

# **Storytelling and the Voluntary Sector in Canada**

Capturing the Individual and Collective Stories

## **Liz Weaver**

Chief Executive Officer  
YWCA Hamilton, Ontario  
*Formerly Executive Director, Volunteer Hamilton*



McGill-  
McConnell Program:  
Master of  
Management  
for National Voluntary Sector Leaders

**McGill University, Montreal, Canada**

October 2001 • Revised April 2005

Copyright 2001, 2005 by Liz Weaver

---

## Contents

Abstract .....	4
Introduction .....	5
1. The History, Components and Craft of Storytelling.....	8
The Story Structure .....	11
The Ethical Dilemma of Stories.....	12
2. The Voluntary Sector Story .....	14
Volunteers: Players or Heroes?.....	18
3. Storytelling Dilemmas Facing the Voluntary Sector and Volunteers .....	21
Practical Issues.....	21
Ethical Issues in Framing the Volunteer Story .....	25
4. Approaches to Capturing the Volunteer Story .....	28
Appreciative Inquiry as a Story-capturing Technique .....	28
Developing A Model for Analysing the Volunteer Story .....	31
Volunteers Share Their Stories .....	31
Fulfilment or Compassion: Which Story? .....	35
Compassionate Citizenship: The Emerging Volunteer Story .....	37
5. Pulling the Threads Together and Weaving the Story.....	39
Appendix I.....	41
Appendix II.....	42
Sources .....	51
Bibliography .....	51
Journals and Publications.....	58
Web Sites .....	58

---

## **Abstract**

Every volunteer has a story to tell: a story about why they donate their time, what the organization means to them and how their involvement makes a difference to others. These stories are often compelling and poignant, and speak to the belief that individuals have the capacity to change communities, for storytelling remains a constant element of the human condition. The shared consciousness generated by volunteerism is in fact a form of social capital, creating compassionate citizens whose stories have the power to induce others to volunteer. Yet the voluntary sector all too often tells its “story” only through analysis and statistics, which though factually reliable are cold and impersonal, and dismiss the human context. On the other hand, the historical storytelling context and the manner in which individual volunteers’ stories are crafted provide a detailed frame of reference for understanding their respective voluntary sector organizations. In this paper, fifty volunteer stories are analyzed and key themes are presented, and the author urges voluntary sector leaders to develop strategies to capture and learn from the stories that exist in their organizations.

---

## Introduction

Stories are everywhere. A compelling story has the ability to connect individuals to each other or a group as the common experience, frame of reference or event becomes shared between the storyteller and the listener. Many of our conversations are filled with either stories of events that have recently occurred in our lives or stories exploring opportunities that connect us to each other.

Storytelling is the root historical context of human cultures. For many of us, it plays a significant and important role in our youth as we listen to our family stories or histories from our parents or grandparents. These stories connect us to a past, a collective presence of both family and social experience, and create a sense that we are not merely isolated individuals but rather parts of a greater whole. Individuals have a strong need for affiliation and for connection. Storytelling creates this link of affiliation, of shared purpose and collective achievement.

First, this paper will explore the core elements that make a story both compelling and complex. While many stories are told, only a small number of stories have the capacity to move us to take action rather than merely listen.

Those stories that do engage us are often more complex tales, although many follow a storytelling formula or pattern in their approach and development. A successful approach to storytelling requires discipline, thought and crafting of both content and message. This paper will explore strategies for crafting stories and how these strategies can assist in the development of other stories that move the listener to action.

Second, this paper will examine the notion of a collective story for the voluntary sector in Canada. Many Canadian voluntary sector organizations have recently come to appreciate the potential and the challenge of capturing and relating this voluntary sector story. This story is necessarily complex, often involving a large number of characters – staff, volunteers, clients, funders, and the media – each with widely different motivations, agendas and achievements. While time has been spent exploring these particular

---

characters and their key story themes, there are many challenges to be faced in both capturing and telling the voluntary sector story more effectively.

Third, this paper will also analyze those elements that make up the particular story of the individual volunteer. The details of volunteers' stories, in turn, may provide a frame of reference for the larger voluntary sector story. What is unique about both the voluntary sector story and the volunteer story is that the individuals within these stories are motivated toward some type of action that expresses their personal commitment to a particular cause or compassion for other people. At the same time, each volunteer has unique and personal motivations, which nonetheless lead volunteers to achieve a collective outcome through the delivery of a service within an organization.

Every year, more than 6.5 million Canadians volunteer for organizations and causes they believe in.<sup>1</sup> These individuals provide to organizations their time, talent and resources, with no expectation of reciprocal monetary or other benefits from the causes with which they affiliate. What is it that motivates these individuals to contribute much of their leisure time to some greater good for the community? What makes a person who volunteers different from the other three-quarters of Canada's citizens who do not choose to get engaged? Are volunteers heroes? Are their individual volunteer stories more compelling or more significant than the collective achievements of the voluntary sector?

To date, many of the stories told about and by the voluntary sector have focused on detailing its collective story, using collective data about achievements to signify its relevance – even to justify its very existence. This collective story is thus a tale of numbers, statistics and outcomes. But these are really only part of the message. While we may be awed by the sheer volume of data, such information is not necessarily compelling, and indeed often fails to motivate listeners or spur them to action. The challenge for the voluntary sector as a whole and for individual volunteers is to truly understand, evaluate, review and develop a story that motivates, challenges and encourages action.

---

<sup>1</sup> M. Hall et al., "Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians" (Ottawa, 2001).

---

This paper is itself a story of how the storytelling context, both for the voluntary sector and for individual volunteers, was explored in depth. It is also the story of how a model was developed to look at the relationships that exist between the concepts of volunteering (*service*), the individual (*self*) and the organization (*system*).

As part of its International Year of Volunteers (IYV) Web site, Volunteer Canada invited individuals to submit either their personal stories, or else stories about other volunteers who had made a significant impact on their work or life. A selection of fifty individual stories will be reviewed within the context of the model described above, particularly with reference to understanding the motivation (*spirit*) of the individual volunteer. The analysis of these stories will look for common approaches, trends and links in the stories. Can the fifty stories present an approach to storytelling for the voluntary sector?

The conclusion of this paper will focus on relevant issues, focus points and learning opportunities for the voluntary sector – particularly for organizations that work with and engage volunteers. The voluntary sector in Canada finds itself in a time of change and complexity. Governments at all levels are pulling back from their customary funding relationships and are looking at ways to co-deliver services in partnership with the voluntary sector. The federal government has identified the need to develop a new relationship with the voluntary sector and has provided over \$9 million dollars to explore this relationship. At provincial and local government levels, new partnerships with the voluntary sector are also being explored.

At the same time, the voluntary sector is also looking to more firmly establish its role as a relevant and important third sector, which contributes significantly to the development and enhancement of the lives of Canadian citizens. If the voluntary sector can enhance its capacity for understanding, capturing and sharing its own story, that story could well have significant impact.

---

# 1

## The History, Components and Craft of Storytelling

Storytelling is drawn from the cultural roots and traditions of virtually every organized society. Robert Fulford, in his book *The Triumph of the Narrative: Storytelling in the Age of Mass Culture* (1999), explores in detail the historical context and various approaches to both generating and telling stories.

Of all the ways we communicate with each other, the story has established itself as the most versatile – and perhaps also the most dangerous. Stories touch us all, reaching across cultures and generations, accompanying humanity down the centuries. Assembling facts or incidents into tales is the only form of expression and entertainment that most of us enjoy equally at age three and age seventy-three.<sup>2</sup>

Fulford's statement raises a number of interesting points for consideration. While stories may be our most elementary form of communication, they can also be a potentially dangerous medium. The assembly of the facts or incidents of the story can either create a story that is true in both detail and content or a story which begins to distort its details and content so as to form the basis of something more equivocal – a myth, an urban legend, even an official lie.

While Fulford admits that stories connect us across generations and cultures, he frames their historical basis in the age-old tradition of gossip.

Gossip remains a folk-art version of literature, the back-fence way of compressing events and exploring their meanings. Like the grander forms of storytelling, gossip expresses our concerns and anxieties, it delivers moral judgments, and it contains ironies and ambiguities that we may only partly understand, just like the most serious work of great authors. When we gossip we judge ourselves as well as those we talk about."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Robert Fulford, *The Triumph of the Narrative* (Toronto, 1999), x.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

---

For Fulford, gossip is not to be considered as pejorative but rather gossip is a model that we use to build our stories. In the relaying of gossip, Fulford identifies key storytelling elements: the resolving of ambiguities, the exploring of concerns and anxiety, and the delivering of a moral judgment. These elements allow a relationship to begin between the storyteller and listener and are critical to a successfully structured story.

To some degree, stories almost always embody and communicate, directly or indirectly, the moral values of the storyteller. The more compelling the value or moral judgment, the more likely the story will be remembered and, more importantly, retold. However, in the retelling, the storyteller may take creative licence, shaping the story to his or her particular context and audience.

A story that matters to us, whether it's an ancient story like Job's or a modern story like Herzog's, becomes a bundle in which we wrap truths, hope and dread. Stories are how we explain, how we teach, how we entertain ourselves, and how we often do all three at once. They are the juncture where fact and feelings meet. And for those reasons, they are central to civilization – in fact, civilization takes form in our minds as a series of narratives.<sup>4</sup>

While stories are instrumental in creating the history of civilization, stories can also have a very personal context. Fulford explains that each of us creates our own personal narrative or history through stories. We use these to entertain both others and ourselves or to explore those issues that challenge us to come to a decision about a moral dilemma. “Most of us feel the need to describe how we came to be what we are. We want to make our stories known, and we want to believe those stories carry values. To discover we have no story is to acknowledge that our existence is meaningless, which we may find unbearable.”<sup>5</sup> And this then becomes the irony of the story. While individuals use the story to create an image for themselves, developing and revealing the story to others also has the potential to reveal personal frailties and lack of achievements, ghosts better avoided. Therefore, some storytellers may craft stories that are largely built on myths and symbols, the surface truth of which cannot be taken literally.

---

<sup>4</sup> Fulford, 9. In *Herzog* (1964) by the American novelist and Nobel laureate Saul Bellow (1915–2005), a professor struggles to find intellectual and spiritual understanding in a world gone out of control.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

---

How does the listener distinguish between stories that are based on truth and those based on myth? How can listeners have faith in the moral values of both the story and the storyteller? One strategy might be to move away from these values-based stories to stories that are based only on empirical data and facts.

Forensically detailing and then analysing a chronology of events might be an approach to capturing our history; but, as Fulford points out, this approach largely lacks the human context and framework that narratives provide. Even myths and gossip convey significant truths about both the story and the storyteller. Unfolding and separating some verifiable truth from a mythical or symbolic or value-laden surface narrative is important and challenging work for the audience. Each story, whether based on a common-sense truth or a myth, creates a context, an unfolding of reality, which gives the story both temporal relevance and narrative substance. The mere recitation of statistical or historical facts often fails to provide the important context of the situation and substance of those involved.

