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VOLUNTEERS IN  
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

LES BÉNÉVOLES EN  
INTERVENTION D'URGENCE

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## EDITORIAL

Volume 12.1 represents our 45th theme. If you are interested in adding back issues to your collection of The Journal, our address can be found under the Table of Contents, send us an e-mail and we will send you a list of those Journals that we have available.

When we chose this theme 'Volunteers in Emergency Response' a little over a year ago, not one of us suspected that we might be crystal ball gazing into the summer and fall that has just passed. Frankly, I wondered whether this issue would have a broad appeal. I am delighted to say that I am sure that you will find the following articles as interesting as the Editorial Team has.

Audrey Kinzel and Ivan Kelly have documented their study of crisis line volunteers in Central and Western Canada. We know that volunteers support people in crisis but do we really understand the volunteers' experiences and the type of support and training they need. Kinzel and Kelly have given a voice to crisis line volunteers and in so doing we hear the voices of many.

We needed the stories of the Salvation Army and The Red Cross. We have them courtesy of Major Lynda Watt 'On the Front Lines' and Janis Watson's 'Canadian Red Cross Disaster Services'. These are household names and yet I learned so much by reading their stories.

Bernard Poirier has given us practical help with his article 'Emergency Preparedness-Where to Begin'. Planning, evaluation, next steps all start to de-mystify the process of being prepared.

Laurie McClure has written a fascinating account of emergency preparedness in action with her article on 'World Youth Day'. What a professional approach!

We have introduced a new volunteer perspective in this issue; one that needs to be told and can only be done so in their own words, that of the youth volunteer. Asma Hamid has given us that view with her article 'How SARS Affected Me!' Enjoy!

This is our third electronic version of CJVRM. We have received many positive comments from you, our subscribers. If you are a member of CAVR or PAVR-O you are receiving The Journal via your profession's website. For our loyal subscribers who are not members of either professional organization, you can renew your annual subscription by contacting us at [jcox@ottawahospital.on.ca](mailto:jcox@ottawahospital.on.ca). Send a cheque for \$10 made out to CJVRM with your name, address, your organization's name and your e-mail address to RR#3 Woodlawn, ON K0A 3M0 and you will receive four issues during 2004.

Wishing you a Happy New Year.  
Chris Jarvis, member of the Editorial Team



# THE EXPERIENCES OF CRISIS LINE VOLUNTEERS: Insights for Crisis Line Agencies

by Audrey L. Kinzel and Ivan W. Kelly

## Introduction

Telephone crisis lines provide an important service to individuals who have defined their current state as a 'crisis'. Feeling suicidal, depressed or frightened, leads many people to phone the line. Callers to the line often describe in detail horrific events and the consequences of these events. Many crisis lines are accessible to any person and operate 24 hours a day. The accessibility of the crisis line is critical to individuals in crisis when other avenues of support are unavailable. Decreasing health care budgets have resulted in services being cut and the wait for services being increased. Further, personal financial restraints prevent many individuals from accessing mental health services from private agencies. Financial restraints and inadequate social support, combined with caller anonymity and confidentiality, lead many individuals to seek support by telephone.

Volunteers, who are both trained and supervised, handle many telephone crisis lines normally paid by professional staff. Budgetary restraints faced by many agencies would make it very difficult if not impossible to operate the crisis line if volunteers did not donate their time, energy and skills. Volunteers are therefore a valuable and essential resource to agencies that operate crisis lines.

Crisis line volunteers are motivated to volunteer for many reasons, including a desire to help people in need and to help stop battering and sexual assault. Volunteers have reported positive and negative reactions to the experience of helping individuals in crisis. Positive reactions included the satisfaction of making a positive contribution in the lives of the callers. The negative reactions experienced include nightmares, intrusive thoughts and negative emotions. Volunteers may also be reminded of their own mortality. The resulting effects of these negative reactions may influence the decision to stop volunteering.

A difficulty faced by many agencies that operate crisis lines is the resignation and high turnover of volunteers. Volunteer resignation results in requesting the remaining volunteers to cover more shifts, which then leads to an increased demand on these individuals. The recruitment and training of volunteers is therefore a continual process. This task draws both staff energy and agency financial resources away from providing other services such as counselling and public education.

Existing research and information on crisis lines and specifically, the crisis line volunteer appeared to be minimal. Research that had been done has

typically focussed on volunteer stress, burnout, motivation and satisfaction. Using qualitative methodology this study set out to explore, elucidate and understand the experiences of crisis line volunteers. The objectives were a) give a voice to the crisis line volunteers, b) provide insight for the professional counsellor who often trains and supports the volunteers and c) create awareness for the crisis line agencies.

## Methodology

This study was conducted within a naturalistic paradigm of inquiry utilizing qualitative methodology. Naturalistic inquiry seeks to enter the world of the individual and to understand the phenomenon or experience from the person's frame of reference. The qualitative method of phenomenology provided the guidance for this study. Phenomenology strives to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of lived experiences from the perspective of the person living the experience.

## Participants

Participant selection was a two-part process. The first step entailed contacting crisis lines across Canada. The second step was selecting volunteers from these agencies.

## Procedure

After receiving consent from the crisis line agency, telephone contact was made between the researcher and interested volunteers. Participants were given a copy of the interview questions.

