

# Engaging YOUTH as Volunteers: “Making Room for Young People”

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The RETHINK Group

WEBINAR  
SERIES  
FOR ARTS  
PRESENTING



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# Reminders

- You can hear us, we cannot hear you!

## Can't hear?

- Try turning up your volume
- Call in by phone or use your computer headphones

**Have a question?** Use the chat box, any time. Will have time at the end and after the webinar.

## Downloads

- Webinar recording
- PPT Slide presentation
- Handout: “Ideas for engaging youth as volunteers”
- Resources at the end will link you to topics on youth from Volunteer Canada

# Learning Objectives

- What do we mean by “YOUTH?” Who might be most appropriate for our organization?
- What are youth looking for in their volunteer experience? What barriers to involvement? What are they currently involved in and might you be able to respond to this?
- New Strategies for engaging youth – how to adapt existing roles or what NEW roles might attract youth.
- Best Practices to consider with youth.

# Defining YOUTH

14-17

- High School “40 hrs” community service
- Community Involvement and School Co-op Placement
- Community Service - Judicial system

18-19

- College and University
- Co-op Placements – Work Terms – Block Placement
- Community Service Learning & Research Courses
- Un-employed and Under-employed

20-24

- College and University
- Co-op Placements: stronger connection to employment
- Community Service Learning & Research
- Internships

# Quick Quiz

Look at the 3 categories of youth.

**1. Are you currently engaging youth?**

**2. Those of you engaging youth, check off the category(s) you engaged most often**

1. High School - 40 hrs community service; co-op school placements
2. Community service – judicial system
3. College - placements or work terms; community service learning and research courses
4. Un-employed and under-employed
5. University Co-op Placements; community service learning and research
6. Internships

# Differences & Similarities

- **Maturity Levels** – changes our relationship and tasks assigned
- **Career focus** – nearing education end brings stronger focus on employment
- **Mandatory vs.** true volunteering vs. course requirement – attitude shift
- **Time available** – different from our traditional volunteer roles
- **Environment and influence** – Keen interest and impact
- **Technology** – digital generation; Social media (facebook; blogs; online; internet search; social networking); communication and tools for research

# Why Youth Information or Data is important

- Helps us understand a demographic and specific volunteer group
- Helps us develop marketing strategies specific to that age group
- Use information for planning volunteer opportunities
- Use information to establish policies
- Starts to establish whether a 'trend' is starting to form...

# GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1987 – 14% Ontario youth age 15-24 volunteered
- 1997 – increase to 35%
  - Represents 75 million hours
  - An average of 147 hours per youth (Ontario youth highest average hours)
- 1998 – introduced 'community involvement' in Ontario – 40 hour commitment
- Your community: How many high school students x 40 hrs = ..... 'volunteer hours'



# **Statistics Canada: Study released June, 2015 – Volunteering in Canada 2004-2013.**

- “ the rate of volunteering in 2013 was highest among teens aged 15 to 19 at 66%.” “ this is partly explained by mandatory volunteering in high school” (1 in 5 said they volunteered because they were required to do so).
- The other 4 are still motivated to volunteer.
- “entering the job market was also a motivator...47% under age 35 were driven by possible job prospects. This type of volunteering has been described as ‘self and career-oriented’ volunteering most commonly associated with young volunteers.”
- Females more likely to volunteer
- Males contribute more hours
- Participation rates increase with education and income

# WHY Youth Volunteer?

- 46% - to develop new skills
- 18% - a prerequisite for graduating
- 65% - it would help get them a job
  - 25% of young volunteers indicated that volunteer work helped get a job
- 93% volunteer for a cause they believe in
- 80% to use their skills and experience
- 70% to explore their strengths

(data from last focus on youth in 2009)

# What does this mean to us?

- Youth want to engage in their communities in meaningful work.
- They see the link between volunteering and paid work/or developing the skills that will lead them to paid work.
- As non profits are we giving youth meaningful opportunities to use their skills and build on their skills to bridge this gap to employment?
- Are we giving youth opportunities to grow and develop when they volunteer? Do we demonstrate and show them this?
- Are we helping them explore their strengths and how do we link them passionately to our cause? Are we youth friendly?