The answer is that narrative, as opposed to analysis, has the power to mimic the unfolding of reality. Narrative is selective, and may be untrue, but it can produce the feeling of events occurring in time, it seems to be rooted in reality. This is also the reason for the triumph of the narrative, its penetration and in some ways its dominance in our collective imagination: with a combination of ancient devices and up-to-the-minute technology, it can appear to replicate life.<sup>6</sup>

This is an important consideration for the voluntary sector, and will be explored further in this paper. Much that is written about or by the voluntary sector seems to tell a story that is relevant in terms of statistics and analysis, yet seems to lack a connection to human values, time and context. As Fulford clearly shows, stories based simply on factual analysis are limited in their approach. For practical purposes, analysis of data is taken to be either true or untrue, black or white; it does not ask for discernment or a judgment to be made, and certainly does not compel involvement on the part of the listener.

While analysis may not be compelling, the narrative is also problematic. In the telling of the story, the historical facts are often changed, personalized or embellished. There are

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 16.

---

many examples of stories crafted so as to misrepresent facts and manufacture a new context. This presents an ethical dilemma in storytelling – the creation of myth and the context of reality – a dilemma that will also be explored further in the contexts of volunteers’ stories and the voluntary sector story as a whole. Some would argue that the process of fictionalization is not harmful and may in fact add moral significance to the story. And indeed it is difficult to determine at what point the fictional elements and the storyteller’s manipulation of facts move so far from common-sense reality as to render a story irrelevant or even patently false. Stories are complex and compelling, and whether this complexity is employed for more harm than good, the story remains a constant element of human social connection.

### **The Story Structure**

A compelling story has a defined structure, which brings together key elements within a context. Fulford illustrates the roots of storytelling by the example of Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*, the hero who lives by a high moral code to which he remains true through every adversity. This attachment to a moral value incorporates three fundamental storytelling elements: a tale of the individual struggle, the expression of important values and examples of adherence to values despite adversity and challenge.<sup>7</sup> This makes up the moral code of the story. Another approach to crafting a compelling story is to create a framework in which the lead character is challenged by a calling, struggles with this calling and through this struggle crosses a threshold and is transformed by the experience.<sup>8</sup> As in the story of *Ivanhoe*, the tale of the pursuit of a calling closely aligns with the individual or lead character in the story, and often represents the lead character’s central moral values. The calling compels the lead character toward some sort of action or struggle, which may be internal or external, as the character is forced to choose between options. In crossing the threshold, the hero struggles with personal values and ultimately must choose one alternative over another. The transformation represents the triumph of the moral values over something that may be more evil or base. The lead character in the story is transformed by the experience, and thus achieves heroic status.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>8</sup> I. Magni, “Once Upon a Time ... The Art of Storytelling” (McGill-McConnell Program, August 1999), 4.

---

While this story framework seems relatively simple, it is more complex than might be initially apparent. The variable elements in each of the three-part structure affect the context, connection and values in the story. The problem of making a choice between two or more options and trying to forecast how one choice might be better or worse than the others creates the context for the communication of moral values through the storytelling medium.

### **The Ethical Dilemma of Stories**

It is people's ability to put a story into a context that both positively and negatively impacts the moral nature of the story; but this can also present an ethical dilemma. John C. Thomas of IBM Research points out that "the development of the written symbol has enabled people to view words as real things. If we write down our myths, they become 'objectively' true; not just something that our community finds useful and comforting to believe, but something that 'is' true. This true knowledge can then be read and acquired by others; unfortunately, this has often been translated into 'must be acquired by others.'"<sup>9</sup>

Thomas examines both the ecological and social factors relating to information gathering and storytelling.

More recently, a number of thinkers in widely varying disciplines have begun to re-examine some of the often implicit assumptions of analytic methods and find them lacking; to see instead that knowledge exists as a web of relationships; that a possibility now exists for reintegrating society; for reintegrating learning and life; for re-establishing older methods of communicating such as storytelling; for fostering the collaborative creation of knowledge by communities.<sup>10</sup>

This ecological view of storytelling recognizes that no single idea is correct or incorrect, but rather that knowledge is built through the interconnectedness of ideas and the dialogue used to create the webs of relationships that form human knowledge.

---

<sup>9</sup> John C. Thomas, "Fostering the Collaborative Creation of Knowledge" (New York: IBM Research, 2000), 2.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 3.

---

The social view of information is built on the notion of gaining trust through the exchange of ideas. If there is mistrust, people will not join in and share their ideas or contribute to the generation of both knowledge and stories.

---

## 2

### **The Voluntary Sector Story**

Despite their limitations, empirical data and descriptive facts do provide a useful framework for putting in context the story of the voluntary sector in Canada. One such empirical description of the voluntary sector in Canada appears in the 1999 Report of the Panel on Governance and Accountability in the Voluntary Sector (see Table 1).

As the table indicates, the size and scope of the voluntary sector are significant in all its aspects, from economic activity to volunteer involvement. But this is only one element of the voluntary sector story. Since the mid-1990s, the voluntary sector has gone through a time of incredible change. There is increasing attention being placed on the voluntary sector by government at all levels, by members of the corporate sector and funders who expect their donations to be efficiently used, and by the voluntary sector itself as the sector strives to meet the competing and often conflicting themes of achieving the organization's mission with accountable outcomes. As a result, key leaders of the voluntary sector in Canada have been engaged in discussing and re-negotiating the relationship between the sector and the federal government. This process is called the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI).

This external pressure has increasingly led to the voluntary sector looking both internally at itself and externally at the role the sector plays in Canadian society. In the spring of 2001 the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy together with a number of its partners hosted a conference called "Telling our Story: Communicating the Value of Philanthropy and the Voluntary Sector." A discussion paper prepared for this conference by Bronwyn Drainie, on key issues in framing the voluntary sector story, pointed out that the time is ripe for presenting this story. Drainie noted that there is also some urgency in communicating the story accurately, in order to correct misperceptions of the work actually being done by the voluntary sector. She also identified some of the key challenges in presenting the voluntary sector story: "Certainly the complexity and

**Table 1. Voluntary Sector in Canada: The Empirical Story**

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN CANADA	
<b>Size:</b>	<p>The non-profit sector in Canada consists of approximately 175,000 organizations: slightly over 78,000 of these are registered charities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is 20,000 more charities than existed in the 1980s and three times as many as in the 1960s</li> <li>• 36 percent of registered charities are places of worship or other religious organizations</li> <li>• 5 percent are hospitals or teaching institutions</li> </ul>
<b>Income:</b>	<p>With \$90 billion in annual revenues and \$109 billion in assets, the charitable sector is comparable in size to the entire economy of British Columbia. However, almost 60% of revenues in the sector are in teaching institutions and hospitals.</p> <p>Taken as a whole, the sector accounts for 1/8 of Canada's Gross Domestic Product.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-thirds of charities have annual revenues less than \$100,000; half have revenues less than \$50,000.</li> </ul>
<b>Employment:</b>	<p>The sector employs 1.3 million Canadians, roughly 9 percent of the country's labour force and pays over \$40 billion annually in salaries and benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 percent of these jobs are in hospitals and 21 percent in teaching institutions.</li> <li>• 76 percent of the executives of charities are paid less than \$50,000 per year (1993 data).</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteers:</b>	<p>7.5 million Canadians (31.4% of the population) did some kind of volunteer work through an organization in 1997, giving in total over 1.1 billion hours in volunteer time. This is an increase of 40 percent in the absolute number of volunteers since 1987 (compared to a 20 percent increase in the population).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of volunteers is changing: volunteers are younger and a substantial portion speak a first language other than English or French. For instance, Volunteer Vancouver reports that, in 1996, 43 percent of its referrals seeking volunteer positions were under 29 years of age and almost 30 percent spoke a first language other than English or French. In Montreal, 23 percent of applicants were under 25 years of age and 25 percent spoke a non-official language.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding:</b>	<p>60 percent of the income of the broad charitable sector comes from governments, 10 percent from individuals and 1 percent from corporations. The remainder is raised through user fees, product sales, investment income and other fundraising activities. In 1997, 88 percent of Canadians (over 15 years of age) made donations to charitable and non-profit organizations.</p>
<b>Note:</b>	<p>The only reliable data are for registered charities. These data needs to be treated with caution, however, because they include quasi-government organizations, such as hospitals and educational institutions. Produced with data from the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Volunteer Vancouver and the 1997 National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating.</p>

SOURCE: *Building on Strength: Improving Governance and Accountability in Canada's Voluntary Sector* (Ottawa, 1999), 13.

---

diversity of the sector, which is its greatest strength, is paradoxically, its greatest weakness when it comes to telling a unified story. Certainly the higher values that the sector speaks to – citizen participation, the three pillars of society, the common good – are terribly abstract and of scant general interest.”<sup>11</sup>

Drainie suggests three ways of capturing and detailing the voluntary sector story: the *practical* story, the *results-based* story and the *inspirational* story. Each approach has its advantages and its weaknesses. The practical story presents the voluntary sector in terms of its economic and funding relationships, primarily with government – a sector with very important needs that are being strongly impacted by government funding cuts and downsizing. Yet there are never enough resources to satisfy what seems like all the expressed needs of the population, and in this story the voluntary sector seems to be continually approaching funders and donors for additional dollar resources to accomplish its tasks and fulfil its mission. “The problem with this story is that it plays into the unpleasant stereotype of the voluntary sector that exists in the minds of business leaders, the media, and the public: These people are always whining. It’s all about the money. They’re pleaders not leaders.”<sup>12</sup>

The results-based story focuses instead on the achievements or outcomes of organizations in the voluntary sector. In this story, the voluntary sector is well known for its ability to use a small amount of funding to incubate innovative approaches when developing or delivering a given type of service. The result-based story can capture these innovations and use them to highlight some of the sector’s most notable successes. It fails, however, to convey in full detail the ongoing work of the voluntary sector that does not produce instant results or high-profile achievements – the longer-term strategies required in many voluntary sector organizations to achieve significant results. “The results-based story is a powerful one that should be exploited, but it has one drawback. It’s a story that tends to focus on the past rather than the future: by the time the story is there to be told, it’s over and therefore falls into the static category that our media executive admitted he wouldn’t be all that interested in pursuing.”<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Bronwyn Drainie, Discussion paper for “Telling Our Story” (Toronto, April 2001), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 8.

---

Drainie’s third storytelling approach, the inspirational story, focuses on the individuals in the voluntary sector: the clients, volunteers and staff. “There is no need to tell those of you already in this sector that this work affirms, enhances and profoundly changes and inspires your life. If you didn’t feel that from your personal experience, you probably wouldn’t hang around for the lousy coffee, the eccentric hours, the lack of societal attention and the crummy (or non-existent) pay.”<sup>14</sup> This personal affirmation seems to be the genesis of the inspirational story and certainly seems to align with one of the key elements of the story model – volunteers’ sense of a calling or mission, and their commitment to core values. However, there are problems with the inspirational story as well. Drainie points out that this type of story carries with it the baggage of heroic achievement – for example, the work of Mother Teresa. Many individuals who work or volunteer in the sector may feel that they can never aspire to such a level of saint-like achievement, and therefore cannot or will not contribute the details of their own personal stories to the larger inspirational story framework. Drainie cites the example of four young people she met with while developing her paper: when she asked about their involvement as volunteers, they recoiled but upon further exploration and discussion, they turned out to be involved in a number of activities which could be considered as volunteer work. “These kids are the audience for the new story of the voluntary sector. And so are their parents, the Baby Boomers, the least committed and most self-involved generation in history.”<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the weakness of the inspirational story as framed by Drainie is that it is incomplete and only contains one of the key story elements – the calling.