Between one and three telephone interviews were conducted lasting between 60 and 90 minutes each. Documents provided by the crisis line agency were useful in enhancing the understanding of the volunteers' experiences.

## Analysis

The constant comparative method of data analysis was used in this study. Key words and phrases were noted. Similarities, patterns and also differences between the participants emerged. The ideas and key words were condensed into six main themes.

## Results

Six main themes emerged from the participant's description of their volunteer experience:

- 1) The Past: Life Experiences of the Volunteers.
- 2) The Crisis Calls.
- 3) Volunteers' Responses to the Crisis Calls.
- 4) Supports and Resources: Ways to Cope with the Experience.
- 5) Evolution: Development of Skills, Understanding and Limits.
- 6) The Present: Impact of the Volunteer Experience



### **The Past: Life Experiences of the Volunteers**

All of the participants commented, in varying degrees of detail, on their past life experiences which included loss, homelessness, addictions and the ending of marriages. Giving back, after receiving help and support through difficult times, was a motive stated by several participants. Life experiences assisted them in understanding callers, being nonjudgmental of their circumstances and enabled them to connect with callers and to move the conversation to a deeper level.

### **The Crisis Calls**

Participants spoke about callers who phoned the crisis line frequently and who told the same story over and over. These callers were referred to as 'repeat' or 'regular callers.' Sex callers and suicidal callers were also callers consistently described. Participants spoke about the influence of the telephone in assisting callers. The absence of the visual modality helped sustain the anonymity for both volunteer and caller as both went about their day to day lives in their community.

### **Volunteers' Responses to the Crisis Calls**

Participants were keenly aware of their thoughts and emotions prior to, during and after the crisis calls. Excitement and fear were felt when the phone rang while fear and anxiety was experienced when participants doubted their ability to assist the caller or hear their story. Responses to repeat callers included anger, feeling used, manipulated and frustrated. Hearing stories of suffering evoked powerful emotional responses for the participants. Hearing the horrific stories of the callers was overwhelming and simply sad. Knowing that they could not stop the abuse, the violence or the torture seemed to be integrally related to the participant's emotions. In the midst of stories, which triggered negative thoughts and emotions, participants described positive thoughts and feelings such as feeling excited and energized with sensing the caller's strength and noticing a change in the caller's level of distress.

### **Supports and Resources: Ways to Cope With the Experience**

Participants spoke extensively and favourably about the supports and strategies they utilize in order to fulfill their role as crisis line volunteers. Support and resources were available to participants primarily from the crisis line agency, as well as, their own personal strategies. The crisis line agency provided participants with initial training, ongoing training and support, volunteer meetings and resources. Several of the participants spoke of the value of their initial volunteer training despite the intensity and the difficulty. Participants recalled the role-plays during the training both as difficult as well as an opportunities for personal growth. Support was available during their shifts either by telephone or in-person. On-going monitoring of crisis calls and reviewing documentation about each call by agency staff were other ways the agencies supported the volunteers. A few participants described the difficulty of their first year of volunteering as being related to the total number of shifts,

plus the overnight shift, they were expected to complete. The reduced number of required shifts and the elimination of overnight shifts after the first year enabled them to continue volunteering. Another importance source of support available was their co-volunteers. Participants described how the volunteer training created a trusting and collegial atmosphere enabling the volunteers to support each other during their volunteer shifts.

Participants described their self-care strategies such as taking personal time following each call and developing a routine if taking crisis calls from home. In addition to these short term, 'in the moment type' strategies, participants also used long-term sustaining strategies such as a personal support system, humour, reduced volunteer hours and taking on other volunteer roles. Finally, volunteer appreciation was another way participants felt both supported and cared for. Written acknowledgment, in the form of letters, notes or certificates, as well as gifts and volunteer events were ways they felt valued by the crisis line agency.

### **Evolution: Development of Skills, Understanding and Limits**

The participants articulated an awareness of changes, which directly influence how they respond to present crisis calls. All of the participants talked about realizing their own limitations and responsibility as volunteers and as human beings, in fixing, changing and helping others. A part of this limitation included not knowing the outcome of crisis calls. Participants expressed how they have come to understand and in some situations, still struggle to understand the caller's choices, situations and behaviours. Interpersonal skills developed through volunteering include implementing boundaries with respect to behaviour, language and time. Learning to trust their intuition and an increased self-confidence were areas several participants described. Participants also recounted an increased awareness of the importance of listening and how this ability enhanced the communication with the caller.

### **The Present: Impact of the Volunteer Experience**

Each participant was impacted by his or her experience as a crisis line volunteer. Participants spoke about how the various realms of their lives have undergone change and how their views of people and society have been altered. Within the area of personal growth, participants described how volunteering propelled them to review their lives and to develop personal qualities such as compassion. Several participants described how volunteering had had a strong influence in creating positive changes in personal and professional relationships.

An area touched on was the adverse impacts and challenges of volunteering on a crisis line. Taking crisis calls from home had a negative impact on one of the participants, which led to her decision to quit the line. Taking overnight shifts and the time commitment were other difficulties and challenges.



Volunteering at the crisis line led several to appreciate their own life and personal circumstances and enabled them to put their own problems and difficulties into a larger perspective. Participant's perspectives of people and society had been altered. They learned about the human capacity to survive. They also have become aware of the isolation, the oppression and human suffering which exist in society. Several participants expressed their views on the health care system, the prescribing of medication and the supports available for people.

