

The Community Futures Development Corporations of Western Canada

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Community Futures Volunteer Recognition Ideas

A volunteer's pay is the recognition that he or she is an equal and respected partner of the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC). As a result, recognition must be an integral part of the management process so those volunteers feel valued within the CFDC they work for.

An effective, targeted recognition program can support your CFDC in many ways. If managed properly, your recognition program will motivate volunteers by satisfying their individual needs and supporting your CFDC goals. If managed properly, your program will:

- **Contribute to productivity**
Volunteers who are given meaningful tasks will feel rewarded by their own accomplishments. They benefit from this while the CFDC benefits from making good use of a precious commodity.
- **Contribute to retention**
By identifying and addressing the specific needs of individuals and providing recognition that satisfies these needs, you are more likely to encourage your volunteers to stay with your CFDC.
- **Contribute to morale**
As your CFDC demonstrates concern for your volunteers through appropriate task assignment and performance recognition, your volunteers' personal satisfaction and willingness to participate will increase.

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Ten guidelines for recognition

1. Give it or else
2. Give it frequently
3. Give it via a variety of methods
4. Give it honestly
5. Give it to the person, not to the work
6. Give it appropriately to the achievement
7. Give it consistently
8. Give it on a timely basis
9. Give it in an individualized fashion
10. Give it for what you want more of

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Recognition programs that typically work are those which:

- Base rewards on an appreciation of the individual volunteer as a unique person and which addresses individual needs.
 - Are based on individual jobs or tasks.
 - Have consistent reward policies, resulting in a sense of trust that effort will receive the proper reward.
 - Recognize longevity and special contributions frequently.
 - Offer rewards that can be shared by teams of volunteers or the entire CFDC.
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Recognition programs that typically fail are those which:

- Base rewards on what the managers value rather than what the volunteer values.
- Assume certain rewards to be good for everyone without regard for individuality.
- Are inconsistently administered.
- Are external to the volunteer, with no connection to the work or person.
- Offer rewards whether performance merits it or not.
- Assume that the CFDC's mission is sufficient justification to volunteer with no recognition or celebration of the volunteers' work.
- Offer excessive recognition and celebration.

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Four typical motivators of volunteers include:

1. **Praise.** Individuals who are motivated to volunteer by praise typically enjoy recognition for their talents and like being singled out for their accomplishments. Since others readily see these volunteer efforts, offer them public recognition at an event, a recognition spot on your Web site or in your newsletter, or a letter thanking their boss, teacher, or family.
 2. **Affiliation.** Individuals who are motivated to volunteer for affiliation enjoy opportunities to get together with others with similar beliefs, backgrounds, and goals, and don't often find working alone very satisfying. As a result, you should recognize the efforts of these volunteers through social get-togethers, name-badge, or a public posting of all your CFDC's volunteers.
 3. **Accomplishments.** Individuals who volunteer for a sense of accomplishment enjoy seeking concrete evidence of their work and like practical, tangible projects. To recognize these volunteers effectively, offer them certificates of accomplishment at specific stages in their work or a special place to put completed projects.
 4. **Power and influence.** Individuals who are motivated to volunteer for power and influence typically like persuading people to see or do things their way, enjoy showing people a better, easier way of accomplishing an objective and like positions where they can help make decisions or train people. These volunteers will most appreciate titles or rank insignia, a special parking spot, or involvement as a speaker at your CFDC's workshop.
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Hints on Recognizing Volunteers

- When your volunteer does something that has really helped the Community Futures program or CFDC, remember to write down the impact, so that when you write a card or give a speech to recognize that volunteer, you will have different messages for each volunteer, instead of using the same language for each one.
- Be aware of volunteers' interests through conversations and observation. That way, when it comes time to give them recognition gifts you can get them something that they will really appreciate, and they will also know that you are interested in them.
- Find out what types of foods your volunteers like - then randomly present them with treats, just to let them know that they are appreciated. Sometimes group volunteer recognition events loses the individual element of each volunteers contribution, so small, periodic random gifts can

help to eliminate this problem. (Example: Give your volunteer a box of mixed nuts with a note attached stating, "We would go 'nuts' with your support!")