Drainie’s paper also looks at those other stories that compete with the voluntary sector story: the stories generated largely by funders, government and the media. Some of these stories tend to stress the need for major capacity building; others are tales of organizational ineptitude and failure. These stories focus on the second story element, the struggle; but they do not necessarily portray the struggle or the crossing of the threshold in a positive light for the voluntary sector. With over 175,000 voluntary sector organizations, there are bound to be failures. The story of organizational failure seems to

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 9.

---

have greater play because when a voluntary sector organization fails, it is seen to somehow demean the public trust – or even the calling itself.

What is more, each story presented by Drainie, though important in itself, is often told in isolation from the others. Without all three elements, the storytelling framework is not really complete. Yet the voluntary sector has traditionally focused on a single approach to developing and telling its story, using either the practical, the results-based, or the inspirational version. There are few examples of all three story types being woven together; yet it is through the interweaving of practical effort, major results and personal inspiration that the voluntary story becomes more compelling, complex and textured.

### **Volunteers: Players or Heroes?**

An integral element, yet one that is often neglected within the voluntary sector, is the story about the involvement and the roles played by individual volunteers. Canadian volunteers contribute significantly to the voluntary sector. It seems to be relatively easy to portray volunteer involvement solely within the framework of the practical story as described by Drainie. The sheer size and scope of volunteer involvement provide a frame of reference, which at first might even be considered compelling, relevant and important. In fact, results of the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating<sup>16</sup> received front-page coverage in many national and local daily newspapers. These were stories about the statistical elements of the report and the potential impact on Canadian society resulting from the decrease in the level of volunteer involvement of over 1 million volunteers since the previous survey data in 1997.

While these demographic and participation statistics do not tell a complete story, they provide an important frame of reference for both this paper and for the voluntary sector as a whole. According to the 2000 National Survey, the rate of volunteering in Canada is 27 percent; approximately 6.5 million individuals annually contribute their time to voluntary organizations. Over 1.053 million hours are collectively contributed to organizations on an annual basis and the average number of hours donated per volunteer

---

<sup>16</sup> Michael Hall et al., “Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians” (Ottawa, 2001).

---

is 162 hours annually.<sup>17</sup> These statistics demonstrate that citizen engagement through volunteering is a significant and widespread feature of Canadian society.

The National Survey also provides detailed information about the demographic characteristics of volunteers with reference to age, sex, marital status, education, labour force status and household income. This demographic information can be useful in relating the practical side of the volunteer story. However, though individuals might see themselves accurately reflected by such statistics, it is unlikely that raw statistical information alone would encourage a person to want to join the widespread phenomenon of Canadian volunteering.

One of the most interesting and relevant parts of the 2000 survey details the expressed motivations of volunteers: how they, as individuals, become involved in volunteering, as well as the scope and limitations of their personal commitment.

Almost all volunteers (95%) agreed that the reason they volunteer is to help a cause they believe in. Approximately 8 out of 10 volunteers (81%) volunteered because they wanted to put their skills and experience to use. Over two-thirds (69%) volunteered because they had been personally affected by the cause the organization supports. Fifty-seven percent were attracted to voluntary service because they saw it as an opportunity to explore their strengths. Finally, 23% volunteered because they wanted to improve job opportunities.<sup>18</sup>

Information about volunteer motivations is an important element in crafting the volunteer story. This information about volunteer motivations can provide some insight into what might be considered as “the call.” The 2000 survey also provides information about how individuals became involved in volunteering. The personal connection between the potential volunteer and the organization is the most prominent element in expressed reasons for involvement. The top respondent categories for getting involved in volunteering include:

- Asked by someone in the organization (30%)
- Approached the organization themselves (16%)

---

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 43.

- 
- Approached by a member of the organization (15%)
  - Child or spouse involved (12%)
  - Asked by a friend or relative outside the organization (9%).<sup>19</sup>

Such records of individual motivation and connection through involvement are important as information for framing the volunteer story. Also relevant are the statistics on why individuals do not volunteer more; these statistics identify some of the barriers to engagement – the issues or factors which individuals may struggle with; as such they can be essential for crafting the volunteer story.

The reason most frequently given by volunteers for not volunteering more (76%) and by non-volunteers for not volunteering at all (69%) was lack of time. The next most frequently given was being unwilling to make a year-round commitment (34% of volunteers, 46% of non-volunteers). A substantial percentage of volunteers (29%) and of non-volunteers (22%) agreed that the reason they were not more active as volunteers was because they had already made their contribution to volunteering. Finally, 24% of volunteers and 38% of non-volunteers indicated that they did not volunteer more because they gave money instead of time.<sup>20</sup>

Understanding both the motivation and the barriers to volunteering seem to be key elements in crafting the volunteer story. The 2000 National Survey provides interesting and practical statistical data on the respondents but fails to capture the compelling story elements of the individual volunteers: their call, their struggles, their threshold experiences, their transformation. However, the statistical verification of the size and scope of volunteer contributions in Canada provides a practical frame of reference. The next section will detail additional practical and ethical dilemmas in capturing and effectively telling both the voluntary sector story and the stories of the volunteers themselves.

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 44.

---

### 3

## Storytelling Dilemmas Facing the Voluntary Sector and Volunteers

### Practical Issues

As noted both in the 1999 Report of the Panel on Governance and Accountability in the Voluntary Sector (also known as the Broadbent Report) and in the Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating,<sup>21</sup> the sheer numbers of individuals and organizations involved in the voluntary sector are enormous. It is not surprising then, that the voluntary sector story is often statistically based or fragmented into components such as the practical story, the results-based story or the inspirational story.

In addition to the size of the sector, there are issues related to the complexity and range in size and scope of organizational involvement. There are approximately 175,000 voluntary sector organizations currently operating in Canada, delivering services in such varied areas as the arts to health care, human services to recreation. Some of these are national organizations, with hundreds of staff and million-dollar budgets; some are provincial in scope. But the most voluntary sector organizations exist at a grassroots or community level, governed solely by volunteers and with budgets of less than \$50,000. Each of these is part of what is known as the “voluntary” sector. Yet the only element these organizations have in common is that they are governed by voluntary boards of directors and may engage volunteers in the delivery of their services.

The Broadbent Report recognized these variances in size, scope and capacity as one of the primary issues facing the voluntary sector.

What is immediately evident, however, is that requirements for accountability are meaningless unless voluntary organizations and the sector as a whole have the capacity, infrastructure and tools to meet them. Without adequate human and financial resources,

---

<sup>21</sup> *Building on Strength* (Ottawa, 1999); Hall et al., *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians* (Ottawa, 2001).

---

skills, knowledge, experience and technology these methods remain goals rather than practices. The urgent requirement for capacity-building within organizations and the sector as a whole, then, is the first subject of discussion.<sup>22</sup>

The Report clearly identifies challenges related to capacity facing the Canadian voluntary sector. The lack of resources – human, financial and technical – can create significant barriers to capturing the story adequately and being able to communicate it in a way that is compelling and convincing. Consistent information and knowledge about the size, capacity and scope of the voluntary sector is an emerging and recurring theme. According to Erwin Dreessen,

the sector recognizes that it is in need of significantly increased knowledge about itself: its size and composition, how it is financed and what other resources are at its disposal, where the money goes and what needs are addressed and what its “outcomes” are. Typically, organizations know the answers to most of these questions in their own case but at the subsector and total sector level the answers range from fragmentary to nonexistent. As a result, the sector has difficulty conveying to the general public what it is about and its ability to solicit support is hampered.<sup>23</sup>

These challenges of capacity are also reflected in the statistics on volunteer involvement. Personal motivation and knowledge of available volunteer opportunities serve to connect the volunteer to the organization. However, the organizations that are unable to communicate their message due to a lack of staff or of mechanisms for promotion will often be faced with a lack of appropriate volunteers. Likewise, volunteer opportunities within organizations that do not match the volunteer’s personal expectations or require a long-term commitment of time or service, are becoming more difficult to fill. The capacity or lack of capacity of an organization has a direct bearing on the ability of the organization to engage volunteers.

Another practical challenge impacting the volunteer story is the concept of volunteering itself. Drainie noted in her paper that the youth she interviewed were reluctant to identify themselves as volunteers. This is equally true for the large numbers of individuals who

---

<sup>22</sup> PAGVS, *Building on Strength* (Ottawa, 1999) 13.

<sup>23</sup> “What we should Know About the Voluntary Sector but Don’t,” *Isuma* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2001).

---

identify themselves as coaches, helpers, parent assistants, or service club members, but certainly not as “volunteers.”

The year 2001 has been declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Volunteers. Volunteer Canada, the lead voluntary sector organization responsible for promoting volunteerism in Canada, is seeking to address the issue of identification through a social marketing campaign based on the theme “I Volunteer. The Value of One. The Power of Many.” This campaign focuses on both traditional and non-traditional forms of volunteer involvement and citizen engagement so as to ensure that all individuals who give freely of their time to a voluntary organization view themselves as included in the campaign.

Central elements of the “I Volunteer” social marketing campaign are about connecting with potential audiences and encouraging their involvement. The target for the campaign is to make “I Volunteer” powerful, purposeful and meaningful; to bring the phrase to life in interesting, surprising and inspiring ways; to stimulate dialogue; and to create a sense of possibility, a sense of momentum, a sense of power.<sup>24</sup> The “I Volunteer” social marketing campaign was designed to be motivational rather than informational – requiring the listener to make a choice between being involved or excluded. It was structured to be “the call.”

Volunteer Canada also invited individuals to submit their personal story of volunteering, or a story about a particularly inspiring volunteer, to the 2001 International Year of Volunteers (IYV) Web site. A selection of these stories will be reviewed later in the paper.

Developing a social marketing campaign that calls individuals to action seems to be an effective strategy to address the practical dilemma of capturing the volunteer story. It provides a vehicle within which an individual can see himself or herself and provides a frame for telling the story. “I Volunteer” has an active element, and while individual volunteers have already, in a sense, answered the call, their personal stories can be situated within this frame. “Stories are personal, however, because telling our own story

---

<sup>24</sup> Eric Young, “Realizing the Potential of ‘I Volunteer’” (19 March 2001).