They had an opportunity to comment on their participation in this study. Given the constraints of confidentiality that surrounds the crisis line agencies, participants are not normally permitted to speak about their volunteer experience in the depth and detail this study afforded. Through talking to me one participant realized that there are issues lingering with respect to a particular event, while another participant was reminded of the positive changes he had made in his life and the pride he feels about the crisis line agency.

Finally, participants spoke about the rewards and the high points of volunteering. Participants described rewards such as learning about and meeting people, the feeling of accomplishment, spiritual connection and their personal growth. Other rewards experienced were the development of friendships and relationships. Participants also spoke about the honour and privilege of being a crisis line volunteer.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study suggest that volunteering for a crisis line is a complex process and may be a life changing experience for the volunteer. A number of implications for crisis line agencies may be drawn from the voices of the participants. Several in this study commented on the high turnover of volunteers they witnessed at their agency and the resulting impact on the remaining volunteers. This is supported by the literature (Cyr & Dowrick, 1997; Kehoe & Grant, 1997). One of the participants suggested that the agencies ask the volunteers why they have quit, however, considering the challenges and large time commitment faced by volunteers in their first year the high turnover of volunteers within the first year is not surprising. Their experience showed that volunteering does get easier after the first year for several reasons, including a reduction of hours and the elimination of overnight shifts. It appears that the obstacles faced by inexperienced volunteers are too large for many to overcome and the decision to quit is made. Perhaps if the obstacles were more manageable a larger number of volunteers would continue.

Another implication relates to the motivation of volunteers. Understanding the motivation of volunteers may enable agencies to target varied demographic groups in order to recruit and retain volunteers. Lammers (1991) predicted that a high turnover of volunteers will occur when the motives to volunteer include learning skills and acquiring work experience. Although several participants were employed in the helping profession or planning to do so, only one

indicated a motive had been to learn skills and acquire experience.

The value of training, supports and resources provided by the crisis line agencies was clearly articulated. The foundation of many of these supports and resources was a nurturing and supportive atmosphere created by staff of the agencies. Many of the participants thought the support during training was adequate however, one participant suggested that more support be made available to the volunteers during training because training can be overwhelming and frightening. Fish (1990) emphasized the importance of the physical and psychological environment of the volunteer. Participants who took crisis calls from home indicated that sometimes they thought their physical safety was in jeopardy. These participants also commented on their feelings of isolation.

### **Implications for Further Research**

The present study involved experienced volunteers who had a minimum of one year volunteer experience and who had only telephone contact with callers to the crisis line. These volunteers had made it through the difficult and challenging first year of volunteering. Therefore other areas of study would be to explore the experiences of volunteers in their first year, volunteers who had quit during their first year and volunteers who have in-person contact as well as telephone contact with clients/callers in crisis.

The present study provided valuable insight into what volunteers of crisis lines in Central and Western Canada experience. Their stories told of the many reasons they continue to volunteer while offering clues regarding why the majority of volunteers quit.

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- Audrey Kinzel was a volunteer at a crisis line & recently completed her Master's thesis on the experiences of crisis line volunteers at University of Saskatchewan. She is enrolled in a Ph.D. program at University of Alberta.*
- Ivan Kelly is a professor of Educational Psychology and Special Education at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. ivan.kelly@usask.ca*



## ON THE FRONT LINES

by Major Lynda Watt

An organization as diverse as The Salvation Army, attempts to meet many groups of people at their point of need, be it the homeless, the addicted or families and children, as well as the communities in crisis.

Although The Salvation Army is indebted to the many people from the community who volunteer in the variety of services it provides, it is probably in the area of emergency response that, as a faith-based organization, it is able to respond most quickly in the face of disaster. As a Christian church with organizational expertise based on a military structure, it is able to mobilize when an emergency is imminent.

The Salvation Army in Canada has made disaster preparedness a priority. Therefore on September 11, 2001, when 35 planes carrying 6,000 passengers were diverted to Newfoundland, The Salvation Army's area commander made a simple telephone call to the local Salvation Army officer (pastor) to have their congregation on standby. The rest is history. The volunteers that came forward were able to provide beds, meals and emotional and spiritual support in the security of the church. There was even entertainment provided by the church's brass band.

The year 2003 was one, which saw The Salvation Army active in a variety of emergencies such as disease, fire, hurricanes and power failures.

While there are times when The Salvation Army responds independently to an emergency, in most cities and towns it is often one of many groups that work in concert, each with its specific role. When forest fires ravaged the interior of British Columbia, a provincial state of emergency was declared which precipitated the involvement of The Salvation Army. As part of an agreement with the province, The Salvation Army provided personal services to the affected areas. Each church in the vicinity of the fires had a call-out list of those who had taken the Personal Services training. When The Salvation Army Provincial Emergency Disaster Services Director contacted the local pastor, the call-out list was activated and volunteers responded. Teams were put into place and rotated as The Salvation Army worked with other agencies to provide all of the necessary services.

The SARS outbreak in the city of Toronto saw Salvation Army volunteers in action delivering quarantine kits to those in need. The Salvation Army's Emergency & Disaster Coordinator for Toronto maintains a list of volunteers who have identified an interest in emergency response. The long duration of the emergency necessitated calls from The Salvation Army

to pastors in Toronto to recruit additional volunteers from their congregations.

