

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering is a great opportunity to enhance your educational, personal, and professional development. Connecting with volunteer organizations can help you to gain new skills and develop professional contacts. Volunteering is also a great way to discover more about the types of organizations that you will eventually be working for. When you volunteer you will gain valuable career skills and competencies in your field of study.

Nonprofit and voluntary organizations, individuals, and society as a whole benefit from the activities of volunteers. Volunteers themselves also benefit from their volunteer activities, according to the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP).

- More than three quarters (79%) of volunteers said that their volunteer activities helped them with their interpersonal skills, such as understanding people better, motivating others, and dealing with difficult situations.
- Just over two thirds (68%) of volunteers said that volunteering helped them to develop better communication skills
- Volunteering is often seen as an opportunity to acquire job related skills and improve job opportunities. Almost one quarter (23%) of volunteers said that they volunteered for this reason.
- 28% of unemployed volunteers (and 16% of employed volunteers) said that their volunteering had helped them obtain a job in the past and 62% of unemployed volunteers believed that it would help them to find a job in the future.

SKILLS THAT YOU CAN GAIN FROM A VOLUNTEER POSITION:

- Enhanced communication skills
- Increased self-confidence
- Leadership skills
- Ability to handle conflict and work in stressful situations
- Time management and organization skills

For more information on the 2000 National Survey for Giving, Volunteering and Participating, including full text of the highlight report, *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians*, please visit www.givingandvolunteering.ca.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:

- Decide on the amount of time that you can devote to the position
- Treat your volunteer job the same way as you would a paid position; arrive on time, act professionally, and dress appropriately for the position
- Ask about any additional training opportunities available through the organization
- When you are comfortable in your role, offer to take on new tasks or responsibilities
- Keep records of the hours that you contribute, the projects that you work on, and the skills that you have developed
- Include your volunteer work on your résumé and your portfolio. Include the new skills that you have developed in the position
- Ask your supervisor for a performance review of your work
- You may also ask your supervisor to provide a reference for you when you are applying for jobs
- Use your volunteer position to help you develop a network of contacts in your field
- Let people in your volunteer community and your network know when you are looking for paid employment
- Have fun and enjoy meeting and working with fellow volunteers!