---

is an incredibly attractive, enriching, and sometimes scaring thing to do. Some of this has to do with being heard, with others listening and thereby appreciating us.”<sup>25</sup>

*I have learned that it is so rewarding to help a community stick together and to give my time freely so that my community and our country can be a better place.*<sup>26</sup>

While giving the volunteer a voice is critical to the volunteer story, there remains the problem of the relationship between many voluntary sector organizations and their volunteers. Most voluntary sector organizations came into being through the energy and commitment of a small group of volunteers who, recognizing the absence of some crucial service in their community, come together in order to meet the identified need. These volunteers often are instrumental in building the organization required to respond to the need. In many cases, however, once the organization becomes more formal with paid staff and other resources, the role, value and involvement of its volunteers seems to diminish. Instead of being seen as integral to the organization, volunteers are viewed as an adjunct to the organization.

As part of its capacity-building resources developed for the International Year of Volunteers (IVY), Volunteer Canada recently released the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement. The Code addresses the issue of volunteer activity by framing a series of questions for organizations to consider. In addition to advocating for values and guiding principles related to volunteerism, the Code provides a standard checklist for volunteer programs. Voluntary sector organizations are encouraged to review the Code, consider adopting its values and principles, and use the standards checklist as a frame of reference for their volunteer program.<sup>27</sup> The Code was distributed to over 65,000 voluntary sector organizations in December 1999, and has been adopted by over 400 organizations to date.

The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement provides an approach to organizations to review the engagement of volunteers within the organization. It provides the opportunity for the organization to consider the ethical questions related to volunteer involvement and the delivery of services within the organization. These issues are explored further below.

---

<sup>25</sup> Carl Milofsky, “Telling the Organizational Story” (September 2001).

<sup>26</sup> Volunteer Canada, “Volunteer Stories,” <http://www.iyvcanada.org> (August 2001).

<sup>27</sup> *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* (Ottawa, 2001), 11.

---

## Ethical Issues in Framing the Volunteer Story

In addition to the practical dilemmas in capturing and detailing both the voluntary sector and volunteer story, there are a number of ethical issues that should also be considered. The voluntary sector and volunteerism are based on the notion of charity, in which the relationship between parties may not always be based on a mutual exchange. Rather, charity tends to involve a relationship that is more power-based, in an exchange between a helper (or giver) and a receiver. The question of how to achieve a just exchange thus become an important moral issue, impacting at the point at which the individual intersects with the organization – that is, when the volunteer contributes to the organization or through the organization to other individuals.

The ethic of justice involves three concepts: distributive justice, justice in exchange and adjudicative justice. When considering ethical actions, the individual is required to make decisions or judgments that may have moral implications and consequences in which someone may benefit from his or her decision, while someone else may be harmed. Because moral judgments are often complex, it is usually helpful to make these judgments within a certain decision-making framework. In the Western tradition of thought, such ethical decision-making frameworks are often based on concepts such as fate, reciprocity, good order or due process.<sup>28</sup> In addition, there are legal, religious and cultural contexts that become relevant to the decision-making process. Distributive justice focuses on the notion of distribution of goods – who gets what and who gets to make the decisions related to who gets what. Questions of power and authority come into play when the goods being distributed are scarce or limited. An ethical approach to distribution would be for “the common good to the benefit of all involved.”<sup>29</sup> Issues related to distributive justice exist everywhere in the voluntary sector. As the Broadbent Report indicates, lack of capacity within voluntary sector organizations is significant. Without adequate capacity, organizations are forced to make distributive decisions that may not always be just. While voluntary sector organizations exist in relation to their mission, funders’ priorities can move the organization away from the mission and toward the goals outlined through the funding. This is what is known as “mission drift” –

---

<sup>28</sup> Fred Bird, “Fostering Justice and Addressing Injustice,” (McGill-McConnell Program, July 2000), 2.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

---

maintaining the organization by obtaining funding which may not be consistent with the organization's mission.

The second concept of justice concerns exchanges between individuals. In principle, "exchanges should be to the mutual benefits and satisfactions of those involved."<sup>30</sup> The notion of just exchange is particularly relevant in considering the relationship between the voluntary organization (or individual volunteer) and the client. Can there be a fair exchange between the client and the organization, when clearly it is the client that benefits? This has been an issue that the voluntary sector has struggled with for the past few years. The notion of charity is deep in the cultural and historic roots of the voluntary sector, and the image of "Lady Bountiful" still characterizes, rightly or wrongly, the image of volunteers. Charity is less about just exchange and reflects a "helping" exchange where one individual has more than they need and the other individual is in need.

In *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, John Kretzmann and John McKnight provide an innovative approach to the notion of just exchange by suggesting that all individuals, no matter their economic or personal status, are composed of both assets and deficits. It is the assets which, when contributed by an individual, can build community.

Every single person has capacities, abilities and gifts. Living a good life depends on whether those capacities can be used, abilities expressed and gifts given. If they are, the person will be valued, feel powerful and well connected to the people around them. And the community around the person will be more powerful because of the contribution the person is making.<sup>31</sup>

In the asset-based approach, both the organization (or volunteer) and client benefit, since both have assets that are valued and contribute to the development of community. Bill Grace applies the concept of just exchange in a similar way, particularly as it relates to the volunteer/client relationship. Volunteers contribute their skills and time in service to an organization and, more importantly, to the clients of the organization. Grace suggests that the concept of service should include the core elements of generosity, compassion, wisdom and courage.

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>31</sup> Kretzmann and McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out* (Chicago, 1993), 13.

---

When we engage in enlightened service to the poor, the dispossessed, or to nature, the other serves as our teacher. In this manner, we serve in order that we may learn, and the other accepts our service so they may teach us. This is a just approach to service that lends dignity to the individual being served and challenges the server to engage in reflection.<sup>32</sup>

According to the notion of service described by Grace, Kretzmann and McKnight, both the recipient and the giver contribute assets; and both can play the roles of teacher and learner in the process. There is reciprocity in this type of exchange. It is less about giving and receiving, and more about a mutual approach to building community and citizens.

The third concept of justice concerns adjudication – the decisions made when problems occur in the distribution or exchange of justice. Adjudication is often based on the legal or cultural traditions of society and is only brought to bear when there are problems in arriving at just decisions.

The concept of justice in all its forms is a significant element of both the voluntary sector and volunteer story. Perhaps it is this concept that will be instrumental in moving the voluntary sector away from the notions of charity and toward the notions of citizenship and community building.

These ethical issues are also present in the voluntary sector story, as organizations and volunteers work toward achieving justice for individuals in the community. Indeed this ethical thread is sewn into the mission statement of each voluntary sector organization, and it is this thread that induces individuals to volunteer and binds them in a common pursuit. This ethical approach of the voluntary sector, with its contribution to community building and enhancing the capacity of individuals, is elemental to the voluntary sector story.

---

<sup>32</sup> Bill Grace, *Ethical Leadership: In Pursuit of the Common Good* (Washington, D.C., 1999), 24.

---

## 4

### **Approaches to Capturing the Volunteer Story**

The following section of this paper will review a variety of pragmatic tools for generating and capturing stories. In addition to the tools, this paper will explore a model that has been developed particularly to capture and analyze the volunteer sector story.

#### **Appreciative Inquiry as a Story-capturing Technique**

Implicit in telling an interesting and motivational story is the ability of the storyteller to effectively capture the content of the story. Earlier in this paper the story framework was described as presenting a calling, a struggle, a threshold-crossing and the transformation experienced by the main character of the story. This framework is based on an individual responding to a situation, struggling with personal or moral demons and achieving transformation as a result of the struggle and choice made. As noted earlier, the size, scope and capacity of the voluntary sector is immense and provides significant challenges to capturing both the voluntary sector and volunteer stories. How, then, can the stories be captured and told effectively?

Appreciative inquiry is a methodology that provides a framework for capturing the stories of the voluntary sector and volunteers in a way that builds on the spirit or motivation of individuals who work or volunteer in this sector. Through the use of a four-stage process, appreciative inquiry engages individuals to describe or appreciate the very best or most positive elements of the story enabling them:

- to view or appreciate what is (the current context)
- to create through dialogue an image or picture of what might be
- to assist participants in determining what should be
- finally, to create what will be – the future of the organization

---

“Organizations exist,” David L. Cooperrider has written, “because stakeholders who govern and maintain them carry in their minds some sort of shared positive projection about what the organization is, how it will function and what it might become.”<sup>33</sup> Appreciative inquiry provides the tools and framework for generating the core elements of both the voluntary sector story and individual volunteers’ stories by drawing out the hopes and dreams of stakeholders that attracted them to the organization initially. The degree to which these hopes and dreams are fulfilled through positive action creates core images, which are important components of the inspirational story. According to Cooperrider, “We all hold self-images, images of our race, profession, nation and cultural belief systems; and we have images of our own potential as well as the potential of others.”<sup>34</sup> The appreciative inquiry approach combines well with a just exchange approach and considers the assets of stakeholders in voluntary organizations. It recognizes that there is something important in the hope or potential of individuals and organizations alike. It is also consistent with the voluntary sector concept of mission-driven organizations. A mission statement is a statement about a positive future for the organization and the community. The ultimate achievement of the mission of the organization means that the need for the service and the organization is fulfilled. Appreciating what is and can be is core to mission statements and to the voluntary sector.

The second key element of the appreciative inquiry approach focuses on the use of inquiry or the asking of questions about important issues relevant to the organization. This process of inquiry helps to frame and direct discussion. The model used in appreciative inquiry is built around developing questions that “discover what is, dream what might be, design what could be, and determine a destiny for what should be.”<sup>35</sup> Inquiry implies dialogue between participants in the process; and this dialogue leads to the co-creation of the stories of what is and what can be. “At the relational level, the interview taps a human longing to experience and recognize meaningful connections. Once discovered, the stories, the shared experience, and the connections become part of the individuals’ and organizations’ identities.”<sup>36</sup> Appreciative inquiry is a relevant story

---

<sup>33</sup> David L. Cooperrider, “Positive Image, Positive Action (1990).

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>35</sup> David L. Cooperrider, *Appreciative Inquiry Workshop*, 30.

<sup>36</sup> David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney, *Appreciative Inquiry* (1999), 24.

---

capturing methodology for the voluntary sector because it brings to the forefront the important core values that can serve to draw individuals to the voluntary sector and more particularly to volunteerism.

While not formally using the framework of appreciative inquiry, Volunteer Canada certainly infused its concepts when it launched the “I Volunteer” social marketing campaign for the International Year of Volunteers in 2001. As part of the Canadian campaign, people were invited to submit stories to the IYV Canada Web site – their own experiences as volunteers, or stories about other volunteers who had made a significant impression on them. Volunteer Canada told these volunteers: “We want to hear from you! If you are a volunteer or someone who has been moved by the efforts of a volunteer this is your opportunity to share your story with millions of Canadians. Each week we profile memorable and touching volunteer experiences. Visit often, you never know – your story may be the one that motivates someone new to volunteer!”<sup>37</sup>

The “I Volunteer” campaign theme seeks to capture and communicate the value of all forms of citizen engagement and volunteerism. The slogan “I Volunteer – The Value of One – The Power of Many” is often followed by a motivational message designed to convey the spirit of the volunteer rather than any specific volunteer activity. The stories appearing on the Web site also capture the positive spirit of affiliation. Fifty stories were randomly selected from the Web site and a model was developed to analyze these stories. The model and analysis will be discussed in the next section of this paper.