When emergencies strike such as the recent Hurricane Juan, The Salvation Army is able to respond with its emergency response vehicles. Volunteers from the local congregations served food on the front lines.

Most often The Salvation Army's role in the larger emergency disaster plan of a community is to provide meals, clothing and pastoral counselling to those affected.

From the great ice storm of eastern Ontario and Quebec, to the arrival of refugees from Kosovo, to the floods in Badger, Newfoundland, the volunteer base of church congregations has made significant contributions through being 'at the ready'.

The Salvation Army's history is wrapped in the fabric of volunteerism. In the 1800's, before it was officially named 'The Salvation Army', there was some thought to calling the organization 'The Volunteer Army'. When it comes to emergency response, perhaps there is more truth to the latter. In any case, the 'Army's' responding strength is based on the premise that it is by doing, that faith is acted out.

*Major Lynda Watt is the Territorial Volunteer Services Secretary for The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda. Lynda lives in Toronto.*

### RAISING FUNDS

The Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre's (ORCC) annual telethon raised \$1.8 million, up from \$1.6 million last year.

"This is our community. This is about us. People calling in are returning something to our community," said Dr. Hartley Stern, CEO of the ORCC.

The money raised will be used to support things not supported by government funding. Half of the funds will go toward research and the other half will fund renovations and technological enhancements, including new radiation equipment.

For more information about the ORCC,

visit: [www.orcc.on.ca](http://www.orcc.on.ca).



## **CANADIAN RED CROSS DISASTER SERVICES**

by Janis Watson

Last year, Canadian Red Cross Disaster Services volunteers responded to almost 2,200 emergencies or disasters, house and apartment fires, chemical spills, floods, forest fires and other incidents requiring the displacement of people. Over 15,000 people were helped with lodging, food, clothing or other types of assistance.

Some Disaster Services volunteers have assisted in their communities for many years while others are new to the disaster scene as they work alongside more experienced volunteers. But they all share the same dedication to taking care of the needs of the most vulnerable people in their communities.

### **Ready to respond anywhere, anytime.**

Most of the time, disasters are unpredictable. Volunteer involvement requires availability and patience. After going through intense training, the call to respond to a disaster could come at any hour of the day or night or there may be a wait of many months. However, the thanks from the people who benefit from the assistance are rewarding and intensely motivating.

### **Where did it all start?**

The idea for the Red Cross Movement started in 1859 when Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman, saw nearly 40,000 casualties on a battlefield in Solferino, Italy. He proposed the formation of voluntary relief societies to care for the wounded in wartime. The emblem chosen was the reverse of the Swiss flag, which was a white cross on a red background.

Dr. George Sterling Ryerson, a regimental surgeon in the Canadian Army, first raised the Red Cross flag in Canada in 1885 during the Canadian Militia Campaign to end the Northwest Rebellion at Batoche. Dr. Ryerson wanted to distinguish the horse-drawn medical supply wagon being used to carry the wounded, so he used the 'red cross on a white background'.

Over the years, the International Red Cross Movement has adapted to the world's social and economic context. Today, it is dedicated to providing relief not only to victims of armed conflict but also to those of natural and man-made disasters and other human tragedies, through medical aid, material relief and emergency social services.

Canadian Red Cross volunteers have responded to a wide range of emergencies over the years. One of the first well-documented responses was following the Halifax Explosion of 1917, when Red Cross volunteers set up and supplied 57 emergency hospitals and dressing stations. Supplies and clothing were sent from Red Cross Branches across Canada and from the American Red Cross.

In the Spanish Influenza Epidemic of 1918 and 1919, Red Cross volunteers provided nursing help and set up emergency food kitchens or depots. In April 2003, during the SARS outbreak in the Toronto area, volunteers delivered health packages containing masks and gloves to homes of people who might have been in contact with someone exposed to SARS.

### **Skills Needed**

Red Cross volunteers may be assisting people who are upset at the loss of homes and their possessions. Sometimes, they are also grieving the loss of lives. Volunteers responded immediately following the crash of Swiss Air Flight 111 off the coast of Nova Scotia in 1998 but there were no survivors to assist. Instead, volunteers provided support to family members of those who lost their lives and the grieving communities surrounding the site of the tragedy.

In 1999, when 5,000 refugees arrived on Canadian military bases, volunteers made sure the people were fed and clothed and that contact could be made with family members in the Balkans through the International Red Cross/Red Crescent network.

Following the September 11, 2001 disaster, the Red Cross was among the community agencies and church groups who looked after over 33,000 passengers diverted to Canada. Later, 145 Canadian Red Cross volunteers travelled to New York to assist American Red Cross relief efforts.

### **Training Volunteers**

The Saguenay (1996) and Manitoba (1997) Floods, the Ice Storm (1998), the Badger Floods and BC Forest Fires (2003) all required the assistance of volunteers with training and experience.

Training is needed ahead of time for the day-to-day volunteers who are the backbone of Disaster Services. They turn out at any hour of the day or night to assist people who do not know where to turn.

For the last few years, much effort has been placed on ensuring that the same Red Cross Disaster Services standards are in place across the country. As a result people affected receive the same assistance, no matter where they live or the size of the disaster. Work also started on revising the Disaster Services training program, to ensure that volunteers receive the same training, regardless of their location in the country.