- Celebrate volunteers' birthdays and let all staff know when that birthday is. For many people, just knowing that everyone involved with the CFDC is aware of you and shows interest can help you to realize that the CFDC appreciates your contribution.

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Recognition Ideas/Suggestions

1. **Thank-you posters by Children**

The United Way does the usual recognition dinner, certificates, plaques, personally signed letters, etc. However, the United Way of Gloucester County's most popular recognition program is "Thank You Posters" created by children from local agencies. These hand-drawn posters are very popular and hang in the main lobby of several local companies. They don't cost much to produce, just some poster board and crayons/markers. Plus, the children enjoy creating them and create more than one. They have been doing this for five years now and the activity gets more popular each year.

Historical context: Have youth depict their vision of how volunteerism has helped shaped Canada's values and identity.

2. **A Personal Note**

It's not earth shattering, but volunteers really appreciate and respond to the personal notes sent out periodically by the Wheelchair Recycling Program Manager. On their organization's note-cards, or specially chosen cards for the individual volunteer, the volunteers are reminded of how important his/her efforts are to the organization. A recently accomplished task or project is emphasized and shown how it affects the organization's operation. When a volunteer group is hosted by an organization, the number of volunteers is multiplied by the number of hours they've worked, then divided out to let the volunteers know how many (non-stop!) eight hour days it would have taken the tiny staff to complete the same volume of work. It's often quite staggering!

3. **More than a Plaque or Certificate**

Some ideas that are not the usual plaque or certificate:

- Send a "thought-you'd-like-to-know" letter to the volunteer's employer, acknowledging his or her positive contribution to CFDC.
- Ask volunteers or staff members to train other volunteers or staff members, to lead meetings to give presentations, etc.
- Forget separate luncheons for deserving staff and volunteer. Bring them together for a joint recognition lunch in their home.
- Send an anniversary card to volunteers or staff, highlighting their year(s) of service. Note how they made a difference in the organization over the past year.

Historical context: Prepare a short history of each volunteer's involvement with the Community Futures program and/or CFDC and how it has made a difference to the community.

4. **Volunteer Mural**

Many years ago one community had a construction project going on downtown with a rather ugly protective wall. The Volunteer Centre co-ordinated a community-wide volunteer recognition event that started with permission to paint this wall (it surrounded a complete city block) and the donated services of an artist who painted an outline all around it of people of every description tugging together on a rope.

The local agencies were asked to submit photographs of a representative volunteer. The photos were blown up and placed on the faces of the painted people in the mural. And then, on a designated day, all the volunteers from all the agencies were invited to come out and paint in the rest of the mural with all sorts of colours! The mural painting itself generated publicity that day (and new knowledge of volunteering in the community) and the mural stayed up for the duration of the construction project.

Historical context: The mural could depict volunteers through time and what they may have done in the community.

5. **Student Recognition Certificates**

Recognize the valuable contribution of youth volunteers by sending Youth Recognition Certificates to high schools and elementary schools. The certificates are presented at the schools' Awards Day ceremonies.

6. **Volunteer Certificate**

The certificate, which is signed by the community's Mayor, is believed to help promote good practice, and raise the status of volunteering. In order to qualify for acceptance into the Volunteer Certificate activity, voluntary groups must adopt good practice and agree to a job description with the volunteers.

7. **Volunteer Caring Kit**

The Volunteer Caring Kit can include:

- * Paper clips: Paper clips have many uses, just like each volunteer has many talents. Paper clips are also used to hold a program together and provide guidance to youth.
- * Rubber Bands: Rubber bands represent the flexibility that all volunteers need to have. You can adapt to any different situation. As volunteers, you can also stretch your own abilities to have new opportunities.
- * Band-Aids: Band-Aids help others and are sensitive to others feelings, just as volunteers have to be keyed-in to the feelings of those they work with.
- * Coin: This coin represents a quarter to call and ask for help and to remind you that you are not alone.
- * Paper Bill: this money calculates the contribution that volunteers make to a program through their donation of time.