*Volunteering has given me a present and a future when the past and present seemed bleak. Volunteering has given me a social life and a sense of community purpose. Volunteering has given me back my self respect, a priceless gift and volunteering has taught me many things about the nurturing of plants from seed or cuttings to transplanting into seedlings and finally into mature plants to help beautify Oakville. . . . Volunteering has allowed me as a disabled person to prove my worth – something that was denied me in the paid working world. I now have a meaningful retirement, involvement with life and the small things that really do count – a reason to wake up and get going with a sense of joy, purpose, dignity and above all else a sense that I can give back for all that I have received from volunteering.*<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Volunteer Canada, [www.iyvcanada.org](http://www.iyvcanada.org) (August 2001).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

---

## Developing A Model for Analyzing the Volunteer Story

The figure in Appendix I presents a “Volunteer Story Model” for considering the volunteer story. There are four elements in this model that naturally link the volunteer and voluntary sector story. The first element is that of *service*: both voluntary action and involvement or the delivery of services by the organization to clients. *Service* is based on, and derives from, the relationships generated between the other two elements of the model: the *self* or individual and the *system* or organization. The model proposes that a *self* cannot provide service without the context of a *system* and likewise, *systems* need the involvement of the *self* through *service* to operate. *Service* becomes a driving force for the individual (*self*) and the *system*.

This model may seem relevant to different types of relationships – business, government and the voluntary sector – but the element which makes it unique, or at least more relevant to the voluntary sector, is the fourth element around which the other three revolve – *spirit*. *Spirit* is the motivation or sense of commitment to a cause brought by individuals and systems to the service relationship. Is there something unique about the motivational spirit of voluntary sector stakeholders? Earlier in this paper, the role and importance of voluntary-sector organizational mission were discussed, as well as the moral concepts of justice and just exchange. These are critical to the voluntary sector spirit; but is spirit enough to frame the voluntary sector story? Or conversely, does the element of spirit only create a part of the story, the inspirational story, as was posed by Drainie earlier in this paper?

This framework will be used to analyze fifty volunteer stories that were submitted to the Volunteer Canada–IYV Web site between December 2000 and August 2001.

## Volunteers Share Their Stories

Appendix II presents a “Volunteer Story Analysis Template,” which captures key details from fifty stories submitted to the International Year of Volunteers–Volunteer Canada Web site and uses the four elements of service, self, system and spirit from the Volunteer Story Model as a mechanism for analysing the content of each of the stories (see Appendix I).

---

The volunteer stories were submitted by

- 30 individual volunteers
- staff working collaboratively with volunteers in 17 organizations
- 11 individuals who were recipients of a volunteers' support
- individuals who were both recipients and also volunteers (included in the volunteer total)

There are several themes that emerge from the stories.

Many of the stories not so much about the actual activities undertaken by the volunteers as about the spirit of the individual volunteers: what motivated them initially and keeps them volunteering.

*I belong to a worldwide troop of volunteers. We dedicate our spare time to teaching young boys and girls . . . the importance of caring for our natural resources. The troops are dedicated to teach, show and actively participate in the natural wonders of our world. Whether it be in the deepest jungles of Africa or the core of a smog filled city in Canada. We help "the people of tomorrow" know that it is up to us to preserve the beauty of this planet. We are your Scouting volunteers, all over the world. I am very proud to be part of [this] group of dedicated citizens.<sup>39</sup>*

Twenty of the stories were about volunteers who shared their time amongst many organizations. Many of the contributors commented that "words could not fully describe" the feelings of fulfillment or the benefits they have experienced as volunteers.<sup>40</sup> The volunteers' motivations in their stories align significantly with the motivations expressed by respondents in both the 1997 and 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, including:

- Believe in cause supported by the organization 95%

---

<sup>39</sup> Volunteer Canada [www.iyvcanada.org](http://www.iyvcanada.org) (August 2001).

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

- 
- Opportunity to use skills and experience 81%
  - Personally affected by the cause the organization supports 69%
  - Seeking to explore own strengths 57%<sup>41</sup>

As well, the benefits expressed in the fifty volunteer stories are consistent in content with the benefits as expressed by respondents to the 2000 National Survey and include

- interpersonal skills 79%
- communication skills 68%
- increased knowledge 63%
- organization and managerial skills 57%
- fundraising skills 57%
- technical or office skills 33%<sup>42</sup>

Many of the storytellers expressed that they had received multiple benefits from volunteering, some of which were surprising to them. Some storytellers also expressed their gratitude in receiving these benefits.

*I can't really remember why I started volunteering, but I know why I keep doing it. Once I started getting involved I got to meet a lot of people with the same goal which I really didn't know at the time. It was to raise money for M.S. which goes for many things such as research and getting things for people to make their lives a little more enjoyable. . . . I put in so many hours in a short amount of time that I was considered a special volunteer and recognized by being given a small token at the Multiple Sclerosis Volunteer Appreciation Night. That's okay, but I can't really put into word the satisfaction I feel from volunteering. I hope someday that they will find a cure.*<sup>43</sup>

Many of the stories described a person-to-person connection between an individual volunteer and a recipient of his or her service. This tangible exchange seems to exemplify, for the storyteller, the connection made with others as a result of volunteer

---

<sup>41</sup>Michael Hall et al., "Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians" (Ottawa, 2001), 43.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>43</sup>Volunteer Canada [www.iyvcanada.org](http://www.iyvcanada.org) (August 2001).

---

service work. Many stories also included examples of a “just exchange,” in which the volunteer was both the giver and the recipient of a gift.

*I was so lucky! In truth, I always felt a little guilty. At first I thought volunteering would be a way of giving something back. Pay off Lady Luck. Little did I know. You see, I was the one who benefited so enormously, in so many ways. Kind, sincere, caring friendships developed from the core. . . . It's difficult to put into words but, ah – I have it. Let me borrow from a line from that wonderful movie “As Good As It Gets.” When Jack Nicholson was asked why he cared about the lady in the movie, he said this: “You make me want to be a better man.” Well, that's how I feel in a nutshell. Volunteering makes me want to be a better person. Know more, give more. Be more. And that's why I volunteer.<sup>44</sup>*

The stories, whether told by staff or volunteers, are poignant and personal. In his book, *Acts of Compassion*, Robert Wuthnow also captures the personal stories of volunteers. “The cold statistics on volunteering are hugely impressive, in one respect, and yet they are neither so telling nor so powerful as the warm-hearted individuals who make up these stories.”<sup>45</sup> Exploring in depth the motivations of individuals who volunteer for causes in their communities, Wuthnow finds that individuals are often motivated not by a single reason but rather by a complex set of feelings, experiences and motives. Caring for others connects the individual sense of self, the volunteer's values and beliefs, with motivations that are realized through the activities of volunteer work.

Caring is both special in a way that reflects our individuality and conventional in a way that associates us with the society in which we live. . . . The accounts of our motives, when all is said, are basically stories – highly personal stories, not assertions of high-flown values, but formulaic expressions of ourselves. It is not the language of religion or philosophy, or of psychology or economics, from which these accounts are constructed, but the language of personal experience.<sup>46</sup>

Why did people submit their stories to the International Year of Volunteers Web site? The answer seems to be that their stories supply, as Wuthnow suggests, the language of personal experience: the connection of the individual to community through the act of caring. Wuthnow's book introduces the reader to many individual stories; but one that he

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *Acts of Compassion* (1991), 6.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 84.

---

returns to repeatedly is that of Jack Casey. Jack's personal volunteer story is a compendium of experiences.

Although he drew from various repertoires . . . he felt more comfortable telling a story. He had told it before. It brought together the deep anxieties of his inner being and the circumstances demanding a caring response in one dramatic episode. It provided a turning point, an example from which to generalize, yet one that required no further generalization. He emphasized his caring by describing his action, but he also disavowed pretension by casting himself as little more than a bystander, an apprentice wanting to learn. So did others. Their stories scarcely gave a full or logical account of their motives. But they did provide an explanation of how and why these people had become involved in caring. Having stories to tell was a vitally important part of their caring. Their narratives reflected their own individualism and the culture that created it.<sup>47</sup>

The fifty stories submitted to the IVY Web site are consistent with the stories captured in *Acts of Compassion*. They are not complete tales and often not logical accounts of volunteers' motives; yet they provide an insight into both the individuals and their contributions to their community. Many of these stories also explore the reciprocal relationship between the volunteer and the beneficiary of the service. For all the variety of organizations, geographic communities and types of volunteer activities presented, each story communicates the ethic of caring held by the individual: "*The feeling we all got from being able to help cannot be described in words. There is so much payback from volunteering. What you receive, just from the good feeling inside, is more than you could hope to get. I've been a volunteer ever since for many organizations. I will continue to do so, it makes one feel good about life and themselves.*"<sup>48</sup>

### **Fulfilment or Compassion: Which Story?**

An important theme in the volunteer story is that of personal fulfilment; yet receiving a benefit seems to be in direct contrast to the altruistic motivation of volunteering, and this would seem to detract from the perceived personal, transformative element of the volunteer story. Wuthnow, however, argues that while personal fulfilment is gained from the volunteer experience, it is usually *not* the primary motivation for involvement.

---

<sup>47</sup> Wuthnow, 85.

<sup>48</sup> See Appendix II.

---

“Fulfilment is the reward from giving – giving of oneself to anything, not just a person in need. I can receive fulfilment from working in my garden or from making a lot of money in the real-estate market. I do not have to devote time to the needy to receive good feelings about myself.”<sup>49</sup> Instead of defining volunteering or caring within the confines of personal fulfilment, Wuthnow discusses the need to view the broader sociological implications of service and the compassion which individuals show for one another through acts of caring.

In Volunteer Canada’s fifty stories, there are numerous examples of individuals who are both volunteers and recipients; moreover, other volunteers expressly recognize that volunteering now is important because one day they themselves may require the support of volunteers. In addition, volunteering creates relationships between individuals and connects these individuals to a larger community context. “When someone shows compassion to a stranger, it does set in motion a series of relationships that spreads throughout the entire society. Even if the chain is broken at some point, so that no direct benefits come back to us as individuals, the whole society is affected . . . we do not have to reap the rewards personally to know that we are all better off.”<sup>50</sup>

Our beliefs and values as a society are connected to the image that we have about the communities in which we live. Robert Putnam refers to this connection as “social capital.”

First, social capital allows citizens to resolve collective problems more easily. . . . Second, social capital greases the wheels that allow communities to advance smoothly. Where people are trusting and trustworthy, and where they are subject to repeated interactions with fellow citizens, everyday business and social transactions are less costly. A third way in which social capital improves our lot is by widening our awareness of the many ways in which our fates are linked.<sup>51</sup>

When Canada receives worldwide recognition as one of the best countries to live in, this captures national media headlines and evokes outpourings of pride on the editorial pages. Likewise, the release of the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and

---

<sup>49</sup> Wuthnow, 290.