### **Personal Preparedness**

It is crucial that response team volunteers realize that emergencies and disasters do not just happen to others. To protect themselves and their families, they must know what to do before, during and after a disaster—they can then be ready to cope as a family and respond quickly as a volunteer.

*Janis Watson is Program Officer, Disaster Services. For more information on personal preparedness or on Red Cross programs in your area, please check the Canadian Red Cross website at [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca).*



## **WORLD YOUTH DAY - EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

by Laurie McClure

Who would have known that a plastic raincoat (one of those cheap throwaway ones that we gave to all pilgrims) would block the waste drainage system? The blockage backed up the sewage into the local business' establishments doing one million dollars damage. Well, no one thought of that!

However, World Youth Day (WYD) organizers did plan for bombs, fires, disorderly crowds, pilgrim medical emergencies, the Pope's medical needs, customs problems, fire and medical emergencies, possible sexual harassment, transportation problems, defections, air traffic control for the Pope's helicopter, VIP security and evacuation plans, just to name a few. We even had a veterinarian on site to handle medical issues with the working dogs.

Just to give you the scope of WYD, here are some facts:

- WYD was the largest "conference" that Toronto has ever hosted (250,000 pilgrims from 173 countries);
- WYD was two years in the planning;
- All three levels of government, the Archdioceses of Canada and the City of Toronto had to approve all plans;
- Seven major languages were used - English, French, Spanish, Italian, Polish, German and Philippino;
- 800,000 attended the final mass;
- 22,000 volunteers contributed eight million hours;
- 400 international volunteers were involved;
- \$50,000 from the Trillium Foundation supported training for the volunteers;
- 3,500 accredited media were in attendance;
- 15,000 calls were handled by the Call Centre over a ten day period;
- 750,000 meals were served; and
- all details were overseen by the Vatican.

WYD activities on television looked great. Behind the scenes it was mid level chaos! The averted police strike one month before the event, a city workers strike that ended two weeks before WYD and a rotating strike at our three main hotels contributed substantially. No wonder plans had to stay fluid!

The volunteer department set out goals and dreams that guided a lot of the work we did.

Our goals were twofold:

- to provide a well trained support base of human resources for WYD 2002 that ensured pilgrims experienced excellent hospitality and service;
- to build a legacy of community service and lay ministry for Canada.

"Our dream was to provide those who chose to volunteer with a positive

experience. We hoped all volunteers felt that they had a challenging encounter while working with an exceptional group of people on a unique project. We also believed in the dream that after WYD was over, the thousands of trained volunteers who contributed to this event would not retire. We dreamed the greatest legacy of WYD to be a renewed sense that volunteering is essential to making our city, province and our country a society that is reflective of our values, hopes and aspirations" (WYD 2002 manual, Kevin MacDonald, Toronto, 2002).

### **EMERGENCY PLANS**

#### **Medical**

The two main sites (Exhibition Grounds and Downsview) had complete field hospitals staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses from local hospitals. St. John Ambulance volunteers and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) staff treated minor emergencies. Special golf cart mini stretcher vehicles were used to transport the seriously ill to the field hospitals. The field hospitals were linked to local hospital emergency rooms.

The Pope had his own team of specialists on standby at all times.

Specific rest areas were set up for those with special needs so they could rest and re-charge their 'batteries'.

There was also a special split-off emergency 911 line that would respond to WYD calls for emergency assistance.

#### **Security**

This was the largest planning and implementation group. It was comprised of active and retired Toronto Police, Ontario Provincial Police, RCMP, CSIS and the Army. They were responsible for bomb threats, emergency evacuation plans, VIP security, crowd control and training the private security staff, checking visas, asylum and defections, customs at all border crossings and the airport, VIP driver license checks and routing, security checks on all WYD staff and volunteers and photo ID badges.

International volunteers were very carefully checked in their own country but also through Canadian sources.

#### **Volunteer Training**

We were told that we would need to train approximately 30,000 volunteers. The training centre was located in a surplus school, which gave us ample space. We decided that we would not be able to train that many people face-to-face so alternative plans were made. Senior staff and volunteers in each department were given 20 hours of intensive training. It was then expected that they would train the volunteers working in their departments. Some of this training would be delivered at the work site.

The manager training consisted of customer service, train the trainer, team building, policies and procedures, special needs (what to do and how to help),



risk management, how to work with volunteers, motivation, disciplining and dismissing volunteers and updates on what all the departments were planning.

A unique training tool was the on-line customer service training required of all volunteers. WYD staff developed an interactive training program based on materials from the Ontario Tourism Education Corporation. There was a final page of questions to be answered. These were then submitted to WYD offices to record that the individual had completed the training.

We trained over 500 volunteers during a six week period prior to the event. They in turn trained another 15,000 volunteers. The remaining 7,000 volunteers had only the on-line training before beginning their volunteer tasks.

### **Volunteer Deployment**

The scheduling of volunteers was another interesting challenge. Detailed application information was transferred to a volunteer database that was managed by 50 volunteers.

An event planner database was also created. This contained information on all the events, locations, shifts, number of volunteers per shift and qualifications needed. The volunteer database was dumped into the event planner and the outcome was scheduled volunteers! Volunteers were notified by e-mail. Of course, rescheduling was necessary, as WYD did not attract as many volunteers as anticipated.

Because we did not receive any information and materials from the previous committee, we had to reinvent everything. A WYD planning guide along with copies of materials and documentation of every step would have been tremendously helpful.