**Poll : How youth-friendly is your organization?**

# Let's rank your current youth status

Based on the questions you just answered

- **On a scale of 1 to 10 how would you rank your readiness to engage youth?**

# Characteristics of Youth (2010 Volunteer Canada Study)

- **Career-focused, flexible** and **receptive to new ideas**
- More **open-minded** – have grown up being exposed to greater diversity than previous generations
- **Energetic and enthusiastic** – have high levels of vitality
- **Technologically savvy** – respond to innovative online communications and recruitment techniques
- **Prefer peer camaraderie** – as social beings, youth enjoy meeting new people and participating in volunteer activities with their friends
- In many instances **affected by mandatory community service** requirements – e.g., community service hours are required for high school graduation in some provinces and territories
- See **volunteering as a bridge** – something that supports their search for employment, skills development, and networking
- **Sensitive to perceived age discrimination** – prefer volunteer tasks where they feel respected and are given some responsibility

# What are Youth interested in? (2010)

- **Education and research organizations** - as well as sports and recreation organizations, followed by social service organizations.
- **International** - youth see themselves as world citizens and tend to define 'community' as being global in nature.
- Organizations that support **environmental issues**.
- **Flexibility** - to accommodate their other commitments for school, work, friends, and family.
- **Volunteer job descriptions** - that give youth a clear understanding of what they will do and the broader significance of their participation.
- Receive **constructive feedback** and **certification** where possible and,
- Where they can **volunteer with other youth**, including their friends.

# Barriers to Youth Volunteering

- Lack of time
- Inability to make a long-term commitment
- Not being asked
- Unsure how to become involved
- Feeling that their opinions and insights are not valued, respected or taken into account
- Organizations' perception that youth need services and help instead of seeing youth as having something to give to organizations (especially communications and technology skills)



# Student Testimonial

*“I think that my involvement in 40 hours of community service was a time of growing for me. I realized that there is a purpose for me and that my help is needed in this world in even the smallest capacities. The best part of having been involved in a community service was the development of self-worth.”*

*(Student with Snowmobile Club)*

# Important consideration!

- EARLY LIFE EXPERIENCES

- In a 2013 Study, 44% of all Canadians over age 15 volunteered.
- In earlier studies, research found that those over age 25 who had volunteer experiences during youth, volunteered at a substantially higher rate. Provided of course that the experience was a good one.

- 40 hours and Community Involvement should be seen as a **GIFT** - If youth have a successful volunteer experience, the chance of obtaining 'life-long' volunteers increases! This helps all non profits who utilize volunteers.

- “An interest in volunteering, developed during one’s youth is likely to be maintained in adulthood. This suggests the importance of providing positive, early volunteering experiences for youth, as these experiences may lead to continued volunteering in the adult years.”

NSGVP 2000 Report

# Benefits to the Organization?

- Increase volunteer 'pool' as well as staff pool
- Increase energy and skill level
- Increase profile and mentorship opportunities
- Increase fund opportunities – grants and donors
- Increase creative ideas and new directions
- Increase social media presence and expertise

**Question** : Does anyone else have a benefit to add to this list...  
how your organization benefit by having youth involved?  
(please type in chat)

# NEW STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING YOUTH

- **QUESTIONS OF DEGREE**

- Degree to which the organization actually welcomes youth volunteers
- Degree to which youth are looking for an experience to meet their unique needs
- Degree to which young volunteers will be expected to 'fit in' to the existing volunteer program (kind of work to be done and context in which it is done)

**This raises questions:** How youth-friendly are we? Have we created uniquely youth-oriented volunteer opportunities or are we trying to 'tweak' the opportunities that currently exist?