- * Balloon: This balloon expands and grows as you learn from others.
- * Heart Sticker: This heart represents the ability to reach out to youth. You care about our youth and what they are doing.
- * Mint: This mint represents the fact that each of you is worth a mint. Volunteers are very special and really make a difference.
- * Lifesavers: Lifesavers represent the special contribution to a program that each volunteer makes and emphasizes that each of us are unique and different just like the rainbow of colour of lifesavers and that there is a place in the organization for everyone.
- * Safety Pin: A safety pin to remind you that you are bright and sharp and utterly indispensable.

8. **Celebrate National Volunteer Week**

National Volunteer Week is a special time set aside in April to honour the people who donate their time and energy to their fellow citizens. It is also meant to raise awareness of the vital contribution volunteers make to our communities and to the identity and values of our country.

With the help of our partner volunteer centres, National Volunteer Week is quickly gaining recognition as an essential civic and community event that is celebrated by all sectors of society.

National Volunteer Week is the time in which most volunteers are formally recognized. However, informal recognition is just as important as formal. Managers of volunteers responsible for volunteer supervision are encouraged to undertake on-going methods of recognition of volunteer service on a regular basis throughout the year. These methods of informal recognition may range from simple "Thank You's" to a concerted effort to include volunteers as full participants in program decision-making and implementation.

This celebratory week is being held during the following weeks in future years:

- * **National Volunteer Week 2002**, April 21 to 27
- * **National Volunteer Week 2003**, April 27 to May 3
- * **National Volunteer Week 2004**, April 18 to 24
- * **National Volunteer Week 2005**, April 17 to 23

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Recognition when a Volunteer joins your CFDC

- * Send a letter of welcome (maybe a small welcome gift too)
- * Provide a good role description, Issue name tag, ID card, etc.
- * Provide an orientation
- * Publish names of new volunteers in CFDC newsletter
- * Introduce the new volunteer to other staff
- * Connect the volunteer with their team leader

Recognition on a Daily or Weekly Basis

- * SMILE!
- * Informal thank you from staff
- * On the job praise - with specific comments
- * Seek feedback from volunteer (suggestions / improvements)
- * Take time to talk Say "We missed you."
- * Recognize personal problems and needs
- * Use a volunteer suggestion box

Recognition on a Monthly Basis

- * Volunteer of the Month
- * Articles in CFDC newsletters
- * Provide funding for volunteer and/or community conferences / workshops
- * Letters to the editor about your CFDC's volunteers

Recognition at the Completion of a Special Event Project

- * Say "thank you"
- * Send letter of thanks to the volunteer
- * Write an article about the project for local newspapers or CFDC publication
- * Take the volunteer(s) out for lunch or a coffee break
- * Promotion, give the volunteer more responsibility
- * Wall of fame, post up a picture of the volunteer with a summary of the project
- * Write a letter to prominent public figures

Recognition at Meetings with Staff or Groups

- * Tell about the volunteer projects and individual volunteer accomplishments
- * Praise the volunteers to others (have staff who are experiencing success with volunteers in their programs become your best advocates with the staff who may be struggling)
- * Show slides or video of the volunteers at work
- * Invite volunteers to staff meetings
- * Provide volunteers with outside training resources

Recognition on Occasions, at Event, etc.

- * Send your volunteers a birthday card
- * Have an informal birthday party (a cupcake with a candle)
- * Send a get well card
- * Remember special event in their lives (child's wedding, job promotions, anniversary)

Recognition when a Volunteer Leaves the CFDC

- * Give a letter of thanks
- * Give a certificate / pin of appreciation
- * Write a letter of recommendation
- * Write a letter of appreciation / commendation to present employer
- * Have an exit interview

Where to Recognize you Volunteers

- * Volunteer Office or lounge

- * Hallway in building / cafeteria
 - * In the community
 - * At shopping centres - display boards
 - * In the media, newspaper articles, cables TV shows, professional journals
 - * In your CFDC's newsletter or on your Web site
-

Awards

There are personal tokens of appreciation that may be given to volunteers: a simple heart-felt verbal 'thank you'; a material 'thank you' in the form of a certificate, a card, a gift or gift package; a medal or of course the monetary 'thank you'. The value of these awards is priceless, because in the end, the winner is not only the devoted individual, but also the community as a whole.