WYD was an interesting event to work on. The involvement of more trained volunteer administrators would have been wise as I was the only person in the department with volunteer management background.

My advice in planning an event of this magnitude - BEWARE OF THE PLASTIC RAINCOATS!

*Laurie McClure was responsible for developing all training materials and training all the volunteers for World Youth Day. She retired three years ago from Toronto Parks and Recreation where she was a policy advisor. She is presently the volunteer chair of the Mississauga Relay for Life, for the Canadian Cancer Society.*

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS - WHERE TO BEGIN?**

by Bernard Poirier

Do you know how your community responds to emergency situations? Does your organization participate? Do you? It may be worth your life or the life of those you love to find out!

We no longer say 'it can't happen here' because it has. However, preparing for natural or man-made disasters or emergencies is still a challenge and therefore another saying 'it's not if but when' is more accurate than ever.

An emergency scenario begins when 'there is an occurrence that cannot be handled in a normal manner' either internally within an organization or externally in the community. Note the list of potential hazards in the chart below. Emergency preparedness requires substantial planning. Assessing what to plan for is the first step in the process.

The planning assessment is based on evaluating a number of factors using the chart developed by Emergency Preparedness Canada as outlined below.

Potential Hazard	Rating for Potential				Sum of 1-4	Planning Priority
	Historical	Change in conditions	Effects from other areas	Ability to cope		
	1	2	3	4		
Environmental						
Natural						
Industrial						
Transport						
Political/Social						
Essential Systems						
Health Concerns						

### **CHART COMPONENTS**

The **historical** column identifies frequency of occurrence.

1 = one or two occurrences with slight damage.

2 = few occurrences, minor damage but more persons involved.

3 = several occurrences, some major damage, many victims & heavy expense.

4 = frequent occurrences, some major damage, many victims & heavy expense.

5 = frequent occurrences with heavy damage, many victims, complex problems & very large expenses.



**Change in conditions** is rated as 0 if there were no changes. If there is a decrease in risk, the rating is negative in value from -3 to -1. If there is an increase in risk, the rating is positive in value from +1 to +3.

**Effects from other areas relates to neighbours.** How do they affect the situation? The rating scale in this column is the same as for the change in conditions column.

**Ability to cope** assesses the community as 0 if it is capable and up to 3 if it is not.

Each line should then be added up and the total placed in column **sum of columns 1-4**. The figure in this column determines planning priority based on the following scale:

- 0 = not applicable
- 1 = not probable
- 2 = low probability
- 3 = moderate probability
- 4 = high probability
- 5 = certain probability

Those potential hazards with a total of 5 or more are obviously top priority and require immediate planning attention.

With the planning process in place and as soon as an emergency situation is discovered, communication is critical. Police and the fire department are the initial contacts. They, in turn, become the first responders and contact the municipal Emergency Preparedness team who assess the situation. Based on this assessment, the Mayor has the ultimate authority to declare an emergency.

Once the emergency is declared, the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) follows previously documented procedures, preferably including a line chart. The EOC assess the need for elements such as:

- Bedding (cots, blankets, pillows, sheets);
- Clothing (infant to adult sizes - seasonal as appropriate);
- Communications (telephone, radio, radio equipment, riders);
- Food (kitchen availability, takeout, hot/dry/frozen/quick-fix, groceries, water, liquids);
- Medical (first aid, doctors, pharmacy, hospital);
- Personal (counselling, chaplains);
- Shelters grouped by area (hotel, motel, school, church, centre, hanger, warehouse); and
- Transport (bus, van, ambulance, emergency).

Managing all of the above requires the assistance of many volunteers and many organizations. Municipal Emergency Preparedness teams depend on a

huge number of people to bring an emergency situation to a successful conclusion.

To ensure this successful conclusion, all organizations capable of providing assistance in an emergency should:

- Develop a response plan;
- Train volunteers to respond according to the plan;
- Notify the municipality with details of their plan and training (the Emergency Preparedness Team at the municipality can offer both planning and training support);
- Provide a contact name and coordinates to the municipality;
- Set up a fan-out system or 'telephone tree' including those members trained in emergency response; and
- Keep a log of all occurrences.

Do you know how your community responds to emergency situations? Does your organization participate? Do you? It may be worth your life or the life of those you love to find out! For further information, contact your local municipality.

*Bernard E. Poirier is a past Chair of the Canadian Red Cross Emergency Preparedness Committee. Prior to retirement, he was responsible for Emergency Preparedness planning for the National Research Council*

## WHAT'S IN A SURVEY?

The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy released the results of a national survey of Managers of Volunteer Resources earlier in 2003. The survey helps define the profile of managers of volunteer resources and those of the organizations that they belong to. This information collected helps research volunteer development in Canada.

The survey was conducted with 1203 managers of which 84% of respondents were women. Some of the questions posed included those on personal education, salary, an organization profile and any professional organizations that the respondent belonged to.

An executive summary can be found at:  
[www.nonprofitscan.ca/pdf/library/Final\\_Report\\_5336.pdf](http://www.nonprofitscan.ca/pdf/library/Final_Report_5336.pdf)

The complete survey results will be posted on the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy website at a later time.