<sup>50</sup> Wuthnow, 300.

<sup>51</sup> Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York, 2000), 288.

---

Participating creates in the media images of a compassionate society where individuals care for one another.

In thinking about compassion, we remember that not all of life depends on efficient, large-scale organization and a productive economy. If only by negative example, we create a space in which to think about our dependence on one another, the needs that can never be fulfilled by bureaucracies and material goods, and the joys that come from attending to those needs. Above all, compassion gives us hope – both that the good society we envision is possible and that the very act of helping each other gives us strength and a common destiny. Part of the sociological case for compassion, therefore, is built into the fact that we already understand, through our metaphoric depictions of it, that compassion is a value that speaks not only to us as individuals but to our sense of living together in society.<sup>52</sup>

Our understanding of compassion, of just exchange, is created through the stories we share about volunteer involvement and about our connections to voluntary sector organizations. The story is an expression of compassion, a connection of individuals to each other.

### **Compassionate Citizenship: The Emerging Volunteer Story**

Over the past few months, there has been an emerging focus on the concepts of citizenship and how caring and compassion should characterize an approach to citizenship. While Wuthnow does not directly link compassion to citizenship, he does frame compassion within the broader social context. Recently, there have been two keynote addresses given that have challenged the voluntary sector to not think of itself as a separate and independent sector but rather as a sector that is an integrated and instrumental element of democracy.

At the Canadian Forum on Volunteerism, in August 2001, the Canadian author John Ralston Saul, speaking in his official capacity as vice-regal partner of Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, challenged participants to reconsider the notion that volunteerism is special and linked only to those who self-identify as volunteers. Instead, he argued that

---

<sup>52</sup> Wuthnow, 304.

---

volunteerism, caring, participating are fundamental components of compassionate citizenship.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, the philosopher and cultural theorist Mark Kingwell, in a keynote address at the 2001 YMCA annual conference (under the theme “Raison d’Être”), discussed the notion of compassion and how it connects us as citizens. In an example, Kingwell stated that while we, as individuals, can’t literally feel another individual’s pain, we can nonetheless be moved by the *expression* of someone else’s pain; and this feeling is what we call compassion. Indeed, it is in this connection with another that we find our individual expression. Kingwell challenged conference participants to consider their relationship with others and with the “earth’s gifts” by engaging in “critical emersion guided by the norm of justice.” The individual understands that there is a responsibility to act and while there may be risks involved, individuals matter and action must be guided by notions of justice.<sup>54</sup>

Kingwell encouraged participants to be both present and conscious in their own lives. He noted that each of us is the main character in our own story. As characters in the *collective* story, we must act with virtues of courage, charity and hope to create the world we want. These virtues connect individuals to each other and create active citizenship. As Kingwell has written elsewhere, “Citizenship is a way of meeting one of our deepest needs, the need to belong; it gives voice and structure to our yearning to be part of something larger than ourselves. By the same token, citizenship is a way of making concrete and ethical commitments of care and respect, of realizing in action an obligation to aid fellow travellers – in short, of fostering justice between persons.”<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> His Excellency John Ralston Saul , Keynote speech, Canadian Forum on Volunteerism, Vancouver, B.C. (18 August 2001).

<sup>54</sup> Mark Kingwell, Keynote Address, YMCA Canada Annual Conference (June 2001).

<sup>55</sup> Mark Kingwell, *The World We Want* (Toronto, 2000), 5.

---

## 5

### **Pulling the Threads Together and Weaving the Story**

Throughout this paper we have explored how storytelling can have a positive impact both on individual volunteers and the voluntary sector in general. The practical and ethical dilemmas have been presented as they relate to capturing, forming and telling this story. As well, the paper has explored a variety of frameworks that might be useful tools for capturing and telling stories within the voluntary sector.

Volunteering and the voluntary sector are important elements of Canadian society. The act of volunteering provides a human connection between individuals and builds “social capital” in communities. Social capital creates relationships that are built on trust because we know and understand that we are connected and linked.

Furthermore, the paper has explored the moral values of justice and compassion. These values are important elements of both the voluntary sector’s story and the stories of individual volunteers. Of the fifty volunteers’ stories studied, many represent tangibly the value of a just exchange in which the volunteer, through the experience of volunteering, came to realize that there was a reciprocity in the exchange. The feelings of gratitude were not directed at the volunteer but rather by the volunteer to the organization for enabling the volunteer experience to occur. Such stories are persuasive examples of the achievement of justice.

Governments, funders, voluntary sector organizations and even volunteers themselves are looking at the capacity of the sector to complete its story in all the richness of its human details. To date, the voluntary sector has responded by primarily providing a practical, statistical story. As we have seen, however, an even richer source of information lies in the personal stories of individuals connected to the voluntary sector, either as staff or volunteers. Their stories are integral parts of the voluntary sector story as a whole. One partner cannot exist without the other; and both sorts of stories are connected through the *spirit* of the individual volunteer and the *spirit* expressed in the mission and values of the organization.

---

While many in the voluntary sector are anxious about what is perceived as a lack of capacity of the sector to capture and detail its important story, the International Year of Volunteers Web site has provided something important and relevant for the voluntary sector: an opportunity for individuals to have a “voice” and to share their personal stories of commitment, compassion and connection. These stories are motivating and inspirational. This Web site also pragmatically illustrates that if you provide the opportunity, individuals will respond. It is possible of course that the stories on the Web site are not all-encompassing, and surely some elements of the voluntary sector story have yet to be told. But these stories are nonetheless relevant as personal accounts of connectedness, of citizenship and of compassion. Individually, they are far more motivational than the mere statistical story; and indeed they are of great practical value precisely because they breathe life and reality into the statistics and demographics.

Perhaps the most important message of this paper is that there are important and compelling stories in the voluntary sector, the stories of individual commitment. Giving voice, providing a forum and listening to the individual stories will enrich the capacity of the sector to capture the story and more importantly frame it so that it becomes a transformational story for both the individual volunteer and the voluntary sector as a whole.

---

## APPENDIX I

### *The Volunteer Story Model*



*The Volunteer Story Model reveals the connected relationship between the elements of Service (volunteering) with Self (the individual) and the System (organization). Each element is connected and revolves around Spirit (motivation).*

---

## APPENDIX II

### Volunteer Story Analysis Template

The following table captures key details from fifty stories submitted to the International Year of Volunteers – Volunteer Canada Web site [www.iyvcanada.org](http://www.iyvcanada.org) and uses the four elements of service, self, system and spirit from the Volunteer Story Model Diagram as a mechanism for analysing the content of each of the stories (see Appendix I).

Service	Self	System	Spirit
Service Club Fundraising	Staff Person Recognizing Volunteers	Elks & Royal Purple of Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give families hope</li><li>• Open the doors of communication for families</li><li>• Recognize and thank for contributions</li></ul>
Photographer	Self as Volunteer	Various Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helped build self-esteem of those photographed</li><li>• Recognition – voted volunteer of the year</li><li>• “I love to help out. If we do not volunteer our time and talents, then our communities will have a hard time making ends meet.”</li></ul>
Fundraising/Events	Recipient / Volunteer	Smile to Smile Club (youth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “I am handicapped myself too and I appreciate very much what I do for them. Just in return the kids give us a smile.”</li></ul>

Service	Self	System	Spirit
Fundraising	Recipient/Volunteer	Desert Rose Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundraise for equipment, education, medical supplies for people with disabilities</li> <li>• Has disability herself which keeps her from working</li> <li>• “Even people with disabilities have ABILITIES . . . we all can do a little something and deserve to be respected for that.”</li> </ul>
Befriending Others	Self as Volunteer	Telecare Living Centre True Davidson Acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided a poem about volunteers: <i>So go hold a hand, and wait a while Take someone for a walk and bring a smile Rub a back and stroke their hair Just let them know you're there, you care</i></li> </ul>
Guide Leader	Self as Volunteer	Girl Guides of Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enriching experience</li> <li>• Lifelong commitment to organization</li> </ul>
Teaching Computers Student Tutors	Self as Volunteer	Students created program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received many thank you cards</li> </ul> <p>“One card in particular struck me; it said, ‘Our future is in good hands.’”</p>
Fundraising / Events	Staff Member Recognizing a Volunteer	Children’s Aid Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizes Christmas program for kids in care</li> <li>• “Lastly, ___ is very humble about her involvement in the community. It would be an understatement to say we could not do it without here. She, like countless other volunteers, is most valued. We take this opportunity to say ‘thank you, ____.’”</li> </ul>
Media Involvement	Staff Member	United Way of Saskatoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition for supportive efforts of media volunteers</li> </ul>

Service	Self	System	Spirit
Repairs / Equipment	Self as Volunteer	Tetra Society of North America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds/refines equipment for the disabled</li> <li>• “The client was a nine-year-old with cerebral palsy. He cannot use his hands, cannot speak and has limited control of his feet. He is bright, loves music. . . . He is now no longer dependent on anyone else to enjoy his music.”</li> </ul>
Environmental Teaching	Self as Volunteer	Scouting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach kids the importance of caring for our natural resources</li> </ul> <p>“We help ‘the people of tomorrow’ know that it is up to us to preserve the beauty of this planet.”</p>
Special Events / Theatre	Self as Volunteer	Shake by the Lake Theatre Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiated festival and has been involved in growth</li> <li>• Awarded Tourism Volunteer of the year</li> </ul>
Fundraising / Community Events	Staff Member	Granum and District Recreation Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing a senior who has made an outstanding contribution to the community</li> <li>• “He works circles around most and quietly goes home at the end of the day. He never asks for glory or payment. His payment is the smiles on the children’s faces, the glee that patrons express when they see what has been accomplished and the knowledge in knowing that he has taught someone else some of the skills taught to him.”</li> </ul>
Teaching English as a Second Language	Recipients of a volunteer’s service	YWCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing the efforts of their volunteer tutor</li> <li>• “Jennifer has people skills. She is friendly, gentle, sociable and kind.”</li> </ul>

Service	Self	System	Spirit
Driving	Staff Member	North York Seniors Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Started volunteering to do something useful, “but you gain more than you give. You really get to know people, their lives and struggles. People really appreciate what you are doing for them.”</li> </ul>
Lunchroom Assistants	Staff Member	North York Senior Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer to meet people, as family is overseas</li> <li>Motivated by their caring and desire to make things happen</li> </ul>
Executive Mentor	Staff Member	Canadian Executive Services Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisted with the launch of a flourishing small business in the Aboriginal community</li> </ul> <p>“I don’t think we could have come this far without him.”</p>
Student Volunteer	Staff Member	Prairie West Health District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognition for the contribution of youth</li> </ul> <p>“I have learned that it is so rewarding to help a community stick together and to give my time freely, so that my community and our country can be a better place.”</p>
Many roles	Family member recognizing Father	Many organizations cited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“His Daytimer is filled but so is his heart. The hours he gives others and us cannot be measured. He is a role model to all.”</li> </ul>
Health Care	Self as Volunteer	Many organizations cited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responsibility, parental influence</li> <li>Met many people and made many friends</li> </ul>
Guide Leader	Self as Volunteer	Girl Guides of Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was a guide and now a junior leader</li> <li>Learn so much about yourself when you teach others</li> </ul>

