January 23, 2002	(REMOVE OTHER LOCATIONS)
	Winnipeg	January 24, 2002	
	Timmins	January 17, 2002	
	Quebec	to be determined	
	Maritimes	January 31, 2002	

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Light refreshments will be provided.
Parking costs/transit fare can be covered.

You will be provided with a Discussion Paper (7-8 pages) on family volunteering to read in advance of the focus group. There will be a facilitator to lead discussion and the session will be tape-recorded to ensure all information is available to the researchers.

Please confirm your participation by (insert date here) to (confirm to?). Thank you in advance for considering our request.

Sincerely
Local Volunteer Centre

Appendix H

Family Volunteering Focus Group Questions Organization Representatives/Volunteers

Preamble

Family Volunteering is viewed as a new trend in volunteering by some. Yet, family volunteering has been around for a long time. This renewed focus on family volunteering has prompted us to find out more about positive aspects of family volunteering, the barriers to family volunteering and the gaps that exist in our knowledge of family volunteering. The primary focus of this research will be on organizational capacity to involve and accommodate family volunteers. Volunteer Canada is conducting these focus groups about Family Volunteering to learn more about the capacity of agencies that now need to respond to the increasing demand of family groups wishing to volunteer and to enhance this possibility where possible.

Warm-Up Questions

Is everyone familiar with family volunteering – (Any initiatives that you know about)?

Does anyone have a definition that they particularly agree with?

Is your organization currently engaged in family volunteering?

(Prompt: Could you tell us a little bit about your family volunteering experiences?)

How many organization representatives here today have not been involved in family volunteering activities – either planning or implementing a program, activity or opportunity.

What do you think is important or not important about family volunteering? (Prompt: Do you think that this venue is helpful to organizations – is it more or less time consuming, does it help or hinder the smooth operation of your organization).

Core Questions

There seems to be a recent trend toward family volunteering initiatives. Why is there a renewed focus in this area of agency programming?

Do you think that family volunteering is as important as it is being profiled to be?

If it is important, what do you think is important about family volunteering?

If it is not important, why isn't it?

Does your organization have any families who perform their volunteer activities together?

What are some of the programs/opportunities your family volunteers participate in with your organization?

What are the barriers to family volunteering overall?

Are these barriers different than those in your organization?

How do you think interest might be fostered in family volunteering – in your community and your organizations (promotion, print/media, word of mouth)?

What are some of the key elements you would like include in the design of a family volunteer program?

Do we need a better, newer, or different definition of family volunteering for today's environment?

What tools do you think are needed to promote family volunteering in organizations – and the community?



Appendix I

Family Volunteering Focus Group Questions/Telephone Interviews Organization Representatives

Date:

Time:

Name of Organization:

Name of Contact

Phone Number:

Introduction:

Hello. My name is Jean-Pierre. It is my understanding that you have agreed to participate in a short telephone interview with me on behalf of Volunteer Canada on the subject of Family Volunteering.

Preamble

I would like to take a few minutes to give you an overview of the project and familiarize you with the purpose of this survey.

Family Volunteering is viewed as a new trend in volunteering by some. Yet, family volunteering has been around for a long time. This re-newed focus on family volunteering has prompted us to find out more about positive aspects of family volunteering, the barriers to family volunteering and the gaps that exist in our knowledge of family volunteering. The primary focus of this research will be on organizational capacity to involve and accommodate family volunteers. Volunteer Canada is conducting these interviews about Family Volunteering to learn more about the capacity of agencies to respond to the increasing demand of family groups wishing to volunteer and to enhance this possibility where possible. This national project is funded through the HRDC and Heritage Canada.

Definition of Family Volunteering

In its broadest definition family volunteering is about volunteer activities carried out by members of a family as a joint activity. This would, of course, include volunteering done by adult members of a family together – sisters delivering meals on wheels together for example, or a father and teenaged-son coaching hockey. However for most community organizations the differentiating factor between family volunteering and “normal” volunteering lies in those cases where the volunteer work is explicitly designed to accommodate: a) a group of people and b) adults and children together. In these cases the volunteer work or position needs to be explicitly designed to involve a family unit. Likewise the recruitment, management and recognition strategies utilized by the organization will likely differ from those used for individual-based volunteering.

Are you familiar with family volunteering –
(Prompt: for example, Are there any initiatives that you know about or use in your organization)?

Yes_____

No_____

Could you explain a bit about this:

Is your organization currently engaged in family volunteering?
(Prompt: Could you tell us a little bit about your family volunteering experiences?)

Yes_____

No_____

Could you explain a bit about this:

What are some of the programs/opportunities your family volunteers participate in with your organization?
(Just a list would be fine – environment (clean up, selling girl guide cookies)

What do you see as the biggest barriers to family volunteering overall?
(Prompt: type of volunteer work your organization engages in?)

How do you think interest might be fostered in family volunteering – in your community and your organizations
(promotion, print/media, word of mouth Just a list would be fine).

What tools do you think are needed to promote family volunteering in organizations – and the community?
(Prompt: manuals, media kits, training workshops or seminars for staff and or families)

Do we need a better, newer, or different definition of family volunteering for today's environment?
(Prompt: what would you include or exclude from the definition).



Appendix J

“Family” – as defined by The Vanier Institute

“Any group of two or more people that consider themselves to be a family: parents, children, siblings, foster parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, and any other who consider themselves a family.”

This definition can be further broken down into six specific types of family configurations:

- ▶ Nuclear families are composed of two parents and their natural or adopted children living together
- ▶ Extended families include parents, children, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and other blood relations known to each other, whether living together or not
- ▶ Blended families are composed of a parent who has separated from a first spouse, the children living with the parent and the parent’s new spouse, as well as any children the new spouse brings into the unit, and any children the new couple have together
- ▶ Single-parent families consist of a lone parent and any children living with him or her
- ▶ Childless families consist of a couple with no children
- ▶ Common-law relationships resemble the various married relationships, without the legal tie of marriage

(Porrit, 1995)