## HOW SARS AFFECTED ME!

by Asma Hamid

I began volunteering in February of 2003 and it was a great time. I would come for my volunteer shift every Tuesday afternoon after classes ended at Harbord Collegiate Institute in Toronto. It was a calm and quiet time with everything going at its usual pace. It was like one of those rural scenes one would see in classic movies where the cow was chewing on grass set amidst a late afternoon sun on breezy day.

So, I would walk in through the Nassau Street Entrance with its high transparent windows where the sun shone down into the Atrium, touched the tops of its trees and benches where people were relaxing. There would be the usual bustle of individuals going from one place to another, either getting something to eat at the food court, or buying something at the gift shop or just asking for assistance at the information desk.

In the volunteer lounge I would put on my uniform, adjust the badge on my chest and head off to the Fell Pavilion Elevators to get to my destination. All of a sudden, literally out of nowhere, everything came to an abrupt halt. SARS hit. It was the Big Bang of Toronto. A new healthcare routine evolved and for the first few weeks, changes were imminent and logarithmic. Everything happened so quickly. SARS headlines were splashed across newspapers and on television. The provincial government was nuttier than usual and we were thrust into oblivion. Toronto Western Hospital was off limits for many people; even the VOLUNTEERS. Oh no... this was not good! I wanted to continue my routine at the hospital. It felt great helping people, getting out and doing something productive in the community. I did not want to stay home and vegetate in front of the television.

Don't worry! Things eventually calmed down by mid summer because by then western Canada was having problems with mad cow disease. Still, most volunteers had not returned to work. However, we were being kept posted every day or so with information about SARS, new hygiene, volunteering information and what was happening in and around the hospital. Many volunteers and staff members received information about SARS seminars. About the hygiene, the only thing I noticed as a major change was that everyone was encouraged to be more diligent in hand washing with the ethyl alcohol solutions or by using more soap and water. Goodbye germs!

After the big power outage hit us, school finally started. I wondered if it was safe to begin volunteering again. My mom told me that if the healthcare professionals felt it was safe for volunteers to return then I should return and she encouraged me to do so. One of the changes at the hospital was an emphasis on hygiene, hand washing at the entry points to the hospital, clinics and patient rooms. The physical landscape of the hospital was different too with newly added sections. Yes, I got lost and did not know where the volunteer office was. Still, I found my way with the help of a fellow volunteer. As well patient interaction has increased in the nursing units with revised guidelines on how volunteers can assist patients and nurses more effectively. All in all, things are shaping up and I am very pleased to be back part of the Toronto Western team.

*Asma Hamid is 17 years old and volunteers at the Toronto Western Hospital, University Health Network. She is in grade 12 at Harbord Collegiate Institute.*

## PEER EXPERTS

### Scenario:

*There are very often long periods of time between call-outs or responses to emergencies and disasters in your community. How would you as a manager of volunteers retain the interest of the volunteers and keep them informed?*

### Response:

Volunteer retention in disaster response continues to be a challenge for many humanitarian organizations throughout Canada. The unpredictability in frequency and location of disasters may often cause the most dedicated volunteers to lose interest. There are, however, several measures that may significantly reduce the level of lost interest and maintain volunteer capacity, which is so crucial in times of response.

- **Hold regular meetings.** Responding volunteers should be familiar with their fellow emergency or disaster response team members long before they actually respond. Maintaining regularly scheduled meetings will provide opportunities for volunteers to get to know each other on a personal level. This will help to strengthen the team. Meetings are also a great forum to discuss protocols and standard operating procedures.
- **Be certain your volunteers are personally prepared.** Emergencies and disasters do not just happen to others - they affect us all. It is difficult to activate your volunteers if they are consumed with concern over potentially affected families and loved ones. Having the proper items available in a home disaster preparedness kit may mean the difference between a situation of inconvenience and something much more devastating. Empowering volunteers with personal preparedness information may also provide opportunities for them to share their knowledge with others by means of public speaking engagements.
- **Exercise volunteer resources.** Regular meetings are a great start towards building your team of volunteers. However, disaster simulations and exercises provide an opportunity for members to react with each other under strenuous circumstances. A person's behaviour may be quite different when under the pressure and stress of a disaster. It is a good idea to have your team simulate these situations in order to be able to interact effectively while keeping the end goal of meeting the needs of the affected population in mind. Exercises can be shortened to test a single function of a response or expanded to test an entire operation from start up to stand down. While it is important to exercise volunteer teams internally, there is also great value in exercising with other responding agencies.
- **Make sure your volunteers know your response partners.** Responding to emergencies and disasters is a community event where several governmental and non-governmental agencies have a role to



play based on the local disaster response plan. Similar to building your internal volunteer team, strengthening the relationships of all responding agencies can only have positive impacts on the efficiency of the next response. Depending on the specific role your volunteers play, not all may have direct contact with other organizations when they are called into action. This should not reduce the relevance of introducing your volunteer base to those who contribute to the overall responses in their respective communities. In fact, this may allow all volunteers to see the "big picture" as many decisions are being communicated to them in a rapid time frame.

- **Provide cross training.** Although it is crucial that volunteers receive training in their area of functional expertise, cross-training volunteers to be able to perform a variety of functions may prove to be critical during those first few hours of a response. Depending on the size and scope of the event, organizations may experience a shortage of volunteer resources available to perform a particular function. Being able to re-design roles and responsibilities on the spot will be facilitated more efficiently if the team members have the basic background knowledge to perform several functions.
- **Integrate your volunteers into the whole organization.** Once all the aforementioned has been accomplished introduce your emergency and disaster response volunteers to any other programs, which may be a part of your organization. Volunteers may become a great marketing resource once they have an expanded knowledge of your entire organization. They may even become interested in revenue generating programs that will better enable you to respond to the next emergency or disaster.