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Awards: Provincial Options

British Columbia

Annual Outstanding Community Futures Volunteer Award

The Annual Outstanding Community Futures Volunteer Award is presented to an individual in each CF Region who has demonstrated outstanding service in the field of community and business development.

Don McMillan Award

The Don McMillan Award is awarded to an individual or group (staff or volunteer) in recognition of an outstanding contribution to community development. This award is awarded to individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the development of a Community Futures program, promoted an encouraged the partnership of community social and economic development agencies, developed a successful CED initiative to assist a particular group or segment of the community, made a notable contribution of promoting CED, and made a notable contribution to promoting or enhancing CED training.

Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation

The Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation is awarded to recognize the efforts, innovation, and initiatives contributed by CFDCs towards economic development and support to their communities. The award can gain your initiative provincial wide visibility and recognition as a successful practice.

Alberta**Laura Swan Award**

The Laura Swan Award is awarded to staff and volunteers who have shown outstanding and ongoing leadership and achievement in the Community Futures world, shown the commitment to the Community Futures program objectives through promotion within the Community Futures community, and have had actions that have benefited an individual or group who would have not otherwise been included in the Community Futures programs.

Unsung Hero Award

The Unsung Hero Award was developed in memory of Evelyn Arlidge, who had worked for many years with Western Economic Diversification and/or Human Resources Development Canada. Her hard work and efforts were noticed and appreciated by many people, but due to her role, often the dedication had gone unnoticed by the people that did not work directly with her.

The recipient of this award must be in an administrative or support role, must have been involved within the Community Futures world for a minimum of one year and must show dedication and commitment to the Community Futures movement.

Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation

The Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation is awarded to recognize the efforts, innovation, and initiatives contributed by CFDCs towards economic development and support to their communities. The award can gain your

initiative provincial wide visibility and recognition as a successful practice.

Saskatchewan

Community Futures Volunteer Award

The purpose of the Community Futures Volunteer Award is to recognize the important achievements that volunteers have made to the Community Futures program in Saskatchewan through service to the communities, region and/or province.

Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation

The Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation is awarded to recognize the efforts, innovation, and initiatives contributed by CFDCs towards economic development and support to their communities. The award can gain your initiative provincial wide visibility and recognition as a successful practice.

The Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal

The Government of Saskatchewan established a second honour in 1995 to recognize the voluntary sector on the occasion of the province's 90th anniversary: the Saskatchewan Volunteer Medal. This decoration is awarded to citizens who have provided, without reward or gain, outstanding volunteer service or exceptional community involvement in an area beyond their normal duties or profession. Any individual or group residing in Saskatchewan may submit a nomination. A call for nominations is made each year in the fall. A maximum of ten medals may be awarded annually and presented by the Lieutenant Governor at the Legislature early in the year. For more information contact the Protocol Office of Saskatchewan at (306) 787-3001.

Manitoba

1) Manitoba CFDC Volunteer Recognition Awards

The Manitoba CFDC Volunteer Recognition Award honours excellence by CFDC volunteers in strengthening their communities and Manitoba as a whole.

There are two award categories:

New Volunteer - presented to a person with less than five years within the Community Futures program who has made a superior contribution to their CFDC and community.

Notable Service - presented to a person in recognition of superior and long standing service to the field of community economic development and the provision of leadership, showing a record of accomplishments, creativity, and vision that has helped shape the Community Futures program in their region and/or Manitoba as a whole.

Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation
The Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation is awarded to recognize the efforts, innovation, and initiatives contributed by CFDCs towards economic development and support to their communities. The award can gain your initiative provincial wide visibility and recognition as a successful practice.

The Premier's Office, in co-operation with the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg, established this award to honour the efforts and dedication of outstanding volunteers in Manitoba and to recognize and encourage the valuable services performed by volunteers throughout the province. There are three award categories:

Individual Volunteers - presented to five exceptional

individual volunteers whose efforts have contributed significantly to the quality of life in their communities.