# **TWO STRATEGIES**

**1. GROUP A NUMBER OF  
EXISTING VOLUNTEER  
OPPORTUNITIES THAT  
COULD BE DONE BY  
YOUTH**

**2. CONSIDER CREATING A  
NEW PROJECT  
DESIGNED  
SPECIFICALLY TO BE  
DONE BY YOUTH**

# **Strategy 1:** need to re-examine volunteer opportunities from a filter of what we now know about youth...

- What is the time commitment?
- When is work scheduled?
- What skills are required?
- Do we provide training?
- What is the setting?
- Do we have a written position description?
- Where are we advertising?
- Can we link this to possible employment or networking?
- What is social context – solitary or teamwork?
- Are tasks appropriate for youth?
- Would it appeal to youth?
- Is there something about this job that makes it suitable for a younger person to do?

## **Strategy “2”:** Consider a NEW project designed specially to be done by youth...

- Does our mission lend itself to youth-directed project?
- Is there an aspect of client services that could be youth directed?
- Are there issues to get youth input? Youth Advisory?
- Is there training or research that could be done by youth?
- Could or should we create a youth position on the board?
- Is there a special event that could be youth delivered or targeted? New event?
- Is there a youth-run fund raising strategy that makes sense for our organization?
- What other projects might we consider?



# Some Ideas to consider:

- Handout: “Ideas for involving youth as volunteers.”

# SUMMARY: BEST PRACTICES

- You have to be READY to engage youth - Let's *“do our homework.”*
- Put pieces in place before you engage youth (like policies and procedures; involvement strategy) (age)
- Structure is essential to success
- Allocate resources.
- Key ingredient to success: Make sure you have a YOUTH CHAMPION
- Different engagement style: be a MENTOR (adjust with age range).
- Meet needs of youth.

## LESSONS – From Donna Lockhart

“If you can’t do it right or well (engaging YOUTH) ...don’t do it at all. You will cause more harm than success.”

If we are in the business of promoting and building voluntarism – starting with YOUTH is obvious.

It is important to provide positive experiences with youth....it has the potential to provide ‘sustainability’ in our volunteer resources!

There are many youth who did their 40 hours, had great experiences and then stayed to continue volunteering with the organization.

Make sure you provide meaningful opportunities and illustrate to youth the skills they will use and develop. (could be a project to manage from start to finish; a youth idea fund raiser). Youth have to see the applicability.

Decide which age group of youth best suits your organization and will help meet your mission.

# Questions posted today....or email me...



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# Resources

- CharityVillage [www.charityvillage.com](http://www.charityvillage.com) has whole resource section on volunteer management. Under this section are several links to topics regarding youth as volunteers.
- The Rethink Group [www.rethinkgroup.ca](http://www.rethinkgroup.ca). Click on volunteer resources and this will take you to 5 articles on engaging youth. These are also posted on Charity Village.

# Volunteer Canada has the following resources on youth: [volunteer.ca/youth](http://volunteer.ca/youth)

- [\*Building Blocks for Youth Volunteer Engagement\*](#) — How can adults support young Canadians in their search for volunteer opportunities? This tool shows you how. The tool also allows youth to find their skills and interests and apply them to volunteering.
- [\*Building the Bridge to Youth Volunteers\*](#) — This fact sheet highlights common characteristics of today's youth volunteers.
- [\*Engaging Youth Effectively: A Case Study for Volunteer Centres\*](#) — This document presents the findings of a youth pilot project on volunteering. The case study gives suggestions for youth involvement programs across Canada.
- [\*Making Room for Young People\*](#) — This questionnaire gives tips for including youth in community building.
- [\*10 Ways to Make Your Organization Youth Friendly\*](#) — This tip sheet gives strategies for organizations looking to open their doors to youth volunteers.
- [\*Volunteer Connections: New Strategies for Involving Youth\*](#) — This manual offers tips for organizations so they can create volunteer roles that appeal to young people.

# Please share your feedback for a chance to win “The Youth Volunteer Audit” Best Practices for Engaging Youth

Published by Donna Lockhart in 2005, “The Youth Volunteer Audit”, is a short planning tool designed to help organizations answer questions in getting ready to engage youth. Five winners will receive a copy of this resource in the mail.

[TAKE SURVEY](#)



Join us next week....

## **Volunteer Burnout: Symptoms, Signs and Solutions**

Wednesday, April 27, 2016

1 pm EST / 2 pm ADT

[SIGN UP](#)