*Bill Lawlor is Manager, Disaster and International Services for Atlantic Canada with the Red Cross. Some of Bill's disaster response experiences include Operation Parasol (Kosovo refugees), Sussex Bus Crash, 911, Badger Floods and Hurricane Juan.*

## **BOOK REVIEW**

by Gordon Spurrell

### **Count Me In! 501 Ideas on Recruiting Volunteers** by Judy Esmond, Ph.D.

There are a number of books on the market with tips for recruiting volunteers and members of not-for-profit boards. This is a very practical resource book with some of the very best ideas for recruiting volunteers that I have read.

There are 37 sections in this 246 pages book, which cover 'Changing How We

Think About Recruiting', 'Making Recruiting Manageable', 'Utilizing the Media Effectively', and 'Responding to Changing Social Structures'.

Here is just one of the 501 recruiting ideas which I have successfully tried.

#### **"Talk to a stranger"**

As part of a recruitment drive, run a stranger a day campaign. Ask everyone in your organization to talk to one stranger each day for the next month and give out a business card. This could be in the line at the supermarket checkout, on the bus or at a café. Multiply this by the number of people in your organization and that's lots of potential contact."

If you are struggling with recruiting volunteers for your organization, this book is full of innovative and creative ways to recruit volunteers and is a must for your library.

Copies of the book can be obtained from visiting Dr Judy Esmond's website at [www.mtd4u.com](http://www.mtd4u.com).

*Gordon Spurrell is a Coordinator of Volunteer Services for Addiction Prevention & Treatment Services (Capital Health), Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia*

Editors Note: While we make every effort to review a Canadian source we felt that in consideration to our long standing reciprocal arrangement in exchanging Journals with Volunteer Australia that we would run this book review submitted to us by Gordon Spurrell.

## **Olympic Gold for Canada?**

In 1998 the Canadian Olympic Association (COA) selected Vancouver-Whistler to be Canada's candidate for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Games.

Vancouver's bid budget is \$23 million and is expected to attract 6,000 athletes and officials, 10,000 media and 35,000 visitors to Vancouver and Whistler.

The Olympic Winter Games and Paralympic Games would be held in February and March of 2010 respectively.

To learn more about the bid, visit the official website at [www.vancouver2010.com](http://www.vancouver2010.com)



# JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Editorial Process and Guidelines for Authors

## Objective

The Journal of Volunteer Resources Management is intended:

1. to serve as a credible source of information on the management of volunteers in Canada;
2. to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and to encourage networking among managers of volunteers;
3. to provide a professional development tool for managers of volunteers;
4. to recognize and encourage Canadian talent in the field of management of volunteers;
5. to include in each issue at least two articles that will consider different views on a specific and predetermined theme.

## Target Audience

The Journal's intended audience includes managers of volunteers, educators, media and funders of not-for-profit organizations across the country.

## Submissions

All manuscripts will be accepted on diskette or via e-mail in either Microsoft Word or Word Perfect. Submissions should be written according to "Canadian Style - A Guide to Writing and Editing" - Secretary of State, Dundurn Press. External reviewers may be engaged to review content if deemed advisable by the committee.

The revised draft is edited for clarity and consistency by the Editorial Team.

The edited version is returned to the author for acceptance along with an approval form for signature.

The signed form is to be returned to the Editorial Team within a week along with any suggestions for final revisions.

## Format and Style

Authors are asked to respect the following word counts:

	Words	Pages
Lead Article	2000	5-6
Secondary Article	700-800	2-3
Book Review	150	1

The lead article will look at the topic in some depth and will normally require the author to conduct research into current trends and perspectives on the subject.

The secondary article will adopt a more practical approach, including personal experiences and opinions.

## Advertising

Limited advertising space will be allowed in the Journal, for materials of direct relevance to managers of volunteer service, and as long as it conforms to the guidelines set out by the Editorial Team.

## Guidelines:

1. Only ¼ page and ½ page ads will be accepted.
2. Ad must be camera-ready.
3. A maximum of one page of ads will be permitted per issue.
4. Job ads are not recommended.
5. Cost is to be determined by the Editorial Team.

## LOOKING AHEAD

April 14-16, 2004

**Charity Channel's Second Annual Summit Conference**  
Anaheim, California

May 4-7, 2004

**Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources -Ontario Conference**  
Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, Ontario  
[www.pavro.on](http://www.pavro.on)

June 17-19, 2004

**Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources Conference**  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
[www.cavr.org](http://www.cavr.org)

October 20-23, 2004

**International Conference on Volunteer Administration**  
Portland, Oregon

For more information or to become a member of either PAVR-O or CAVR, click on to their websites at [www.pavro.on.ca](http://www.pavro.on.ca) and [www.cavr.org](http://www.cavr.org).

## DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS & THEMES

Issue	Deadline	Theme
Spring '04	articles due on the 24th of February	Record Keeping Pain or Gain
Summer'04	articles due on the 24th of May	Humour in Management of Volunteer Resources
Fall'04	articles due on the 24th of August	Outcome Measurement