Youth - the youth leadership category recognizes young Manitobans (under 25) who have made considerable contributions to their schools, organizations and communities through volunteer work. The young volunteers serve as role models, encouraging other young people to give of themselves for the betterment of the community.

Community Groups - this award has been expanded to include voluntary organizations. It will be presented to three community groups that have improved the quality of life in Manitoba through extraordinary collective volunteer efforts of their members.

These awards consist of a presentation gift and a lapel pin, presented by the Premier. Candidates of all ages who volunteer in Manitoba are eligible. For more information on the 1999 award, contact the Premier's Volunteer Service Award's information line at 1-800-282-8069 or at (204) 945-0906 in Winnipeg.

2) Royal Bank Local Hero Award: Manitobans Helping Manitobans

Royal Bank invites individuals, community groups, voluntary organizations and corporate volunteers to submit nominations for the Royal Bank Local Hero Awards in Manitoba.

This award recognizes the extraordinary way ordinary Manitobans rally together to help each other. The Royal Bank Local Hero Award is given annually to an individual or community that shows a

similar kind of leadership in helping a neighbour in crisis.

The award consists of a commemorative plaque accompanied by a five thousand dollar (\$5,000) donation to a registered charity of the recipient's choice. For more information, please contact the Royal Bank Local Hero Award at the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg at (204) 477-5180.

3) The Volunteer Award for Manitoba Business

This award recognizes how vital corporate support is to the program and activities of non-profit and charitable organizations. It is presented to businesses that encourage employee volunteerism and are innovative in their use of resources (time, funds, people etc.) towards a project. For more information, contact the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg at (204) 477-5180.

4) The Golden Hand for Manitoba Media

For this award entries are submitted by non-profit or charitable organizations who have benefited from the efforts of Manitoba's media, whose contribution is vital in the promotion of volunteerism. Staff of freelancers of both print and electronic media is eligible for the nomination. For more information, contact the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg at (204) 477-5180.

5) The Mayor's Volunteer Service Award

From the early days as a Hudson's Bay Company trading post (Fort Garry) in 1870, with a population of 215 persons, Winnipeg has been well known throughout Canada for the extent and dedication of its many volunteer organizations. The Mayor's Volunteer Service Award was created in 1984 to honour those agencies or organizations which have made outstanding contributions to their city through volunteer service and to focus public attention on these remarkable and innovative volunteer efforts. The awards, which are the result of a co-operative effort between the Office of the Mayor

and the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg, will be presented at the Centre's Annual Volunteer Awards Luncheon. For more information, contact the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg at (204) 477-5180.

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Awards: National Options

1. **The Prince of Wales Community Leader Scholarship**

Created in honour of the Prince of Wales' visit to Canada during International Year of Volunteers (IYV) 2001, the scholarship will highlight the exceptional contributions young people make as volunteers in their communities. The Prince of Wales, who has an international reputation for supporting community service and volunteerism, has lent his name and encouragement to this special Canadian award. Nomination forms must be postmarked by October 1st, 2001.

2. **The Governor General's Caring Canadian Award**

This award is intended for an individual whose unpaid, behind-the-scenes voluntary contribution provides extraordinary help or care to families or groups in the community over a long period of time. The award recipients will normally not have been previously recognized by a federal or provincial award or honour. There is no age requirement for this award, but youth candidates are particularly welcome. Anyone may submit a nomination. There is no deadline date for nominations and awards are announced on an ongoing basis. For further information and nomination forms, please contact the Chancellery at Government House (1-800-465-6890) or www.gg.ca/honours/caring_e.html.

3. **The Flare Magazine Volunteer Award**

The Flare Volunteer Awards were established in 1997. Six awards are presented annually to Canadian women aged 18 and older whose volunteer service in the field of social services, health, arts, culture, education, environment or citizenship have made a significant contribution to the welfare of others by addressing needs in their community. For more information about the awards or to find out how you can nominate someone, contact Hazel Picco at Flare Magazine in Toronto at (416) 596-5462.