Service	Self	System	Spirit
Museums	Self as Volunteer	Canadian War Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest in museum</li> <li>• Able to share experience and knowledge with others</li> </ul>
Leadership	Self as Volunteer	Girl Guides of Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes me feel good</li> <li>• Friendship, get back more than I give</li> </ul>
School Patrol Leaders	Staff member	CAA -School and Bus Patrollers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaches leadership, safety and responsibility</li> <li>• “They exhibit fine leadership qualities, are responsible, community-minded citizens, and serve as examples to their schoolmates of what giving and caring is all about.”</li> </ul>
Fundraising / Events	Self as Volunteer	MS Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I can’t really put into words the satisfaction I feel from volunteering. I hope someday that they will find a cure.”</li> </ul>
Teaching	Self as Volunteer	Toronto Zoo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling of need to give back for own blessings</li> <li>• “Little did I know! You see, I was the one who benefited so enormously in so many ways.”</li> </ul>
Teaching	Self as Volunteer	Toronto Zoo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer memory – giving a tour this person connected with a special-needs child</li> <li>• “The real reward came at the end of the tour when the mother told me that she had never before seen her daughter go to anyone that was not well known to her.”</li> </ul>
Teaching /Leading	Recipient/Volunteer	Christopher Leadership Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course gave leadership skills, encouragement and support to share these with others as a volunteer</li> </ul>

Service	Self	System	Spirit
Service Club	Self as Volunteer	Kinsmen / Children's Wish Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing that the group was able to grant a wish for a child who later passed away</li> <li>• “The feeling we all got from being able to help cannot be described in words. There is so much payback from volunteering.”</li> </ul>
Special Events	Recipient of a volunteer's service	Block Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child was lost at a special event</li> <li>• “I never really got to thank her for what she did for me that day and sometimes I feel bad that I was not able to. . . . I hope she knows how special she is.”</li> </ul>
Leader	Self as Volunteer	Girl Guides of Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do things because enjoy it</li> <li>• Love teaching children – fellowship and friendship</li> </ul>
Emergency Services	Staff	Fisheries and Oceans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff thanking volunteers who support emergency search and rescue activities</li> </ul>
Teaching	Self as Volunteer	Toronto Zoo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share love of nature</li> <li>• Recognition and thanks from those who have been taught</li> </ul>
Teaching	Self as Volunteer	Literacy Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendship – teaching</li> <li>• Learning about the African culture</li> </ul> <p>“We have been given the unique opportunity of creating our own program, while at the same time, immersing ourselves in the African culture. We are learning not only how to tutor effectively, but also organization and leadership skills, which I believe will be invaluable to each of us in the future.”</p>

Service	Self	System	Spirit
Befriending	Self and Pet as Volunteers	Manor Retirement Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belief that animals can help you feel better and shares this with others</li> </ul>
Telephone Support	Staff Member	Telecare Distress Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Length of commitment</li> <li>• Caring and support when people in crisis need them</li> </ul>
Counsellors	Recipient/Volunteer	Heart Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caring and support by sharing their personal experiences with new heart patients and their families</li> </ul>
Teaching	Volunteer	Toronto Zoo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friendship made through volunteering, teaching</li> <li>• “Volunteering at the Zoo adds a richness to my life that I have rarely found in any other activity. I look forward to spending many more years there, learning and teaching and having fun.”</li> </ul>
Climate Observer	Volunteer	Environment Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially started because of curiosity</li> <li>• “Although I’m an avowed nature lover, venturing into freezing, windy downpours to take instrument readings has occasionally tried my mettle. When I feel like complaining (to myself of course) I laugh and remember that even though curiosity killed the cat, satisfaction (through volunteer service) brought it back.”</li> </ul>
Secretarial Support	Recipient/Volunteer	Delta Child Care Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single mother began as user of service, volunteered her time and gained administrative skills – is now employed</li> </ul>

Service	Self	System	Spirit
Counselling / Support	Recipient / Volunteer	Sleep/wake Disorders Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has narcolepsy – felt isolated and alone</li> <li>• Started a local chapter, provides support to others</li> <li>• “At those times, I realize how grateful I am for being given the opportunity to share with others what I was given through others. And in this, I am not alone.”</li> </ul>
Virtual Volunteer / Technology	Staff Member	Youth One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve youth in building a resource for youth in the community</li> </ul>
Ski Patrol	Staff Member	Chicopee Ski Patrol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a safe place to play and get exercise and fresh air</li> </ul>
Search and Rescue / Emergency	Self as Volunteer – Recognizing Others	Sauvetage Canada Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition for services provided</li> </ul>
Library	Staff Member	Richmond Public Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kept “friends” organization going</li> <li>• Dedication and commitment</li> </ul>
Helper / Teacher	Recipient/Volunteer	Various Organization	<p>“These people had so much faith in me that they gave me opportunities that other kids in my position wouldn’t get, and then they encouraged me to make the most out of them. These people, in my mind, are all volunteers who helped change the course of my life. Anyone who says that one person can’t make a difference is wrong.”</p>
Support / Emergency	Self as Volunteer	Canadian Red Cross / Scouts Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learned skills, travelled, make friends</li> <li>• Knows that their volunteering makes a difference</li> </ul>
Leaders / Teaching	Staff Member	Employees of Scotiabank who volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and thank them for their contributions</li> </ul>

Service	Self	System	Spirit
Counselling / Support	Self as Volunteer	Oakville Humane Society, Oakville Municipal Greenhouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Volunteering has given me a present and a future when the past and present seemed bleak. Volunteering has given me a social life and sense of community purposes. Volunteering has given me back my self respect, a priceless gift and volunteering has taught me many things about nurturing . . . volunteering has led me to confront abused and abandoned animals and they in turn have comforted me. . . . Volunteering has allowed me as a disabled person to prove my worth – something that was denied to me in the paid working world. I now have a meaningful retirement, involvement with life and with the small things that really do count – a reason to wake up and get going with a sense of joy, dignity and above all else, a sense that I can give back for all that I have received from volunteering.”</li> </ul>

---

## Sources

### Bibliography

- Allen, Kenn, Shirley Keller and Cynthia Vizza. *A New Competitive Edge: Volunteers from the Workplace*. Arlington, VA: Volunteer – The National Centre, 1986.
- American Red Cross. *Volunteer 2000 Study*. Washington, D.C., 1988.
- Anderson, John, and Larry Moore. “The Motivation to Volunteer.” *Journal of Voluntary Action Research* 7, no. 3/4 (1978).
- Arkansas Institute for Economic Advancement and Arkansas Division of Volunteerism. *Economic Impact of Arkansas Volunteers, 1992*. Little Rock, AR, 1993.
- Arlett, Allan, Phelps Bell and Robert W. Thompson. *Canada Gives: Trends and Issues towards Charitable Giving and Voluntarism*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 1988.
- Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA). *Positioning the Profession: Communicating the Power of Results for Volunteer Leadership Professionals*. Richmond, VA, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Statement of Professional Ethics in Volunteer Administration.” Richmond, VA, 1999.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Volunteer Administration: Portrait of a Profession*. Boulder, CO, 1993.
- Beugen, Paula J. *Traditional and Non-Traditional Volunteers: How to Tap All of Your Resources*. Boulder, CO: Yellowfire Press, 1985.
- Brinckerhoff, Peter C. *Mission-Based Management*. Dillon, CO: Alpine Guild Inc., 1994.
- Brown, Suzanne. *Active Citizenry in Hamilton-Wentworth: Making the Commitment to Reach Change*. Social Planning and Research Council. Hamilton. 1997.
- Building Caring Communities: Five Capacities that Build Communities*. Toronto: Ontario Trillium Foundation, 1997.
- Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR). *Standards of Practice*. Vancouver: CAVR. 1998.
- Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. “Symposium 2000: Does Philanthropy have a Future?” Toronto, 2000.

- 
- Canadian Heritage, Volunteer Centre of Ottawa Carleton and Voluntary Action Directorate. *Volunteering in Canada: Citizen Participation in Canada*. Ottawa, 1994.
- Carter, Novia. *Volunteers: The Untapped Potential*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1995
- Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations. *Challenge 2000: Taking Voluntarism to the Year 2015*. Ottawa: New Economy Development Group, 1994.
- Cieplik, Narcyza. *Barriers to Volunteering*. Hamilton, ON: Volunteer Centre of Hamilton and District, 1999.
- Cooperrider, David L. "Appreciative Inquiry: A Constructive Approach to Organization Development and Social Change." Workshop. Dively Center for Management Development, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH. Undated. Photocopy.
- Cooperrider, David L., and Diana Whitney. *Appreciative Inquiry: A Constructive Approach to Organization*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1999.
- Culver, David and Lawrence Pathy. *The Study for Charitable Excellence: A Status Report on Capacity Building*. Montreal: Foundation for Charitable Excellence, 2000.
- Dalla Costa, John. *The Ethical Imperative: Why Moral Leadership Is Good Business*. Toronto: Harper Collins, 1999.
- DePree, Max. *Leadership is an Art*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Leadership Jazz*. New York: Dell Publishing, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Leading without Power*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.
- Drainie, Bronwyn. Discussion paper for "Telling Our Story – Communicating the Value of Philanthropy and the Voluntary Sector," Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 7th Annual Symposium. Toronto, April 2001. Also available on line at <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/awareness/pdf/drainie.pdf>.
- Dreessen, Erwin. "What we Should Know About the Voluntary Sector but Don't." *Isuma: Canadian Journal of Policy Research* 2, no. 2 (Summer 2001). Also available on line at [http://www.isuma.net/v02n02/dreessen/dreessen\\_e.pdf](http://www.isuma.net/v02n02/dreessen/dreessen_e.pdf).
- Drucker, Peter F. *Managing the Nonprofit Organization*. New York: Harper Business, 1990.
- Eastman, Elaine, and Jackie Prtenjak. *Motivating Volunteers*. Burlington, ON: Halton Social Planning Council, 1987.
- Ellis, Susan J. *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success*. Philadelphia: Energize Associates, 1986.

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Volunteer Recruitment Handbook*. Philadelphia: Energize Inc, 1994.
- Ellis, Susan J., and Katherine Noyes. *Proof Positive: Developing Significant Volunteer Recordkeeping Systems*. Philadelphia: Energize Associates, 1980.
- Fisher, James C., and Katherine Cole. *Leadership and Management of Volunteer Programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.
- Foot, David, and Daniel Stoffman. *Boom, Bust and Echo: How to Profit from the Coming Demographic Shift*. Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter and Ross, 1996.
- Forward, David C. *Heroes after Hours: Extraordinary Acts of Employee Volunteerism*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.
- Franck, Frederick, Janis Roze and Richard Connolly (eds.). *What Does it Mean to Be Human? Reverence for Life Reaffirmed by Responses from Around the World*. New York: Circumstantial Productions Publishing and UNESCO Institute for Education, 1998.
- Fulford, Robert. *The Triumph of the Narrative. Storytelling in the Age of Mass Culture*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1999.
- Gales, Meagan. *Reflections on the Spirit of Volunteerism in Canada: Volunteering, a Time-Honoured Tradition*. Ottawa: Volunteer Canada, 1999.
- Graff, Linda L. *Voluntary Activity In Ontario: How Much Is 4.5 Billion Dollars Worth? A Profile of Volunteers Based on the 1987 National Survey on Volunteer Activity*. Profile Number 25. Ottawa: Voluntary Action Directorate, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1989.
- Godbout, Jacques T. *The World of the Gift*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1998.
- “Good Work: How Volunteers Can Make a Difference.” *Royal Bank Reporter*. Royal Bank of Canada, 1991.
- Grinnell, Robin Lynn. *Today’s Heroes in Your Community*. Lansing, MI: Volunteer Centers of Michigan, 1999.
- Hall, Michael, Tamara Knighton, Paul Reed, Patrick Bussière, Don McRae and Paddy Bowen. *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 1997 National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1998. Also available on line at <http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/n-r1-ca.pdf>.
- Hall, Michael, Larry McKeown and Karen Roberts. *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2001. Also available on line at <http://www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/listpub.cgi?catno=71-542-XIE2000001>.

- 
- Hall, Michael, A. J. McKechnie, K. Davidman and F. Leslie. *An Environmental Scan on Volunteering and Improving Volunteering*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2001.
- Hill, David. *Getting Heard: The Science and Art of Effective Communication*. Minneapolis: Lakewood Books, 1997.
- Hillman, James. *Kinds of Power: A Guide to Its Intelligent Uses*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.
- Hollo, Wendy. *But That's Not What My Mom Does*. Why Not Publishing Company. Edmonton. 1987.
- Changing Roles, Changing Relationships: The New Challenge for Business, Nonprofit organizations, and Government*. Discussion paper for the Three-Sector Initiative. Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 1999. Also available on line at <http://www.independentsector.org/programs/leadership/changeroles.pdf>.
- Isaacs, William. *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*. New York: Doubleday, 1999.
- “IVY Stories.” International Year of Volunteers Web site. [www.ivycanada.com](http://www.ivycanada.com). August 2001.
- Jacobs, Jane. *The Nature of Economies*. Toronto: Random House Canada, 2000.
- Johnstone, Ginnette, ed. *Management of Volunteer Services in Canada*. Ottawa: Johnstone Training and Consultation, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Volunteers: Active Partners*. Ottawa: Johnstone Training and Consultation, 1996.
- Kingwell, Mark. Keynote Address to YMCA Canada Annual Conference, Vancouver, June 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The World We Want*. Toronto: Penguin Books, 2000.
- Kitchener-Waterloo Association for Volunteer Management. *Gathered from the Best: A Collection of Resources for Volunteer Managers*. Kitchener-Waterloo, ON, 1993.
- Kouzes, James M., and Barry Z. Posner. *The Leadership Challenge*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Encouraging the Heart*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.
- Lautenschlager, Janet. *Promoting Volunteerism*. Ottawa: Voluntary Action Directorate, 1991.

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Volunteering, A Traditional Canadian Value*. Ottawa: Voluntary Action Directorate, 1992.
- Logan, Suzanne. *The Kids Can Help Book*. New York: Putnam, 1992.
- MacDuff, Nancy. *Volunteer Recruiting and Retention*. Walla Walla, WA: Macduff/Blunt Associates, 1985.
- MacKenzie, Marilyn. *Curing Terminal Niceness: Building Healthy Volunteer-Staff Relationships*. Downers Grove, IL: VMSystems–Heritage Arts Publishing, 1990.
- MacLeod, Flora. *Motivating and Managing Today's Volunteers*. Vancouver: Self Counsel Press, 1993.
- Magni, I. "Once Upon a Time....The Art of Storytelling." Lecture notes. Module 1. McGill-McConnell Program for National Voluntary Sector Leaders. Montreal: McGill University, August 1999. Photocopy.
- McKnight, John, and John Kretzman. *Building Communities from the Inside Out*. Chicago: Centre for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, 1993.
- Mellon Bank Corporation. *Discover Total Resources: A Guide for Nonprofits*. Pittsburgh: Mellon Bank, 1985.
- Milofsky, Carl. "Telling the Organizational Story: Bringing Private Viewpoints into the Public" *The Not-for-Profit CEO Monthly Letter* 8, no 11 (September 2001).
- Moss, Ellen Feinman. *Helping Out is Cool*. Toronto: Tumbleweed Press, 1997.
- Muldoon, Brian. *The Heart of Conflict*. New York: Berkley Publishing Group, 1996.
- O'Connell, Brian. *America's Voluntary Spirit*. New York: The Foundations Center, 1983.
- Ontario Voluntary Forum. *Growing Our Future Together*. Hamilton, ON: Volunteer Centre of Hamilton and District, 1998.
- Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector (PAGVS). *Building on Strength: Improving Governance and Accountability in Canada's Voluntary Sector*. Final Report. Ottawa: PAGVS, February 1999. Also known as the "Broadbent Report." Also available on line at [http://www.vsr-trsb.net/pagvs/Building\\_on\\_Strength.htm](http://www.vsr-trsb.net/pagvs/Building_on_Strength.htm)
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Helping Canadians Help Canadians: Improving Governance and Accountability in the Voluntary Sector." Discussion paper. Produced by the Voluntary Sector Roundtable. Ottawa: PAGVS, May 1998. Also available on line at <http://www.vsr-trsb.net/pagvs/helping.html>.

- 
- Picard, André. "A Call to Alms: The Voluntary Sector in the Age of Cutbacks." *Toronto Star*, November 1997. Also available on line at <http://www.andrepicard.com/Atkinson%20Fellowship.html>.
- Potter, Dr. Beverly. *Finding a Path with a Heart. How to go from Burnout to Bliss*. Berkeley, CA: Ronin Publishing, 1995.
- Prince, Russ, and Karen File. *The Seven Faces of Philanthropy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.
- Putnam, Robert. *Bowling Alone*. New York: Touchstone Books, 2000.
- Ross, David P. *The Economic Dimensions of Volunteer Work in Canada*. Ottawa: Secretary of State, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *How to Estimate the Economic Contributions of Volunteer Work*. Ottawa: Voluntary Action Directorate, 1994.
- Sarner, Mark, and Janice Nathanson. *Social Marketing*. Toronto: Manifest Communications, 1996.
- Saul, His Excellency John Ralston. Speech on the Occasion of the Opening of the Canadian Forum on Volunteerism. Vancouver, Saturday, 18 August 2001. <http://www.gg.ca/media/doc.asp?lang=e&DocID=1367>.
- Satterfield, Mary T., and Karla K. Gower. *The Law and Volunteers: A Guide*. Ottawa: Johnstone Training and Consultation, 1993.
- Schwartz, Peter. *The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World*. New York: Doubleday, 1991.
- Senge, Peter M., et al. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- Shore, Bill. *Revolution of the Heart: A New Strategy for Creating Wealth and Meaningful Change*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1995.
- Silver, Nora. *At the Heart: The New Volunteer Challenge to Community Agencies*. San Francisco, CA: The San Francisco Foundation, 1989.
- Stallings, Betty B. *Resource Kit for Managers of Volunteers*. Pleasanton, CA: Building Better Skills, 1992.
- Steckel, Richard. *Filthy Rich and other Nonprofit Fantasies*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 1989.
- Street, Lorraine. *The Screening Handbook*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Volunteer Bureaus and Centres, 1996.

- 
- Sustaining a Civic Society: Voluntary Action in Ontario*. Report of the Advisory Board on the Voluntary Sector. Toronto, January 1997. Also available on line at <http://www.lin.ca/resource/html/sector.htm>
- Tait, Cam. "The Priceless Gift of Volunteering." Charity Village, 9 October 2001. <http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/archive/asp/asp01/asp0140.html>.
- Thomas, John, C. "Fostering the Collaborative Creation of Knowledge: A White Paper." New York: IBM Research, 2000. [http://www.research.ibm.com/knowsoc/project\\_paper.html](http://www.research.ibm.com/knowsoc/project_paper.html).
- Van Der Heijden, Kees. *Scenarios: The Art of Strategic Thinking*. Chichester (UK): John Wiley and Sons Ltd., 1996.
- Vineyard, Sue. *Secrets of Motivation: How to get and Keep Volunteers and Paid Staff*. Downers Grove, IL: Heritage Arts Publishing, 1991.
- Voluntary Sector Project Team. *Volunteer Involvement Through Access and Leadership*. Ottawa: Ottawa Transition Board, 2000.
- Volunteer Canada. *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement*. Ottawa, 2000. Also available on line at <http://www.volunteer.ca/volunteer/pdf/CodeEng.pdf>.
- Working Together: A Government of Canada/Voluntary Sector Joint Initiative. Report of the Joint Tables. Ottawa: Voluntary Sector Initiative, 1999. [http://www.vsisbc.ca/eng/knowledge/working\\_together/pco-e.pdf](http://www.vsisbc.ca/eng/knowledge/working_together/pco-e.pdf)
- Wuthnow, Robert. *Acts of Compassion. Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves*. Princeton University Press, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Learning to Care: Elementary Kindness in an Age of Indifference*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Young, Eric. "Realizing the Potential of 'I Volunteer.'" Presentation to IYV Campaign Strategic Planning Session. Ottawa, Ontario, 19 March 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Remarks to the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy 7th Annual Symposium. Toronto, April 2001.
- Zimmerman, Brenda, Curt Lindberg and Paul Plsek. *Edgeware: Insights from complexity science for health care leaders*. Irving, TX: VHA Inc., 1998. Also available on line at "Edgeplace," <http://www.plexusinstitute.com/edgeware/archive/index.html>.

---

## Journals and Publications

*Journal of Volunteer Administration.* Association for Volunteer Administration (AVA).  
Richmond VA (formerly Boulder, CO).

*Canadian Journal of Volunteer Resources Management.* Canadian Administrators of  
Volunteer Resources. Ottawa.

*Front and Centre.* Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. Toronto.

*Nonprofit Management and Leadership.* Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations. San  
Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

*Leadership.* Points of Light Foundation. Washington, D.C.

*Volunteer Beat.* Volunteer Canada. Ottawa.

## Web Sites

Canadian Centre for Philanthropy. <http://www.ccp.ca>

Canadian Centre for Ethics and Corporate Policy. <http://www.ethicscentre.com>

Charity Village. <http://www.charityvillage.com>

Energize Inc. <http://www.energizeinc.com>

International Year of Volunteers. (Canada) <http://www.iyvcanada.org>

Management Centre for Nonprofits. <http://www.mapnp.org>

Volunteer Canada. <http://www.volunteer.ca>

Voluntary Sector Initiative Reports. <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/products/reports.cfm>