4. **Imagine "New Spirit of Community" Partnership Awards**

Imagine, an initiative of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, is a national program promoting corporate and public giving, volunteering and support in the community. Imagine has over 400 business partners, and

1,200 Community Partners and is a co-sponsor with the Globe and Mail (Canada's national newspaper) of the "New Spirit of Community" Partnership Awards. The Awards recognize and showcase leading examples of business/community partnerships that creatively provide services to those in need and ensure the social and cultural vitality of Canadian communities. Any company or voluntary/non-profit agency operating in Canada may apply. To request an application form for yourself or to nominate a partnership, contact the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy at (416) 597-2293.

5. **The Peter F. Drucker Award for Canadian Non-profit Innovation**

It is the vision of the Peter F. Drucker Canadian Foundation to find the Innovators, whether small or large, to recognize and celebrate their example, and to inspire others. The Foundation endeavours to fulfil this vision by calling attention to the worthwhile, innovative and essential contributions made to society by non-profit organizations throughout Canada through the annual Peter F. Drucker Award for Canadian Non-profit Innovation.

Peter F. Drucker defines innovation as: "change which creates a new dimension of performance". Innovative ideas need to possess resolve, imagination, and groundbreaking new thought. The ideas also need to be measurable and transferable to the experiences of other non-profits in the field. Innovation at a non-profit level should be shared and benchmarked in order to create an overall well being of society. Since 1993 the stories from applicants for the Drucker Award in Canada have proven that innovation can be a powerful tool in the betterment of people's lives. For more information, please contact the Drucker Foundation at (519) 660-2943.

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The International Year of the Volunteers 2001

The United Nations' declaration of International Year of Volunteers 2001 (IYV 2001) gives cause for celebration to over 7.5 million Canadian volunteers and not-for-profit organizations. Launched in Canada on December 5, 2000, International Year of Volunteers 2001 promises to be a landmark year for Canadian volunteers and the voluntary sector.

"The International Year of Volunteers affords us all with a rare opportunity to put volunteers and volunteering in the forefront of our thinking," says Lila Goodspeed, president of the board of directors of

Volunteer Canada, the lead charity for IYV 2001 planning in Canada.

National planning for IYV 2001 in Canada is a joint initiative of Volunteer Canada, Canadian Heritage, and Human Resources Development Canada.

Volunteer Canada's Millenium Project; Volunteering Through Time

Volunteering Through Time, a travelling exhibit that made its way across Canada, took Canadians on a fascinating interactive journey. This exciting project celebrated both the history and the future of Canadian volunteers by highlighting events in which volunteers played an integral role. Costumed characters, informative panels, first-person testimonials, and take-away materials were just a few of the elements included in this innovative museum.

In recognition of the diverse make-up of Canada's 7.5 million volunteers, Volunteer Canada designed the exhibit around six key themes. The sectors that were represented are health and social services, youth, disaster relief, sports, environment, and arts and culture.

Volunteering Through Time began its journey in Ottawa, Ontario, in April 2000 during National Volunteer Week and visited 16 sites across the country until it ended in April 2001. The display was hosted and staffed by local volunteer centres. The exhibit was set up in high traffic areas such as community centres, museums, and shopping malls, the exhibit appealed to youth, seniors, and families.

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2001 Canadian Forum on Volunteerism - Vancouver BC, August 16-18, 2001

This forum allowed volunteers to debate volunteerism and share their views.

The following four issue statements were compiled from roundtable discussions held across the country in the spring of 2001: (a) Volunteers deserve to receive tax benefits for their donated time and expenses. (b) By putting an economic value on

volunteer hours, we comprise the essence of time freely given. (c) A truly effective and well-managed society would not need volunteers to provide essential services. (d) Altruism is on the decline as volunteers are motivated primarily by vested interest. They are meant to be controversial and are not necessarily reflections of the beliefs of Volunteer Canada or our sponsors. The statements were intended to generate new insights and energy around volunteer activity, offering an opportunity for intellectual dialogue and the exploration of new ways of thinking about volunteerism in Canada.

These statements were debated by a panel in plenary format, then discussed by delegates in small breakout groups, followed by a final vote in a summary plenary session. During the closing of the forum the final four statements were to be endorsed by the forum, representing viewpoints of volunteers from across the nation.

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